January 1, 2011

These are letters that I wrote 30 years ago when I decided to resign my membership and association with Jehovah’s Witnesses. There are two sets of letters in this file.

The first set of letters are the exchange I had with the local congregation and the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses (their ruling council at their headquarters) over whether I had voluntarily resigned or had been expelled (“disfellowshipped”). At the time (1980), there was no announced policy how to treat people who voluntarily resigned (“disassociated”) from the religion. Even though I had voluntarily disassociated from Jehovah’s Witnesses I was not shunned as are those who are disfellowshipped.

Initially, the local congregation announced I had voluntarily disassociated but a couple of months later they announced to the congregation that I had been disfellowshipped. In a subsequent discussion with one of the congregation elders I was told they were ordered to disfellowship me in a letter they had received from headquarters. After that announcement I was totally shunned. I protested their action and eventually wrote to the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses in New York demanding they withdraw this expulsion action.

This dispute over whether I had ‘quit’ or been ‘fired’ received some local news coverage. Eventually, in early June of 1981 the local congregation reversed the disfellowshipping (presumably after being notified to do so by headquarters) and announced to the local congregation that their action had been unnecessary.

However, just a few months later, the September 15, 1981 Watchtower changed the policy towards those who had voluntarily disassociated. From then on, anyone who resigned membership in the religion would be shunned just as someone who was disfellowshipped. So, after this change in policy I was shunned again but at least it was clear I had left the religion of my own volition.

The first set of letters contain:
1) My voluntary disassociation letter dated August 5, 1980
2) The letter of disfellowshipping I received dated January 2, 1981
3) My initial protest to the local congregation dated January 15, 1981
4) My letter to the Governing Body demanding a withdrawal of their disfellowshipping me dated February 28, 1981
5) News coverage from the Tucson Citizen mentioning my case (last column of article)
6) I did receive a notice of the reversal from the local congregation in early June of 1981 but I no longer have a copy of that letter
7) The change in policy regarding those who disassociate themselves from Jehovah’s Witnesses as first published in the September 15, 1981 Watchtower

Appended to this collection is the letter I sent out dated September 25, 1980 to dozens of Jehovah’s Witness friends to explain why I had resigned from the Witnesses. It begins with a verbatim copy of my resignation letter and then discusses doctrinal concerns I had with the Jehovah’s Witness’ teachings about Jesus Christ.

Dave Brown
daveignatius@gmail.com
Body of Elders, Encanto Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses
Phoenix, Arizona

Gentlemen:

Following the procedure outlined on pages 61 and 62 of the book "Pay Attention to Yourselves and to All the Flock" I am hereby providing written notice of my desire to voluntarily disassociate myself from the Encanto Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses and also from any association with the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. I have arrived at this decision after much prayer, Bible reading, and intensive personal study. I can no longer believe that the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society is God's visible earthly organization.

I have no animosity towards anyone of Jehovah's Witnesses. In my 15 years of association with the Witnesses I have known many wonderful people. Many have been true friends and very kind and helpful, even in a material way. I would say all of them were sincere. They have not been perfect, but neither have I been perfect. They are still in my thoughts and prayers.

I know this hurts Doris very much. Even though it hurts me to be the cause of her pain I feel I must proceed with this voluntary disassociation. Since my wife desires to remain a Witness I ask the congregation not to forget her. I know you will do what you can to help her, but I wanted you to know that I will not oppose such aid.

I request when announcement is made to the congregation of my action that it is made clear that this is a voluntary action on my own part. You are free to show this letter to anyone you wish as an explanation why I have taken this action.

Sincerely,

David T. Brown

5017 N. 23 Ave. Apt C
Phoenix AZ 85015
August 5, 1980
Mr. David Brown
5017 N. 23rd Avenue, Apt. #3
Phoenix, AZ 85015

Dear Mr. Brown:

After due consideration, the committee of the Encanto Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses found it necessary to disfellowship you from the congregation. It was so announced to the congregation on November 28, 1980.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signatures]

James Aboud
Joseph Diehl
Roy Horton
Body of Elders, Encanto Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses  
c/o Mr. Roy L. Horton  
5235 N. 19 Avenue  
Phoenix AZ 85015

Gentlemen:

Today I received a letter from you telling me that you have disfellowshiped me from the congregation and that announcement of this was made to the congregation on November 28, 1980. Such action on your part comes as a great surprise to me. I have talked to one of the judicial committee on the telephone since you announced the disfellowshiping, but you did not choose to inform me until today. Since you prefer to communicate about this matter by the mail I have decided not to telephone you regarding it, but to reply by mail myself.

On August 6, 1980 I personally delivered to Mr. Roy L. Horton, at his home address, written notice dated the day before of my desire to voluntarily disassociate myself from the Encanto Congregation. This action on my part was based on the procedure outlined on pages 61 and 62 of the book "Pay Attention to Yourselves and to All the Flock" which says: "If a baptized person insists that he wants to be no part of the congregation and he wants his name removed from all our records, we can comply with his request. If he takes such an adamant position, it would be well to encourage him to put his request in writing and it can be held in the congregation files. In a case like this the Society should be notified and a brief announcement should be made to the congregation. The person will be viewed as 'disassociated' and he would have to apply for reinstatement in the regular way in order to become a member of the congregation again." Mr. Horton told me that my resignation letter would be acceptable to the congregation. (A copy of that letter is enclosed with this letter). Mr. Horton and I talked for several minutes at that time regarding my action and one question I put to him was whether the congregation would go ahead and try to disfellowship me anyway. He gave me several assurances that would never happen because by my resigning in the way I was I was removing myself from the congregation. In fact, he reminded me of the Society's instructions quoted above which state that I would need to apply for reinstatement if I desired to become a part of the congregation again. Mr. Horton did say he wanted to discuss my action with the elders of the Encanto Congregation before making announcement to the congregation. This he did and announcement of my voluntary disassociation was made to the Encanto Congregation on August 15, 1980 by one of the elders, Mr. Joseph Diehl. I had supplied a copy of my resignation letter to the Solano Congregation and they announced my voluntary disassociation on August 20, 1980, and this was announced by one of their elders, Mr. Herman Kurrie. In view of the fact I had already removed myself from any association with the Encanto Congregation or from Jehovah's Witnesses in August of 1980 it surprises me that you now say that you 'found it necessary to disfellowship me from the congregation.' How can you disfellowship someone who is no longer a part of the congregation? If, according to the Society's instructions quoted above, I would already need to apply for reinstatement to "become a member of the congregation again," how can you disfellowship me as though I still was a member of the congregation?
It is true that I mailed letters to several of my Witness friends explaining why I decided to resign. But I did this nearly two months after I had resigned. Regardless of how you feel about my present religious beliefs don't you agree I have the right to inform my friends of my decision to voluntarily disassociate myself and the reasons why I felt I should? There was no attempt in any of those letters to cover over the fact I had resigned. The first page in every letter contained a verbatim copy of my resignation letter so all of my friends were fully informed that I was no longer a Witness. It is also true I wrote a letter to the Watchtower Society telling them I felt they had been dishonest in some of their scholarship, but this letter was dated September 25, 1980 (long after my resignation), and I plainly told them I had already voluntarily disassociated myself from the congregation.

There are several unanswered questions regarding your disfellowshipping action. For exactly what grounds did you decide it was "necessary" to disfellowship (expel) me from the congregation? Exactly how was the announcement read to the congregation? Did it simply say you were disfellowshipping me? Or did it state you were disfellowshipping me for "conduct unbecoming a Christian?" Or did it state it was for "apostasy?" Or was it for "promoting sects and divisions?" Or something else? Were there, either at that time or at some other time, any further remarks about me either directly or by innuendo? In what other congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses was your disfellowshipping action read? Why was I never informed that you were disregarding the fact I had already resigned and that you were proceeding to try me by the judicial committee? I do appreciate that you finally did inform me of what you have done, but why did you wait so long to do so? You may feel these questions are minor or silly, but I feel you owe me some explanations and answers to these questions. In a group of people of which I was no member you brought up my name in a bad light and stated you were "expelling" me from membership for some wrongdoing. If someone is treated like that shouldn't they be informed as to why and how it was done? I would appreciate it greatly if you would by either letter or in person explain your action and answer the questions I am asking in this letter.

In view of the fact I have not been a member of your congregation or of your religion since August of 1980 I ask you to reconsider your disfellowshipping action. Your action does not take into account the procedure outlined in the book "Pay Attention to Yourselves and to All the Flock" on pages 61 and 62. You are allowed to use my name in this way if you make announcement to the congregation: 'The decision made to disfellowship Mr. David T. Brown, announced on November 28, 1980 was in error. Mr. Brown had already voluntarily disassociated himself from the congregation previous to that time and therefore not a member of the congregation subject to disfellowshipping. Mr. Brown left the congregation of his own volition.' You may not use my name or refer to me (either directly or by innuendo) in any other way in your meetings without my permission. I also ask that if you do reconsider your disfellowshipping action you notify all the other congregations that also read your disfellowshipping notification and ask them to announce the reversal. May I hear from you by February 15, 1981 if you will withdraw your disfellowshipping decision?

Thank you,

David T. Brown
Mr. Frederick W. Franz
124 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Dear Mr. Franz,

The May 15, 1980 Watchtower (page 30) relates the almost unbelievable response one man received when he wrote to his local Catholic Church to have his name removed from its records: "Under no conditions can we remove your name from any Baptismal or other Sacramental records. As you know the Catholic Church is the one true Church founded by Jesus (Matt 16) and to so remove your name would be a sin against the Holy Spirit." Surely, such an attitude by that Catholic Church is hypocritical and preposterous. Due to recent developments I feel compelled to ask if a similar attitude is to be encouraged among Jehovah's Witnesses? I do not believe you think so.

Early last August I decided I did not want to remain one of Jehovah's Witnesses so I wrote a letter to the local congregation (Phoenix, Arizona, Encanto Congregation) and voluntarily dis-associated myself, following the procedure outlined on pages 61 and 62 of "Pay Attention to Yourselves and to All the Flock." The elders of that congregation accepted my action as valid and for nearly 4 months it was an accepted fact that I had resigned from the congregation and was no longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Last month I found out that the elders of that congregation decided it was "necessary" to disfellowship me from the congregation in late November, DESPITE THE FACT I WAS NO LONGER A MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION. Still later I was informed the disfellowshiping was for "apostasy."

On February 8, 1981 I met with 2 elders from the Encanto Congregation who told me they had 'made a mistake' in accepting my resignation letter and that they should have disfellowshiped me at that time instead of allowing me to resign. They also indicated they were told to disfellowship me by someone there at Brooklyn Bethel.

I know such a mistake could not have been made by you or anyone on
the Governing Body. Therefore I am writing to you so that this situation can be corrected.

Surely it is quite unethical for the Encanto Congregation to represent me as a member of that congregation and then subject my reputation and character to the stigma that goes with disfellowshiping, when it was a settled matter that I was no longer a Witness. The way the Encanto Congregation handled their disfellowshiping procedure is also reprehensible. I was never notified in advance of a committee meeting to disfellowship me. Neither was I invited to attend. I was not informed of their action until the middle of January, a month and a half afterwards.

Respectfully I ask you to instruct the Encanto Congregation to retract their disfellowshiping action and to notify me in writing of their retraction. The truth of the matter is that I was not expelled from the congregation, I resigned and left of my own volition. I would really appreciate it if you would straighten out this situation. I am enclosing all pertinent correspondence with this letter. I realize you have many responsibilities to care for, but I am trusting there won't be too much delay on this matter.

Thank you,

David T. Brown

Copies to members of the Governing Body individually and to the Encanto Congregation.
Local Jehovah's Witnesses hit with schism

By LEE SUSTAR
Citizen Staff Writer

Mrs. Kling and her husband, James, a lifet ime Witness, said they just wanted to quietly join what some ex-Witnesses say is 160,000 who have left the JW's organization. Instead, Mrs. Kling said, she was caught up in what has been called a "witch hunt" of those who have left the society and opposed the organization.

A special report

that reportedly has affected members of the JW's, a member of the Governing Body and people in local congregations throughout the nation. The group, which is composed of ex-Witnesses and former JW's, has formed out of the society's International headquarters in Brooklyn, N.Y., to Tucson and Phoenix congregations.

Scrapes of paper floated down like postal convict as Mary Kling pushed the mail in the envelope.

"You are a fool," read the letter. "I have never known you. Don't try to contact me again."

The letter, once a copy of Mrs. Kling's letter of resignation from the Witnesses' Valencia Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses and the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. The note was from a friend of Mrs. Kling, also a Jehovah's Witness, there were also pictures of Mr. Kling's two sons in the envelope, pictures sent back by her friend.

Now Mrs. Kling has fewer friends. When she tried to resign, the congregation responded like the boss who tells his employee, you can't quit your job. She was disfellowshipped, the JW term for excommunication.

Disfellowshipping is done to keep the organization "clean," those booted out are usually shunned and regarded as spiritual pariahs, guilty of some immoral act or of violating basic doctrine.

Continued on Page 6A
Local Jehovah's Witnesses hit with schism

From Page 1

complaints from people they call a few "isolated, embittered individuals."

They point to steady increases in the total number of "publishers" — the active members — of the organization, and to the "crisis" in the Watchtower Society's work — as evidence of a healthy organization.

Observers acknowledge this growth, but claim the increase is due to new baptisms which offset the number of people leaving or becoming inactive in the organization.

Pocket-size diffusion abroad, and the Tucson Citizen has received copies of letters, news reports and legal files from loosely coordinated U.S. and Canadian groups disinclined with the organization.

One of the focal points of such groups is Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, where the Lethbridge Watchtower Society was incorporated. The organization, a University of Lethbridge history professor and religion scholar, said he was disfellowshipped a year after he criticized the Watchtower Society for its strictness.

The controversy continues, and Penton and two other elders — congregational leaders — at Lethbridge's Lakeview congregation resigned, he said. About 60 others left Lakeview's three congregations, but only one was disfellowshipped, he said.

"They don't have the guts to disfellowship everyone who left," Penton said. "It would make them look like they are a repressive, authoritarian body." Penton said he no longer accepts the JW's belief that only 144,000 will reach heaven.

John Poole, one of the Lakeview elders who resigned in support of Penton, has helped begin a Bible study group called the International Christian Bible Students Association (ICBSA), a name similar to that of the early JW organization. Poole said about 30 people attend the group's weekday Bible studies in the Lethbridge area, and the ICBSA is now publishing its own literature.

Penton said that since news of his resignation spread, he has received letters and phone calls daily from JWs all over the world.

The Lethbridge Watchtower Society, he said, "doesn't know what to do. They have no idea what they are doing." He said the Watchtower Society has told him he is "isolated, embittered, and not a leader." But he said he was "determined to go on and to continue to speak out against the organization."

"According to the Bible, they (the congregation) must confront us with our wrongdoing three times, and they did not," James Ten Eyck, an elder at the Lethbridge Watchtower Society, said. "We have confronted them several times since then, and they have never responded."

The Kings received a letter from three of the congregation's six elders dated March 13, stating that they had heard reports that Mrs. King "expressed ideas contrary to those of Jehovah's Witnesses" and invited a disfellowshipped person to come to your home for study.

Mrs. King also was accused of believing that JW counsel for young people was overly strict, of disagreeing with the JW interpretation of the Bible's "great crowd," and of speaking out against the organization. The letter asked the Kings to attend a disfellowship hearing the next week.

The Kings said they sent their letter of resignation by registered mail before the hearing, but Mrs. King was disfellowshipped for "apostasy," or turning away from God.

James King said that he and his wife had been considering resignation for three years — "You just don't walk away from something that's been your whole life" — but that congregation chargesweren't valid.

The disfellowshipped person who visited the couple's Drexel Heights home was a teenager thrown out of the congregation for smoking.

Mrs. King said, "I went back and read the Bible and realized that the Bible says that a child is a child until 18." She said she was "disturbed" by the way the congregation was handling the case.

"I just feel it doesn't matter anymore. A lawsuit can't bring my name back."

The other 20 JW congregations in Tucson are quiet. Alfred Nussinwał, the Watchtower Society representative for about 30 English-speaking congregations in the Tucson area, said he does not know of any other disfellowships and could not comment on具体 cases because he did not know its specifics. But he did say that the congregation usually permits a person two to three years to resign. But if it doesn't, "the whole thing is very carefully reviewed."

"There must be some way to resolve the conflict, and I think that's what's happening in this case," Nussinwał said. "It's a delicate matter. Each congregation is individually responsible for handling its own cases."

In Phoenix things aren't so quiet. Letters obtained by The Citizen show that David T. Brown received notice of his disfellowship on Jan. 19, 1985, even though he had resigned from Phoenix's Evangelical congregation on May 4, 1986. He said he never was told of any judicial action against him, nor was he ever confronted with any charges. But, he said, "they say they are prepared to do anything.

I sent copies of my resignation letter to friends at the Brooklyn headquarters," he said. "And I told them what I had found in the Bible."

"I think they are just trying to make an example of me," Brown said. "I hope the congregation accepted my resignation, and then (Evangelical) will stop."

Brown has been a Jehovah's Witness for 20 years. He said he was disfellowshipped for "outrageous" behavior.

"My wife is a Witness," he said. "We are a close-knit family. I have some dealings with Witness at home, but almost all of my old friends are gone. I have been subjected to some unfair treatment."

A "try not to be bitter" letter, he said, "I tried to admit that I made mistakes and that I believed all of these things."

There was something of a JW action in Phoenix in 1979. Chuck Evenson, a former elder, said, "I just got a letter from the JW's last year. They said I had resigned and that about 30 others disfellowshipped, too." Evenson said he was not disfellowshipped, "I did leave the congregation, but I have been in seclusion since then." Evenson said.

"I would ask questions, and no one would answer them. When I resigned, I told them I wouldn't do it if there were any disfellowship."

A "try not to be bitter" letter, he said, "I tried to admit that I made mistakes and that I believed all of these things."

Evenson hosted a weekly Saturday radio program on 1260 AM, but he said he doesn't use it to reach Witnesses. He said he has met secretly with some Phoenix elders and "worked to influence" Witnesses, but he thinks preachers to them do more harm than good.

"That's the worst thing anyone can do. Witnesses who don't hear the gospel powerfully attack them, they're sure they're right. The only way these people will ever leave the organization is to accept Christ and their personal salvation."
son on any spiritual or social level reflects loyalty to God's standards and obedience to his command at 1 Corinthians 5:11, 13. This is consistent with Jesus' advice that such a person be considered in the same way as "a man of the nations" was viewed by the Jews of that time. For some time after the apostles died, those professing Christianity evidently followed the Biblical procedure.* But how many churches today comply with God's clear directions in this regard?

**THOSE WHO DISASSOCIATE THEMSELVES**

A Christian might grow spiritually weak, perhaps because of not studying God's Word regularly, having personal problems or experiencing persecution. (1 Cor. 11:30; Rom. 14:1) Such a one might cease to attend Christian meetings. What is to be done? Recall that the apostles abandoned Jesus on the night of his arrest. Yet Christ had urged Peter, "When once you have returned, strengthen your brothers [who also abandoned Jesus]." (Luke 22:32) Hence, out of love Christian elders and others might visit and help the one who has grown weak and inactive. (1 Thess. 5:14; Rom. 15:1; Heb. 12:12, 13) It is another matter, though, when a person repudiates his being a Christian and disassociates himself.

One who has been a true Christian might renounce the way of the truth, stating that he no longer considers himself to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses or wants to be known as one. When this rare event occurs, the person is renouncing his standing as a Christian, deliberately disassociating himself from the congregation. The apostle John wrote: "They went out from us, but they were not of our sort; for if they had been of our sort, they would have remained with us."—1 John 2:19.

Or, a person might renounce his place in the Christian congregation by his actions, such as by becoming part of an organization whose objective is contrary to the Bible, and, hence, is under judgment by Jehovah God. (Compare Revelation 19:17-21; Isaiah 2:4.) So if one who was a Christian chose to join those who are disapproved of God, it would be fitting for the congregation to acknowledge by a brief announcement that he had disassociated himself and is no longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Persons who make themselves "not of our sort" by deliberately rejecting the faith and beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses should appropriately be viewed and treated as are those who have been disfellowshipped for wrongdoing.

**COOPERATING WITH THE CONGREGATION**

Though Christians enjoy spiritual fellowship when they discuss or study the Bible with their brothers or interested persons, they would not want to have such fellowship with an expelled sinner (or one who has renounced the faith and beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses, disassociating himself). The expelled person has been 'rejected,' being "self-condemned" because of "sinning," and those in the congregation both accept God's judgment and uphold it.

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* Ecclesiastical historian Joseph Bingham writes concerning the early centuries: "The discipline of the church consisted in a power to deprive men of all the benefits and privileges of baptism, by turning them out of the society and communion of the church, . . . and every one shunned and avoided them in common conversation, partly to establish the church's censures and proceedings against them, and partly to make them ashamed, and partly to secure themselves from the danger of contagion." . . . no one was to receive excommunicated persons into their houses, nor eat at the same table with them; they were not to converse with them familiarly, whilst living; nor perform the funeral obssequies for them, when dead, . . . These directions were drawn up upon the model of those rules of the apostles, which forbid Christians to give any countenance to notorious offenders."—The Antiquities of the Christian Church, pp. 880, 891.

13. What should be done in the case of a person who becomes weak and inactive?
14. How might a person disassociate himself?

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13. What should be done in the case of a person who becomes weak and inactive?
14. How might a person disassociate himself?

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"To be or not to be a Christian is my problem; to be a good Christian is my task."—A German proverb.
David T. Brown  
5017 N. 23 Ave. Apt 3  
Phoenix AZ 85015  
August 5, 1980

Body of Elders, Encanto Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses  
Phoenix, Arizona

Gentlemen:

Following the procedure outlined on pages 61 and 62 of the book “Pay Attention to Yourselves and to All the Flock” I am hereby providing written notice of my desire to voluntarily disassociate myself from the Encanto Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses and also from any association with the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. I have arrived at this decision after much prayer, Bible reading, and intensive personal study. I can no longer believe that the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society is God’s visible earthly organization.

I have no animosity towards anyone of Jehovah’s Witnesses. In my 15 years of association with the Witnesses I have known many wonderful people. Many have been true friends and very kind and helpful, even in a material way. I would say all of them were sincere. They have not been perfect, but neither have I been perfect. They are still in my thoughts and prayers.

I know this hurts Doris very much. Even though it hurts to be the cause of her pain I feel I must proceed with this voluntary disassociation. Since my wife desires to remain a Witness I ask the congregation not to forget her. I know you will do what you can to help her, but I wanted you to know that I will not oppose such aid.

I request when announcement is made to the congregation of my action that it is made clear that this is a voluntary action on my part. You are free to show this letter to anyone you wish as an explanation why I have taken this action.

Sincerely,

David T. Brown

September 25, 1980

Dear Friends:

I am enclosing some scriptures and some thoughts that helped me to see that I did not have “the Truth.” (John 14:6) These have helped me to come to Him. (John 6:68, 69) He invites you to come to Him, too. (Matthew 11:28-30)
Hebrews 7:3
This is speaking of how Melchizedek is a type of the Son of God:

"In being fatherless, motherless, without genealogy, having neither a beginning of days nor an end of life, but having been made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually."

In what way is the Son of God without beginning of days or end of life?

John 1:1

"In the beginning the Word was ... "

Is this saying that the Word existed before creation? That, in the beginning, place it where you may, the Word already existed?

Compare the New English Bible rendering of John 1:1-4:

"When all things began, the Word already was. The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was. The Word, then, was with God at the beginning, and through him all things came to be; no single thing was created without him. All that came to be was alive with his life, and that life was the light of men."

Colossians 1:15

Can the expression "firstborn of all creation" have another explanation than meaning that Jesus was God's first creation? Again the New English Bible (Colossians 1:15-20):

"He is the image of the invisible God; his is the primacy over all created things. In him everything in heaven and on earth was created, not only things visible but also the invisible orders of thrones, sovereignties, authorities, and powers: the whole universe has been created through him and for him. And he existed before everything, and all things are held together in him. He is, moreover, the head of the body, the church. He is its origin, the first to return from the dead, to be in all things alone supreme. For in him the complete being of God, by God's own choice, came to dwell. Through him God chose to reconcile the whole universe to himself, making peace through the shedding of his blood upon the cross -- to reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven, through him alone."

Compare Genesis 41:51,52 with Jeremiah 31:9; Psalm 89:27. On Colossians 1:19, compare with Colossians 2:9 in the Emphatic Diaglott, Byington, and other recent versions. Also see Emphatic Diaglott (page 889) under "Firstborn." At Colossians 1:15 "Firstborn" is a statement of position, not priority in time.
Revelation 3:14

Similarly, can the expression "the beginning of the creation by God" ("the beginning of the creation of the God" - Kingdom Interlinear) have the meaning given in the New International Version?:

"These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation."

(Compare Revelation 1:5). New Testament Greek lexicons give "origin" as another meaning for beginning.

Proverbs 8:22-31

Can we be positive this applies to Christ? (Read Proverbs chapters 1-9. Wisdom and foolishness are contrasted.) Does Proverbs 8:3,4 apply to Christ?

If we can say Proverbs 8:22 applies to Christ -- many versions translate it Jehovah "possessed" me, etc. After all, when has Jehovah been without wisdom? See Green's Interlinear Old Testament, NIV, NASB.

Hebrews 1:10-12

This passage quotes Psalm 102:25-27 (LXX) and applies it to Christ:

"And: 'You at the beginning, O Lord, laid the foundations of the earth itself, and the heavens are the works of your hands. They themselves will perish, but you yourself are to remain continually; and just like an outer garment they will all grow old, and you will wrap them up just as a cloak, as on outer garment; and they will be changed, but you are the same, and your years will never run out.'"

In Psalm.102 this statement is definitely speaking about Jehovah. Does this identify Jesus as Jehovah?

Other examples:

1 Peter 2:3 says:

"... provided you have tasted that the Lord is kind."

This is shown to be speaking about Jesus in the next verse (1 Peter 2:4): "Coming to him as to a living stone, rejected, it is true, by men, but chosen, precious with God." 1 Peter 2:3 is a reference to Psalm 34:8 (LXX): "Taste and see that Jehovah is good ... " [Comparison of the interlinear with the Greek Septuagint (LXX) shows the phrases to be identical.]

Is Peter calling Jesus "Jehovah" in this place?
COLOSSIANS 1:16-21

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The Kingdom Interlinear Translation

The image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation;
16 by means of him all things [other] things were created through him and for him.
17 He is before all things, and in him all things consist.
18 He is the head of the body, the church; in him the fullness of Deity was pleased to dwell,
19 and through him to reconcile all things to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven.


FIRST-BEGOTTEN, FIRSTBORN

PRÓTÔTOKOS (πρωτότοκος), firstborn (from prósos, first, and tíkhe, to beget), is used of Christ as born of the Virgin Mary, Luke 2:7; further, in His relationship to the Father, expressing His priority to, and preeminence over, creation, not in the sense of being the first to be born. It is used occasionally of superiority of position in the O.T.; see Ex. 4:22; Deut. 21:16, 17, the prohibition against the evil of assigning the privileged position of the firstborn to one born subsequently to the first child.

The five passages in the N.T. relating to Christ may be set forth chronologically thus: (a) Col. 1:15, where His eternal relationship with the Father is in view, and the clause means both that He was the Firstborn before all creation and that He Himself produced creation (the genitive case being objective, as ver. 16 makes clear); (b) Col. 1:18 and Rev. 1:5, in reference to His resurrection; (c) Rom. 8:29, His position in relationship to the Church; (d) Heb. 1:6, R.V., His Second Advent (the R.V. “when He again bringeth in,” puts “again” in the right place, the contrast to His First Advent, at His Birth, being implied); cp. Ps. 89:27.

The word is used in the plural, in Heb. 11:28, of the firstborn sons in the families of the Egyptians, and in 12:23, of the members of the Church.

Note: With (a) cp. John 1:30, “He was before me,” lit., “He was first (prósos) of me,” i.e., “in regard to me,” expressing all that is involved in His pre-existence and priority.

Rev. 3:14 (Kingdom Interlinear Translation):

Compare Rev. 1:5 (K.I.T.):
Rev. 3:14 (NIV)

14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

15 There is a voice in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and of the twenty-four elders: "Who is like God?"

16 "Who is like the living God?"

17 And in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and of the elders I saw a lampstand, like that of a temple, with seven lamps; and the seven lamps are seven spirits of God. 18 And before him was a small lake of crystal water, clear as glass.

19 Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass like crystal, with in it, as it were, a rainbow in the form of an emerald. 20 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white linen, with golden crowns on their heads.

21 And from the throne came voices saying, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

22 So I heard every voice from the throne saying, "Come and take the blessing of the living God!"

23 And I heard every voice in heaven saying, "Amen! Praise be to our God who is seated on the throne, who is the Lamb!"

24 And the four living creatures said, "Amen! And let God be praised!"

25 And the elders fell down and worshiped."
The prophecy of Isaiah 40:3-5:

"Listen! Someone is calling out in the wilderness: 'Clear up the way of Jehovah, you people! Make the highway for our God through the desert plain straight. Let every valley be raised up, and every mountain and hill be made low. And the knobby ground must become level land, and the rugged ground a valley plain. And the glory of Jehovah will certainly be revealed, and all flesh must see it together, for the very mouth of Jehovah has spoken it.'"

Matthew 3:1-3, Mark 1:1-4, Luke 3:2-6, and John 1:23 apply this to John the Baptist's preparatory work before the ministry of Jesus. Is John the Baptist calling Jesus Jehovah?

Isaiah 8:13-15:

"Jehovah of armies . . . And he must become as a sacred place; but as a stone to strike against and as a rock over which to stumble to both houses of Israel, as a trap and as a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them will be certain to stumble and to fall and be broken, and to be snared and caught."

1 Peter 2:8: "and 'a stone of stumbling and a rock-mass of offense.' These are stumbling because they are disobedient to the word. To this very end they were also appointed." (Compare also Luke 20:18) If Jesus is Jehovah, would that not be a stone of stumbling for the Jews?

Isaiah 8:12b,13:

"The object of their fear you men must not fear, nor must you tremble at it. Jehovah of armies - he is the one whom you should treat as holy . . . "

1 Peter 3:14b,15: "However, the object of their fear do not you fear, neither become agitated. But sanctify the Christ as Lord in your hearts . . . ."

Joel 2:32 and Romans 10:9-15:

"And everyone who calls on Jehovah's name will come off safe; for on Mount Sion and in Jerusalem there will be escape, as Jehovah has said, and among the survivors whom Jehovah calls." (Byington)

"Because if by your mouth you acknowledge Jesus to be Lord, and in your heart you believe that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with a heart believing is done leading to righteousness, and it is with a mouth acknowledgement is made leading to salvation. For the text
Anyone who believes in him will not be put to shame; for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same one is Lord of all, rich toward all who call on him; for everyone who shall call on the name of the Lord ("the name of Jehovah" - NWT) shall be saved."

Compare Acts 2:21,33,36,38. For the identity of the "him" in verse 11 see Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:6. Who is being referred to in Romans 10:13-15?

Hebrews 1:6

"But when he again brings his First-born into the inhabited earth, he says: 'And let all God's angels worship him.'"

This is quoted from Psalm 97:7 and Deuteronomy 32:43 (in the Septuagint and also in the Dead Sea scroll of Deuteronomy) and the "him" referred to is Jehovah God. Yet Hebrews applies it to Jesus Christ. Does this identify Jesus as God, worthy of worship as the Father is worthy of worship? Does this identify Jesus with Jehovah? Also, does the fact that all of the angels are commanded to worship him make Jesus not an angel, but superior to them? (compare Hebrews 1:4)

The Father is Greater

Can the scriptures that speak of the subordinating of the Son to the Father (like John 14:28; 1 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Corinthians 15:27,28, etc.) be explained by Jesus' voluntary emptying of himself to take the form of a humble slave -- as stated in Philippians 2:5-11?:

"Have in you, each of you, this same mind as in Christ Jesus, who, when he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as a prize, but emptied himself, taking slave form, coming into the likeness of humanity; and, being found as it were a man in guise, he humbled himself to become obedient down to death, the death of a cross; for which very reason God raised him supremely high and granted him the name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee of what is in heaven and what is on earth and what is underground should bend and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Byington)

Compare Isaiah 45:22,23.

Jesus is LORD!

"For this reason I make it known to you that nobody speaking in the Spirit of God says 'Jesus is accursed,' and nobody can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in Holy Spirit." 1 Corinthians 12:3 (Byington)
Why does acknowledging Jesus to be Lord require the operation of God's Spirit? Do the implications of the statement "Jesus is Lord" stagger the human mind to require the help of the Holy Spirit?

**John 20:28**

"In answer Thomas said to him: 'My Lord and my God!"

Was it proper for Thomas to make this statement? Is it proper for Christians today to make the same statement?

**Romans 8:9**

"But you are not in flesh but in spirit, if God's Spirit does reside in you; but if anybody does not have Christ's Spirit, that man is not his." (Byington)

What do the parallel expressions "God's Spirit" and "Christ's Spirit" indicate as to the relationship of the Father and the Son?

Compare Acts 16:6,7:

"And they went through Phrygian-Galatian country, being forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in the province of Asia, and came up to Mysia and tried to take a course into Bithynia but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them; and they went past Mysia and down to Troas." (Byington)

**John 5:17,18**

"But he answered them: 'My Father has kept working until now, and I keep working.' On this account, indeed, the Jews began seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath but he was also calling God his own Father, making himself equal to God."

Is the apostle John saying that Jesus claimed equality with God? In verses 22 and 23 of the same chapter Jesus says:

"For the Father judges no one at all, but he has committed all the judging to the Son, in order that all must honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He that does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him."

The New English Bible on these same 2 verses reads:

"And again, the Father does not judge anyone, but has given full jurisdiction to the Son; it is his will that all should pay the same honor to the Son as to the Father. To deny honor to the Son is to deny it to the Father who sent him."

Can a created being receive the same honor as the Creator?
Isaiah 9:6

"For there has been a child born to us, there has been a son given to us; and the princely rule will come to be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."

In the next chapter (Isaiah 10:20, 21) it says:

"And it will certainly occur in that day that those remaining over of Israel and those who have escaped of the house of Jacob will never again support themselves upon the one striking them, and they will certainly support themselves upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in trueness. A mere remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God."

Who is this Mighty God?

Luke 10:22

"All things have been delivered to me by my Father, and who the Son is no one knows but the Father; and who the Father is, no one knows but the Son, and he to whom the Son is willing to reveal him."

Can the Son only be comprehended by the Father? Why?

John 16:13-15

"However, when that one arrives, the spirit of the truth... That one will glorify me, because he will receive from what is mine and will declare it to you. All the things that the Father has are mine. That is why I said he receives from what is mine and declares it to you." [Compare John 17:10.]

What does Jesus mean that 'all things that the Father has are mine'? What does this show about their relationship?

John 14:14

"If you ask me anything in my name I will do it." (Byington) "If ever anything you should ask me in the name of me this I shall do." (Kingdom Interlinear). "If you ask anything in my name, I will do it." (New World Translation)

Why does the New World Translation leave out the word "me"? Is it proper to petition or ask Christ concerning things we desire?
Comparing Scripture with Scripture

Is John 12:40,41 a reference to Isaiah 6:3-5,10?

Is Ephesians 4:7-10 a quotation and reference to Psalm 68:15-18? Who is referred to in Psalm 68 and in Ephesians?

Is there parallelism in these titles and functions?: Jeremiah 11:20; 17:10; 20:12. Compare Revelation 2:23.
2 Thessalonians 1:9. Compare Isaiah 2:21 (Septuagint).
Isaiah 45:22,23. Compare Rom. 14:9-12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Philippians 2:10.

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

1] Is there any clear, direct statement in the Bible that says Jehovah created Jesus?

2] Why are the New Testament writers so free in applying passages about Jehovah in the Old Testament to Christ? Can we do so today?

3] Is there any clear, direct statement in the Bible that pointedly says Jesus is not Jehovah? If the teaching that Jesus is not Jehovah is true, would we not expect such a statement or some sort of explanation for the N.T. writers' application of the divine name to Jesus?

4] Is there any clear, direct statement in the Bible that pointedly says Jesus is not God? (If you are using the New World Translation for your reply -- be sure to compare it with versions like Byington, New International Version, New American Standard, etc.)

5] Are there places in the Bible where Christ is called Jehovah?

6] Are there places in the Bible where Christ is called God?
IS THE HOLY SPIRIT A PERSON OR A FORCE?

The scriptures tell us the Holy Spirit:

I. Has Will: (1 Corinthians 12:11) "wills"  
"Forbids" and "Permits" - Acts 16:6, 7  
"Appoints" leaders - Acts 20:28

II. Has Mind: (Romans 8:27) "minds"  
"Knows" - 1 Corinthians 2:11  
"Thinks" - Acts 15:28

III. Has Feelings: (Isaiah 63:10) "feel hurt"  
"Outraged" - Hebrews 10:29  
"Saddened" - Ephesians 4:30  
"Love" - Romans 15:30 (cf. Romans 12:1)

IV. Has Ability To Hear: (John 16:13) "hears"

V. Has Speech: (1 Timothy 4:1) "says explicitly"  
"Spirit of Jehovah spoke" - 2 Samuel 23:2  
"Thus says the Holy Spirit" - Acts 21:11  
"What the Spirit says to the congregations"  
- Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22

VI. Has Self-Consciousness: (calls Himself "I")  
"The Spirit said...I..." - Acts 10:19, 20  
"The Holy Spirit said...I..." - Acts 13:2

VII. Personally Directs The Preaching Work:  
"I have called them." - Acts 13:2  
"The Spirit told me to go..." - Acts 11:12  
"The Spirit said...Approach..." - Acts 8:29  
"...you are not the ones speaking, but the Holy Spirit is." - Mark 13:11

VIII. Treated As A Person: (or "mistreated")  
"Lied to" - Acts 5:3  
"Tempted" - Acts 5:9  
"Blasphemed" - Matthew 12:31  
"Spoken against" - Matthew 12:32
IX. Functions As A Person: (could a force be ...) "Another Helper" - John 14:16

[Jesus Christ, our personal Helper, (1 John 2:1) promised to send Another (allon - "of the same kind") personal Helper to take his place on earth while he went to the Father.]

One Who "Pleads" for us - Romans 8:26, 27 [Our Helper on earth (the Spirit) pleads for us - exactly as Our Helper in heaven (the Christ) pleads for us (Romans 8:34) cf. Hebrews 7:25.]

"God's Spirit Living in us" - Romans 8:9, 11 [The Spirit who "lives in us" (James 4:5 - cf. Ephesians 3:17) makes us "the Temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19) and also "the Temple of God" (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17).]

"That Person [who] reminds you" - John 14:26
"That Person* exposing the world" - John 16:8
"That Person* testifying about Me [Christ], and you [twelve persons] also testify" - John 15:26, 27 also Acts 5:32

X. Named "Jehovah": (2 Corinthians 3:17)

*ekeinos = "that he" or "that male person"

Early Christian writers taught the Holy Spirit is a Person. There is a statement or two by Justin Martyr and Hippolytus that might seem to indicate otherwise, but a thorough reading of their writings reveals they viewed the Holy Spirit as a Person. The teaching that the Holy Spirit is not a Person is of comparative recent origin. Even Arius of the fourth century A.D., who was one of the first to deny the Deity of Christ, did not deny the personality of the Holy Spirit. 'The noblest of the Son's creations' was his viewpoint of the Spirit.

It is true that in the pagan Greek language the word "spirit" is neuter in gender. However, God saw fit to use this universal language of the day to communicate His thoughts. W.E. Vine in his An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words expresses some thoughts on this and also on the reason why the Greek words for "Holy Spirit" sometimes lack the definite article ("the"): "Sometimes the absence (of the definite article) is to be accounted for by the fact that Pneuma (like Theos) is substantially a proper name ... The personality of the Spirit is emphasized at the expense of strict grammatical procedure in John 14:26; 15:26; 16:8,13,14, where the emphatic pronoun ekeinos, "He," is used of Him in the masculine, whereas the noun pneuma is neuter in Greek, while the corresponding word in Aramaic, the language in which our Lord probably spoke, is feminine (rucha, cf. Heb. ruach)" (pages 1076, 1077).
IS GOD A TRINITY?

The word "Trinity" does not appear in the Bible. Neither do words such as: "Bible," "Chronology," "Disfellowshipping," "Neutrality," "Organization," or "Theocracy." All of these terms have grown up to designate concepts taught (or thought to be taught) within the pages of "The Bible."

Does the "Bible" associate the Father, Son, and Spirit in such a way as to indicate they form a "Trinity"? Early Christians who were taught directly by Jesus Christ were ...

chosen: by God, the Father through sanctification of the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ - 1 Peter 1:2

baptized: in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit - Matthew 28:19

filled: with the Spirit singing praises to God in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ - Ephesians 5:18-20


Given: varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit varieties of ministries, but the same Lord varieties of functions, but the same God - 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

Praying: through Christ in the Spirit to the Father - Ephesians 2:18

Evidently, the early Christians who were taught directly by Jesus Christ spoke often of these three in connection with each other -- even though they did not use the term "Trinity."

"Praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ." - Jude 20

"Through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit exert yourselves with me in prayers to God." - Romans 15:30

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all! Amen!" - 2 Corinthians 13:14
The doctrine of the Trinity does not teach that there are 3 Gods in one God. Neither does it teach that Jesus is the Father, nor that the Holy Spirit is the Son, nor that the Holy Spirit is the Father, etc. The doctrine of the Trinity teaches there are 3 distinct Persons in one God. Admittedly this cannot be fully comprehended. But it is possible. (Luke 18:27) Humans cannot comprehend spiritual things fully -- especially some matters about God.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are separate Persons. Matthew 28:19 tells us they share a common "name." One name they share is the name "Jehovah." The Father is called Jehovah, the Son is called Jehovah, the Holy Spirit is called Jehovah. But Jehovah is One. The 3 are one God. (Compare Deuteronomy 6:4 with Genesis 2:24 where the same Hebrew word is used for "one.")

The Son is subject to the Father in accomplishing the redemption of mankind and in His serving as mediator between the Father and mankind. It is possible for 2 persons to still be equal even though one willingly subjects himself at times to the other (Compare Philippians 2:1-4 with Philippians 2:5-11, Byington).

A correct understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity explains how all 3 -- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit can each have Divine names, titles and attributes applied to them yet there still be only one God. Again, this is hard for humans to fully understand -- yet our worship of God should not be based on human reasoning, but on the divine revelation -- the Bible.
HEBREWS 1: 7–12

1. In the beginning, God created heaven and earth.

2. He was speaking to his angels, saying, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." And so he created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

3. And the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

4. And the LORD God said, "Let us make a cosmic garden, and place it in the center of the world, and let it have every kind of tree whose fruit will be good to eat and whose leaves will be good for food."

5. And the LORD God placed the man he had formed in the garden of Eden to tend it and keep it.

6. And the LORD God said to the man, "Adam, you are not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, or you will die."
mercy and judgment; the earth is full of the
mercy of the Lord. The word of the
Lord the heavens were established; and
all the host of them by the breath of His
mouth. He girded them with strength and
made all their borders. All the waters of
the sea as in a bottle; who lays up the
deeps in treasuries. Let all the earth fear
the Lord; and let all that dwell in the
world be moved because of him. For he
spoke, and they were created.

The Lord frustrates the counsels of the
nations; he brings to naught the devices of
the people. The counsel of the Lord stands
forever; the thoughts of his heart from gene-
teration to generation. Blessed is the
name of his glory. His mercy is on those
who fear him; and he hasenthis
righteousness to the children of men.
A horse is safe; neither shall he be deliver
cause of his power.

Psalm 33:10-22

1. I will bless the Lord, therefore I will bless his name; all for ever.
2. O Lord, thou hast spread out thy hands over all these things; thou art
the heavens, and all the waters that are in them.
3. For he spake, and they were created; he commanded, and they were

Psalm 119:97-108

1. How good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.
2. Surely the heavens are told of his righteousness; and the
3. The earth also is ailden with righteousness, for he executeth the
4. The Lord blessthe law, and through his word, doth he establish the
5. He is a block unto them that leap after vanity, and who praise him
6. His word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
7. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth
8. The Lord, in the greatness of his power, hath done for me great things; my
9. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is un
10. They are abundantly loosed, and are not bound; they are not bound
11. They are not bound.

Psalm 135:1-9

1. Give praise to the Lord, for he is good; his mercy is on those who fear him.
2. He gathereth up all the souls of the poor, and knoweth their
3. The heavens are the Lord's; and all the children of Zion are his.
4. He bringeth down princes from the seat of highness; and casts the
5. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the humble from
6. He setteth him on many high places; and ruleth over kings for
7. He gives saving health to Jacob; and upholds Israel for ever and ever.
1 Peter 3:8-17

8 Just as Kírós pros με, laid out on Stíatstó tóumov kíkív méga-
lov, laid out on the cross, what is good for me; let him lay it aside and let him seek
peace and let him pursue righteousness, for he is the Lord. "Because

9 Kírós laid him to the ground, and laid it aside, and laid it aside, and laid it aside,
and laid it aside, and laid it aside,
and let him be the Lord. "Tó yúmión, they are for the Lord, and they are for the Lord, and they are for the Lord, and they are for the Lord, and they are for the Lord.
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