

ALFRED KLIMK

# GOD and the Temple

or

the application of religion in life.

TEMPLE SOCIETY

AUSTRALIA

 **Inteligion**  
Religious evolution

A

Religious Discussion

on Sunday 19 January 1997  
in the Boronia Hall

with members and friends of the  
Temple Society Australia

This is the Second in the Series on the Theme **GOD and the Temple**

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The follow-up Discussion Day

on the subject

**GOD and the Temple**

or

the application of religion in life.

Boronia, 19 January 1997

**Inteligion**  
Religious evolution

A collection of talks and discussions presented on the day by the participants,  
arranged and printed by Alfred Klink

## PROGRAM

- |    |   |                       |
|----|---|-----------------------|
| 1. | <b>INTRODUCTION &amp; WELCOME</b><br>by the Chairman, Geoff McCallum.   | 10:00                 |
| 2. | <b>5 x 20 MINUTE TOPIC PRESENTATIONS</b><br>(plus 3 questions to each from floor)                                   |                       |
| A. | <b>The Origin and evolution of Christianity:</b>  | Herta Uhlherr 10:20   |
| B. | <b>The Essence of Islam:</b>  | Irene Bouzo 10:50     |
| C. | <b>Other Religions:</b>   | Rita Steller 11:20    |
| D. | <b>A scientific Perspective:</b>  | Alfred Klink 11:50    |
| E. | <b>Can Science lead to a spiritual understanding:</b>   | Hennig Imberger 12:20 |
| 3. | <b>LUNCH</b>  | 12:50                 |
| 4. | <b>BEDE GRIFFITHS</b> , (video).<br>The spiritual journey of a most remarkable man.                                 | 13:30                 |
| A. | <b>Synopsis of Bede Griffith's insights:</b>  | Geoff McCallum. 14:30 |
| 5. | <b>PANEL OF SPEAKERS ANSWER QUESTIONS</b><br>(Seated at table facing audience)                                      | 14.50                 |
| 6. | <b>THE APPLICATION OF RELIGION IN LIFE.</b><br>Small group discussion (so long as a sufficient number are present.) | 15:20                 |
| 7. | <b>PLENARY SESSION AND SUMMARY:</b><br>Small groups report to the gathering   | 16:00                 |
| 8. | <b>CLOSING REMARKS:</b>   | Rolf Beilharz 16:30   |

end

## INTRODUCTION

by Geoff McCallum

I would like to welcome you all here today.

Jesus said,

Where two or more are gathered together in my name, there I am also.

Let us pray then that our deliberations today will be guided and inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus.

At the same time let us remember that we are Templers. As Templers we can claim for ourselves the right of freedom of thought as regards religious matters. Our society was founded by, amongst others, principally but not alone, Christoff Hoffmann, a radical and free thinking Protestant theologian who was expelled from the State Church of Württemberg for his teachings.

Christoff Hoffmann was a theologian. He was not a prophet and he was not a messiah. He was a scholar and teacher; a man of conviction and dedication and, I suspect, considerable charisma. Upon his death it was feared that the Temple Society which he had founded and which had derived so much from his personal qualities, would crumple or disband. But it did not and here we are today.

Although he was considered a radical, when we read his writings today, we can see that he was also a man of his times who, in addition to expressing much that we would recognize as good, also expressed much which reflected what we would now see as the prejudices of his time. But we ought not let this distract us from what I believe to be his lasting legacy to us; the freedom to honestly search for the spiritual truth un-fettered by prescribed dogmas and creeds.

And so we come together to discuss our beliefs and the role religion or religious concepts and beliefs may play in life. Discussions such as I hope will take place today, will bring out many and varied religious points of view. I therefore encourage you, in the spirit of Hoffmann, to have the courage to allow yourselves to develop spiritually in the direction which God leads you unencumbered by outside pressures or expectations.

Unfortunately, I did not attend the Seminar in September 29th 1996, however I have read the booklet containing the presentations. I must tell you that I was most impressed by the high standard and thoughtful content of the presentations. I thank the speakers who spoke that day for sharing their thoughts as I thank in advance today's participants for their contributions to today's seminar and to the spiritual fabric of our Temple Society.

It is my view that each of us is on a spiritual journey. I certainly feel that I am and I know that my views and understandings are in a continuous state of evolution. As St Paul wrote (I Cor. 13,11.)

When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child and I thought as a child. But when I became a man I put away childish things.

And so we begin our life with a very childish view of God and spirituality which, in time, we outgrow as we embark upon a journey of spiritual discovery, a quest for spiritual understanding.

Unfortunately, it is often the case that people are led to believe that there is one view of religion, or more particularly of God, which they may accept or reject. In English, the expression God the Father; in German Gott der Herr conjures up a vision of God the creator much like Dr. Coppelius the puppet maker, which most contemporary people find impossible to relate to. Consequently, believing this to be a take it or leave it view of God, sincere modern people are likely to find themselves in a spiritual vacuum.

This point was brought home some years ago in the Temple Society at a religious seminar, which some of you may remember, when a brave representative of the Sydney Community declared that the young Sydney Templers were not interested in religion as they were all agnostics. This was, more or less, the case in my own life where, having rejected one view of God, I believed myself to be an atheist for over two decades.

When I read the transcripts of the previous seminar, there were, of course, some contributions and view-points which I could relate to more easily than others. I am sure it was the same with you. However if you think back into your past, you will probably be able to confirm that your own concept of God has changed over the years and is probably still changing. Therefore, consider the possibility that an alternate view of God which another might express, which seems to contradict your own view, might in fact represent an alternative path to the same ultimate truth to which your own evolving view of God may be leading. Irene made this point very nicely in her presentation on Islam where she gave expression to the view that Christianity and Islam might best be seen as interwoven religious movements rather than totally different religions.

It is with this constructive view of diversity that I welcome you all here today and offer you my encouragement on your deliberations.

As you can see from the program, we shall begin with brief re-visitations of the topics presented at the previous workshop. There will be a full opportunity to question the speakers as a panel and discuss each topic in an integrated manner, in the afternoon.

Therefore I would like to take only 3 questions immediately after each topic in order to keep the morning flowing.

It is with regret we note at this point that Herta Uhlherr is unable to participate and develop the interesting themes in her previous presentation: THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF CHRISTIANITY

The next speaker is Irene Bouzo. Irene is uniquely positioned to have access to both the Islam and Christian spiritual traditions. I was particularly interested to hear her suggest, if I am not mistaken, that Christianity and Islam might represent alternative or inter-related paths to the one ultimate truth?

Islam has certainly produced some great mystics who, arguably, have reached the source of all religion such as Ibb'n Arabi or the poet Rumi who lived for 30 years after his realization. But although I find the written word of Islam very appealing; particularly, Sufi literature such as the Tales of the Mulla Nasrudin, I myself still have some problems with Islamic Culture.

I refer not so much to the scenes of Islamic fundamentalism which we sometimes see on the TV, as to the many women who I have seen in my practice as a gynecologist who have undergone genital mutilation in Islamic countries. Whilst I do realize that these practices are not based on the Koran, and as such you may feel it somewhat unfair for me to raise them without warning, they do give me reason for concern about the status of women under Islam.

## THE ESSENCE OF ISLAM - PART 2

By Irene Bouzo 19/01/97

In my previous paper I talked about two things:-

- 1) **Dispelling some Western myths and stereotypes about Islam and**
- 2) **Universals/Similarities between Islam and Templer Christianity**

Now I wish to make a few concluding points arising from that paper which might be useful and relevant to Templers.

But first I would like to put my paper in the context of this seminar by presenting an underlying issue, or problem if you like, in a short dialogue.

There are two people talking and it goes like this:-

- A: *Mum und Dad want me to join the Temple Society.*  
 B: *Are you going to?*  
 A: *I don't know. Maybe not.*  
 B: *Why not?*  
 A: *Because I don't know if I can say I'm a Christian and that I believe in God.*

Now I ask you: Is this familiar? Has this happened to anyone you know? What can you do about this? What are the issues and solutions?

My task today is to present a summary follow-up of my paper on Islam. I would like to link my comments to the issues raised in this short dialogue, even though I am not going to stop to list any of these issues,

There are six points I'd like to make which look at barriers to multi-faith tolerance, barriers to being a Moslem in the 1990's and perhaps I can hint at barriers to being a Templer.

1. Islam is as valid a faith as ours, perhaps better in many aspects. It is natural for us to feel a strong loyalty to Templer Christianity. It is also a good thing to defend the truth as we see it, to stand up for our tradition and to protect our community bonds. But at the same time it is also presumptuous and pretentious, it is arrogant (for Christians) to believe that the biblical God could not, or would not, be revealed elsewhere as well, say to Moslems or Buddhists. I remember Dr. Hoffmann used to talk about the final and ultimate mystery of God.

The unfathomable power and reach of God is described beautifully by Paul in a passage from the Bible:

*O the depth of the riches and  
 wisdom and knowledge of God!  
 How unsearchable are his judgements  
 and how inscrutable his ways!*

(Rom. 11:33)

This leaves Church Christians and Templer Christians with the difficult issue of how to integrate our faith with the aspects of God's "unsearchable and inscrutable" reality as they are reflected in other religious traditions (Cox in Sharma 1993:418).

**2. Islam is most like Protestantism, and even more like Templer Christianity in that it emphasises direct communion between a worshipper and God, unmediated by a select priesthood. Islam has sometimes been described as the religion of reason and rationality; and Christianity as the religion of love.**

Understanding Islam helps me focus on personal freedom and rationality in religion for it is very much a de-institutionalised faith. Don't be misled by television images of group prayer. It is very much a personalised faith where the individual is

encouraged to make personal, rational choices. It reminds me of the essence of the Templer faith and I need lots of reminders of that.

**3. When you start to look in depth at another faith it leads you to search for a way of describing this. Ecumenism these days is loosely used as a term focusing on world peace and mutual understanding and tolerance of other faiths. But it is in fact a limited Christian mind-set.**

**Certainly ecumenism encourages theologians to examine religious differences with sympathy. However it refers only to the multi-faith context within Christianity, and was even more narrowly relevant only to Protestantism for a long time.**

It was a movement that originated this century as a response to the new speed of transport and communication, and the increased mixing of world ethnic and religious groups. It leaves us with the dilemma of still searching for a term which can be used for true multi-faith tolerance and understanding in today's world.

**It takes a very high level of personal awareness to understand our own thoughts, our feelings, our impulses (Dr. Leichty, a Mennonite in Ireland 1995) as insiders as well as those of other outsiders.** When confronted with another religious viewpoint we may experience spontaneous impulses of anger, fear, self-protection, group solidarity. We might be in danger of putting a misguided interpretation on other faiths, or more likely of accepting interpretations that others make for us (e.g. the media).

Sometimes our unintended actions have harmful consequences. It is only when we truly look inside that we may discover problems or see that our intentions are sometimes not as pure as we thought they should be. It is easy to succumb to the temptation that we as Templers have transcended all these problems. Churches and religious communities need to become more critical of their own traditions and less critical of others (Leichty 1995)

**Islamic theologians and councils these days are looking for ways to achieve mutual tolerance, co-operation and dialogue with "all Divine Religions" and societies which seek justice and promote human rights (Dr. Douglass Pratt, NZ 1996).**

**It has been suggested by renowned theologians (Kueng 130) that in the long history of Moslem-Christian relations we are still at the beginning. Members of both religions need to develop a spirit of mutual recognition and appreciation.**

I believe Islam has something to teach Christians that would strengthen their faith in the Truth. (*i.e. the Truth which is greater than any single religion, individual or community; the primordial covenant between God and all human beings*). For this to

be realised Moslems must also rethink their approach to the faith in the Truth and

accept that there may be a variety of religious expressions of this. For us the best way to do this is to meet personally with people from other religions whenever the opportunity arises; then openly and sincerely listen to them and learn from them. When this is fully realised, only then can we come closer to true ecumenism and world peace.

**4. The dilemma of tradition and modernism, in the religious context, is one tackled very well by Islamic feminists. It may also be relevant to Templers today.**

The twentieth century has brought economic pressures, changing social needs and modern concepts such as equality, human rights, democracy and feminism. Some of these have confronted the Islamic traditional life style, which was based on patriarchy, i.e. things being run by men, and religious issues interpreted by men.

The Islamic dilemma is as follows. Some conservative Moslems believe that modernisation in the Western style is incompatible with the teachings of the Koran (Dr. Oya Arasli, Unity in Diversity Conference, 1995) and so oppose modernisation. They think modernisation would diminish the effectiveness of religion on the society and even make community leadership more difficult. This leads to fundamentalism or in immigrant groups to introversion.

Today in most Moslem countries the modernisation process includes improving the status of women. And this is done largely through re-interpreting the scriptures from a different, feminine and modern point of view.

The issues of women's rights are the same the world over. They involve such issues as changing family and social roles, legal and political rights, dress, sexuality and many more. But Moslem women have the added difficulty of solving these problems within the Islamic framework. On the one hand it is easy to reject tradition and to live a secular life based on modern values. It takes far more courage and self-discipline to do this within a theological context.

This is where the work of women can show that the holy Scriptures can be reinterpreted in a new way. As women learn to choose a new identity it can cause identity conflicts between old and young generations and with different parts of the community. Islamic women who are also immigrants in Australia experience conflicts of loyalty such as loyalty to the religion, loyalty to the old country and loyalty to the Australian secular society. Education has come to play an important role in solving the problems of Moslem women and their adaptation to Australian life. This notion of education, i.e. religion education, is similarly important to Templers.

**5. The fifth point is about the secularisation of society. The Islamic notion of believers and non-believers is clear and unambiguous; either you believe in God and the Koranic teachings or you don't.**

**This lead me to explore the Christian equivalent: The notions of Secular and Christian. The modern usage of the terms secularisation can have harmful outcomes.**

In the West we tend to link ideas like, modern life, secularisation, the crisis of faith and the general decline of Christianity often measured by church membership or attendance. The term secular is over-used by the media. It conjures up the connotations of a life- style which is either Christian, sacred and religious on the one hand perhaps even focusing rigidly on self-denial and on the other hand a life which is non-Christian, secular and worldly, even bent on gain and enjoyment. I believe the term secular is out-dated and obsolete. It originated in another era when the Church - State distinction was common and of greater political importance.

It was a term coined originally by the Christian Church to create boundaries and protect itself. The media these days talks about the secularisation of Christmas, life style etc. Secular refers more correctly to institutions than the modern references to life-style or celebrations. In fact it can do more damage in its modern usage by confusing people who are considering membership in a religious society. If I become a Christian should I forfeit the attractions, the pleasure and comforts of modern life? Or do I become a hypocrite or guilt-ridden? etc.

The secularisation idea can make it difficult for a person to know how to integrate Christianity with many elements of the modern Western culture. Perhaps the Temple Society provides a good opportunity for combining Christian thinking and modern living as never before; but this opportunity may be misunderstood by those on the fringes of our community.

**6. The last point I want to make concerns what the Irish call "the accident of birth factor" (Leichty 1995). Generally, for Christians and Moslems alike we tend to adhere to the religion or religious community we are born into.**

This can cause two opposing conditions which involve loyalty and religious content. Islam seems to have enormous strength and solidarity which most certainly is connected to the religious education process.

Whereas our birthright here brings with it a kind of nominal membership (I refer to the Temple Society); one in name only without commitment or active participation. Without adequate religious content, in other words religious education, such nominal members may feel less loyalty and even end up leaving the religious community or church.

But this stripping away of nominal members does not necessarily leave a weaker and more modest church. Especially in these secular times those who stay have a higher degree of loyalty and commitment for they must be much clearer about what they are committed to and why. This can lead to a renewed and stronger version of what went before. What will be needed is a special quality of teaching the content of the faith. Religious education needs to be less formal, targeted more at adults and their adult needs, more like "nurseries for the mature".

**Conclusion**

These are some of the issues raised by my explorations into Islam and by the challenges of our times. □

Irene Bouzo 11/01/97

We include here an elaboration on points raised during the afternoon group discussions on Islam. Irene's personal comments are added because time was too short to discuss them in more detail at the time.

I feel the most practical religious application which the TSA can make at this point is in the area of religious content. By this I mean getting the religious content over to the members, and others on the outskirts of the community. It is religious education for the adults which is most needed. For children there is Sunday School and Kids Club, and for teenagers there are confirmation classes. Adults need ongoing religious education too. The Sunday service or Saal is, and should be, the pinnacle of our religious education. But there needs to be something in between.

Adult members, especially the Australian-born ones, need an opportunity to explore religious themes within the security of our Temple Society. It is a society fortunate enough to have strong community and social activities. But in the end it is first and foremost a religious society. The key to a successful religious education program for adults is to present it in an appropriate adult way. How can this be done? First of all we must accept the assumption that adults spend most of their time outside working duties being "keen, tired and hungry".

This is not meant to be funny. It is a fact that with the pace of living these days most adults are very keen to pursue some kind of personal development and eventually become interested in some aspects of their spiritual development. The good intentions are certainly there but we often feel exhausted at the end of the day, tired and hungry, reluctant to go out one more time. Therefore a suitable religious education program should offer a variety of short courses that require only a small commitment that has a beginning and an end.

For example one evening a week for about one and half hours across about four or five weeks. Several of these courses could be repeated to suit those who "couldn't make it last time" because they were keen but too busy. The sessions ought to be relaxed and interactive, more like discussion groups because all adults bring a lot of personal knowledge and experience with them. The content of these courses could be quite varied. Some topics or themes which I would find interesting are:

- How to make a commitment to a faith?;
- Do you believe in God?;
- What is the legacy left to the Templers by Christoff Hoffmann?;
- How to begin reading the Bible?;
- How to read the gospels?;

or a discussion of one or more current books on spiritual themes. Such short courses might generate voluntary on-going discussion groups. But initially busy people need to have the chance to complete a finite number of sessions and stop there, according to the dictates of their lifestyles.

I believe if six people turned up at such a session and there was a 30% drop-out rate (the average for short, part-time courses) it would be a worthwhile exercise. In fact sometimes people feel more comfortable in a smaller discussion group. I certainly look forward to the such an opportunity within our Temple Society which is renowned for its tolerance of religious thinking and free discussion of ideas.

□  
Irene Bouzo

We now come to Rita Steller. The rituals and beliefs of other religions can seem strange, even frightening. Yet is there a common truth underlying them?

As Rita previously said at the previous seminar, The Buddha avoided the use of the term God in his teaching yet I can not help wondering whether this was not to avoid the trap into which Christians sometimes fall of letting a somewhat simplistic concept of God stunt their spiritual development.

## OTHER RELIGIONS

by Rita Steller

**From Sphinx to Christ, from Buddha to New Age philosophy, there have always been teachers among us who dedicated their lives to mankind in an attempt to lead us back to God.**

**They have probably been the most influential thinkers in human history. They have brought us our religions. Some religions show us how to make sense of the most perplexing problems that face all of humanity, while others aim to lead us back to our creator.**

While Christianity may not be unique in its outer trimmings and its unimportant claims about the historical Jesus, what we are earnestly looking for, instead, are the teachings, which form the core of any religion. And here we find in essence the same important principles that have guided mankind throughout centuries. They are:

- that mankind has been separated from its Divine Source,
- that man is Divine in origin,
- that he longs to return to his rightful place with his Divine Creator, and
- that Jesus came to show us the way.

This way will lead us onwards, through our own efforts with love and compassion, in this spiritual quest to reunite with God.

□

Alfred Klink. We all know Alf to have a fine scientific mind. And yet sometimes we can clearly discern the poet in him. How are these two sides of a most interesting man to be reconciled?

I thought Alfred did a fine job of identifying the ways in which science has caused our civilization to abandon previous superstitions and practices. But I wonder whether science has really shown us that there is no need for miracles or has it simply enabled us to understand something of the way in which the miracle of creation has unfolded and is unfolding still.

## A SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVE.

By Alfred Klink

At the previous discussion day in Bentleigh I talked on the subject of religion itself. How religion is at all times interwoven with life and with the realities of our environment. Inseparably so. If one evolves, the other must adapt to it remain viable. Through science we have achieved the capacity to read and write the script of life, and this knowledge is an awfully big responsibility. It is impossible to walk away from such awareness. It is as if the controls for a bus, an aeroplane, a spaceship in which you are a passenger, were suddenly handed to you, and you are shocked to realise that the vehicle is just a machine, with no feelings, a machine that needs guidance to get you to a destination. Awareness dawns, it is you that determines where we are going. It is you who gives meaning to the journey.

We have recognised the tree of knowledge and enjoyed its fruit. We still do. We have come to terms with the fact we left Paradise of our free will. Consciousness, self-awareness and the freedom to choose, make it impossible for us to ignore our neighbour's suffering and nature's challenges in the knowledge that our intervention will make a difference.

Religion to me is an attempt by man to make sense of Nature, to satisfy our "scientific" mind with Why and How of our existence. We know we live in an endless universe, with unlimited resources and limitless possibilities. We can not go back to the cosy old world picture in the hope this acrophobia feeling of an ever expanding universe will pass. All the boundaries and restrictions that we feel, are of our own making, our own laws. This Reality must be part of the framework of any religion.

Intelligent religion can be the program that makes it possible to unite man, science and nature in an environmentally stable world picture. Perhaps we should call it INTELIGION?

Today we try and expand the subject of the previous talk and reflect on "the application of religion in life". I shall concentrate on my main points in that talk to

try and present them in more details and relate them to everyday life.

1. **Item number one is God is Life.** It is an innocent enough statement. Why make it, why define God and Life?
  - i. The God of our forefathers is a jealous God. A God who divided the world into His domain and ours, who considers the future His prerogative. Yet one of the most important instincts living creature possesses is the desire to know their environment and to work in harmony with it. To orient itself for its best survival chances, to sense danger. To man an environment also has to make sense intellectually, because we have extended our five senses through the intellect with foresight and long-range planning. To anticipate the lean and the fat years so to speak. We have invaded the Kingdom of God.
  - ii. The traditional image of God is emotionally charged, it has generations of definitions and tabus attached to it. It is beyond discussion, it has become immutable, almighty, everlasting. Such a picture can not evolve with the human intellect any more. It is anchored in mysticism and superstition where rational thought and reality do not prevail. That image has become a stumbling block for the intellect, an impenetrable barrier, against which modern thought and feelings and science are helpless.
  - iii. We need some means to climb over this artificial "edge of the world" concept contained within the expression God, to make rational thought and discussion on our origin and evolution possible again; to face the Why and How questions that have tantalized the human mind for centuries. We have to remove that mental block from our brain, that reef on which all our attempts to cross into new territory founder. We have to carve a road through the Blue Mountains, find a North-West Passage so we may explore and settle the land that must lie beyond these formidable barriers.
  - iv. My tool to accomplish this monumental task is Life. Life has the tenacity to make anything possible and yet is explainable in natural terms. Life is open to exploration, to experimentation, to understanding. It created the environment of which we are an intricate part. Life evolves with us. Understanding life is the master key that will help us unlock the secrets of nature. Life can provide the stepping stones and the stairs our mind needs to cross the reefs or to climb the mountains that are blocking intellectual progress.
  - v. I am not proposing to let Life replace God. I am offering a friendly alternative in cases where the religious connotations are not absolutely necessary. And I am not creating a new deity. Our mind at this stage of our evolution still needs a God to believe in. But not its frightening shadow, the image our ancestors have created, the threats and the restrictive interpretation. Let's hide Gabriel and Michael behind the friendly and familiar face of life. I would like to replace that God which refuses us the use of our God-given talents to the best of our individual ability. I would like



to replace the God that plays favours with race, creed, colour and gender. I would like to show that the limits to our imagination, to our spirit of adventure, to knowledge and to creativity, are not even in sight yet. We must learn that with infinite knowledge goes infinite freedom and infinite responsibility. No restrictions, no guidelines, no excuses, but responsibilities. In Life we have been given the opportunity to use all of our senses and our creativity and our imagination to explore the universe.

2. **My second point is Jesus.** Jesus was a man. Of course he was a man. The statement seems superfluous today. With our 20th Century awareness we have no problems acknowledging outstanding human achievement without having to invoke the supernatural.

- i. That Jesus was a man has to be spelled out, because so much mystical nonsense has been accumulated around the name Jesus that it is almost impossible to discuss his life rationally.
- ii. The picture of Jesus of Nazareth was in fact an attempt by an earlier society to make the overwhelming image of God I spoke of above, more approachable, less forbidding. He is the humane interface. To make God (using to days terms) "more user friendly"
- iii. Some people still take the debate whether Jesus was of virgin birth or not, serious. Remember, this was in a time when gods and half-gods roamed the world in every story, around every corner. A time when the next best thing to noble birth was a claim to a paternal or maternal connection with the gods. The gods of antiquity interbred and intermixed happily with the human population on a regular basis. With no thought given to cross species fertilisation problems or sexual incompatibility.
- iv. The Greek legends are filled with half-gods. Hercules, son of Zeus, famous for many exploits, amongst them the one that impresses me most, when he cleaned out the muck from the Augean stables by changing the course of a river to wash them out. Achilles, Hector and Paris of the Trojan war fame: Achilles, who has so much in common with the Siegfried of the Nibelungen Saga, including swiftness of foot and a vulnerable spot, (in his case on his heel) where his mother, the goddess Thesis held him while she dipped the baby in the river Styx to make him invincible. And there is of course Paris, the story of the golden apple that led to Helena, the face that launched a thousand ships, and to the fall of Troy. This is the time into which Jesus was born, a time when any above average physical or mental ability was attributed to a supernatural parentage.
- v. That attitude that has done untold damage to the enquiring mind of our forefathers. And it is still stifling scientific awareness. It is that god-mentality block again. The tabu that serves as the bolt on doors, barring all intellectual and scientific progress. There are no locks on the doors in the house of wisdom, no bars on its windows. Its doors are there for

courtesy only and its windows to keep the wind out. Only by allowing Jesus to be a mortal man can we fully measure and appreciate the magnitude of his achievements.

- vi. I have dwelled on this point on purpose. It is important not only because Jesus is the son of the God of the Bible, but he is also the focal point of our Templar Philosophy. He is of utmost importance to us. In a theological evolutionary jump Christoph Hoffmann in his book 'Occident and Orient' said "... even if Jesus were an idealised, fictitious character it would not alter the fact that this ideal, and the way to its realisation as demonstrated by the Christ of the Gospels, meets a profound human need and shows us the goal we must strive towards ..." His teachings, his deeds and his life must be seen as humanly motivated, not as a demi-god on a holiday on Earth. His pain and suffering are as a man, as are his pleasures and his disappointments in human understanding.

3. **The Bible is an ethnic history book.**

- i. The Bible is a collection of moral and ethnic guidelines jumbled up with threats and vague suggestions of rewards in a life hereafter. The Bible can be quoted on any subject. I am sure some one will presently find some symbolic references to the computer and to the Internet. It is 5,000 years of human nature presented in all its scope, from the noblest thoughts of human aspiration to the deepest pit of degradation to which man can possibly sink.
- ii. The Bible is a classical example of the futility using the past to warrant our actions. Any human conflict can be justified and convicted in the same breath with quotes from the Bible equally well. There is not a single point beyond doubt, without appeal to our faith.
- iii. Its lasting value lies in the long and often bloody association the Bible has with the evolution of human society. It is part of our culture. It was the motivation for most Western Society conflicts or, at the least, was used as an excuse to interfere in somebody else's dispute. It is so much part of our language, we quote it, often with out realising, in all but the most technical literature.
- iv. How then can we live with the Bible? How can we make use of its many positive attributes, without letting it dominate our lives? The process is not new. For the last hundred years or more the Bible has been subject to gradual fragmentation into locally applicable section. We Templars have played a not insignificant part in it. We select portions of the Gospels such as the 'sermon on the mount' that appeal to our community oriented philosophy, sections that are attuned to our lifestyle, and refer to the rest of the Bible as children stories or ethnic culture.
- v. Perhaps man's dependance on the Bible is not as deep as might appear at first to our western view. Contacts with other religious denominations have taught us that a knowledge of the Bible is not an

exclusive ingredient for either good moral conduct or social harmony.

4. **Templer Religion.** We have a Templer philosophy, which is an idealised approach to Christian Religion.

- i. I see religion as a means of communicating on a higher level of thought. Where people can intellectually stimulate each other, where they can rise above petty disputes with their neighbour and where they can see the overall harmony in Nature. It does not preclude any of the other philosophies being discussed as part of religion.
- ii. Religion is a very efficient tool for man to help him live together. It has been part of our intellectual evolution for so long we would be hard pressed to face life without it. But it is a tool, like language, like music, like science and its ultimate benefit is determined by how it is used. If it is to continue to help human society evolve it too must evolve. As the Philosopher Daniel Dennet once said of Darwin's theory of evolution: Everything is subject to evolution; even Darwinian Evolution is subject to its own laws, it evolves, it adapts, it mutates. Religion can not be considered in isolation from its people or from the environment. They evolve together.
- iii. We often consider early religions as Earth and Nature bound, concerned with explaining man's practical relationship to Nature. When we talk of science in the context of religion today we immediately connect it with its modern image, chemicals, computers, space exploration, but science is really any methodical consideration of a problem at hand. in the best way known both then and now and with the full scientific awareness at the time. Where there is man, there has always been Science. It is what makes us human. It is the light that illuminated the steps leading us out of the cave and the kill or be killed animal environment. Whether it is in forming stone tools or in applying herbal remedies, the sciences of physics and chemistry as well as animal husbandry are as old as civilisation itself. They are the original religion. Human knowledge and scientific awareness form the basis for our most treasured Religions.

5. **Templer Functions,** where our Templer philosophy finds its practical expressions. Here 'the application of religion in life' takes form.

- i. "It is in the nature of the Temple Society that the faith of its members finds expression in community life", it says in our pamphlets. It does not specify the faith and it does not specify the expression. We are indeed fortunate. A religious philosophy is a powerful uniting bond if cultivated properly.
- ii. I suppose all human interaction takes place in Communities. From the family nucleus to the community of nations, the trading communities of Europe and the Asian Pacific community. Whether it is a common purpose, a religion or some other unique characteristic they share, people tend to concentrate their efforts where they feel their participation can make a

difference. And the forms of expression vary from personal care to mutual stimulation to intellectual and commercial competition and to all out war. In that sense the scope of our Templer Community concept occupies a very narrow band on the community spectrum.

- iii. Any community needs an active nucleus of motivated people. A core of members who give time and effort providing the essential services to the organisation. Around this centre people group themselves, physically or symbolically more or less loosely, according to their current commitments.
- iv. I have described perhaps the obvious to you. My reason for this is to open speculation on how the community concept can be widened to allow a larger number of people participating. On an "INTELIGION" level. Traditionally it is expected that members take part in our activities by being present, making a crowd, generating an atmosphere for community spirit. I suppose there is no substitute for physical presence and a handshake. But times change, conditions change, and - we adapt. In our Global Village physical presence is often made impossible by distance, by dedication to family and career commitments, by changing priorities. And we compromise.
- v. Ideological community ties can often be maintained without direct contacts, such as the Templer monthly publications keeping persons informed on social and religious developments, and by inviting intellectual participation on issues of concern through correspondence. But these days, with instant global communication, a month or two between contact and response is far too long. Lifestyles are too hectic for that.
- vi. One coming convenience I would like to mention in this regard is the Internet. Distance does not matter to the Internet. Next door or around the Globe, it is all the same time and at the same price. The information can be updated daily at no material costs. The vast bulk of information on the INTERNET is not like junk mail; it is unobtrusive, it is there to enjoy. Like the flowers in nature: You pick and cultivate the ones that please you. Your private library and your archive. If you are browsing Templer activities on the Internet you can take as much or as little as you want, when you want it. You can respond to a stimulating article, or tell them you are coming on the spur of the moment, by pressing a button. Very unobtrusive and as easy as that. It has the spontaneity almost of being there. I think the Internet may just be the window we have been looking for to overcome the "tyranny of distance" border limit of Templer Communities and religious participation.

So much for my explanations to the five points in the original discussion. I'll close with something I said at the recent Founders day Service in Bayswater, with apologies to those that have heard it before:

Mankind is at the threshold of adolescence. It becomes difficult for us to pretend to be children, just so we may enter the kingdom of heaven, and yet we are

not ready to accept the responsibility of an adult.

We like the comfortable feeling that someone is looking after us. That we are, after all, not responsible for our environment, for the air we breath, for the sewerage in our oceans, for overpopulation. We insist on being grown up, but have much difficulty entrusting our fate to our intellect and our instincts.

Here we stand, with one foot in the past, still in paradise, longing for its comfort and security. Often we catch ourselves wishing someone would come and hide this bothersome tree of knowledge. Get it out of sight, like the group that wrapped up the Reichstag building in Berlin. Hide it, so we don't have to feel guilty about wisdom and its potentials. Our other foot is on the path to the future, the challenges of the unknown, the excitement of applying ourselves with all our abilities to Life and the newest creation in Nature: INTELLIGENCE. □

Hennig Imberger. Hennig is a man who has devoted many years to science. He told us in September how he abandoned religion for the scientific approach to understand the universe, only to find that the explanations afforded by science failed to complete the picture and in particular ignored the spiritual dimension of creation which is self evident in numerous small and large ways, if we are sensitive to it.

Yet I wonder, must the guiding spirit or intelligence be separate or outside the universe like an architect is outside his physical creation, or is the guiding spirit one integral aspect of the unfolding universe?

## Can Science lead to a Spiritual Understanding.

By Hennig Imberger

In my previous presentation, I pointed to some of the theoretical problems in Darwin's original theory of evolution. I pointed to intermittent very rapid evolutionary developments on earth that show no trace of small intermediate steps. This is quite contrary to Darwin's theory which postulates a relatively SLOW development via such small intermediate steps.

That is, because the postulated natural selection occurs from grown specimens and in small stages it cannot progress very rapidly. And because in general, selection at each stage necessarily requires large numbers, at least some remaining traces of the small intermediate steps should occur.

I also described how, in the infinite time available, it is plausible, that life initially evolved on the mass-less energy level or the so-called spiritual level. Thus, during this infinite amount of time it is at least CONCEIVABLE that SPIRITUAL LIFE has evolved to a level of intelligence where, in essential harmony with the biblical and

other religious accounts of CREATION, it created hydrogen atoms and used them to build a material universe.

Furthermore, such spiritual intelligence could be responsible for an element of DESIGN in the consequent evolution of life on earth. And such an element of design can fully EXPLAIN the observed very rapid evolutionary developments and the absence of the small intermediate steps. This type of explanation is very much SUPPORTED by the abundant evidence for the actual EXISTENCE of spiritual life, (as carefully documented, for example, in the field of para-psychology) and the explanation is also supported by the long existing, very extensive and very varied dialogue with this spiritual life.

This is, very briefly, what I said so far. but in the booklet published by Alfred and Ursula, Alfred consequently asks three questions:

Firstly he expresses concern, that the explanation of life has thereby become more complex: I am also in favour of simple explanations but on the other hand we DO seek explanations which fit ALL the observations: When we reflect, we find, that there are many examples in the fields of science where, in the light of NEW EVIDENCE, existing explanations, necessarily became more complex.

[It is relevant here to refer to the question which was asked several times during this discussion, namely 'What IS truth?'. After some discussion, Felix Haar said, that which is selfless and another answer was, that which works and that which survives. Rolf Beilharz referred to Newton's law of gravitation which works in most everyday situations but in astronomical and microscopic surroundings, the law generally needs refining in order to describe events sufficiently accurately. (The refinement was accomplished by Einstein in his theory of relativity).

Consequently we would seek an understanding or a truth which gives a sufficiently accurate description of the principles of life, so as to allow us to live tolerably and preferably joyfully. Such a description obviously would need to fit the relevant facts and be free of self-contradictions. As indicated by Felix and also later in this present report, the facts today are such, that if we do not work together for the common good (ie. more selflessly) we are in danger of not only inflicting unnecessary suffering on ourselves (including the suffering of boredom) but of destroying our very foundation, namely nature].

Alfred then asks, whether I feel physical consciousness is possible without a material body? I conceive, that a more developed kind of consciousness requires the abilities to observe, to remember, to plan and to initiate action accordingly and today we are able to understand, how our material nervous system is able to perform all of these functions.

The building blocks of the nervous system are atoms. However atoms themselves are constructed of protons, neutrons and electrons and these in turn are made of energy particles, some of which, have acquired the property of mass. Consequently I find it conceivable that other less visible and more flexible structures based solely on mass-less energy particles can exist and therefore, that a more primary and more developed life form, (with its own consciousness) is able to be

based on such finer alternative building blocks.

The second question is: If I see a Super-being interacting with Darwinian evolution, how do I explain millions of years of inactivity on its behalf? Does it have a purpose? If we follow the evolution of ANYTHING, that is made by a creating intelligence, we do observe relatively long periods of seeming standstill. One simple example would be the evolution of CONTAINERS from their carved wooden ancestors right up to the many modern forms.

We can observe here, that progress often requires, the preliminary slow accumulation of experience and knowledge, before a visible relatively rapid breakthrough can occur. Concerning the purpose of WHY such a superior life-form should want to construct atoms and promote the evolution of a material universe with material life, one confronts the question of the purpose of life itself and I think Alfred and I agree, that a great deal of life's joy and fulfilment comes from the activity of CREATING SOMETHING.

The creation of a material universe and material life may just be such a creation project. However we may delve further and ask, why should spiritual life chose this type of project? After all, there is a lot of pain involved? From the spiritual literature, the short answer evidently is, that the material universe and its material life forms have been established mainly for the TRAINING of spiritual beings (or souls):

Because of the denseness of matter (it is reported) lessons in relation to living and creating can be learnt much quicker. That is, the consequences of behaviour within our material life forms on earth are relatively very intense. There are many relevant passages in the Bible, that concern this training purpose.

Alfred's last question is: The human spirit is very imaginative. We can fly like a bird, heal the sick and visit other planets. Can you see us doing this sometime in the future without science and technology?

From the evidence I have, the science and technology in the spiritual realm of life is far superior to our more material forms. Evidently it is this spiritual science and technology which is behind the type of rapid healings performed by Jesus or behind his feeding of the crowds and his other unusual abilities. From the spiritual literature it becomes clear, that we are all, to a larger or smaller extent, connected to spiritual life and furthermore, that the human being is constructed in such a way, that for his proper function spiritual contact is necessary.

Thus the human inventions, for example, are all reported to have been passed down from spirit. It is also reported, that the envisaged spiritual plan for the earth entails a stronger connection of material life to spirit and that consequently this higher science and technology will be used more extensively.

In my presentation so far, I have not spoken about the social influence of Darwin's theory. As this aspect seems to be important, I would now also like to ask the question: Why, after the publication of Darwin's book 'Origin of Species' in 1859, his theory of evolution was accepted so rapidly by scientists, universities, publishers and governments. I would like to do this quite neutrally without passing any

judgement.

The first edition of Darwin's book was sold out immediately and by 1872 the work had run through six editions. In consequent years the theory increasingly replaced the religious creation explanation and eventually state schools in the leading countries became secular.

Before Darwin's publication a common argument for the existence of God was the observed sophistication and seeming purposefulness of life. Thus it was argued, that natural life is far more intricate and developed than any human-made apparatus and this fact consequently points to a CREATOR and MAINTAINER of life, who is far more intelligent than man.

People further reasoned, that by opening one's mind to this Creator through faith, respect and thankfulness and by communicating with him through meditation and prayer and consequently obeying his will, one might thus be able to obtain invaluable understanding and help. The actual experiences of many and very varied people throughout history (among them, the founders of the worlds religions) repeatedly confirm that such help from a higher spiritual source can actually be obtained in this manner.

These people report, that they have thereby received answers to perplexing problems, counsel and strength in difficult times and that, as a result, they generally possess better mental security and find greater joy in life. Many of these perceived communications from God, particularly His general instructions to us, about HOW we should live, have eventually been written down in numerous religious writings, for example, the Bible.

Now, we are all aware, that, in essence, these perceived instructions or laws from God require the seeking first of the good of the whole (or the kingdom of God) by loving God with all one's heart, soul, mind and strength and loving one's neighbour as oneself. This requires a non-judgmental and helpful attitude toward others particularly towards those who are in need, the latter requirement often being very explicitly expressed and demonstrated.

It is understandable however, that those people in positions of wealth and influence have not found this to be easy. That is, God's will as portrayed, would mean an eventual sharing of such wealth and power with those less well off. On the other hand, a common argument of the wealthy and influential has been, that they have acquired their wealth and influence by the fitting use of their abilities and by their own hard work, and it is often therefore seen by them as fully appropriate, that such able and industrious people should also reap the greater rewards.

It is now of interest, that Darwin's theory of evolution, more or less postulates, that just this type of more competitive behaviour is actually the important driving force of evolution. In other words, 'the fittest survive'. [Competitive behaviour in relation to Darwin's theory means direct competition between individual life entities for the reward of prosperous positions in the 'economy of nature'. In this sense competitive behaviour (or win, loose behaviour) contrasts with the sharing cooperative behaviour (or 'win, win' behaviour) advocated by the religions. The word competitive is used in this sense below and not in the sense of its more

modern development meaning simply; suitably active and competent.]

It would consequently be tempting, for those in influential positions, to accept this argument of evolution (whether rightfully or not) and to reject the earlier, more difficult commandments, as having been superseded by advancing science. However evidence IS accumulating, that also in its social application the competition-based evolution theory, is contributing to serious problems. The competition-based way of life brings losers, which, in human societies, usually do not just simply die (as the theory might postulate) but rather (if not given a great deal of enlightened attention), they tend to become a problem to society.

So it is well-known, that in our western societies the poor are becoming poorer and the rich richer. Furthermore, a poor loser in the competitive struggle may choose to continue to compete in another manner: Feeling society has treated him meanly and fighting for his and his dependents survival, he may take the criminal path. Other losers may seek escape in drugs and we know that both criminality and drug addiction have risen. So has the number of stress-related diseases and the suicide rate.

Also there seems to be no end to wars with all their related devastating suffering. All these evils are found in competition-based societies, while they do not exist in the more cooperative and caring. In addition, it has become very evident in recent years, that particularly as a result of our preoccupation with powerful competitive struggles, we are also inflicting severe damage to our natural environment. That is, we are seriously endangering NATURE, without which higher life is not possible.

It is now of interest, that continuing research concerning the underlying solutions to these varied problems and the ensuing laws, regulations and organising methods that are starting to be successfully introduced, all very clearly point in the direction of the above LAWS of GOD. Thus it becomes evident, that the human social experience is showing, that the competition-based aspect in Darwin's theory is, (in the human society as it now stands) associated with severe problems.

It is of course true, that considerable competitiveness can be observed in many parts of nature. However here it is generally kept in check by controlling instincts and the overriding ecology. On the other hand, nature also very clearly displays the cooperative communal way of life. and shows furthermore, that once a certain degree of cooperative interdependence has developed, (as, for example, in the case of cells in a living body) then even a partial reversion to the cells less developed more competitive way of life, very easily kills the whole community of cells. This is illustrated, when a sufficient number of the body's cells become cancerous.

In summary, the scientific approach from the angles of the physical, the biological, the parapsychological and the sociological have all led me back to the essential tenets of the deeper religions. In conclusion however I would very much like to emphasise that the scientific effort, when dealing with the origins and the patterns of life, has very clearly uncovered a great deal of very valuable detail as for example, concerning a deeper understanding of time periods, sequences,

varieties and mechanisms and it is clear to me, that these findings in conjunction with the slow, encompassing and careful research approach of science can help invaluablely - to successfully resolve the differences between the various religions.

## DISCUSSION

It was suggested that some competition is healthy and that, just as in the case of the religions, Darwin's theory has unfortunately also been used to excuse excessive behaviour. This point is valid when competition is defined as 'suitably active and competent.'

However Darwin's theory explicitly points to a limited number of 'gaps' in the 'economy of nature' and a consequent fierce competitive struggle between individuals (or groups) for the occupancy of these gaps, to the extent that the weaker (or less adapted) will be thrust out by the stronger (or better adapted). [eg. See Encyclopaedia Britannica under 'Darwin'].

Although Darwin applies his theory to plants and animals, nevertheless, the implication is, that man as a descendant of animals, is continuing the evolutionary struggle as based on this principle. If this is the case, then the theory suggests, that any individual being, or group of beings, would do well to improve its own competitiveness by building its own abilities, rather than spend time trying to help the needy. The religious laws on the other hand very explicitly state, that those in need should be helped, as one would like to be helped oneself if one were placed in their situation.

It is true however, that on a more enlightened level, it becomes evident, that those who ably and selflessly help the needy, generally also strengthen their own position. That is, they reap gratitude and contribute to a better society of which they are part. However, in the light of the clearly described struggles for ones own direct advantage (see above), such an interpretation of Darwin's theory is less common.

Another response concerned the observation of rapid evolutionary changes without any evidence of intermediate steps. The explanation was offered, that because of continual random additions and variations of code in the DNA molecule, there always exists a large pool of different forms of organisms. During any particular state of the environment, these different forms live in an overall equilibrium which favours some forms and allows others to exist only marginally.

When however the environment changes, it may become better suited to previously marginal forms, while previous predominant forms may recede. Hence with each change a new type of equilibrium rapidly follows and no intermediate steps occur. My reply is, that the random variations in DNA code, generally only account for relatively small changes, so that in any one species one does not observe individuals with entirely new functional mechanisms.

Although some species themselves may only exist in small numbers and may, following a favourable environmental change, greatly increase their numbers because of the possession of advanced mechanisms, such mechanisms had to originate somehow.

If it is argued, that according to the Darwinian explanation, such advanced mechanisms originally developed as a result of the always existing small random DNA code variations and repeated natural selections until a multiplicity of small evolutionary steps has produced a new advanced mechanism, then this same explanation also requires, that at each stage, selection necessarily occurs from a large number of individuals. Consequently, because of these large numbers required by each small step and because the paleontological record regresses to earliest times, some trace of at least some of the earlier small intermediate steps can be expected to be found at least for the case of some of the evolved mechanisms.

However such small gradual intermediate steps cannot be found. In addition to their absence, it is often very hard to imagine such small intermediate steps leading to a new complex mechanism (or a complex improvement of a mechanism, as has repeatedly occurred in the case of the nervous system).

Each step necessarily needs to be small and provide a distinct survival advantage. As an example, part of the lung apparatus consists of the swallow mechanism which senses the approach of the food and precisely closes the lung opening before the food arrives. It is not easy to imagine, how such a control mechanism can develop in such small stages.

A further suggestion was offered: It was proposed, that originally pure chance caused major, complex and relatively abrupt DNA code changes responsible for the new mechanisms. This relatively large-step manner of evolution is not part of Darwin's theory and is therefore a new theory. If however it is right, I would like to believe it. Nevertheless, relatively simple calculations show enormous odds against even one such complex mechanism being produced over the entire evolutionary period (even when sufficiently large DNA rearrangements occurred in every specimen of a relatively enormous and very fast breeding population).

Make for example the generous assumption, that the DNA of each of a trillion specimens is being randomly increased and a new generation tested every month over the entire time of the earth's evolution: The chances of adding even a single new functional complex mechanism are practically nil.

It may help to picture this type of process, by imagining the plan for the production of a propeller aeroplane being stored in code form in a trillion computers, each computer stationed in an automatic factory. Following the initiation of the programs, aeroplanes are then automatically manufactured according to the coded information. If now the programs are subject to similar mutation variations, as are the DNA codes of living organisms, one can expect the manufacture of many types of variations of propeller aeroplanes – large one's small ones, many propellers or few, etc. Many would not fly but some may be better suited (with or without changing flying conditions). However, the chances of acquiring in this manner a practical aeroplane based on new and advanced mechanisms, such as a jet plane, are practically nil.

As another illustration, imagine a trillion monkeys typing frantically for 4 billion

years, each producing a book containing 1,000 characters every hour. Again, the chances of producing a meaningful book in this time are practically nil. The code for the production of even only a simple new mechanism, is necessarily so extensive, that it just cannot be produced in this random variation and selection manner in the relatively short time of the earth's evolution and the relatively long time required to produce and test each new specimen.

An illustrative example using figures: To effectively define the production of a functioning mechanism, a minimum number of code steps is needed. Using this minimum number of code steps, there will be relatively few, if any, alternate workable sequences. The human DNA molecule contains about 100,000 genes, each gene being responsible for a specific function and, on average, each gene contains about 60,000 code steps. Let us estimate for example the likelihood, that within the time period of, say 4 billion years, a relatively simple mechanism will be added (perhaps a laser-detecting mechanism).

Assume that the minimum number of code steps required to specify the production of this mechanism, is as few as only 10 genes or 600,000 code steps.

There are however  $4 \times 4 \times 4 \times 4 \dots 600,000$  times  
 $\therefore$  that is  $10 \times 10 \times 10 \dots 361,236$  times  
 or  $10^{361,236}$

different possibilities of arranging these 600,000 code steps. Even if ONE single gene were sufficient, the number of possibilities would still be  $10^{36,124}$ .

Assume furthermore that the new mechanism is very similar to an already existing mechanism (which is therefore already coded) and assuming, that the addition (to the DNA molecule) of the relevant existing genes (eg. light detecting genes) with as few as 1X of their code steps suitably changed, will provide the function.

Then (assuming again that a single gene is sufficient) the 1X of the code steps

can still be filled in  $4 \times 4 \times 4 \dots 60,000/100$  times, ways  
 or  $10^{361}$  ways.

The odds against producing such a mechanism by chance additions and alterations are practically impossible, considering that one trillion tries (assuming a relevant population of 1 trillion) every month (assuming one generation per month) for 4 billion years (the estimated evolutionary time on earth),

gives only  $1,000,000,000,000 \times 12 \times 4,000,000,000$   
 $= 4.8 \times 10^{22}$

examples to select from].

If it is now argued, that if one particular mechanism is not produced, then there are many others which can be produced and that we are therefore the chance outcome of a great multitude of different possibilities, then it needs to be realised,

that the number of potentially useful mechanisms, at any stage, is very limited indeed. For example, as lakes dried up, only one type of mechanism, namely the mechanism of air ventilation was relevant for survival.

Another very singular mechanism in the development of life is the growth in sophistication of the information retrieval, processing, dissemination and storage mechanism (ie. the nervous system).

□  
End

## BEDE GRIFFITHS

### The story of a most remarkable man

by Geoff McCallum

This video has been shown previously on the ABC TV Compass program. It runs for about an hour and depicts the spiritual journey of a most remarkable man.

Allan Griffiths was an Englishman who born in 1906. After studying at Oxford, he entered a Benedictine Monastery at the age of 25. Over the years his view of religion underwent a process of broadening punctuated by several distinct mystical experiences.

The last 25 years of his life were spent in India where he founded an Ashram in which the religious teachings of the great spiritual traditions of the world are studied and taught.

Fr Bede Griffiths died in 1994 but his ashram continues as a source of spiritual guidance. The principal element of his teaching is that there is in the universe an essential "Universal Wisdom" or knowledge of God as self, which is the ultimate spiritual understanding.

Prior to his death, he compiled an anthology of spiritual writings from Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism with an introduction summarizing his religious philosophy (and which is available in bookshops).

□

## CLOSING REMARKS

by Dr. Rolf Beilharz

Thank you all for your wonderfully full and tolerant exchange of ideas. This seminar has been an example of a useful exchange of ideas which I hope we can repeat many times.

Allow me to add one thought to the topics presented by the various speakers and the discussion that followed.

It is people who think. People's thoughts are the basis of all that we know, even if this knowledge now seems so large that we need libraries and computer databases to hold it all.

We define the words we use, and dictionaries try to capture how words have been used in the past. We also define what is true. We even define God.

Clearly what people know about the Universe and Life in general, affects their definition of GOD (and whether there might or might not be a more useful concept that describes God).

We use concepts like inside and outside, or bodily and spiritual, to try and capture the different parts we perceive about humans. Only when we have definitions of concepts or things that we agree on, can we have the most useful discussion about matters that are as complex as Religion.

Words used in different historic periods, or in different cultures, may not correspond precisely to the words we now use. When we recognise that, it should make us more tolerant towards people coming to a discussion from a different background. We should aim to find what we have in common and not talk past each other.

Accepting these difficulties, and being ready to define our ideas accurately, we have much to do, and much to look forward to, in future discussion.

Examples are:

- 1) What is the definition of religion? This is particularly important for the Temple Society as it strives to translate its beliefs into daily life. Is a healthy, loving- everyday-life attitude, which I believe Jesus wanted us to strive for as the Kingdom of God, still Religion?
- 2) What is the appropriate religion for the ordinary people in the year 2,000.?
- 3) How do we get people, all people, to strive for the Kingdom of God? Or was Jesus asking something which is impossible?
- 4) In practice, how does a small group like the TSA convince our many potential friends outside that a sound religion, which improves life for all, is important?

There is much to discuss. I hope that many more discussions like today's will follow, so we may grow in wisdom. □

# List of participants

in the Discussions on the Subject **GOD and the Temple**

## 29. September 1996, Bentleigh Hall

Beilharz,	Hilda und Kurt
Bouzo	Irene
Eppinger	Anna und Kurt
Haar	Ruth
Hirdes	Monika
Imberger	Hennig
Klink	Ursula und Alfred
Kohl	Anneliese
Krockenberger	Gretel und Oskar
Leschinski	Ruth
Löbert	Otto
Ruff	Isolde und Dieter
Ruff	Luise und Helmut
Steller	Rita
Uhlherr	Herta
Wagner	Elisabeth
Wagner	Hulda

23 Teilnehmer

## 19. January 1997, Boronia Hall

Beilharz	Hilda und Kurt
Beilharz	Vyrna und Rolf
Beilharz	Renate
Blackwell	Susi
Bouzo	Irene
Haar	Ruth und Felix
Hirdes	Monika
Hornung	Peter
Imberger	Hennig
Klink	Ursula und Alfred
Leschinski	Ruth
Löbert	Herman
Löbert	Otto
Mc Callum	Geoff
Ruff	Dieter
Schwarzbauer	Resi
Steller	Rita
Uhlherr	Helga
Wagner	Elisabeth
Weber	Traude

24 Teilnehmer

