

An internet plot

**Part 2 of a review of an article by “Mr Blunt”:
The real origins of the article**

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“Mr Blunt” and an internet plot

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The review referred to here was written at the request of a visitor to www.livingwater-spain.com.

That review can be found here: http://livingwater-spain.com/Jn20_28_Blunt.pdf

The article by “Gregory Blunt” that it reviewed can at the time of writing be found here: https://www.academia.edu/43428437/June_24_2020_S_The_Greek_Conjunction_%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9_Applied_to_the_Exegesis_of_John_20_28_A_Fresh_Grammatical_and_Contextual_analysis Accessed on 22.11.20.

About the Author

Dr Trevor R Allin graduated from the University of Leeds with a 1st Class Honours degree in Phonetics, French, Spanish and Philosophy and History of Religion. Following studies in linguistics, he undertook original research on a South American indigenous language, for which purpose he lived within the indigenous community and studied the language with native speakers over a period of more than a year. The University of St Andrews subsequently awarded him a Ph.D. for his thesis “A Grammar of Resígaro”.

For many years he taught a range of languages up to “Advanced” level standard in state schools in England and in Germany, and in state-recognised schools in Scotland and Spain. He also worked full time over a period of many years supporting and inspecting qualified Modern Language teachers and giving them professional development training. Teaching and examination materials written by him for French, German and Spanish at a wide range of levels, up to and including “A” Level, have been published by mainstream U.K. educational publishers and examination boards, for whom he has written and marked examination question papers.

He is also the published translator of books from Spanish and German into English and is the author of “Curso de Griego Bíblico: Los elementos del Griego del N.T.”¹, the Spanish edition of the leading textbook on New Testament Greek, Jeremy Duff’s “The Elements of New Testament Greek”.² He has taught New Testament (Koiné) Greek to Spanish-speaking adult students in Spain and has delivered lectures in various places in Spain on the important early Greek manuscript of the Bible, Codex Sinaiticus.

¹ CLIE, 2019 See <https://www.clie.es/curso-de-griego-biblico>

² Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005

Introduction

Part 1 of this article looks in detail at an internet posting on the Biblical verse John 20:28, where Thomas calls Christ “My Lord and my God”. It can be found here:

http://livingwater-spain.com/Jn20_28_Blunt.pdf

The author of the posting in question does not give his real name, using instead a pseudonym, “Gregory Blunt”. Further examination of “Mr Blunt’s” article leads to a surprising discovery. Here in Part 2 of our investigation we investigate that discovery.

A covert campaign

In Part 1 of this review, we saw how easy it is on the internet for even the least-knowledgeable of writers to be quoted and requoted. It is also easy for anyone to claim that the original writer is an “expert”, and for this claim to be repeated by others until it is assumed to be the case.

Part 1 of this review examined the article by the anonymous source that calls itself “Mr Blunt”. “His” article argues against the deity of Christ as proclaimed in John 20:28. When we look at all the evidence in Part 1 of this review and “join up the dots”, it seems highly probable that what we have in that anonymous article by someone who wishes to hide his true identity is part of an internet campaign orchestrated on the orders of the Governing Body of the Watchtower Organization of the Jehovah’s Witnesses in New York state.

Here we see that they have inadequately concealed the pointers to this highly-secret operation, which would appear to have two targets:

Firstly, it seems likely that it aims to combat the potential loss of the next generation of Jehovah’s Witnesses, in response to the recognition by the Organization’s leaders that many children of JWs now defy the official ban on consulting the internet. These teenage children of JWs are either future members or already members, having been baptised by the Organization at an age when they were still highly influenced by their parents.

By searching secretly on the internet, these young people, generally second or third generation JWs in their teens or early twenties, are finding independent information on the Watchtower Organization, its activities and its teachings. Much of this information is negative.

Creating “independent” support

Secondly, it is reasonable to deduce that another aim of this covert operation is to plant on the internet false information in which the true identity of the posters is hidden, with the aim of creating a “source” of statements that the Organization can claim come from “independent experts”.

In this way, this internet campaign aims to bolster the Organization’s claims to have “independent support” for their dogmas from supposedly non-JW academics (while at the same time the Organization openly attacks the writings of genuine experts in the field).

This campaign can only have been planned and authorised at the highest level of the Watchtower Organization, which for nearly a century has had a team of writers at its headquarters working full-time to produce material defending the sect’s activities and teachings.

One of the essential features of this campaign is that the true source of these internet postings must be kept hidden, *even from most Jehovah’s Witnesses*, so that in conversations with non members of the sect, rank-and-file Jehovah’s Witnesses will believe that the Organization’s teachings have high-level independent academic support, without even themselves knowing that the information that they are being fed, or that they are finding in their secret researches on the internet, *has in fact been placed there by the Organization itself*, to deceive them and to keep them in line.

Another of the goals is to persuade middle-ranking JW’s whose faith in the Organization’s authority is wavering that they must not abandon the sect.

The impression that there are non-Jehovah’s Witness experts who support the Organization’s claims will also result in rank and file members arguing with more conviction on the doorsteps, genuinely believing that this information is reliable.

Hiding the truth: a weapon of “theocratic warfare”

The Organization teaches its members that “hiding the truth” “for the Kingdom’s sake” is justified:

- 1) to protect the Organization
- 2) when seeking to allay the fears of people being targeted for conversion.

Of course, more straightforward terms for “hiding the truth” are words such as “lying” and “deceiving”.

Trey Bundy of The Center for Investigative Reporting states that “Since the 1950s, the Witnesses have preached a doctrine allowing Jehovah’s followers to deceive anyone outside of the religion if doing so protects the organization. They call it “theocratic warfare.” ”³

Bundy quotes from an article in the Organization’s “Watchtower” magazine and states:

“the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York ... grants permission to Jehovah’s followers to hide the truth from “enemies” of the religion.”

Bundy continues, “The religion teaches that the world outside the organization is controlled by Satan... “So in a time of spiritual warfare it is proper to misdirect the enemy by hiding the truth,” the article reads. “Today God’s servants are engaged in a warfare, a spiritual, theocratic warfare, a warfare ordered by God against wicked spirit forces and against false teachings”.”⁴

Bundy continues:

“The theocratic warfare doctrine teaches that refusing to cooperate with criminal investigations involving Jehovah’s Witnesses is sanctioned by God because outsiders are not entitled to the truth.”⁵

However, the sect’s leaders are aware that this policy does create problems for members of the Organization who have difficulty lying convincingly, or who are resistant to telling lies. The covert internet action by the Headquarters of the Organization, which we uncover here, solves this problem, as it will enable such members to deny criticisms of the Organization and of its practices and teachings with conviction and sincerity.

³ <https://revealnews.org/article/jehovahs-witnesses-can-hide-the-truth-in-court-to-protect-religion/> Article dated 23 September, 2015 Accessed on 4.12.20.

⁴ The article is to be found on pages 285 and 286 of the issue of “The Watchtower” magazine dated May 1st, 1957.

⁵ See also the entry on “theocratic war strategy” in Reed, David A., “Jehovah-Talk”, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1997, p. 129

Targeting those who are already Jehovah’s Witnesses

Thus we see that, as well as targeting people that the Organization seeks to convert, this highly-secret operation has two targets *for those who are already members of the sect*:

- 1) to convince them that there is *independent* evidence that supports the arguments presented by the Organization.
- 2) to enforce discipline among members and to reduce the numbers of members who express doubts. This will reduce the need to threaten these members with “shunning” and “disfellowshipping”. When this punishment is used, under orders from the Organization, members designated as to be “shunned” are ostracised even by the nearest and dearest members of their families, whom the Organization does not even allow to eat in the same room with them, not even if they live in the same house. Often members who toe the sect’s “party line” by implementing “shunning” against their own loved ones do so with a heavy heart, out of fear, because of threats by the Organization that if they do not, the same will happen to them.

Maintenance of discipline within the Organization

When people convert to the sect, the Organization encourages them to minimize their contacts with people who are not Jehovah’s Witnesses. The result of this is that for many members, their only friends are other members of the sect. Thus the punishment of “shunning” is a particularly powerful weapon for the Organization, as members with doubts can find themselves totally isolated, with no existing sources of human contact and support outside the Organization.

This “shunning” and use of threats to implement this against a member is part of an abuse of the human rights of the members of the Organization. Through this punishment, such members again become victims of the Organization and its leadership, frequently resulting in a severe impact on the wellbeing of “disfellowshipped” members, in the splitting up of families and in the breakdown of marriages.

The Organization discourages its converts from pursuing higher-level studies

The devious internet campaign described here will be successful with many who are already members of the Organization, as it has been official policy for more than 60 years to put pressure on members not to continue their studies beyond the minimum level insisted on by the government in the country where they live. In the U.K., this has meant that most children of JWs have left school at age 16, and that those who go on to age 18 or even beyond do not study any subject that could have a relevance to the teachings of the Organization. Thus, they are instructed that they are not to study philosophy, theology or related subjects.

In consequence of this, members who have obeyed the Organization’s instructions as regards their studies will not have the tools needed in order to examine the Organization’s teachings objectively and critically. Consequently, they may be easily impressed by spurious “evidence” of the kind exemplified by the anonymous article examined in part one of this review.

Members of the Jehovah’s Witnesses are also prohibited from reading any books on any religious theme other than those that have been published by the Organization itself. As part of the leadership’s strategy, it also instils in members a fear of studying anything written by people who have left the Organization. Such people are branded “apostates”.

Avoiding contact with “apostates”

At a simpler level, as they go from door to door, if Jehovah’s Witnesses find themselves in conversation with someone who is well-informed about the Organization’s doctrines, they are instructed to ask such a person, “Are you a former Jehovah’s Witness?” If the answer is “yes”, members are instructed to break off the conversation immediately and to report to the “elders” of their Kingdom Hall the address where this “apostate” is living, so that other members will be instructed to avoid this address when going from door to door.

In fact, Jehovah’s Witnesses refuse even to touch a book written by any ex-member of the sect. In addition to this, if on the doorstep they are offered printed material by the person they are seeking to convert, if it is not written by an “apostate”, they will accept it politely and promise to read it and return with their comments on it. When I have given them studies that I have written, the same couple has never come back and has never contacted me. If they follow the Organization’s rules, they will immediately hand any such material to an “elder” in their Kingdom Hall, who will destroy it without reading it.

The Organization’s hand is strengthened by the fact that Jehovah’s Witnesses going door to door are in twos, and in most cases (except in the case of a parent and a child), these twos are normally unrelated. Thus, even if one of the two does wish to examine such material, he or she will be afraid to do so, knowing that their companion will refer this breach of the rules to the Organization, which can take severe measures against members in such cases.

Jehovah’s Witness characteristics in the article by “Mr Blunt”

When we examine carefully the internet article published under the name “Gregory Blunt”, we see that it has the “fingerprints” of the Organization all over it:

- arguments that start with the intended conclusion and work back from there
- incompetent use of Greek
- references to Hebrew, but with no actual examples given in Hebrew, not even transliterated or in translation
- quotations out of context from unrelated Bible verses
- quotations from “experts” who turn out either not to be experts, or to have been misquoted
- statements that claim to be “facts”, whereas this has not been demonstrated to be the case
- rejection of or hiding of inconvenient evidence
- hiding of the true identity of the writer or writers
- excessive use of technical terms, sometimes clearly misunderstood or misused, apparently selected in order to intimidate readers and to cause them to abandon independent thought or reasoning.

We also observe further characteristics of this article:

- It refers to other articles for which the same pseudonym has been used – further evidence that this is part of an orchestrated campaign.
- The writer or writers carefully avoid the use of the word “Jehovah”, in order not to give the game away and reveal the true source of the article.

Multiple authors

The article also presents a series of *unrelated arguments* that are *not co-ordinated with each other*. Arguments presented include:

- ““*The Construction*”: Repeating the Possessive Pronoun with Coordinate Items”
- “The Grammatical Reason for the Hebraism”
- “The NT Study” (based on the use of commas in the American Standard Version)
- “The Context of John 20:28” (based on reference to verses elsewhere that contain parts of the verb “believe”)
- “An Expository Rendering of the “Objective Contextual” View”
- “How to Falsify the Conclusion”

In the article, these arguments are not related to each other: one argument does not logically lead to another, and each argument does not refer to other arguments presented. This does not look like just the work of *one* zealous member of the sect. It seems to be a clear indication that several different staff writers at JW Headquarters were involved, each of them instructed by the leadership to develop a separate argument.

In fact, many of the phrases used are incomprehensible anyway. They are mere gobbledegook. They are gibberish. “Mr Blunt’s” article is written in the style that is commonly seen in similar articles officially published by the Organization. “His” article is clearly an example of the best that the Organization has been able to do, but the quality of the “research” is quite frankly incompetent, the “scholarship” is dreadful, and the writing is mediocre.

In defence of the staff writers of the Jehovah’s Witness Organization

In defence of the staff writers of the Jehovah’s Witness Organization, I must point out that the sect prevents even its own writers from gaining too thorough a knowledge of the source languages of the Bible and of academic material on the Bible, to try to prevent further defections from the religion by high-profile members, seeing that such people are well-informed about the most secret internal workings of the sect.

The dangers of learning too much

Many Jehovah’s Witnesses have heard of Raymond Franz, who was a staff writer for the Organization and, what is more, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses. On top of all of this, his uncle, Fred Franz, became the fourth President of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, which is the name of the legal body that runs and controls the Jehovah’s Witness Organization.

In the course of his research when producing materials to justify the sect’s teachings, Raymond Franz discovered some of the errors in their teachings. He brought this information to the sect’s leaders, but all his findings were rejected and he was “disfellowshipped” by the sect and declared to be an “apostate”. After the Organization did this, he went on to write a detailed account of this experience, entitled “Crisis of Conscience”⁶. This book has been translated into at least twelve languages.

⁶ Franz, Raymond, “Crisis of Conscience”, Atlanta: Commentary Press, 1st edition, 1983, 4th edition 2007.

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Raymond Franz subsequently wrote a detailed study of some of the doctrines of the sect, published in a large book entitled “In Search of Christian Freedom”⁷. Members of the sect are forbidden to read his writings.

So the Organization’s staff writers have no doubt done their best in their article that bears the name of the fictitious “Mr Blunt”, but they have been hindered by three factors:

- 1) their lack of adequate studies in linguistics, Biblical languages and the Biblical text;
- 2) the limits imposed by the Organization on their access to other information and writers;
- 3) the requirement by the sect that they only write material that supports its teachings and practices.

Engaging in discussions with JW writers

It is therefore not surprising that genuine experts in the Bible and biblical languages resist wasting their time trying to engage with the Jehovah’s Witnesses and with articles such as the one we are dealing with here. Indeed, as soon as I spotted the first fundamental mistakes in the writers’ understanding of basic grammatical principles, I stopped reading further. It was only at the urgent request of a young person who was beginning to be impressed by all these false arguments that I went back and read it carefully, in order to protect him and others like him from being misled, deceived and trapped by the Organization.

Am I qualified to evaluate the article by “Mr Blunt”?

Authors do not normally write about themselves. However, readers of this two-part review are entitled to ask who is behind this investigation. Can I be trusted to tell the truth? Do I have the background necessary to evaluate reliably the article by “Mr Blunt”?

Unlike “Mr. Blunt”, who hides his true identity behind a pseudonym, I do not write on this website under an assumed name. The purpose of the “About the Author” section before the beginning of each of my articles on this website is to show that I am not a bogus “expert”. My B.A., First Class Honours degree and my Ph.D. degree are from well-established universities with a high reputation and a long history: Leeds: established over 100 years ago, and St. Andrews: established over 600 years ago and historically Scotland’s first university. My degrees are also in specialisms relevant to the subjects that I examine on this website: languages, linguistics and theology. I have also been professionally involved for decades in the teaching of languages and the training and inspection of teachers of foreign languages.

My textbook teaching Biblical (Koiné) Greek is the Spanish version of the leading textbook on New Testament Greek from Cambridge University Press, Dr Jeremy Duff’s “The Elements of New Testament Greek.” The Spanish edition is published by the leading Spanish publisher of academic texts on Biblical studies, CLIE, which was established in 1924 and publishes close to 100 new titles each year.

The aim of my articles is never to promote any doctrine, theological position or church, but to examine the Biblical text from the point of view of a linguist and languages expert, to determine what the text *actually says*. Where necessary, articles do therefore on occasion point out where some translations and versions of the Bible make statements that are not a possible meaning of the original text.

I have never been a Jehovah’s Witness, but over many decades, when they have knocked on my door, I have engaged with them and frequently had lengthy discussions with them. If ever possible, I have

⁷ Franz, Raymond, “In Search of Christian Freedom”, Atlanta: Commentary Press, 1st edition, 1991, 2nd edition, 2007.

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invited them into my home and have got out the Bible, generally the Greek text. Discussions have frequently centred on Christ, and the Jehovah’s Witnesses have presented their arguments against the verses that declare the deity of Christ.

They have also sent to me “elders” from their Organization whom they said were experts in Greek, and I have welcomed these elders into my home. In lengthy series of discussions over many weeks, I have seen that these “experts” could only read isolated Greek words, and on condition that they were transliterated into Roman script. They were often “stumped” when I explained what Greek phrases actually meant. However, the next week, having consulted their Organization, they came back with the official “explanation”, printed out or photocopied from Watchtower publications. However, these “explanations” never justified the interpretation put on the passage by the sect.

I respect Jehovah’s Witnesses with whom I come into contact, and I sincerely seek to help them to understand the Bible more accurately. However, I recognise that their Organization has fed them interpretations that at best are based on misunderstandings of the Biblical text, and often deliberate distortions of the obvious original meaning.

As regards their version of the Bible, “The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures”, those who produced it were at least incompetent and they were often dishonest with regards to the clear meaning of the original text.

The true authors of the article by “Mr. Blunt” follow the example of those behind the “New World” version of the Bible, *who hid their true identity*, preventing any evaluation of the validity or otherwise of their qualifications, if indeed they have any relevant qualifications from recognised, independent, established universities of international repute.

Conclusion

There are of course thousands of sources of information on the internet and not all of them are bad. However, we need to recognise that people who post on the internet and social media may be misinformed, misguided or have a hidden agenda that seeks to promote their own particular beliefs. The article published under the pseudonym “Mr. Blunt” demonstrates all these negative characteristics. The conclusions presented in this investigation indicate persuasively that “his” anonymous article is indeed part of a covert campaign by the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ Watchtower Organization to promote Jehovah’s Witness doctrines. The Organization has decided to target the internet as a new field in which they can pursue their strategy of “theocratic warfare”.