

## **On our own account**

### Frequently Asked Questions

## **SoundWords**

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**Leading verses:** 1. Thessalonians 5:21,22

**1Thess 5,21.22:** But prove all things, hold fast the right; hold aloof from every form of wickedness.

## Introduction

We are often asked questions that we would like to answer here in general. Of course, we are not surprised that we hear some questions again and again, because we do not want to address only Christians of a certain group with this internet work, but we want to serve the church in general. We do not promote any particular group in Christendom, even though we ourselves feel closely connected to the so-called Brethren movement. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that we generally agree with everything there and publish articles in order to promote a certain movement – or even a certain branch of this movement. Rather, we are fundamentally concerned with the whole body of Christ, to which all born-again Christians belong.

### Not a website of a particular group

We are convinced that the gifts of each member of the Body of Christ are different, but that all gifts are given for the edification and growth of the whole Body – regardless which group of Christians someone belongs to. Therefore, we do not wish to represent the internet representation of any particular group of believers, nor do we believe that gifts have existed or exist only in any particular group of Christians.

### Articles from the past centuries

Many faithful believers from past centuries have left us a rich mine of extremely valuable articles, which we do not want to leave unused. The only difficulty is that these articles are often written in a style that is very difficult for many contemporary readers to understand, both linguistically and in style. This also leads to difficulties in translation. We have to balance accuracy and comprehensibility. There is a certain risk associated with this, namely not having met the author's thoughts at one time or another. We have also left some articles in a rather rough translation – in order to rather spend our time on other tasks – when we thought that they might be interesting only for a smaller part of our readership anyway. Thus, we would like to apologize for the sometimes rightly criticized quality of the translation of some articles.

### Critical statements in certain articles

Critical statements in the published articles about any teachings and practices of any Christian group do not in any way mean that we want to place ourselves above these Christians or that we want to discredit anything. On the contrary, it is our only desire to help by drawing attention to certain dangers. At the same time, we are quite aware of

seeing ourselves just fragmentarily.

## The selection of topics on SoundWords

Regarding the selection of topics, we ask you to consider that certainly not every topic is equally interesting and important for every group of Christians. With an anonymous, but certainly mixed Internet audience, it is not possible for us to do anything other than give special consideration sometimes to this group and sometimes to that group, and here we are of course also aware of our own subjectivity.

### One more note about the articles on sexuality:

It is clear to us that some readers find the presentation of this topic too open, while for others it is not clear enough. Some consider such a theme to be wrong in the first place. However, due to the sharp increase in problems among Christians in this very area and the lack of information about God's thoughts on this subject in some Christian circles, we feel that helpful articles on this are urgently needed.

## Wrong conclusions from the selection of Bible expositors

Just as by reproducing an article by F.W. Grant we are not saying that we also agree with his teaching on the life in the Son, neither by reproducing an article by C.E. Stuart are we agreeing with his teaching on atonement or position of the believer. In the same way as by reproducing articles by J.N. Darby we do not approve of all his practical ways of action (e.g., in the Ramsgate story), we do not by a biography of Georg Müller give our approval to his conduct in the Bethesda question. Although we bring some of the excellent biblical interpretations of W. Kelly, this does not mean that we approve of his attitude toward W.W. Fereday. With the inclusion of articles by J.B. Stoney we by no means intend to propagate mysticism, but it can at most serve to show that besides an objective presentation of truth we must not forget the subjective side. The inclusion of articles by H. Smith does not mean that we also share his attitude towards F.E. Raven. However, we do not know any writer of that time who interpreted the Word so concisely and at the same time easily understandable even today. The indication of some points to which we do not give our approval in the case of the above-mentioned writers does not mean either that we thereby give our approval in principle to all – or even to some – other teachings or actions. In particular, the inclusion of an author in our list of authors in no way means that we thereby also recommend the ecclesiastical path of this author.

Our main concern is to make a very clear distinction between the content of an article and the person who wrote it.

The argument that by including an article of a particular brother we might be misleading our readers to imitate certain false teachings or practices of that brother, we hereby strongly reject. Finally, the inclusion of Song of Songs, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes in the Bible does not imply a recommendation for polygamy and idolatry (both of which Solomon practiced at the end of his life). We do not consider any of our readers to be so stupid as

to choose, for example, their ecclesiastical path according to that of the author of an article.

## From which expositors we would not publish writings

The only principled reason that exists for us not to publish articles by a particular author is that we are aware that that author is advocating evil doctrine that attacks the person of Christ and His work or the foundations of the faith, or that we have concerns about his moral conduct. A special question about this will be addressed in the next topic.

## Writings of W.J. Ouweneel

Basically, we SoundWords Editors appreciate most of the former lectures and articles of this brother until today and have partly been privileged to attend such lectures in Germany ourselves in earlier times. In recent years W.J. Ouweneel has taken a changed attitude in some doctrinal questions – and in connection with this also in practical ways of Christian life. Some of these changes we welcome, others we reject or are critical about. We have been particularly troubled by his attitude and contacts with the Nigerian preacher and healer T.B. Joshua and his attitude toward dealing with homophiles.

In the judgment about T.B. Joshua Christians differ very much. Some see him as a man who works miracles from an occult (demonic) source, others see him as a man of God who works these miracles through the Holy Spirit. Each presents various seemingly convincing arguments in support of their views and condemns those who think otherwise. Those who consider T.B. Joshua's gift to be occult see a connection with him as a connection with demons. Those who consider his gift to be worked by the Holy Spirit believe that the others are in danger of committing blasphemy against the Spirit because they attribute "obvious" effects of the Spirit ultimately to Satan.

In the following, we will now discuss some points that to us seem particularly problematic in W.J. Ouweneel's writings:

### Topic inspiration

Brother Ouweneel continues to hold the conviction that the original text of the Bible is God's perfect Word, which is completely true. However, he has made statements regarding the inerrancy of the Bible that have caused irritation among many and also seem very problematic to us. A careful weighing of apparently contradictory statements in this area and extensive discussion within the editorial team on this subject do not, however, allow us to discover a fundamentally evil doctrine in these statements. However, we see him treading border areas here, where one can no longer be sure, in our opinion, that he is still on Godly ground. Therefore we would like to express here the warning to follow speculations in this area, which can cause doubts about the Bible for some.

### The Historicity of Adam

Brother Ouweneel has here – in our opinion unfortunately – "protected" theologians who doubt this historicity (as e.g. also Karl Barth does). However, he himself holds on to it, as he has confirmed to us personally.

### **Messianic Judaism**

Also in this area the author represents new thoughts nowadays. Thus he sees in the Messianic Jews of today already a part of the prophetic remnant of Israel from the prophetic writings of the Word of God. On this difficult subject of Messianic Judaism only briefly the following remark: In our opinion the believers before the Rapture, "before the tribulation", all belong to the Church – no matter whether they call themselves Messianic Jews or not. The believing remnant of the "tribulation," however, does not belong to the Church. Also a special position of the Messianic Jews towards the law, which the author wants to see, we cannot find in the Scriptures in this way.

### ***Nachtboek van de Ziel* („Night book of the soul“)**

For many German Christians it is rather difficult to understand that someone presents his own, very personal dream experiences to the public like brother Ouweneel has done in his book *Nachtboek van de Ziel* ("Night Book of the Soul"). Now we should consider once in principle that he is Dutchman and this book was published (so far) also only in Dutch. Besides, it should be actually free to everyone whether he lets others participate in the processing of painful experiences or not.

Also the fact that he uses elements of C.G. Jung in the interpretation of dreams in this book, which many cannot understand after his own statements about this man in earlier publications, is no reason for us to condemn the book in principle for that reason. Even under the premise that C.G. Jung has really been under demonic influence, this does not mean in our opinion that all his statements and "findings" are therefore wrong, evil or worthless, so that one should not use anything of it in any case.

However, we see him entering border areas with dream interpretation here as well, which contains dangers in our opinion. This is also true for special statements in this book in particular.

### ***Geneest de Zieken* („Cure the sick“)**

This book, published by the author in 2003, deals in detail with the subject of *healing*. He comes to the conclusion (which many readers will certainly not share) that this gift still exists today and that certain people also exercise it.

On the basis of the Holy Scriptures, it cannot be excluded, according to our present knowledge, that this gift still exists today. It would be quite possible that – if someone brings the pure word of God, leads an exemplary life, leads many to the Lord and in his ministry, perhaps only in a special field of ministry, then real healing miracles may happen – this could be a powerful confirmation of his ministry. The problem of our days, however,

is to determine whether this is really the case with someone. In many cases, opinions differ greatly in the evaluation of these points. Whether the persons mentioned by brother Ouweneel in the book really possess this gift from the Lord, we cannot judge. Basically, we recognize in some of the persons listed in the book teachings and practices that – to put it mildly – are not in accordance with Scripture and partly point to evil sources according to earlier statements of the authors themselves (for example, Branham). The classification of problematic persons (such as Cho, Hinn, and Joshua) under "men of God" seems very questionable to us. However, Brother Ouweneel has explained to us that this was changed in the fourth edition of his book and the phrase "men of God" no longer appears there. In our opinion, one of the main dangers of this book is that – in order to obtain healing – it allows the option of associating oneself with people who are fundamentally evil or, in the worst case, even demonic, which is certainly difficult to exclude completely. However, we would also like to point out that the possession of even the most remarkable and striking gift of God does not protect one from falling into heresy and moral evil. This means that even a believer who falls into fundamental evil can still possess and exercise a gift of God. With our article [„Rezension: Heilt die Kranken \(von W.J. Ouweneel\)“](#) we have published a detailed review of this book.

However, we will not conceal on this occasion that we consider it important to once again bring to our awareness the connection between sin, bitterness, occult bondage and illness, which is shown in this book, since in our opinion many Christians today no longer seem to be aware of this aspect. See also the article [„Heilt die Kranken ...!?“](#).

### ***Seks in de Kerk („Sex in the Curch“)***

In his book *Seks in de Kerk*, published in the Netherlands in 2006, Ouweneel condemns homosexual practices in the church on the one hand, but on the other hand he distinguishes between homosexuality and homophilia. Even though he does not call permanent homosexual marriages biblical – contrary to the claims of some people – he pleads for giving them a place (with certain restrictions) in the Christian community. Further, Ouweneel says that the practiced homosexuality condemned by God in the Old Testament as an abominable sin referred to cultic acts in paganism and cannot be easily generalized. In our opinion, this opens the door for the connection of the name of the Lord with the practice of homosexuality – even if practiced under the cloak of love. See also our article [„Homosexualität in der Gemeinde“](#). With our article [„Rezension: Sex in der Kirche \(von W.J. Ouweneel\)“](#) we have published a detailed review of this book, which has so far only been published in Dutch.

### **Conclusion**

All in all, we have to say that we consider some of Brother Ouweneel's statements, practices and theological contacts to be very questionable, and especially the last point now leads us to refrain from publishing articles of the recent past on principle. For the sake of simplicity, we set the cut-off point to the year 2000. In the very few exceptions of articles of later date that are already published on the homepage, we add the year below the article. From the beginning it was one of our principles for this Internet work to

examine everything and to keep what is good according to our state of knowledge and to keep away from all kinds of evil. Therefore we would like to publish what is definitely good from brother Ouweneel – and in the articles/books written before the year 2000 we cannot discover the ideas described above so far – but also warn against things that we consider evil or at least dangerous.

## **Book Reviews**

The inclusion of book reviews does not imply that the editors agree with the reviewer's judgment, nor that they have even read the book. The inclusion of such a review is intended solely to assist in the critical reading of a book.

## **The ecclesiastical path of a Christian**

If anyone is in doubt about the right ecclesiastical path to follow, we think we have enough articles on our website to help them find that path in Scripture. Furthermore, in such cases we are always ready for a personal conversation. The definition of any Christian groups or addresses should always come last here. Certainly, it would be easier if we would only prescribe the way of a certain Christian group by a selection of authors. However, we must reject this idea as sectarian and carnal. When the disciples ask the Lord where they should prepare the Passover for Him, He instructs them that they would encounter a man carrying a pitcher of water, and that they should follow this man and then ask him certain things. There it was certainly on the tongue of the disciples to say: Lord, don't make it so difficult for us, it only confuses us; tell us the street, the house number and the floor, it is much easier. – But the path of faith is never easy. There is no other way than to let the Holy Spirit show us the way in the Scriptures (water pitcher). In this context, it is also important for everyone who perhaps once walked such a path several years ago to check again and again whether this path is still the one that the Lord wants us to walk today, because unfortunately 6,000 years of human history, 2,000 years of church history and 190 years of "Brethren" history have shown only too clearly that man has corrupted everything he has been given in the course of time.

## **Reader opinions and questions**

Since we, the SoundWords editors, are employed, it unfortunately happens more often that we cannot answer questions and reader opinions immediately and that for some therefore the question arises whether we might not have received the e-mail or whether we will answer the question at all. We would like to ask for your patience. Basically, it is our rule to answer all questions and reader opinions (with e-mail address). However, for the reason stated above, this may be delayed. If someone still has no answer after a few weeks, please write to us again. Even with us, with the abundance of work, sometimes something slips by. Thank you for your understanding.

## **Open to constructive criticism**

We always want to be open to reconsider problems raised by reader opinions on an objective level. Arguments that we would "cause confusion" and that the reader would be "unsettled" by this page do not count, of course. In a sense, words spoken in their time (though we don't automatically claim that for ourselves!) have always caused confusion and uncertainty. This can be discovered again and again in the history of the church (whereby we are not interested in going into church history, but we would like to speak to the individual who is important to the Lord Jesus). So we would also like to challenge and wake up sometimes in a certain way, in order to reconsider points of view and to question them on the basis of the Scriptures.

*The SoundWords Editors*