

Seven Days: Vermont's Independent Voice

NOVEMBER 04, 2009

From Log Cabin in Vermont, Couple Fights Reclusive Religious Sect

POSTED BY ANDY BROMAGE ON NOVEMBER 04, 2009 AT 03:01 PM IN RELIGION, VERMONT, WEB/TECH | PERMALINK

What would you do if your upbringing inside a fundamentalist Christian community left you scarred and confused — and estranged from family members still inside the sect?

For Tim Twinam, a software developer living in Williston, Vermont, the answer was: Launch a website dedicated to re-connecting lost members driven apart from family and friends by the religion's "doctrine of separation."

Twinam was raised inside The Exclusive Brethren in 1960s England. He couldn't eat or socialize with anyone outside the sect, and TV, radio and university education were strictly forbidden. Internet is also banned.

Today he is the webmaster of Peebs.net, an online community made up of former members of The Exclusive Brethren, which is the subject of this week's Seven Days cover story.

Twinam, and his wife Sallie (pictured), have devoted the last four years to exposing the secrets of the reclusive Brethren and creating a network of "helpers" to assist those who want to leave the religion but don't know how.

Now the Brethren are suing the Twinams in Vermont federal court for copyright infringement, claiming Peebs.net downloaded Brethren-owned sermons and letters that are property of the Brethren.

Lawyers for the sect say they're just protecting their legal property. The Twinams say it's a lawsuit meant to silence their criticism by bleeding them dry financially.

Two attempts to settle the suit have failed and a third attempt is slated for later this month. Meantime, the Twinams told their story in the hope it would raise awareness about a relatively unknown religion with 43,000 worldwide followers, one they say wields outsize influence in the worlds of business and politics.

We've linked to the story here to allow readers to comment.

COMMENTS

I just wanted to add my support to all the information that Tim has given you. What you have been informed of is just the tip of the iceberg. The so called leading priests leading this cult have now got to a state of chronic neurosis over this whole affair. They have been living under the influence of a string of megalomaniac leaders who are losing control. They will fight tooth and nail to try and keep their actions secret from the world. This includes not caring for families and isolating family

members to the extent where they deny fathers access to their children. Older brothers and sisters are denied social interaction. If you are a family member who has been excluded, you are regarded as being dead. Many ex members, male and female alike often suffer severe physiological damage which takes years to recover and often they never seem to be able to do so.

I hope there will be more ex peebs who will have the courage to share their stories on this blog. I also pray that the judge presiding over this case will become aware of the devastation that the exclusive brethren have caused.

POSTED BY: PETE WADE | NOVEMBER 04, 2009 AT 05:42 PM

Why would an organization like this try and shut down the website if they are proud of what they are doing and have nothing to hide? And if it really is about copyright, wouldn't they want their ministry to reach a wider audience, for the betterment of society? Something very dodgy here, and good on the 'little people' for standing up to the bullies.

POSTED BY: PETER WILSON | NOVEMBER 04, 2009 AT 08:15 PM

To answer Peter Wilson's comment, I have read the items in question, and from the content may I assure you that no self respecting religious group would want to see that material in wide circulation.

Tim Twinam is merely a conduit for information gathered up from people all over the world who have been severely hurt by the members of the Exclusive Brethren, and the hurt continues from many years ago, caused by the breaking up of families, an act of treachery, aided and abetted by the Exclusive Brethren leadership. The organization is corrupt in the extreme, and many published articles, books and radio and TV interviews given by the Exclusive Brethren only serve to show that they are elusive, sneaky and not what they preach. It's more a business than a place of worship.

Trying to shut up communicators like Twinam is not going to work. There are others ready and willing to step up to the plate and continue the quest for truth, and the healing of many broken hearts. Exclusive Brethren may say that the contributors to www.peebs.net are malcontents, disgruntled people who should not be heard. I am an ex EB, and can say that I have love and care for those trapped inside Exclusive Brethren, they are people that I was once privileged to call my brothers and sisters in Christ. That has not changed, but they need to know that there is support for them, genuine care and concern. Shutting information sites down wont change that, and I sincerely trust that the Judge in the court case takes into consideration the magnitude of the decision before him, and allows the maintenance of free speech in the United States of America.

POSTED BY: MICHAEL ALEXANDER | NOVEMBER 04, 2009 AT 10:07 PM

And where would a UK Charitable Trust whose objects on the charities database in the UK can be viewed by going to <http://tinyurl.com/mg4qec> and who on the same page state that their charity

benefits the 'General public/Mankind' find what must be by now, hundreds of thousands of dollars over 3 years pursuing this case?

Maybe the Exclusive Brethren's only living MINISTER OF THE LORD IN THE RECOVERY, BRUCE DAVID HALES of Australia (and whose name appears on the above Charity website), should be 'encouraged' to disclose how much input HE has in this case. As most know members can hardly sneeze without his permission.

Of course The Exclusive Brethren want to close Peebs.Net down. They did it to Dick's site and to Daniel's site. They have sent threatening legal letters to some of the members of Peebs.Net, telling them to stop posting to the site and to delete all their previous posts, or ELSE.

I am not an exEB but I am the wife of an exMember. I have seen UP CLOSE the destruction to families that the Exclusive Brethren Hierarchy have caused over the past 30 plus years.

There MUST be continued support for those who wish to leave and somehow the EB walls that divide families MUST be broken down so that family members can reunite.

POSTED BY: MARGARET | NOVEMBER 04, 2009 AT 10:40 PM

As an exEB,I can attest to the previous comments as being accurate. The main line ecumenical groups must realize that the Exclusive Brethren have wandered far from their roots as an Anglican-Episcopalian sect, and over the past 60 years have evolved into a cult of personality adept at exerting mind control, emotional persecution, sexism, intimidation and censorship while at the same time its leaders have enjoyed limitless personal power and financial gain. They have said, "Do not oppose us." The Exclusive Brethren "system" is much more compared to a political dictatorship than a church. The Twinams have picked up the torch from brave souls before who have worked to educate, enlighten and enable people who want to learn more about this group, people who need to heal from the wounds of having been in this group, and people who need the support to leave this group. May the presiding judge find the insight and wisdom to rule justly in this landmark case.

POSTED BY: BLUESTAR | NOVEMBER 05, 2009 AT 01:07 AM

The Exclusive Brethren appear to forget this is a democracy with the constitutionally entrenched rights of free speech and association-albeit in cyberspace,as they try to curtail both by fear and intimidation,anybody who dares to exercise those freedoms.

In fact,although they would stoutly deny it ,any casual observer would see little or no difference between the doctrines and coersive intimidation tactics of the Exclusive Brethren and those of David Koresh[Waco] or Jim Jones[Jonestown mass suicide]as they in a strange paradox use their virtually bottomless coffers to use the democratically developed legal system to enforce what some have described as their version of fundamentalist Muslim sharia law on those who would dare to speak out in protest

POSTED BY: PETER CLARKE | NOVEMBER 05, 2009 AT 08:52 AM

My husband was in the Exclusive Brethren and I have seen first hand how he has been treated by it's members.

When he said he wanted to leave because he didn't agree with new teaching, he was subjected to nightly brainwashing sessions as he tried to sleep, until neighbours called the police, who came to the house and issued warnings that it had to stop and that they would be watching the house.

The Exclusive Brethren and all their many Trusts are registered as charities, yet it appears that no outsider is able to get into the meetings - I know because I have tried. They claim that they are the only ones that God speaks to today, and yet they refuse to share what God has revealed to them. Even suing someone they say has copied these "messages from God" to share with others.

How and why can they receive Charity Status and all the accompaning tax relief, when they disallow all outsiders, and even refuse to eat with them?

My husband's family say that my husband is dead. None of them attended our wedding, and have never informed us of family events including births, marrages and deaths.

Education is restricted, within their own schools, for which they receive Government help, but ask them to name even one of their number, educated within their system who has a degree? They say they allow it, but where is the evidence?

Peebs.net is a lifeline to families like us who have been cut off from their real families. Tim and Sal are HEROES for all their hard work and what they have endured to keep peebs.net active. Surely the Exclusive Brethren's action here is infringing our Human Rights to communicate with likeminded people, who have now become friends, replacing our EB families. They say they don't want to shut down the site, but they have already shut down the two previous sites, and it appears that any deal with Tim and Sal will involve them closing the site. The Exclusive Brethren have

cut us off from our families and now they are seeking to cut us off from our friends.

Please help our site survive, we need it and all Tim and Sal have done is give selflessly to support ex-EBs and those who want to leave the Exclusive Brethren.

POSTED BY: KATE | NOVEMBER 05, 2009 AT 09:38 AM

I have been contributing to one of the most viewed threads on peebs.net as "Spoof Reading" - over 180,000 views so far where I take a satirical poke at the leaders of the Exclusive Brethren; it provides some light relief to both myself and contributors and viewers alike as to the very real suffering this evil cult has and continues to do in damaging lives.

The attempt by Bruce Hales and his cohorts to shut this site down will only cause further pain to ex members who believe me have suffered more than enough at the hands of these dead set evil EB.

Enough is enough and this cult are headed down the track already gone by Jim Jones, David Koresh to name just two lots who in their words.."are the only right position!!"

This site must remain open at all costs.

I use the pseudonm for fear for my family member still locked in this awful cult who would be picked on because of me.

POSTED BY: FRED FLINTSTONE | NOVEMBER 05, 2009 AT 09:43 PM

I would like to say that Tim & Sallie Twinam have been instrumental in helping save people's lives. I personally know of one man who was about to take his life, is an exbrethren, didnt know anything about the peeps.net website, decided to google the words 'exclusive brethren', up came the peeps.net website, and he visited that site, and says that it suddenly gave him hope, that there were many other people across the world who shared the same pain as he did. Suffice to say he is a lot better and enjoying life. He says that the peeps.net website was a lifesaver for him. I also use a pseudonym due to the fact I write on the peeps.net website with strong comments relating to the cruel, ruthless and destructive actions of the exclusive brethren.

POSTED BY: SETTIMO | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 12:08 AM

As the only person in my family to have been thrown out of the Peebs I found reading the threads on Peebs net a great comfort in my loneliness. I missed my family hugely and although I made new friends, no-one that hasn't been there can possibly understand such a background. After over 20 years more family members have escaped but I still use my pseudonym so those still trapped are not persecuted. Keep going Tim and Sallie, your work is literally life saving!

POSTED BY: JAYCEE | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 01:12 AM

After my husband left the Exclusive Brethren, he fought and gained access through the courts, to his 6 children. He settled for visitation rights every Saturday at their house, but this caused more grief for both him and the children.

Always there were barriers placed in the way of these meetings with his children. There were always "OVERSEERS" EB elders... standing like guards at the home of the ex-wife and children. They were very much like Bruce Hales. They didn't speak, they just stared and stood like little tin soldiers with arms folded - as each of my husband's children entered the room as a solo act. Stood looking their Dad in the eye and stated - "We don't want to see you... until you GET RIGHT with the Lord... You have the devil in you..." (exit stage right)

This child was then replaced by the next youngest, entrance - statement - exit the same as the one before. Etc etc etc - until the littlest one of all who was only 5 yrs of age... quoted the exact same words as her older brothers and sisters and also ran from the room.

My husband - the birth father of these children was left standing in an empty room with several EB ELDERS - standing like dummies - arms folded - staring at him, until he decided to turn and walk away. My husband tried to converse with them, but he may as well have been talking to the wall.

How many times is a birth father expected to accept this kind of mental abuse? No matter the number. There comes a time when the father decides his actions are not helpful to his children, to himself, or his future....

THEN IT STOPS! The umbilical cord is cut. The pain is obvious.

Where does this father go for support? He has until now, confided in one or two only, outside the Exclusive Brethren. His past in the Exclusive Brethren is all too difficult to explain and attempting to do so opens the wounds that are trying so hard to heal.

This is the danger time for an exExclusive Brethren member and in the past some have committed suicide. Others close the door on their past, refuse to discuss it, attempt to rebuild their lives and create a new family for themselves. Often this approach doesn't work either, because the damage done to the individual has never been addressed. At this time their new non-EB husband or wife and maybe children of the new relationship are stuck between a rock and a hard place. Often they are unable to understand the problems that arise, and the exEB partner is unable and sometimes incapable of explaining.

This is where the importance of Peebs.Net comes to the fore.

As a wife of an exEB, my contact with others in my position on Peebs.Net has helped me understand many things about my husband.

Sharing information on Peebs.Net has assisted me greatly in understanding what the young Exclusive Brethren go through when they are ousted by the Brethren, so that I now feel more confident in offering my assistance to any Exclusive Brethren person who is either being ousted or has chosen of their own free will to leave.

Peebs.Net members do NOT stand outside the Gospel Halls, tempting the members to leave, BUT we would like it to be known that there IS support for those locked inside, when and if they need it. Hopefully this will assist in saving a life here and there.

Why do we do it? Because we have lived the need.

I am using my Peebs.Net name, as the EB hierarchy in Australia (led by Bruce Hales) has already unmasked me and sent me a threatening legal letter. He will also know the above story as it has previously been posted on Peebs.Net

POSTED BY: LADYKIWI | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 01:23 AM

Thank you for posting this article. The general public has a right to know what is happening to their tax dollars, and if our taxes go to a religious group who are happy to take the money but not willing

to treat the rest of the world in a Christian manner (love thy neighbour as thy self), then they need to be publicly scrutinised.

I applaud the Twinam's for their fight for what is right, and 'just' for the ex members of the Exclusive Brethren. Peebs.Net is a community, and clearly, the only support structure in existence for those who have been excommunicated or who have left the EB. It is also one of the only websites dedicated to collecting the entire history of this religious group (warts and all).

As an ordinary member of the public, and having never been a member of the EB, what the EB do in the name of "Christianity" NEVER ceases to amaze me. Peebs.Net must stay in place as an emergency refuge for those who can no longer follow the personality cult of Bruce Hales and his minions.

POSTED BY: ELLIE | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 02:42 AM

The USA have led the world in championing the cause of free speech...the malicious attempts to squash by money, bullying and contempt of all democratically elected governments around the world by the E.B. to shut up and shut down peebs.net is a huge violation of free speech. These proven liars who have damaged countless lives through malicious motivation are doing all they can to hurt as many ex EB for two reasons...to scare "wobblers", (still locked inside the EB) into staying through fear, and out of vindictiveness to bankrupt anyone who criticises Bruce D Hales Inc.. They have not been hurt one whim by peebs.net and the benefit to the wider community and especially ex members trying to find a way through life outside the fettered rules of being inside the EB are enormous.

Picking like vultures on the flimmiest of flimsy at Tim & Sallie Twinam is despicable and only shows up further the wretchedness and rottenness of who these people really are.

POSTED BY: FRED FLINTSTONE | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 03:02 AM

This is written under a pseudonym due to fear of being pursued and sent broke by the litigious Exclusive Brethren hierarchy.

Tim and Sal Twinam are before the court for only one reason.....The Top Dog in the Exclusive Brethren has authorised the expenditure of huge amounts of "church" money to silence legitimate criticism of his inhumane pseudo-religious money machine. No-one, repeat NO-ONE, inside the Exclusive Brethren, including the Bible and Gospel Trust(BGT) would dare to initiate, let alone continue, legal action of this nature without the specific command of the so-called Man of God (MOG). To do so would mean they would risk expulsion, which in turn would mean they would be completely severed from, and rejected by, their spouse, siblings, parents, children and friends - for life. Additionally they would lose their home and occupation. Yet some individuals choose to leave the Exclusive Brethren and pay that cruel price rather than suffer the mental torture of trying to reconcile the constant clash of doing business in the name of "religion" under the minute control of an enforcer.

By airing this story, Seven Days has done a favour to taxpayers in many countries. The Exclusive Brethren is a profit-making business in disguise and must be investigated to ensure that many millions of dollars in taxpayer funds are not immorally directed to the bottom line of an extensive international web of trust companies directly or indirectly controlled by the MOG, a Sydney accountant.

The Twinam/BGT court case is driven by the need of the Exclusive Brethren hierarchy to protect their profit-making concerns - to enable it to continue to fly under the radar. It has nothing to do with legitimate copyright, nor religion. It is about free speech.

POSTED BY: OBSERVANT1 | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 03:18 AM

When we were contemplating leaving the Exclusive Brethren we knew that we would be ostracised, which means: no contact of any description, dis-inheritance, no news of the deaths of family members. In our minds we faced this; but the reality of experiencing this separation has been harder than we thought.

The Hales brethren never relent in the determined separation they enforce. My friends and my sister have not contacted us for 35 years. It is like a bereavement but the people are still alive.

The site Peebs net with its over 60000 contributions has helped many, helping exBrethren deal with their loss by separation.

POSTED BY: OVER60EXEB | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 03:19 AM

When my 'still in' EB mother died (as an ex-eb I had not seen her or spoken with her for almost 25 years) I was notified 10 minutes after she had passed away, not having been told she was even ill.

When a couple of years later my elderly father was ill I was thankfully notified and was able to visit. Initially the visit was to be supervised but I refused to do this. This was during a brief mellowing of separation following adverse publicity. When he died I was notified but then a few days later told that the funeral had already taken place at 6.30 in the morning.

To have been able to share this with people who both understood and even believed my story (my non ex EB friends sometimes think I am making it all up) was a lifeline offered only by the peeps.net website so courageously managed by Tim and Sally.

POSTED BY: JACK | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 04:20 AM

I know how the Exclusive Brethren operate as I used to be a member.

They want the site closed down so that the public and the authorities are not made aware of what they do. Their normal approach when dealing with such things is to prolong litigation until the poorest party (never them) collapses. In this case they will hope that peeps.net falls over from lack

of funds. Then if this fails they will offer cash for the site (even though they say they don't want to close it down) at the very last minute. The Exclusive Brethren have often settled on the steps of the court when they have failed to bleed their opponent dry and are about to lose a case designed to break their opponents.

I hope that this judge has done his homework and can see through these people, they have a lot to answer for.

POSTED BY: ANON | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 04:44 AM

Peebs.net is a useful website for many reasons. It is a source of information for those who want to learn more about the people they are employed by or who they deal with in business.

It is a vital website for those exBrethren who have been out in the 'wilderness' thinking they were the only ones. It is heartening to see people make connections, have a common bond with others, and understand the ordeal others went through. It is also a place that new leavers and intending leavers can seek nonjudgemental support and friendship.

I have been delighted to see people grow and develop as they work their way through the pain and hurt of having been separated from family. Peebs.net has given them this emotional life line.

Why do the Exclusive Brethren think they have a right to quieten anyone if the accounts are not favourable. Criticism is part of life. Ask a politician about it; ask the Catholic church. If the criticism is not correct, prove it.

Do they shut down every psychologist who treats an exmember and hears criticism in their regular consultations?

Will all other social networking and support websites be threatened with legal action if they show any opposition or disagreement towards someone or something? Will alcohol companies try to shut down websites which support those who have had bad experiences with alcohol?

What do Exclusive Brethren fear? If they have the courage of their convictions then they have nothing to fear.

Peebs.net website must not be allowed to be beaten by the stick of a minority group who continue to believe that they are the 'only true church' This website is too valuable for the information and friendships it provides.

POSTED BY: PEBBLES | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 04:48 AM

The EB exist on cover ups and lies. Covering up evil in the form of one of their so-called great leaders Jim Taylor of New York caught in bed with a naked married EB woman and passed off as being an "ambush" to sort out opposers from the true line!!!. The man was an alcoholic as was his follow on Universal Leader the North Dakota Tax Evading Pig Farmer Jim Symington.

The present day leader is a slithery rat from Sydney Australia who is worth billions of dollars extorted from poor brain washed ordinary EB...make no mistakes about it this guy is totally behind the push to discredit two ordinary citizens of the USA Tim and Sal Twinam and shut up free speech.

Get behind this America..This is the land of the free!

POSTED BY: TELL THE TRUTH | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 04:48 AM

In the Might v. Site article, the Exclusive Brethren led by Bruce D Hales are described as a “vindictive sect” and their leaders as “vindictive individuals”. The use of that particular adjective to describe a purportedly Christian group and its leaders has shocked me, even though three years ago I was warned by a member of this fellowship that “Brethren have taken persons to court for making serious inaccurate allegations against them or our leaders”.

In truth, I don’t know whether this Exclusive Brethren group is revengeful or not, but there is plenty of documented evidence that they are merciless as they evict people permanently from their birth families in pursuit of their own ecclesiastical ends. The great sadness behind all this is that only about fifty years ago it would have been possible to write positively about members of this group - they would have been described then as generally reserved, but kind and educated Christian people; but in the 1960s the then leader, James Taylor Jnr from New York, drew up the drawbridge and instructed his followers to treat other people - including close family members and other Christian believers - as “unclean associations” or “spiritual fornicators”. Since then the cruelty of this group has been so intense that some ejected members have been driven to suicide, and in one case murder. A terrible cost is still exacted from both members and former members, so it’s vital that Sallie and Tim Twinam should be allowed to continue their work of providing an online refuge for those whom Bruce D Hales and his Exclusive Brethren have rejected.

The world needs to know exactly what goes on behind the “Bible and Gospel Trust” facade.

POSTED BY: JOAN | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 05:09 AM

True Story.

An Old man in his late 80’s relaxes in his bed in a local Rest Home.

He is visited by two men in suits. He has no idea who these men are, apart from one being older, and the other being younger.

They announce to him that his Wife has passed away. The old man is bewildered and very upset that his wife had passed away.

The two men in suits leave.

The Rest Home management phones the person on their books as the Next of Kin. This is the eldest son of the Old Man who is also an exEB

This Old Man and his Wife (who was now deceased) were separated by the Exclusive Brethren approx 15 yrs previously because the EB made a rule that alcohol should be taken daily and the Old Man refused to have the "Devil's Water" in his home. So one day when he was out, his youngest son came to the home and removed his Mother and approximately half of the furniture while his Old Father was absent.

The two men, who visited the Old man, were his son and grandson. And he recognised neither of them because he hadn't seen them for approx 15 yrs.

Funeral Time.

The Old man and his exEB son were refused admittance to the Exclusive Brethren Church Service, so they waited at the cemetery to farewell the Mother and exWife.

Even then it was a struggle as the Exclusive Brethren members closed ranks around the grave. The Son with his Father in a wheelchair shuffled him as close to the grave as possible but was forced back by the Exclusive Brethren members around them.

Finally it was decided to let the Brethren "DO THEIR THING" and the father and son said a private farewell to a dearly loved Mother and Wife... who through no fault of their own, or hers, were forced into separation by the Exclusive Brethren Cult.

The only way these memories can be lived with is by them being shared and in gaining the knowledge that you are not the only one who has been through such a trauma.

Peebs.Net provides this. There is no other place. It would be criminal if this service was closed.

POSTED BY: VIVID MEMORIES | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 06:26 AM

When I left the Exclusive Brethren I went from being a daughter to a nobody. In the eyes of the Exclusive Brethren I had never been born. So why are the Exclusive Brethren concerned about a life-line for 'dead' people?

Tim and Sallie have brought me back to life. Their dedication to this site for me has provided me with comfort in times of sorrow, joy in times of happiness and the opportunity to reconnect with friends from my past. I don't have my birth family but I do have my peeps.net family and that means the world to me. I would be so broken without this site.

POSTED BY: I ONCE WAS A DAUGHTER | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 07:58 AM

Even though I am an outsider (I have never been an EB) I have learnt so much from all of the wonderful people at peeps.net. Please don't allow the EB shut down this site.

Cheers to you both Tim and Sallie.

POSTED BY: JO | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 08:21 AM

I'm glad we can provide a forum for all of these comments, but I want to remind everyone posting here to keep this conversation civil. We will take down any comments containing implied or explicit threats, as per our commenting policy.

<http://www.7dvt.com/blog-commenting-policy>

Thanks,

-- Cathy Resmer

Online Editor

POSTED BY: CATHY RESMER | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 09:23 AM

The Exclusive Brethren publicly claim they are "not trying to shut down Peebs .net" yet at the SAME time propose the "Wyman solution"-which resulted in doing exactly that-shutting down a prior public forum where people could meet, exchange information and support each other-precisely what peebs.net facilitates.

While at first glance this lawsuit may seem to be a minor tempest in a teapot confined to a relatively few members and ex members,the taxpayers should know that multi millions of their tax dollars in government funds support the Exclusive Brethren,and be asking questions why the Exclusive brethren are throwing huge sums in an effort to shut down this public form-what is there that they are so keen to hide?Is it their finances?is it sexual abuse that has gone on for decades and is now just coming to light? is it their version of sharia law they impose on their members?Up to now the Exclusive Brethen have managed to maintain rigid control over their members by "shutting up" anyone daring to speak out,isolating them from any contact....and while peebs net cannot stop them ,at least it brings it into the light of day

Beyond the human interest factor of the personal accounts,tragic and heartrending though they be-public money is involved here-and the public has a right to know...and the ONLY window into this cult is peebs.net....no wonder they want to shut it down,questions are beginning to be being asked of this group that claims to be "the highest court in the land"-questions the Exclusive brethren don't want to answer....

POSTED BY: ANON. | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 09:24 AM

There can be no doubt that this litigation is about suppressing the truth and continuing the deception.

Peebs.net is dangerous for the Exclusive Brethren because the movement now survives on the basis of continuing lies and Peebs.net blows their cover. It records in one place vital historical information not disclosed to those "inside" and which is a great help to those who are thrown out or leave. Such people have been subjected to lies and mind control and need some way of researching the truth.

Through this site many have been able to connect with others who can understand their pain. The horror stories of abuse and cruelty go on and on (I could tell you many) and irreparable damage has been done.

All of this in the name of the Lord who has been so evilly misrepresented!

POSTED BY: FEAR NO MORE | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 09:24 AM

These brethren split up my happy family and I haven't seen my wife or 3 of my children for twenty six years. I also had experiences similar to what Ladykiwi posted above. A court ordered that my seven year old boy visit me, but, rather than comply, a "priest" delivered nasty, hateful, notes, which my son had been encouraged to write on toilet paper. That hurt!!! This group does not respect court judgements nor deal honestly. The website has put me in touch with persons the other side of the world and I have found that dishonesty is the norm in every country.

POSTED BY: FREE, FREE AT LAST! | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 12:22 PM

My concern that this group of people lie so often they forget what they have stated in the past, and then tell more lies to try to cover up. How can any Judge trust what they will say in court? The legal system in every country must be made aware of this so called group of so called Christians.

POSTED BY: POKER FACE | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 12:58 PM

LADYKIWI. What a sad, sad, story. You and your husband have my deepest sympathy. The children deserve protection from this kind of abuse by unqualified and self-appointed 'priests'. Sadly, this is not a one-off event, an over-zealous leader going too far... THIS IS THE NORM with the Exclusive Brethren. I know, I had the same.

Peebs.net, thanks for the wonderful service that you provide to us who have managed to get free of the Exclusive Brethren. It's a place to communicate with others who understand where we are coming from and who are supportive. It's a source of information that is very useful to the friends, carers and professionals who try and pick up the pieces after the abuse, and attempt to bring the victims back to some form of normality. Without the provision of peeps.net, it would be a lot more difficult. Thank you so much.

POSTED BY: ANON | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 01:08 PM

Glad this group is finally getting some press in the US. Many of the group are good people, but they have been hoodwinked into thinking they are the only people who are right. Sounds a lot like the FLDS in Utah and BC.

I lost my entire family when I left nearly 40 years ago - my father said it would be like I had died! Peebs.net has provided a way to find old friends and hear of other family members who have left. I have also met exEB in other countries as a result of this site and hope the EBs don't succeed in shutting it down - because in spite of what they say, I believe that is their goal.

POSTED BY: LOCEANJO | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 02:21 PM

You cannot rip a family apart without severe emotional consequences. Shortly after I was separated from my parents, my brothers, my home and all my friends, and left to find my own way without a friend in the world, my father swallowed a large overdose of sleeping tablets and nearly killed himself.

My own emotional trauma likewise left life-long scars. And the Exclusive Brethren have inflicted similar traumas on thousands of other families. Tim and Sallie Twinam's Web site helps to heal these scars.

The Exclusive Brethren leaders don't like it when their cover is blown like this, but the publicity serves a valuable purpose. It is the only way to restrain the EB leadership from more extreme abuses of their power, and thereby protect their deluded, misguided followers, especially the children, most of whom have no realistic hope of escape from an oppressive, controlling, abusive system.

Besides, the public have a legitimate interest in topics like the following.

covert attempts by the EB to swing election results

exemption from property taxes on buildings that are alleged to be places of public worship

sequestering of children from contact with non-Brethren, and psychological effects on the children

attempts by EB leaders to suppress allegations of child abuse within their ranks

public funding of Brethren schools

strict limits imposed by the EB leaders on the education of Brethren children

severely traumatic severing of family relationships

several attempts by the Brethren, sometimes successful, to silence their critics by vexatious litigation, thereby suppressing constitutionally-protected speech.

POSTED BY: IAN | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 02:39 PM

Ian, that is a good posting. The fact that your father took a large dose of tablets and nearly killed himself is tragic. Thank you having the courage to share your story - my heart goes out to you and to those who support you. I have also seen the very same thing, my father also tried to commit suicide and came close to death while the family was forced to split due to the Exclusive Brethren's punishment. I didn't tell anyone for years - the thought was just too bad. Thanks to the freedom of

communication (and the wonderful facility of peebs.net) I can now start to come to terms with it and talk to others who understand.

As you also point out, we will have life-long scars, but we need to support projects like peebs.net to keep the spotlight on the EB and prevent the next generation being abused in the same way that we were. Within the EB there are no checks and balances. I feel for the children, they have little choice. They have limited education, limited socialisation, limited career choices, and no freedom. The only real gain is the finance and power of the few at the top. Those who can see it for what it is should support kind-hearted initiatives like peebs.net and protect these vulnerable people from the abuse that they are suffering. If you are a praying person, please include the Exclusive Brethren children - they deserve better.

POSTED BY: ANON | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 03:11 PM

I don't know if there is a limit on the number of words in a post, but because the following is so long I have only posted part of it. I will place a link at the end so that people may read it in its entirety if they wish.

Here is a remarkable document written by a New Zealander while she was still an Exclusive Brethren cult-member in 2008. As can be seen, Lindy Simmons put a great deal of time and thought into organizing her thoughts.

In mid-2008, Lindy decided she needed some answers and mailed the following document to Bruce D. Hales, the current leader of the cult, in Ermington, NSW, Australia.

Bruce Hales did not, or could not reply.

Lindy Simmons left the Exclusive Brethren at the end of 2008 and is now coming to terms with freedom from one of the most restrictive modern-day religious groups.

Lindy's List

Lindy Simmons – Summary Letter

21 August 2008

The aim of this letter is to summarise my questions and issues about the E.B. It is an appeal for increased understanding and answers in regard to these things.

Obviously, I will have to go over them in greater detail before my current thinking could be changed, if I was to be thoroughly settled and convinced about them.

Where I am currently at is that I have such questions and issues about foundational EB beliefs, principles and practises that I feel I can no longer belong to the EB church.

However if they can be answered, their reason for existence explained, or if I become convinced some other way that before God I must remain an EB, then I may do so, as I believe the Word of God is law and obedience to Him is highest priority.

Brief summary of my questions/issues about the Exclusive Brethren:

I don't understand or agree with the EB application of 'separation from evil'. I don't understand why we must be so extreme in our separation, especially

Why do we separate so totally from other believers?

Why do we separate ourselves so totally that we restrict our capacity to evangelise/do outreach to unbelievers? Or even just to get more involved with 'doing good'?

Why do we separate from 'out' family members to the point it is like a death and its a complete cold severance? (Especially how can this be Scripturally justified when they are not wicked and haven't given up the faith?)

Why can't we belong to associations/memberships etc?

I don't understand the EB application and interpretation of 2 Timothy 2.

I don't understand the EB teaching that they are the 'one divinely accredited position' or the 'best position'.

I don't know what the 'light of the assembly is' and cannot see that we have a more special position or more special light than some other assemblies I have come across.

I don't understand the teaching that the EB will have some special part in the 'end times' – or that they are the only ones who are Christ's Bride, or that they can claim to be holding some special ground.

I don't understand the 'we are exclusive' or 'special' mindset.

I don't understand the teaching that the EB assembly as a whole will one day be perfect and sinless while still on earth.

I don't understand the concept of one elect vessel, one man who leads the entire assembly.

I don't understand how his one ministry is all that we should follow.

I don't understand why he can be called 'Paul of our day', I struggle to believe every word that comes out of his mouth is from heaven, I struggle to believe he is infallible and that he is God's only representative here on earth.

He does a lot of good, yet I still see far too many people totally out of his reach and falling through the gaps. It is impossible for one man however great to adequately serve a flock as big as the EB. There is something wrong with this system.

I don't understand the teaching about how any human can reach a sinless state, such as is claimed about the 'great men.'

How can it be right that the 'great men' and their ministries are quoted and spoken of far more in the EB meetings than Jesus or the Bible is?

I don't understand why the EB do not support or do any missionary work.

I don't understand why the only form of evangelising/outreach is the street preaching.

I don't understand why we don't advocate Jesus, and the EB position, far more to 'all men' or do more to 'put our light on a hill'.

I don't understand why the EB cannot have jobs other than working for EB businesses. Especially why not service-type jobs (eg. fire-fighter, nurse) and jobs that are essentially doing humankind (and therefore God) good.

I don't understand how the teaching in regard to the Lord's Supper can be right – that the Lord only attends the EB communion. I'm struggling to understand the teaching about our social boundaries being set by those with who we have the EB Lords Supper.

Other things that I cant understand – again, that I cannot see the moral or logical reason for:

I don't understand why there is this extremely strong and yet unable-to-be-pinned-down concept among the EB that it is forbidden and immoral to marry anyone who is your 5 th cousin or 4 th cousin.

I don't understand why there is also this extremely strong concept that marriage between persons who have different skin-colouring is forbidden and immoral.

Why we cannot donate blood or organs

Why we do not vote

Why we cannot adopt or foster children

Why if I have a non-Statcom phone, camera or computer I am immoral.

Why we cannot have pets

Lindy's full list can be found <http://tinyurl.com/yk6js55>

POSTED BY: ANON | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 03:27 PM

To be in the EB you must conform in every way....dress, hair style, car you drive etc etc. Epilepsy does not conform. An elderly EB man in my area was banished to a 'colony' for years. Then my wife became epileptic after suffering eclampsia. Suddenly WE didn't conform, meetings were missed due to fits, her own parents steadfastly denied the condition and so we left. Since we left the EB 20 years ago they have never asked about her condition or been in touch, even though her younger sister died recently .

At least peeps.net gives us the opportunity to converse with old friends, many hurt in other ways, without judgement, bias or conformity. Please don't allow this facility to be taken away. God bless you Tim and Sallie.

POSTED BY: MARK | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 03:54 PM

What harm has the peeps.net site done to anyone? Absolutely nothing apart from discrediting the current goings on in the Exclusive Brethren cult and exposing them for what they are.

What harm have the Exclusive Brethren leaders done, AND are still currently doing? Check it out for yourself. Thankfully the peeps.net site is still up and running, but for how much longer?

If Bruce D Hales and his henchmen have their way they will spend whatever it takes to close it down as well as bankrupt anyone that stands in their way.

Make no mistake that this is one of the most evil cults in the world today who will do in an instant anything their lord and master Bruce Hales tells them to do. Get behind Tim & Sallie and protect free speech.

The Land of The Free but for how long?

POSTED BY: TELL THE TRUTH | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 05:02 PM

I left the brethren because I could not stand the meetings every day and the boring worshipping of the leader. But I miss my Mum and Dad, my brothers and sisters and all my friends I grew up with. They are still in the brethren and will never speak to me - its like I am dead. It is very cruel and am so happy that Tim and Sal have made peeps.net available for me to catch up with others who left. Without it I do not know what I would have done and do. Please keep the site open.

POSTED BY: EX BRETHERN | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 05:15 PM

Seven Days - hope the Exclusive Brethren aren't contemplating action to quieten you down for having reported this case!

POSTED BY: KAREN | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 05:23 PM

I was raised in the Open Brethren, but they were nothing like this Exclusive Brethren's people.

We had the gospel preached to us and hung over hell if we didn't believe!! But these Exclusives - they are something else. They have so much money especially the leader who is a recluse - I would love if the Media could get an interview with him as he hides out behind tents and things.

The peeps net site tells a lot of interesting information on them. Pretty bad bunch these Exclusives if you ask me

Peace to y'all

Frank

POSTED BY: FRANK | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 06:09 PM

For over 40 years the Symington/Hales led exclusive brethren have been splitting up families. By "Splitting up" I mean husband has been separated from wife, children have been separated from parents, either one parent or both. My nephews and nieces (four in number) were allowed to remain with relatives within the group after their parents had been excommunicated. The parents allowed this to happen believing it would lead to an early reconciliation of the family. Unfortunately once the brethren had the children, although nothing was legalised, the parents were denied their parental rights. The youngest was seven years old when this happened in the late 1980s. Those children were brain-washed into thinking that the circle of the EB brethren is the only right place for them to be. Their parents, who are now grandparents to children they never see, have been left in despair.

The Peebs Net site has been in existence since May 2004. That is five and a half years ago, approx 2000 days, or approx 48,000 hours of existence. There have been over 61,000 postings to the site, which means that on average well over one posting per hour has been made throughout the existence of the site. This shows the importance of the site.

POSTED BY: OVER60EXEB | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 06:13 PM

The exclusive brethren would be worse today than they were 40yrs ago and prior. They are savvy now and have lots of cash. There was abuse even 40 yrs ago. Worked for a "preacher" who tried it on me. Years later it was revealed he had abused his child for many years. If member complied to rules there were rewards! Had to be a member of the club in other words. Any disobedience to these rules was dealt with, ie. being shut up. Kicked out of home and house. Families wrecked never to recover. Adultry was rife. Went to college at night in a City and when classes finished had to walk past some hotels. A leading brother and two other leading brothers came out with "fancy women"!!! Valium and other drugs were given freely to sisters who could not cope and they had then in their handbags. This was a talking point often as to which drug had the best effect. A local doctor prescribed them. He now is under suspicion of carrying out evil doings. Leading brothers, ie Taylor, Hayles and others around were viewed as being next to God. Godly men? No, they were not!! Peebs.Net is being attacked because it tells the truth and members feel free to talk over what has happened to them. Seeing their are member forums, how to the EBs get into them and read same. This is only the tip of the iceberg though.

POSTED BY: CAMILLE | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 06:37 PM

In 2004 I privately published a book called 'Behind Closed Doors', a book I had started writing several years earlier but had refrained from publishing during my late husband's lifetime for fear of reprisals from the Exclusive Brethren. Within a few months of it being published it was discovered by Random House and a 2nd edition was published commercially in 2005. The Exclusive Brethren threatened to sue me for my autobiography but they did not proceed, no doubt because they knew I'd spoken only the truth and any lawsuit would make them look bad.

Unfortunately my brother, who is still in fellowship with the Exclusives, allegedly suffered a heart attack due to the pressure put on him by the Exclusives. I believe it was he who was given the job of bringing me to my knees. He contacted my oldest son and laid it on his conscience to disown his mother and encourage his brothers and sisters to do the same - we left the fellowship when my five children were very young so the Exclusive Brethren have no membership claims on them. Not content with that, he then started putting pressure on my two sisters to disown me and they are not in the fellowship either! My brother is not acting as an individual; his behaviour is governed by instructions from the leaders.

When we first left the Exclusive Brethren in 1974 with our young family I would have done anything to have the support and friendship that the Peebs.net site has provided. For many years I felt loaded down with guilt for being the family member responsible for us being on the outside. I was so wicked, I had taken the 'Pill' for five years without my husband knowing and for that we had been withdrawn from and estranged from our families. Now I know that I'm not a wicked person but richly blessed to be on the outside.

'Behind Closed Doors', originally launched by peeps.net, gives the reader an overview of the Exclusive lifestyle and is written with love and compassion for the people I once walked with while uncovering many horrendous Brethren practices. A book that tells such a familiar story for all of us who have left but keeps the reader glued to its pages to the end, unbelieving that such cruel behaviour can be got away with in our modern times.

This is not meant to be an advertisement, just a heartfelt understanding of what it will mean if the Exclusive Brethren succeed in shutting down our lifeline, peeps.net.

POSTED BY: NGAIRE | NOVEMBER 06, 2009 AT 07:00 PM

Truth is truth.

It can be denied, argued with, fought against, analysed and ignored.

But still truth remains.

The Exclusive Brethren leadership have hired public relations experts, at great cost, to attempt to tell the world their version of "truth" - always reactively.

In doing so they have highlighted their deceptive behaviours. The Exclusive Brethren leadership previously directly attempted to "spin" their stories to the media, only to find that their nonsense was quickly seen for what it is by independent people not under their influence.

The Peebs.Net website portrays the truth as experienced by the individual authors - except for a thread that is specifically an important stress-relieving spoof of Exclusive Brethren behaviours. Many a true word spoken in jest!

A common theme and apparent philosophy of the Peebs.Net website is, "The Truth Will Set You Free".

The leadership of the Exclusive Brethren fear just that, and are quite prepared to outlay huge amounts of tax payer subsidised funds to prevent publication of truth. Such apparently surplus funds would be better spent on charitable works, than trying to defend their rotten deception.

POSTED BY: OBSERVANT1 | NOVEMBER 07, 2009 AT 12:30 AM

I cannot stress enough how important it is for the public to be made aware of the struggles all former members of the Exclusive Brethren go through once they are evicted, or leave voluntarily.

It is so vital that Peebs.net remains open as I was once a member of the Exclusive Brethren. I have found a great support system within the members of Peebs.net. Without it, I doubt that I would have grown to be a more confident person, with a happier outlook on life.

The tragic stories of fathers/mothers being separated from their children NEED to stop once and for all. The EB children need to be allowed to have a University education to be worthwhile citizens instead of having their talents suppressed.

The Twinams need to win this fight!!

POSTED BY: TRUTH FOR ALL | NOVEMBER 07, 2009 AT 02:15 AM

I was kicked out of the EB's in 1980 and not contacted for 25 odd years by my family or any one else from in there. Peebs . net has become a lifeline for me since I came across it 3 years ago.

I was there, now i'm here.

POSTED BY: I WAS THERE | NOVEMBER 07, 2009 AT 04:09 AM

The EB are trying to shut this site down – it is clear they do not like attention being brought upon their activities – they prefer to “fly under the radar” wherever possible. They say they just want to be left alone to live their lives in their way, but they still persecute former members and break up families and destroy lives – all to maintain extreme control of the remaining members and to hide the truth from them.

I can see a light at the end of the tunnel – and I believe the Twinams and the website are its fuel.

POSTED BY: LENIDAD | NOVEMBER 07, 2009 AT 04:28 AM

One would logically think a "church" that openly preaches an "utter hatred for the world" and demands its members live in "separation" would also extend this doctrine to not receiving financial support from the taxpayers "world" it so openly despises-not so!

These are smart business people who have managed to avail themselves of every government grant and tax exemption possible, and there have been allegations of cycling business funds through their school system in order to obtain dollar for dollar government grants.

And while they claim financial support for political parties favourable to them are "only from a few concerned businessmen-nothing to do with the church", there is at least one instance of a "shell company" with no assets, inventory or sales that mysteriously emerged during an election campaign and was quietly shut down afterwards.

Ex members tell of carrying large sums of cash across borders-but with the Exclusive Brethrens penchant for secrecy and not disclosing their finances-who really knows what goes on?

The ONLY way information is being made public on this secretive group that some say is really a business organization masquerading under a church for tax purposes is by way of a public forum-Peebs.net. Is THAT why the real reason Exclusive Brethren are pursuing this legal action? Is THAT why there are harsh reprisals for anyone going "outside"? One thing IS certain-anyone who thinks this case is merely about copywrite infringement is being very, very naive

POSTED BY: ANON. | NOVEMBER 07, 2009 AT 08:56 AM

Um . . . splain me why these people joined this kooky conservative christian sect in the first place???

POSTED BY: BRONWEN | NOVEMBER 07, 2009 AT 09:39 AM

nobody joins this "kooky conservative christian sect in the first place"-they are born into it-and with birth control banned, it is not uncommon for a breeding age woman to produce 10 or 12 children. In fact, if a woman goes too long without becoming pregnant-she can expect a visit from the "priest" asking why. If she becomes depressed with the work overload, pills are prescribed. In the past, it was alleged that husbands were advised to "keep up the pressure on their wives until they almost cracked-then back off a bit"

Many of the people who contribute to peeps.net are the people who escaped, or refused to put up with this treatment. It's the only connection they have with other ex members, and the only people who understand

POSTED BY: ANON. | NOVEMBER 07, 2009 AT 10:47 AM

You're born into it. No birth control and families are larger.

Very few, if any, have joined in recent years.

You could try going to one of their so called public meetings, but my guess is that they won't let you in.

POSTED BY: PAT | NOVEMBER 07, 2009 AT 10:51 AM

Members dont join Bronwen - members are mostly born into it. I was born into the group as were my parents and as were their parents. So it goes back generations - back to the 1820s or so.

My family left in 1960 because they felt the rules were becoming too strict and unscriptural. When we left we left the only world and pretty much the only people we knew. It was very traumatic for me - some scars remain after all this time.

In the early 1990s I carried out research on the mental health of former members of this group and it did not surprise me to find that as a group we experience higher levels of psychological distress than the general population. I am intending to repeat this study soon - anyone interested who is a former member of the exclusive brethren, please do contact me on brethrenresearch at googlemail.com (an email address created just for this purpose. Please replace the "at" with the usual @)

Jill

POSTED BY: JILL | [NOVEMBER 07, 2009 AT 11:18 AM](#)

What Peebs.net is doing for people around the world, should never be silenced! This cult needs to be exposed for what they truly are, and those of us who have once been a part of their cruelty should be able to have the freedom to share with others. I believe there is healing for us in our sharing...especially when those we share with understand what we are saying. I too, am an ex-EB, and am cut off from my parents and siblings in the EB. This EB organization has left many horrible scars emotionally that take years to overcome. After 24 years out of this cult, I wonder if there will ever be freedom from the horrible memories, and healing from all the abuse I was subject to growing up. Do the nightmares ever end? This cult should be responsible for the devastation they have pronounced on so many peoples lives. It affects not only us, but our children and our spouses as well as our friendships with others. They should not be allowed to silence the good that Peebs.net is doing!

POSTED BY: ALI | NOVEMBER 07, 2009 AT 04:06 PM

What can we do to help Tim and Sally? Is there a fund we can contribute to?

POSTED BY: A CONCERNED EX-PEEB | NOVEMBER 07, 2009 AT 04:30 PM

Browden,

Your question exemplifies the service that Tim and Sallie have afforded the numerous expeebbs who have found comfort, understanding and validation on the site. It appears to be a 'kook conservative christian sect' - unfortunately it is so much more; and unless you have lived it... it often sounds unbelievable! For those of us who have survived the experience of leaving the EB know, we understand, and we can support.

It is for this reason that the cowardly attack on free speech needs to be stopped. We have the right to share our thoughts and concerns. As do the members of my family who may one day find the courage to 'leave'.

The work Twinams are doing needs to be supported and not hindered - I hope the judge is wise and able to rule in the interests of righteousness.

POSTED BY: JOY | NOVEMBER 07, 2009 AT 04:50 PM

Sorry for the type oh in my previous comment - it was should have begun Bronwen.

POSTED BY: JOY | NOVEMBER 07, 2009 AT 04:53 PM

WHAT A BUSINESS!!

A manipulative, deceptive, psychologically damaging, demeaning, sexist, self-serving, tax avoiding, dictator run, very profitable, international business!!!!

They receive significant government subsidies and funding allocations from many countries.

The Exclusive Brethren claim to be a church, and under that guise pretend to be entitled to freedom to practice their "religion". They are at least an extremely anti social cult. However, they are probably better described as a dirty business entangling captive employees, and engaged in extensive cash transactions to avoid detection of the scale of their operation.

An investigation is not persecution.

When will government authorities responsible for the regulation of corporate conduct properly investigate the administration of the Exclusive Brethren business?

POSTED BY: OBSERVANT1 | NOVEMBER 08, 2009 AT 12:15 AM

When I was in the Exclusive Brethren scotch whisky was pushed around like water and as a result I got accustomed to drinking a bottle of scotch a day..it helped numb the pain of endless rhetoric.

I got kicked out and after terrible times found the peeps net site and have since got myself sort of sorted but still am angry that after all the EB have done, they are doing all they can to further rub us into the gutter. Don't let them win and close the site.

POSTED BY: RECOVERING ALCOHOLIC | NOVEMBER 08, 2009 AT 01:29 AM

Justice will not be served by allowing the cashed up Exclusive Brethren (EB) to use their largely ill-gotten financial resources to overwhelm a socially responsible and responsive Peebs.Net in an upcoming "David and Goliath" court decision.

The EB are known in many legal cases that have involved them, to attempt to win their case by attrition.

Perhaps Vermont's new anti- SLAPP legislation will put a stop to this immorality.

POSTED BY: OBSERVANT1 | NOVEMBER 08, 2009 AT 01:56 AM

What Tim and Sallie are doing is an amazing gesture of love and care for their fellow man. This is so much more than just making a website available - they toil at this thing for huge chunks of their day - and also have to put up with the stresses and costs of legal challenges by this rotten sect that has ruined so many lives. We know it is hard for people who have no real knowledge of this sect to understand. That is why this web site is so important to so many people. For many - it is their only lifeline in the world. You don't join the Exclusive Brethren. They don't want people to join. You are born into it. And for the smallest thing- they will throw you out of it too...and when they do -most say goodbye to their families for ever. Never to see them again. It's a cruel thing...and amazes many that such inhumanity can still exist today. But - as they are cashed up...they throw millions at lawyers to pursue their aims...and all manner of underhanded activities. They are NOT normal - they ARE cruel- they DO destroy families and they are probably the most hypocritical community on earth. One day a court will stand up and recognise their wickedness and do something about it.

POSTED BY: WOODSMAN | NOVEMBER 08, 2009 AT 02:31 AM

I agree with you there Woodsman. Tim and Sallie don't have to do this, but they do - because they appreciate the value of each and everyone of us who are members of Peebs.Net. Can the Exclusive Brethren say the same? No. Do they value the true human worth of each and every ex-member? I think not. Legal action designed to shut down this website does not honestly say, "I love my fellow brethren" - does it? If they EB were true Christians - then they would follow Jesus' teaching: "Love one another, as I have loved you."

POSTED BY: JO | NOVEMBER 08, 2009 AT 04:39 AM

“A concerned ex-peebe” (see above) asks if there is a fund he can contribute to, to help Tim and Sallie’s defence. Yes, there is. You will find details at <http://peebs.net/Community/viewtopic.php?p=56896&f=33#p56896>

POSTED BY: IAN | NOVEMBER 08, 2009 AT 06:54 AM

Being an escaped EB I can fully link onto all these stories of horror and despair. Readers who have never heard of The Exclusive Brethren or had dealings with them may believe some of these stories appear to be exaggerated. What is probably also noted is that almost all of these writers have a pseudonym which also may lead readers to have doubts in their minds when contributors do not identify themselves.

Let me assure those of you who have these doubts that these people are reporting on a vicious sect who not only threatens any person whom they can identify with legal action but also punish any of their relatives who may still be trapped within the sect. It is this threat of such action by the EB’s upon the relatives of these contributors that cause so many to not identify themselves.

This sect is viscous and will stop at nothing in order to maintain complete control wherever possible; hence their desire to try and legally close down a site which is a means of escapees re-contacting one another, sometimes years after being separated. It will be an absolute tragedy if the EB’s are successful in closing down the peebs.net site, hundreds will lose a means of finding lost relatives and sharing their experiences with others.

David

POSTED BY: DAVID | NOVEMBER 08, 2009 AT 01:59 PM

Join it Bronwen? you must be joking! No one in their right mind would join, and if you tried to attend one of the meting at their 'Charity Tax exempt meeting houses' I very much doubt if you would get in the door! The local meeting room where I live in UK has a security guard with a dog patrolling the perimeter whilst they are in the hall!

I left voluntarily in 1981 with my husband and 4 children. We had had enough of the false teachings, control and lies. I never really chatted to my children about my previous life until many years later when I accidentally came across the original site on the web, which the EB later managed to get closed down. (Bless you Dick for that site which brought me in touch with some family members and old friends who had also left). Unless you have been in this situation you will never understand which is why Peebs.net is so imporstant to excapees.

When I found the first site I spent days just reading the stories, crying and realising that I was not the only one and that others understood 'My Story'. I got so depressed that I went to my doctor who advised me to talk to my children openly about things from the past. My past had been something that I never talked about to anyone.

I got my children together - I was by then divorced some time - and I told them everything. They did not even realise that I had several brothers and sisters as well as numerous aunts uncles cousins etc!

This Cult is evil, controlling and its members are all brainwashed and do not know anything about normal life. They lie, believe themselves to be the chosen ones and they consider themselves to be above the law and will twist anything to suit themselves.

When we left the cult we were told that "God will kill one of your children for leaving" How is that for mind control?

I am so so glad that my children have been brought up by myself to love unconditionally everyone one no matter what colour, creed or class. I believe that many members of this cult would like to leave but are too afraid of the personal cost and consequences to do so.

This site run by the Twinams must continue to support and help others like myself who need to know that they are not the only ones coping with the pain and rejection of leaving the Peebs.

Jenny

POSTED BY: JENNY | NOVEMBER 08, 2009 AT 02:54 PM

The exclusive brethren wriggles their way into friendships in high places and are highly thought of and get cash handouts. The PM of Australia had a bit to say about them which showed he did not trust them and knew very well they were up to. However, once in power nothing more was said and cash handouts still kept going despite a lot being said in Parliament about this sect. It does seem that anyone who dare say anything about this sect, gets "shut up" fairly quickly. In the grounds of a meeting room were many brand new all the same color 4x4 vehicles, unregistered and packed together like sardines. They disappeared in the night!

POSTED BY: CAMILLE | NOVEMBER 08, 2009 AT 03:11 PM

I left the Exclusive Brethren voluntarily in 1968, for the simple reason of being tempted by glimpses of the outside world. While I knew the consequences of my action and have never regretted my decision, the pain of separation from my family remaining inside the EB has not diminished even after 40 years.

Your readers should note that it was entirely because of stumbling across Peebs.net (or its precursor the Wyman site) in 1998 that I had the courage to tell my story and get some healing – I had remained silent about my previous association with the EB ever since I left the sect in 1968, feeling ashamed and embarrassed to own up to my past. However, on reading the heart-rending stories on Peebs.net I realised I was not alone and I believed that if the public were made aware of the true nature of this sect – justice would be done. How wrong I was – justice has not been done, and if the EB succeed in their current outrageous action to close down Peebs.net – the cycle of injustice will be

perpetuated. Most stories beggar belief – my simple story of personal pain pales into insignificance when you look at the “Horror Stories” on Peebs.net. The “Memorial Pages” section of Peebs.net is also particularly moving.

The fact that the Exclusive Brethren have recently softened their stance in some areas I believe can be directly attributed to the influence of the Peebs.net site – because the exposure has forced them to modify their actions. Without Peebs.net they would no longer be subject to public scrutiny.

Tim and Sallie have displayed altruism in its purest form in operating this community site against all odds and deserve justice.

POSTED BY: JOY | NOVEMBER 08, 2009 AT 04:31 PM

A couple of posts back is the following contribution: "When we left we were told that - God will kill one of your children for leaving."

When we were in the process of leaving my wife went into premature labour due to the stress of being "Shut up" (which is the first stage of discipline on those who leave). The two men (called priests) who visited me said "If that baby dies it will be your fault". (Fortunately our baby did not die).

Yes I forgive them for having said such a thing, but I feel free to post it here as I suspect they have said similar things to others, and might even have said such a thing to a dissenter in the year 2009.

POSTED BY: OVER60EXEB | NOVEMBER 08, 2009 AT 04:54 PM

Many ex-members of this insidious sect have the same reaction when they discover other ex-members through the peebs.net website: "I thought I was the only one! The only one that was treated this way, and the only one that feels this way."

Starting with me, and the many tens or hundreds I have seen contributions from since – I genuinely believe this peebs.net has saved lives, and probably more importantly allowed ex-members to rebuild lives; to understand shortcomings they may possess due to being raised in this sect, and being able to work on them and overcome them; and to be able to enter into functional, lasting relationships and become tender, compassionate people who can assist others trying to escape, or have escaped.

I can't see why the EB needs to take peebs.net to task – I've never heard of any active recruiting by peebs.net to take members away from the EB – what would be the point? There would be no money or glory in it. Rather peebs.net helps the already fallen and rejected by the EB (or about to be) pick themselves up and attempt a new start – in a free world. Peebs.net is a lifeline.

POSTED BY: CHANTELE BARCLAY | NOVEMBER 08, 2009 AT 07:43 PM

One of the teachings was that if one was not Saved, or in Fellowship, death would surely await. We had to ask a brother if we could "Remember The Lord". This request was then brought up in the next Care Meeting. There was pressure to ask at a fairly early age. We were made to attend week-day meeting and if we (teenagers) did not want to go, someone had to ring the leading brother of the meeting and tell them why we did not want to go. Many were the altercations about this, but we stood our ground.

POSTED BY: CAMILLE | NOVEMBER 08, 2009 AT 07:51 PM

Tim and Sal Twinam are not just a couple fighting a reclusive religious sect from their log cabin in Vermont. Tim and Sal represent the deepest wishes and future hopes of people who have escaped from this controlling organisation, and quite probably that of many thousands who wish they could escape.

They are a couple of people, extremely generous with their time and skills, who know intimately the devastation and on-going pain inflicted by the cruel practices of the pretentious psuedo-religion called Exclusive Brethren (EB). They also know significant details about the power-hungry, greedy leaders of the cult - including their brazen double-standards, their nepotism and their complex web of interwoven business trusts.

Tim and Sal Twinam also know that, at present, the EB leadership continues daily to inflict mental harm on their international flock of about 43,000 modern slaves. The main driving force behind Tim and Sal Twinam's voluntary work is their realisation that, like them, there are many thousands of people drastically affected by the EB leadership's demand that it's members must live in extreme separation from the "worldly" community. This cult has developed it's power base to the extent that it almost totally negates the natural forces that operate to bond spouses and family members. It is the very real fear of massive personal loss, inflicted by the ruling elite of the EB leadership, that holds the flock captive. The consequences are personally destructive, and deaths can be attributed to this commercially-driven policy.

The Peebs.Net website saves lives, and is available to improve the quality of the lives of many hurt people - it must not close while that demand exists.

POSTED BY: OBSERVANT1 | NOVEMBER 08, 2009 AT 10:05 PM

Im also am ex eb and have experienced situations like lan reports.

Ive experienced one brother trying to commit suicide by swallowing sleeping pills,another tried to hang himself.I have a brother in law who succeeded in hanging himself,and a cousin who also passed on through taking her own life.

This cult has effected my family and many other families in so many very sad ways that often are never really able to be repaired and often only seem to get worse.Many of those who even escape still suffer on long afterwards and it even effects their children.Its a cancerous curse of birthplace, nobody in their right mind would ever agree to join out of choice.And next to none ever do.

Its seems strange im sure but i now even look forward to my own death as it slowly approaches with older age, i know only then will the pain for me really honestly cease.Only then will the regrets installed by a religious cult and a split and divided family that have been lived through like a long tedious never ending nightmare finally totally disappear.For me now in reality this has become just an inescapable truth that has to be faced.

Peebs net is a vital lifeline for many in so many ways.If a religious cult with large collective amounts of money is simply so easily able to totally shut down the only voice ex cult members have.

Then not only is it a sad thing for ex members,but it also exposes a very uncaring world that would simply allow such a thing to just happen.

POSTED BY: ITSTHETRUTH | NOVEMBER 09, 2009 AT 03:13 AM

Imagine

A new baby is born into the Exclusive Brethren community. She is the third child in the family. Let's call her Anna

Her social exposure is limited to her own family and other Exclusive Brethren families. She will probably attend church with the other members of the family (several times a week).

Anna is now five years old, and probably has at least one and maybe 3 younger siblings. She is of school age and will be either Home Schooled or will attend an Exclusive Brethren only school.

Her social exposure is still limited to her own family and other Exclusive Brethren families.

Anna is taught by qualified teachers who are NOT Exclusive Brethren members. The reason? The EB don't have qualified teachers. The reason? Exclusive Brethren members are not allowed to attend University, hence they can't gain qualifications.

Anna does well in her schooling. She is now in high school and is really interested in Computers, but the only computer Anna has used are the ones at school and they have been programmed so that the students only have access to "Exclusive Brethren" allowed programs and websites. The computers are called Wordex Machines. Many websites are blocked from her.

As a teenager Anna's social exposure is still limited to her own family and other Exclusive Brethren families.

This means:

NO TV

NO MOVIES

NO RESTAURANTS

NO PLAYING WITH THE KIDS NEXT DOOR

NO CUTTING YOUR HAIR

NO WEARING JEANS OR OTHER TROUSERS

NO MAKEUP

NO JEWELRY

NO GOING ON HOLIDAY

NO SWIMMING AT THE BEACH

NO CUPS OF TEA OR COFFEE WITH THE PEOPLE NEXT DOOR

NO OUTINGS WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN

NO CDS

NO RADIO

WHY??? Because she has been told that she MUST separate herself from the world as do all Exclusive Brethren.

Anna is now 18 yrs old and feeling pretty frustrated. She longs to continue her education and to experience the world outside of the Exclusive Brethren but is stuck working in an office for her Uncle, who of course is an EB. Anna's future seems mapped for her. She will be married in a few years and will quickly become a Mother of many.

Anna at 19 yrs of age can cope no more.... She breaks loose and leaves her family home. This means she will lose her job also and that her family will no longer wish or be allowed to communicate with her.

She did speak to her parents before she left, but their input didn't help her. They told her that something terrible would happen if she left and that she could possibly die in a car accident.

Anna had seen an advertisement in the local shopping mall and had replied. She was to live with an elderly couple who seemed very friendly and helpful.

Her first night away from home was emotional and horrific. All she could think of was the family she had left behind, even though they were only .5 of a kilometre away.

She watched TV for the first time with her elderly landlords. It was hard for her to follow and she had terrible guilt feelings for watching something so sinful.

At this time Anna's social contact is zilch. She is now unable to have social contact with her family or other members of the Exclusive Brethren.

She feels lost and alone. She feels guilty for moving out from her family. She has no job, no friends, and no family to help her.

She knows NOBODY and she is really worried about the threat from her family.

Anna is grieving for her family.

Where does she go?

Who can help her?

Who would even understand her story?

Where can she find support?

With a little luck... She may have heard of PEEBS.NET and if Peebs.Net is not there.... well maybe her parents threat could come true :(

POSTED BY: JUST IMAGINE | NOVEMBER 09, 2009 AT 05:10 AM

Buy Behind the Exclusive Brethren by Michael Bachelard. It will explain everything about this most nasty religious group.

POSTED BY: ANON | NOVEMBER 09, 2009 AT 07:20 AM

My son, now 25, never saw his grandparents. My 18 year-old daughter never saw her grandmother but saw her grandfather on his deathbed during a very narrow opening of seeming goodwill. My children loved their never-seen grandparents; I understand that they loved my children.

But their paths never crossed. peebns.net enabled me to express my grief in a way that I otherwise had no outlet for.

Don't close them down.

POSTED BY: JACK | NOVEMBER 09, 2009 AT 07:49 AM

To the Editor: Thank you for allowing us exEBs to post our comments here. The public in the US need to know more about the Exclusive Brethren that "fly below the radar."

My mother WAS best friends with her sister. Having come from a close-knit family, they did everything together and spoke to each other every day on the telephone. That was 39 years ago.

Mom is now 88 years old and her sister close to 90 years of age. They haven't seen each other in 39 years and have spoken to each other approximately 5 times in that span. Those conversations consisted of Mom's sister telling her that she needed to "get herself right, repent, and return to the True Position."

Mom's one wish is to hug her sister one more time before she "goes to be with the Lord." With the EBs policy of Separation, this will NEVER happen. Such is the situation of EVERYONE who leaves the

Exclusive Brethren unless they get extremely lucky and the local EB "High Priests" offer a special dispensation.

Peebs.net offers us (exEBers) a place where we can tell our stories and receive comfort from those who REALLY understand.

POSTED BY: FREEBUTSAD | NOVEMBER 09, 2009 AT 10:57 AM

The Exclusive Brethren gave up their right to be called followers of Christ or Christians in 1970, when they made a vow of 100% loyalty to James Taylor Jr. a test of membership in their cult of human personality. If one refused to take this oath, s/he was expelled. (Mr. Taylor had recently been discovered in bed with a married naked woman not his wife and had been "withdrawn from" in Aberdeen where the incident occurred.) Owing to the business relationships with the Hales family (Mr. Taylor's daughter, Consuelo Taylor, married Bruce Hales), the Hales family supported and thus approved Mr. Taylor's extramarital behaviour. To this day, the Hales family and James Taylor's direct descendants defend him and have never said that he did not "have a right to take round" any woman in the Exclusive Brethren he desired. One can only assume that as this doctrine of extramarital sexual activity for "the Divinely Appointed Minister of the Lord in the Recovery" applied to James Taylor, Jr., then it must also currently apply to the present "Divinely Appointed Minister of the Lord in the Recovery." Why hasn't the government determined, if in fact, the Exclusive Brethren are allowing this polygamous practice to continue?

If a child is born gay and born into the Exclusive Brethren, s/he will be expelled as a teenager, because "there is no homosexuality amongst us." Therefore, there is no need for sex education or AIDS awareness. What has been described as "an epidemic of sexual abuse" of both underage males and females within the Exclusive Brethren has been established by law courts to have existed, and convictions for abuse committed within the ranks of the exclusive brethren have resulted. Why does the government continue to fund these private exclusive brethren schools which do not allow sex education in the curriculum? Why does the exclusive brethren hierarchy want its young people to be ignorant of possible or probable sexual predators in their midst? Why does the government continue to allow these youngsters to be enrolled in schools where there is no background screening of every exclusive brethren adult male frequenting the premises of their schools?

If a child is born with a deformity, "God is speaking to the parents," who must have done something wicked to be punished in such a way. Cousins marry and intermarry within the Exclusive Brethren, because marriage outside this personality cult is forbidden. Black exclusive brethren cannot marry white exclusive brethren, and vice versa. Inter-racial marriage, once allowed, is now forbidden. Why does the government continue to fund and perpetuate a cult of human personality, which practices racial discrimination?

Given these few examples of the extreme practices of the exclusive brethren, it is not hard to understand why the "Divinely Appointed Minister of the Lord in the Recovery," the world board chairman of the cult of human personality more commonly known as the Exclusive Brethren, is trying to silence his critics, who have exposed his anti-Christian operations and operatives on the Peebs.net website.

What is truly shocking is the involvement of a fine law firm Fulbright & Jaworski in a lawsuit, which is an act of malice against practicing Christians (two people actively involved in pastoral ministry motivated by their faith to assist those damaged by the exclusive brethren), and the role of Fulbright & Jaworski as facilitators of a lawsuit without any reasonable basis under the law. This law firm has made itself an accessory to the public persecution of two Christians carrying out the commandment given to all who confess His name and obey His commandment: "Let your light shine forth before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

The exclusive brethren are using the federal court in Vermont to interrupt and prevent the Twinams from carrying out their Christian mission as believing and practicing Christians. To the Twinams I can only refer again to that sermon given on a mountain almost two thousand years ago: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake." It is my fervent prayer that all God-fearing people in America will be aroused to protest this travesty of judicial process and help end the religious persecution of the Twinams by a fanatically closed cult of human personality.

POSTED BY: MALACHI | NOVEMBER 09, 2009 AT 03:10 PM

Gay relationships were around well and truly even prior to 40 years ago. A couple of women were discovered and that was only the tip of the iceberg. So to discriminate against Gay people is just a cover up for what is really going on. Some members live sordid lives and pity those who are stuck in there and cannot get out. Even some leading brothers were supposed to be a bit odd, but "had to get married".

POSTED BY: CAMILLE | NOVEMBER 09, 2009 AT 03:51 PM

many of these accounts document the Exclusives Brethrens aberrant,hypocritical,even reprehensible doctrines-but they aren't illegal.From personal accounts posted on peebs net,chances are there ARE questionable financial transactions going on- certainly the Exclusive Brethren wouldn't be the first cult that was accused of that-especially when they make comments about "flying beneath the radar" and being "the highest court in the land" That suggests they see themselves as above the law and make their own rules.

What the taxpayers following this case should really be asking themselves is "do we want our tax dollars supporting this sort of thing?" and "why isn't there an audit of these people's finances?"

POSTED BY: PETER M CLARKE | NOVEMBER 09, 2009 AT 04:26 PM

Peebs.net is a great site, full of information and contacts with people who understand this brethren background. I don't tell my friends about my family who have been caught up in this cult for the last 40 years but have been grateful for the contacts made through peebs.net. I was four when I left and wasn't aware of all the details so this site has helped fill in the gaps. It is so sad that many families

have been split up, and the way that Exclusive Brethren treat family members who have left is appalling. Peebs.net is a great service in highlighting their un-Christian behaviour and I hope that the Brethren are brought to account for their years of abuse.

POSTED BY: HANNAH HUTTON | NOVEMBER 12, 2009 AT 09:35 AM

I'm a young man (almost 30) who left the brethren only a few years ago (not using my real name to avoid persecution of my family still in). It's been hard because I've had to depend on my own self in trying to kick the props of alcohol and anti-depressants (often prescribed over the phone) which were so readily available and a staple diet of brethren life.

Luckily I've met a good woman (no previous brethren connection) and I'm getting there. But there were some very dark patches and I'm grateful that I came cross this website and found support through peebs.net. I now have a wide social circle of friends, some I have met in person, and in addition my wife (we got married this year) has found a lot of information that has helped her deal with some of my weirdness! This is an essential site, an invaluable resource and we must fight to maintain it at all costs. Thanks peebs.net.

POSTED BY: ADAM | NOVEMBER 13, 2009 AT 09:47 PM

Last year I came in contact through Peebs Net with a man whose parents used to be close friends of mine in the Exclusive Brethren in the 1950s and 1960s. He left the brethren as a teenager over 20 years ago and I was able to supply him with much information about his parents and grandparents which he did not know. I was able to send him my pictures of his parents' wedding. He had been put out of the brethren and had suffered the usual total separation from family who stayed within the brethren group.

Peebs net is an invaluable tool for helping people who have lost families and friends to re-connect with those who understand their situation.

POSTED BY: OVER60EXEB | NOVEMBER 14, 2009 AT 04:12 PM

I believe the Exclusive Brethren plan to silence Peebs.net then go after individual contributors who told the world what this cult was doing, and then break them financially by pursuing them by the courts- and they have the money to do so. Once Peebs.net is out of the way- the Exclusive Brethren will have a free rein to do whatever they want to whoever they want, whenever they want - just as they did in the days before computers- and there will be no way to stop or expose them.

POSTED BY: EX EB | NOVEMBER 16, 2009 AT 10:03 PM