

### **2.5. Mr Simon Blackwell, Mr Laurie Jordaan.**

Mr Simon Blackwell is 31 years old. He is an estate agent and an assistant cell group leader at the Hatfield Christian Church. Mr Laurie Jordaan is 56 years old and is the area manager of Link Pharmacies. He is a cell group leader at Hatfield Christian Church. The interview was conducted in Morningside, Johannesburg on the 27 September 1995. The interview was conducted by Royden Blackwell. The interview is fully accessible.

**Royden: What church do you belong to?**

Simon: Hatfield Christian Church.

**Royden: How long have you been going there for?**

Simon: For thirteen years.

**Royden: What church do you belong to?**

Laurie: Also the Hatfield Christian Church, and I've been going there for, well I've been associated with them for over twenty years, but been a full time member for the last four years.

**Royden: My first question is, how do you feel about the Zionist church?**

Simon: How do you feel about the Zionist Church?

Laurie: Well what I know of them is that they certainly have a very big following and they seem to be a group of people who are shall we say slightly more loyal to the church and in many respects they are strict in their habits their daily living. They won't do certain things, they won't eat certain things. Even as employees they are found to be pretty loyal and trust worthy and responsible compared to a lot of other run of the mill.

Simon: I don't really know alot about the Zionist Church. The only thing that I've noticed about them is their meetings that they hold over the weekends, the clothing that they wear, we've heard rumours about the way they baptise people, that they hold people under water for as long as they think they've been wicked. How true that is I don't know. But obviously that we know about the major occurrence that happens over the Easter weekend when they go up to Pietersburg and hold their meetings up there. I don't know much about their leader infact nothing at all.

**Royden: What is your understanding of Ancestral veneration or Ancestral worship?**

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Laurie: Well my understanding is that first and foremost its an abomination in the sight of God and its rampant in the entire Africa its obviously also found in many other parts of the world amongst the heathen nations as such, but in Africa its very

very strong and it has a very big influence on family life. Apart from a very small percentage of tribal folks they have become more westernised and civilised because of the city environment.

Simon: Ancestral worship in my opinion involves contacting the dead and what we understand of it is that you're probably aren't speaking to your ancestors, but possibly to evil spirits masquerading in that form. So I think that it is wrong and if those sort of teachings are being taught by the various christian churches I think they are leading their people into deception.

**Royden: If the Zionist Church says that they can back up ancestral worship or ancestral veneration with the Bible using the old testament, what's your reaction to that?**

Simon: Where?

**Royden: they have various parts of the old testament that's used to say that one can contact the ancestors. Are you aware of it?**

Simon: Well I know of one instance where I think it was Saul, I think it was Saul who was seeking God's word on an issue and because he wasn't hearing God at that particular point in his life he resorted to going to a witch and he wanted to speak to a prophet if I remember correctly. And I don't think that turned out to good in the end. My understanding of ancestral worship would probably... well my understanding tells me that it would involve contact with ancestors in some form or another and to make contact with an evil...with an ancestor in my opinion involves making contact with the evil spirits, and so that is an abomination to the Lord which is sinful. the chances are that they maybe taking the scriptures that they refer to out of context or they might be applying, trying to apply a specific situation to justify what they believe.

**Royden: When they heal in the Zionist Church they say they use various types of coffees, oils or water that has been prayed over that would be drunk or put into their food and that would cleanse the person. In your understanding of healing is that a right perception of healing?**

Simon: Well I don't think that there is anything wrong with taking medication but one perhaps has to consider the spiritual significance of what the people believe about what they are drinking or swallowing. What they believe about it. I don't know...maybe they are they are maybe almost conned into believing something

about...[end of tape]...The question that I have about the various methods that they use is, what is the root of it. Does the person administering it claim that it has magical powers? Do they claim that you know that its a all healing remedy.

**Royden: If for instance in the St John Apostolic Church which is an African Independent Church, they use water that they pray over in the name of Jesus and they administer it to the person who is sick.**

Simon: And do the people get healed?

**Royden: Yes they get healed.**

Simon: And do they stay healed?

**Royden: They haven't said anything interms of staying healed, but the question that I would have is that if somebody is healed interms of the St Johns Apostolic Church would one regard that as christian?**

Simon: Well its difficult to answer that because, if the enemy, if Satan is behind a specific healing then I believe that Satan has the power to heal people if it will serve his own purposes. We know of instances where people have been healed through other means that are not associated with the churches and they have been healed and it seems miraculous but its not long after that they start picking, they start to develop symptoms and have problems with other areas of their health. So its you know I think that if you are healed by Jesus, if Jesus touches you you will be healed, finished there's no question that you are going to be deceived by Him. You will be healed and you'll be healed and that's the end of the story. That's why I said to that's why people pick up other problems I don't know. The Bibles... the way I understand it the Bible says that we, that the mission that Jesus gave in Mark was that we are to lay hands on the sick and they would recover. And He also said that the eldership should anoint the sick with oil and they should recover. I don't know of anywhere in the Bible where people were healed because of prayers being offered over water or those sort of methods so my answer to that would be a big question mark. I don't think so.

**Royden: Do you believe that God heals interms of a persons cultural understanding?**

Simon: I don't understand the question, what do you mean by cultural understanding?

**Royden:** If for instance in Africa they say that God would heal through water where as maybe in Israel in the first century people were healed through the laying on of hands. What would your reaction be to a statement like that?

Simon: You see its difficult to answer that because you can't... let me say that you can't ... can you show me documented proof where people have been healed permanently because of the... having the holy water administered to them? Can you answer that question?

**Royden:** No I can't answer it.

Simon: Ok now I can give you documented proof of people that have been healed by the laying on of hands. I believe that God is the same yesterday, today and forever, so He said in His word, "lay hands on people and they shall recover so that's... I take christianity the way that God said it. If God said lay hands I'll lay hands if He said lay feet I would have laid feet. I don't see why it would be a problem to explain to people of other cultures that God will heal by the laying on of hands and that's what His command is.

**Royden:** If for instance in for example in a family somebody commits suicide, now in African culture they must now slaughter a goat or a cow and put the bad luck of the family onto the cow or the goat and then the blood will be washed away and then they eat the bad lucks interms of the meat and that is a sacrifice to the ancestors. Do you believe that's a valid sacrifice interms of christianity?

Simon: Probably not because as a christian you don't need to make a sacrifice. As a christian the sacrifice has already been made one sacrifice for all time. Jesus died on the cross for our sins once we do not need to make a sacrifice because that is actually making a public display of Him. I'm sure of what the scripture reference is but you would know better than me. So I don't think so I think its pagan.

**Royden:** Do you maybe think that its not a cultural understanding that God has given to Africa interms of the church?.

Simon: Ancestral worship... I don't think God has different rules for different cultures. If you look at on fire christians across the world they all have something in common. God is... I don't believe God is a democrat I believe God is a theocrat He's the boss and you do as He says you have to be obedient to Him so I don't believe that God makes different rules for different cultural groups around the

world. I remember reading books by Mel Tari about his mission work in the Philipines and the South Sea islands [ The book is called Like a mighty wind] and God certainly did not change His word to suit those peoples beliefs, but He was able to change their hearts by the power of His Holy Spirit.

**Royden: Would you say that the God in African Traditional religions that is worshipped and the God that is worshipped in the mainline Charismatic and the Pentecostal churches is the same God as some of the African Independent churches do claim?**

Simon: I've never attended an African church service I do not know in any detail as to what the beliefs of these particular people are. My perception is is that they, that yes it is the same God but it seems as though they have combined alot of what they believe with regards to the christian faith with their own traditions and ways of life from their pasts.

**Royden: Do you feel that maybe that is wrong?**

Simon: Look I don't think...certain traditions are probably not harmful at all every family has traditions but I think that once you start putting traditions of men above with what God says then you're starting to tread on thin ice.

**Royden: In the Africa Independent churches they pray over water in the name of Jesus to be given to a person for healing or they would put oil into their pup or they would use various potions for the persons healing, how do you feel about that?**

Laurie: Well alot of those practices are man made and its almost tradition in many instances it has evolved and just been pasted down through the generations and maybe tales have been added to it but for all intensive purposes it is man made and I don't think there is any scriptural basis for it to be practised. In scripture we read about calling on the elders of the church and being anointed with oil and that type of thing, but many of the many of the scriptures have been taken and man has elaborated on that and in many instances you find that leaders try to create a following and try to be different and unique because that seems to appeal to mankind something that's different something that's unique something that they can accept that inner satisfies their conscience that if they do certain rites that because the church says they must do it I'm ok buddy. That's fine everything's ok and that's why you end up with a following there, but there is no healing power there is no real power in all these practices... that will satisfy the uses....

**Royden:** In the case of a family they may have a suicide in the family. Now they would get a goat or a cow and they would cast the bad luck of the family on to the goat or the cow then slaughter the animal so that the bad luck would be washed away by its blood, how do you understand that from your christian tradition?

Laurie: Well according to scripture we are either blessed or cursed and if we're cursed as God's children we can have those curses broken. Certainly there is no power in any form of if I could use the word traditions or old covenant or old testament practices. The only power that is available to us is the power in Jesus the blood of Jesus. Every thing is cleansed when we come to Jesus and ask for either forgiveness or cleansing or the breaking of curses can only be done in the name of Jesus. They can kill a thousand goats and do what they like with the blood but it won't take away the bad luck as such as the call it or the curse if there is a curse. It is that those curses can only be broken by the power of Jesus. There is no other way to break a curse on the family if there is a curse on the family. In the case of a suicide each person is responsible for their life and in this life it is very difficult to judge in the case of suicide the effects that it has on the family and also what will happen to the soul when the person committed suicide...

**Royden:** In the case now of an African Independent pastor that we have interviewed. He said that the God the God that he worships and the God that's worshipped in the mainline, Charismatic and Pentecostal churches is the same God, but His just worshipped in different cultural mediums, what's your response to that?

Laurie: Well there's only one basis for worshipping God and that's the Bible and if the Bible allow for cultural differences then someone can put me right on that and if it can be found in scriptures and can be substantiated by scriptures then I'll be the first in the que to accept it. But my Bible teaches me that we are to break with the carnal man and that we are to break with the god of this world the prince of this world who is Satan and his practices and the Bible sets a pattern for worshipping God and christian living very very clearly so I don't think there can be any doubt, if a person's sincere and if they are standing on the hill of God which in many cases the old testament is used, again people use just parts of the old testament and establish what they call a church, but there's nothing churchy about it because the church is the Bride of Christ, and so as such to qualify a church they have to be in subjection to Jesus as Lord and Saviour in first instances and if that's not present

they are not a church. They are a church only in name and there's no compatibility whatsoever with the true church of Jesus Christ.

**Royden: Do you see a future for the Africa Independent churches in Africa?**

Laurie: Again it depends on largely on their practices and their beliefs. If they are going to continue in their heathendom and in their ancestral worship and man made practices there won't be a future for that type of church because there will always be a following people speak of...are very gullible and uneducated in particular are maybe more gullible but there'll be no power and eventually the people will go where the source of the power is and the power is not to be found in a leader or a man or man made rules and regulations. The power is to be found only in God and in submission and obedience to God. That's where God invests His power and eventually that's where the people will go because the power of God is there.

**Royden: What nationality or culture do you think God is?**

Laurie: Well if you're referring to Jesus then Jesus was part of the triune God and as such the nationality or culture compared to human races is non existent. Its certainly not as most people would see it that Jesus was born a man and became a Jew was born into a Jewish home followed the Jewish traditions and the Bible refers to and He came unto His own and His own received Him not, and the Bible also speaks of the God's chosen people. But while He was on earth and while He was a man He certainly lived in Jewish community so He was part of the Jewish community. That is Jesus.