

St James Schools Report
August 1996

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1. Introduction

This report aims to examine in a general way what appear to be some of the obstacles preventing St. James having a wider appeal beyond the confines of the SES and out into the community. It also seeks to examine the broad management implications of keeping the operation as an SES controlled special school. It is based on some interviews and visits to all the schools but is not intended to be an exhaustive or detailed appraisal. Hopefully, it highlights some of the major areas of difficulty which can be tackled in more depth in the near future.

Everyone has pet diagnoses and cures for overcoming the problems facing the organisations they manage. All that can be done here is to voice those which are considered to be key, in the full knowledge that they are unlikely to correspond with anyone else's and therefore are likely to be ignored. That may not matter. What is certain is that unless the right ones are adopted fast the whole operation will come to a grinding halt.

My only credentials are that I have been a governor of the schools for about a decade and have sent five children there for a total of about two hundred terms of education over the past two decades.

2. Background

Founding principles.

The founding principles were set down by L. MacLaren as follows:

The principles to be applied are:

a) To give children information of:

(1) the simple principles of spiritual knowledge,

(2) knowledge of the universe

(3) man

(4) and the individual's relation thereto. In the belief that the child really knows, and, if the information is given simply and accurately enough, it will connect with that inner knowledge and make it available to the child.

b) To remind the child of the threefold human duty

(1) to remember (sic) the creator

(2) to live according to the fine regulations of the universe

(3) to find the way back to God.

c) to give disciplined practice in spiritual, mental and physical fields, including training in appropriate skills.

Founding sound

In order to examine the question of St. James and where it is or should be going we must look at the sound from which it all arose.

It sprang from the desire by some SES parents to give their children a better education than was generally available in the state system together with the opportunity to hearing the philosophy teaching that they were receiving themselves. Other parents then wanted their older children to benefit from this and requested the setting up of a secondary branch (St. Vedast).

When consulted Mr. MacLaren stated that the parents concerned would have to underwrite the

cost and a fund was duly set up which ran for a few years. As the operation grew this fund was not maintained.

Development over the first 21 years.

It started with four girls at Waterperry taught one subject per day by voluntary teachers.

At that time the SES had several hundred in Part 1, 600 in Middle School and a steady supply of lusty breeding parents to keep the pupil numbers swelling and support the day schools financially. The St. James and St. Vedast operation all appeared very successful and ever expanding. Ten years after its foundation Samashti shot across the bows with the Secret Cult book. The fallout of ordinary white middle class parents was rapid. The impact of this fallout on the income of the schools was disguised by the rise in the Indian community's adherence to the schools at the behest of their Guru and by the closure of the heavily loss-making St. Vedast operation. The early growth was halted but not reversed.

St. James did little to re-market itself to the white middle class academically ambitious defectors who are the financial backbone of all the private fee-paying London schools. In some ways there was a helplessness as to what to do other than hope the bad publicity would all eventually be forgotten. Gradually St. James has managed to get some good publicity to sit alongside the bad in the medias' files. The SES however has not. Since the shot from Samashti in 1984 there has been nothing significant added to the SES press files to counteract the original Secret Cult and Evening Standard press.

St. James remained more or less solvent through the Thatcher boom years thanks to the feel-good factor that reached even the notoriously impoverished SES members and the Indian community support. An intake of 50 pupils a year in the junior school made sure of a substantial profit which could be ploughed into the senior schools (which have always made a loss).

According to Paul Moss the current forecast intake of pupils from SES and Indian families to the junior school is 16 per year until 2001 as against approx. 36-38 per year in the early 90's. The "non-SES / Indian" element has stayed constant at around 12-14 per year.

3. The Market

Aims

The founding principles set out in the previous section are of a breadth and generality that ensures their lasting validity and relevance to virtually any age and location. Few other than committed atheists would argue with them.

In the document commemorating the life of the author of those principles was written: "The first pupils were drawn from the families of the School of Economic Science; but St. James was designed for everybody. It is open to children of all races and all creeds. It also has to obtain the approval of the world, which demands inspection, accreditation, examination results and university entrance. The success achieved so far, without compromising the revolutionary ideas which formed it, is a tribute to the insight of its founder." It concludes, somewhat defensively, with the statement: "The intention is to hold onto the principles and not be diverted from them."

These are fine sentiments and general aims, shared by most schools in the country. The "approval of the world" is an interesting phrase in the context of this report. Clearly the world does not approve at present. It is no longer overtly hostile but it certainly is not beating the door down! L. MacLaren told the heads and governors some years ago to remove the question mark over the day schools. The key questions are: what are the question marks and how are they to be removed?

Image

People in the SES and St. James are often scornful of the notion of "image". It implies something produced by "dreams", opposed to the "Reality of the Self", insubstantial, trivial, not to be given the time of day, the product of imagination. Indeed, as with the whole of the rest of creation, it is the product of imagination. The present image is the principal reason St. James is not attracting enough pupils. Imagination runs the world and St. James must tune into it fully if it wants to survive in that world.

Leon MacLaren maintained that if the SES ladies all wore long skirts at all times the world would follow. Twenty-five years later we need to consider whether that is true. Are we actually confident that this is an equally valid approach with educational fashion? That Sankrita is the

"long skirt" of primary school education?

If we are and the idea is that "we (St. James) have got it right and they (everyone else) have to come round to our point of view" then we shall need a lot of capital to finance the interim period while "they" get round to it. (I would estimate at least £10M to allow the schools to run as they are without any expansion in facilities).

It is observable that what are absolute and cherished "principles" for some teachers are not for others. This calls into question what is a true principle and what is simply prejudice or reference masquerading as principle.

If the schools really have "come of age" as stated in the advertisement sent to all local newspapers in the Twickenham area then it is time to re-examine whether there is a genuine will to make this "revolutionary" teaching available to a wider public. If the schools, the governors and head-teachers are truly interested in a wider audience then a rigorous process of self-examination is very much overdue to weed out the accretions of rules and prejudices which have grown up around the simple fundamental principles set out in Section 2 above. The schools are choked by a collection of unsaleable practices which do not stand up to rational examination.

A simple example will suffice: the previous headmistress was among the first ladies in the SES to don the long skirt when the edict was issued by L. MacLaren in 1971. Today the senior girls are no longer in uniform and, on outward bound week-ends, are reportedly wearing slacks! Is the education the worse for it? At the same time the previous headmistress is touring the world lecturing on the "St. James system" as emanating from London. No doubt the long skirt features prominently as an essential "principle" of a St James education.

This is a simple but, in "image" terms, catastrophic example of the kind of muddle that pervades a lot of the St. James operation. Nothing marks the schools out as odd or cultish more than the long skirt system. When you read this report St. James Senior Boys will be a few days away from opening in Twickenham. With the move from Victoria St. James are trading the anonymity of central London for the heart of a very image conscious and switched on middle class white community. Just the kind of people who left St. James in 1984/85.

If the mothers and sisters of prospective boys at St. Catherines' girls school opposite see massed ranks of "long skirts" collecting the boys from "the new school across the road" it will be around the dinner tables of Twickenham before you can say "Dvaita".

Suddenly the locals will dig out the advert or a prospectus and look up School of Economic Science on the Internet. The overall effect will be seriously undermine the appeal of the schools in the community. If the schools intend to appeal to a wider audience I suggest an immediate edict is called for banning the wearing of long skirts when attending the Twickenham premises (and, preferably, altogether).

Appendix 4 consists of a series of extracts from a few of the items that can be found on the Internet under "cults" and some of the very telling and recognisable warnings as to errors perpetrated by individuals' misunderstandings of the profound teachings imparted by some spiritual movements including the SES. It is the claim to supposed truth and principles contained in those individual misunderstandings that bring those miraculous teachings into disrepute. Presumably the Mayas' way of ensuring that not too many people wake up and spoil the play!

Other Contradictions

Other ambiguities and muddled thinking which affect the image of the schools in the world surround the teaching of modern languages, Latin and Sanskrit in the boys' secondary school (which have gone in and out of the curriculum like yo-yos'), the very limited (but continued) use of the cane, the criteria for the appointment of teachers, the links with the SES generally and the SES controlled "foundation ceremony" in particular. These and other contradictions are addressed in more detail elsewhere in this report.

Mr. Plevy, the immensely successful fundraising consultant working with W. Salisbury at Emmanuel College Cambridge, advised St. James that "transparency" of organisation and perceived clarity of aims are the key prerequisites of public acceptance and successful fundraising. The St. James set-up is, as yet, far from transparent.

School for SES members or School for all.

None of the above matters much if the schools are intended primarily for "SES families". In that case St. James can afford to ignore the community it finds itself in and revert to being a specialist school similar to that from which it started 21 years ago. This is a perfectly tenable, if introverted, aim for an educational establishment. However, no one I have spoken to seems to think this is a worthwhile objective. Everyone wants to go for growth.

This really is the key issue at the heart of the difficulties facing the schools today. Is it really still a school for the "SES families", controlled by the SES, and sparingly admitting those few outsiders who, for whatever reason, want their children to enrol, or is it resolved to become a school for all, unusual but academically strong, professionally run and truly independent?

The St. James / SES governing hierarchy has consistently attempted to be both. To have control of the spiritual cake and eat it. To be both open and secret, Christians and Hindus, Elitists and Advaitins. As a result, not really having a clear and rationally unassailable set of principles, change in response to outside pressures has been slow and reluctant as if, in an imaginary battle, a valiant rearguard action is being fought against the Forces of Darkness. They inch us back .. but only slowly We are so busy with the good fight we have not noticed that our supply lines are being cut and the Gurkhas are deserting to Neasden!

We must decide who we want to market ourselves to and then go for it systematically, professionally and fearlessly. The procrastination compromise and contradictory objectives of the past few years has resulted in the situation we find ourselves in.

4. The teachers.

In relation to the schools' broader appeal to the community, their academic standard and their economic survival there are a number of key issues with regard to the teaching staff:

Issue 1.

The presumption that attendance at SES makes you a competent teacher or that it will soon do so and that non-attendance disbars you from teaching at St. James.

Issue 2.

The principle that teachers are looked after according to their needs and what this means in practice.

Issue 3.

The assumption by many teachers that SES duties take precedence over teaching responsibilities at all times.

Issue 4.

The degree that teachers are occupied in SES duties of one kind or another which prevents them

- a) being available for supplementary tuition of weaker students,
- b) being available to make connections in the local community, with "non-SES" parents and functions.
- c) completing marking on time and preparing lessons fully.
- d) being able to attend Professional Development courses where they can keep up with the latest issues in teaching and, most importantly, meet teachers from other schools.

Issue 5.

The incestuous and binding nature of the working relationships.

Issue 6.

As for issue 5. above but in the relation between the governors and the staff (including the heads).

Taking the points in turn:

Issue 1.

The simple fact is that, as with Architects, Doctors, Artists and Lawyers “in the school”, attendance at groups and other activities is no guarantee of excellence or even basic competence. Doubly so in teaching where no formal training in a particular teaching method is required to be a teacher at St. James. The result is an extraordinary hotchpotch of abilities and approaches. Many Junior school teachers attempt to reinvent the educational wheel. Their abilities vary, according to Paul Moss from "brilliant to appalling". This is of particular concern in the present St. James set-up where the form teacher is the same for the pupils' whole Junior School career.

Often glaring lacunae in teaching skills are overlooked because there is no alternative SES teacher in that subject or no budget to attract someone better/more experienced. The overall effect in the Junior School is of an erratic academic standard, with the Sanskrit teachers regarding themselves as above the rest, a “kingdom within a kingdom” whilst the basic 3R's are at the mercy of the form teachers abilities with no systematic syllabus and testing system throughout the Junior school. Paul Moss also feels that necessary managerial change has often been hampered by the SES /family considerations.

Attendance at SES groups as a valid and essential passport to teaching at St. James also needs examination.

Here are some hypothetical examples which need to be considered as part of an overall policy:

- a) A teacher of 54 who has been at SES for 30 years and taught at St. James for 15 years and is an initiator "leaves" and goes to the SOM. Is he unfit to teach at St. James?
 - b) As above but goes to TM.
 - c) As above but does not join anything and continues to meditate.
 - d) Is a 34 year old professor of Sanskrit at SOAS, a brilliant teacher versed in Vedanta and occasionally attends the Study Society both as a student and a lecturer. Is he barred?
 - e) As d) above but does not attend the Study Society.
- 3) Is a 38 year old homosexual with a pleasant smile who has attended SES unflinching for 20 years, is erudite in the teaching and sleeps regularly during meditation. Is he qualified?

It is quite easy to fall into the trap of thinking that SES attendance confers a level of inner

development which other paths cannot provide. It would be desirable to examine whether this is really so or whether it merely confers familiarity with a system of behaviour and knowledge of the "Club rules" which the people in authority and their SES peers are comfortable with.

The key questions are: What makes any of the above examples possess or lack the necessary qualifications? Who is to be the judge of that? Is attendance at SES a valid criterion? Is it to remain a sword of Damocles over teachers whose whole career and childrens' education is made dependent on their continued attendance at SES? Is this really conducive to freedom of thought, speech and action or is it a subtle enslavement of the teachers? Is the parallel of a Jesuit school requiring teachers to be Jesuit priests really valid? If so, does that mean Advaita is a religion? Is this a sustainable position and, if so, are we prepared to argue it publicly? These questions must be addressed as part of an overall review of all St. James practices.

Issue 2.

This is a major issue in relation to the teachers themselves. The principle of not paying for knowledge but according to "need" has been so comprehensively abused that it is hard to know where to begin. In order to make ends meet and charge the lowest possible fees the interpretation of "Need" has stretched (downward) to the most incredible depths.

Some of the teachers are reportedly having to purchase suits from the Oxfam shop. When asked 4 years ago what providing a decent standard of living for the teachers meant in practice Mr. MacLaren said "three Savile Row suits"! The sacrifices the teachers have made day in day out for years make the gifts from a few rich individuals signing cheques at Chinese restaurants look as nothing.

The "need principle" also leads to severe distortions when it comes to pensions. As time goes on and we continue to operate the schools on a shoestring it is easy to push pensions into the background.

The system in society presumes that older and more experienced teachers get paid more and this then naturally feeds through to the pension entitlement.

At St. James the surest way to a salary rise is to get your wife pregnant (again!). It's the trump card in the "need" stakes.

As you get older your "need" is deemed to diminish and you tend to get paid less. This then

seriously affects your pension rights which are geared to final salary.

In a curious way, for an organisation which is markedly right of centre, the woolly and arbitrary employee evaluation /performance / remuneration package is more reminiscent of the old style Communist Russia than of a sophisticated entrepreneurial capitalist economy. The fundamental injustice of this feature does not directly affect the appeal of the schools to the public at present but is a time bomb waiting to go off with unforeseeable repercussions.

The other major issue, too complex to go into here but alluded to in Appendix 3 (The myth of free fees), relates to the long-term relationship of teachers to the St. James organisation and the question of housing and retirement provisions.

There is a need to review the whole set up of "need", salaries, retirement provisions, pensions and accommodation in order to arrive at a true cost which accords with natural justice and then set our budgets to match that.

Issue 3.

The simple fact is that in most schools of any academic standing the teachers are fully occupied with their teaching duties during term time. St. James teachers have other commitments and priorities.

For many teaching at St. James takes second place to SES duties. Teachers will miss an "A" level lesson a few weeks before exams to go to Waterperry for the weekend. SES duties often mean teachers such as ***** do not prepare their lessons fully and do not hand in the marking when they would wish to.

Life during term time is described as having a sense of being "under enormous pressure". Like ***** and ***** before him I think he is heading for a breakdown. There are others. For a key secondary school teacher to be a head of level or even a tutor must, to some extent, detract from his ability to give the fullest service to his pupils during term-time. There is no spare teaching capacity at all.

One teacher ill or away at SES in the senior boys school puts great pressure on all the others. Some teachers have said the pressure is only relieved by attendance at SES where a modicum of bliss and peace can be acquired. But this is a circular and artificial set-up where the SES is both the cause and the solution.

Issue 4.

a) The term time commitments to SES mean that teachers are rushing off at the end of school (or busy marking). Many schools have significant allocations of extra-curricular time where teachers are available for tuition of weaker students.

This is particularly helpful in raising the overall academic standard in a non-selective school such as St. James.

b) This is related to issue 3 above but is particularly relevant to the Twickenham move. All major schools in the UK make a big point of establishing links with the local community. Not just having the odd concert or play but actually working with old people, in hospitals or performing some other visible service to the community (and getting positive publicity for it). This needs organising and also takes time.

c) The limitation of teaching staff and, in some cases, equipment available means, if anything, that more time should be devoted to preparation, not less.

d) The idea is that SES can provide all the teaching skills and knowledge necessary. This may well be so. The social aspect of these conferences should not be underestimated. There are many head teachers who only know St. James as the cult school and warn parents off from any involvement.

Issue 4 (continued)

This cannot be rectified without social contact, dialogue and example. Glossy brochures fool no-one and are no substitute for putting in considerable time to make genuine contact with the teaching community.

Issues 5 & 6.

The SES pecking order and social system makes it difficult to manage the schools independently and professionally. Political SES considerations play as subtle undercurrents to relationships and management decisions.

A teacher in charge of management and performance standards may have another, potentially incompetent, teacher as his SES "tutor" or fellow student and be reluctant to express an objective view as this will be deemed "criticism".

Sanskrit teachers are described by the head of the junior school as considering themselves "a kingdom within a kingdom".

The SES connection gives access to a detailed knowledge of peoples' backgrounds and relationships. Discussions, judgments and pronouncements by tutors and level heads about SES students are a regular "behind the scenes" activity. This practice is time-honoured in SES and considered absolutely normal.

Access to this knowledge about St. James staff, their families, wives, parents and in-laws is unique to SES and colours and distorts judgments about teachers working situations. Teachers who should have been asked to leave years ago are kept hanging far beyond a normal employer/employee relationship solely because of extraneous SES considerations. One, eventually fired last term, is now 40 and has very little possibility of starting a new career. The schools need a full-time Managing Director to ensure effective staffing decisions are taken as needed. The Governors/Board of Management do not perform this task.

5. The Academic standard.

The Junior School

The Junior school is probably the key to the health of the whole operation. It has historically been the source of the great majority of secondary pupils and also the major profit centre with which the secondary operation has been subsidised. I have therefore concentrated principally on the Junior school in this report.

The academic standard is important from two points of view. The quality of the actual education received by the pupils and the perception of the world at large and prospective parents in particular.

There is merit in offering an alternative to the treadmill of the hyper-academic prep schools. Increasingly people are recognising the limitations of a purely academic approach. There do, however, have to be certain measurable and externally recognised criteria which are set and met consistently if the school is to attract the pupils it needs to flourish. No amount of sweetness and light will substitute for shortcomings in the academic sphere.

The form teacher system.

At St. James a pupil has the same teacher for the whole junior school career. Around that teacher are loosely appended a curriculum and syllabus. The standard of education is therefore highly dependent on the personality, skill and academic calibre of the teacher. The overall standard is not one of excellence. Paul Moss was not clear as to the origin of the concept of a form teacher and whether it is an immutable principle of a "St. James education". In the case of the junior girls the system hardly works anyway since many of the teachers are young wives who get pregnant within a year or two of starting with a young form and cease teaching.

I recommend that the system be reviewed to ensure a consistent and rigorous standard is achieved and maintained.

The curriculum.

I understand there are no set reading schemes or tests for the senior part of the junior school. The form teacher of a class of 8-year olds was recently absent from his class for a substantial

part of one term putting on two school plays.

A parent stated: "At St. James there is little or no evidence of a systematic approach in English. The senior end have no reading scheme and no grammar is explicitly taught. This lack is widely recognised and of concern to parents but not the school." I have not verified this but if it is only half true it is a cause for concern.

Greek, long taught to St. James pupils from the age of 8 is now withdrawn. This is a great pity as the ability of young minds to absorb vocabulary and grammar quickly and easily will be sorely missed when they study it in the Senior School.

One (SES) parent wrote to his sons form teacher: "At what age can we expect our son to be given proper games? At what age will they use sports clothing? Our 8-year old's reading throughout his time at St. James has been totally unsupervised. This term nobody has heard his reading and no care has been taken by his teacher to even help him select suitable reading material. How is the progress of their reading monitored and are they tested to ensure they are progressing".

The whole question of consistency should be looked at with fresh eyes as St. James junior school does not have a particularly good academic reputation. Given the immense love and care that goes into the operation that is surprising and perhaps not too difficult to rectify. A director of studies, whose prime job is to ensure consistent academic performance and attainment is a key function missing in the Junior school.

Target intake.

St. James Junior School, does not follow the national curriculum and does not systematically address the core curriculum of english/maths/science and the tests thereon. This cannot be a good selling point with parents.

Is it really impossible to reconcile the general expectations of the public with the St. James approach? Is teaching Sanskrit really the ultimate goal? Does it take precedence over having a healthy intake of pupils? Elsewhere reference is made to SES and Indian parents supplying about 16 pupils per year until 2000.

A healthy target intake for the Junior schools is a 2-form entry of boys and girls totalling about 80-

100 pupils. Currently the "non SES/Indian" community only sends about 12-14 pupils per annum and has done for some time. Only a vital, consistent and appealing curriculum will increase that number to 70 or 80. I am of the view that the prominence of Sanskrit, the form of the pause and the "Hindu feel" are the major current reason why the number of "outsiders" has remained static at between 10-15 per annum for some years.

The hidden centre.

Another difficulty for "ordinary" parents is the division between the St. James system and the normal school system of prep and junior schools. This gives prospective parents the impression that they are being asked to commit to the "St. James education" for the duration of a child's school career. It probably is not so in practice but being perceived as such is too much for many. It is a big gamble to take if you are a "normal" non-SES/Indian parent of a 4 year old. Most will not risk it. Why should they if the school is not exceptional academically or in some other perceived way?

The division has another, more sinister, aspect. In all schools or organisations generally, the people who come into contact with it seek to know what is its' centre. "Non-SES" parents perceive St. James school to have two centres. One appears to revolve round Paul Moss as headmaster and the visible school set-up, the Queensgate premises, the teachers, the open days, sports days and speech days.

They also perceive, according to Paul Moss, a second, hidden centre which is only known to the SES-"in" crowd. This is especially observable on the pavement outside no. 90 every afternoon. The SES mothers are all chummy and are in the know when it comes to things like who will be Johnny's form teacher when he goes to Senior school. The rest are excluded and, anyway, are wearing a skirt of the wrong length.

This hidden centre is private to the "in" crowd and is a cause of division. Committed SES parents do not socialise much with outsiders anyway as they are away at evening classes and week-ends for much of the time.

The Senior Schools

The senior schools appear to do fairly well academically considering the constraints under which they have operated. However, they are certainly not exceptional. This year the boys are about 450th in the country in GCSE grades (approx. 20% "A" grades at GCSE). The Girls school appears not to have been listed. There is probably a reason but it doesn't look good. With a different and more rigorous set up for the teachers I believe the schools could be much higher up the national list. Like it or not, this rating is an important criterion for many prospective parents of both senior and junior school entrants.

When one considers that St. James over five and a half days a week currently only has the same number of academic lesson periods (36) as a five day week as St. Pauls, which, on average, has much brighter pupils who learn more quickly (over 85% "A" grades at GCSE this year), it must be possible to improve through more intensive and concentrated efforts on the part of both the boys and the teachers. At a less academically oriented school such a Roedean (40% "A" grades at GCSE this year) there are 39 academic periods per five day week and numerous (up to 16) free periods for individual consultation / tutorials with teachers. Some of the pressures on the St. James teachers which restrict their availability and are probably holding back the academic performance are described in Section 4 of this report.

The senior girls school set up is curious. The headmistress (whose irregular appointment is documented elsewhere) was supposed to have a Full-time Directrice of Studies alongside her. In practice this has not happened. ***** and ***** are available to be consulted but it does not feel like a humming, professional educational operation. The teacher list appears to be made up of a large number of part-timers, perhaps for reasons of economy.

There is a highly structured reporting system which certainly gives the headmistress almost total control of everything that goes on down to minute details. Yet two of the few first rate experienced teachers in SES (***** and *****) don't teach at St. James.

Why not? Are they too expensive? Would they find the heavy-handed management style unacceptable? Would they, by their qualifications and experience, pose a threat to the headmistresses' control?

There are very positive moves taking place in relation to freeing up the whole set-up at the level of uniforms and activities but, as with the Junior school, sweetness and light are not a substitute for academic rigour.

The academic side might be much improved by teachers having more time to teach, prepare lessons and attend outside courses/conferences rather than the helter-skelter term-time scurrying between home, SES and St. James.

The image of the school could be transformed by well publicised work in the local community. Less tea and cakes with princesses, more work in old peoples homes and hospitals!

6. The Governors and the SES

Role and function of Governors.

The Governors' function at St James is dual. They are supposed to give a respectable front to the whole set-up and to take responsibility for all legal and financial issues.

This they do. As front it makes the right noises, but it really is not hands on. Perhaps it is not meant to be. Compared, for example, with the attendance at the Executive meetings of the SES (10 meetings per year with non-attendance by any member very much the exception) attendance at the four or five governors meetings per year is erratic and, in some cases, almost non-existent.

There really is not a sense of an active, governing, policymaking body responsible for a £2m per year business and the livelihood of 100 employees currently losing over £250,000 pa on the operating side.

Perhaps the Board of Management is supposed to do this?

The SES connection.

The origin of St. James makes a close historical connection with the SES understandable. However, perhaps the time has come to re-examine those ties.

Behind the governorial front are the hidden hands of the Board of Management and the leader of the SES which perhaps are the real, "shadow" directors of the operation.

The head teachers allegiances.

The most notable instance of this concerned the appointment of Mrs. Hyde as headmistress. In this regard I enclose, in Appendix 2, a transcript of the two letters written to you at the time of that appointment.

You did reply to the first letter. I appreciate it did not raise an easy issue at the time and your

reply studiously avoided the key question of the relationship of the SES leader to the St. James operation raised in the last paragraph. However, it acknowledged a need for the appointment of a full-time, academically strong, Directrice of studies.

This, as you know, never happened. I did not receive a reply to the second letter. It was formally acknowledged at a subsequent Governors meeting that the process of appointment of Mrs Hyde had been improper. I was given an undertaking that it would not recur.

I also discussed the matter briefly with Mr. Lambie at 83 Brook Green in May 1995. He stated that he had left the matter of the Governors agreement to the appointment in the hands of Richard Edmunds, Chairman of the Board of Management and that he had "arranged everything".

He was asked why it was not left with you as Chairman of the Governors to call a meeting. I don't recall the exact words of the reply but the tone of it was dismissive, as if the question was not important.

He bolstered his reply with a statement that, in any event, the Heads of the St. James schools "depend on his consent" for their continued tenure. If this is truly the case then we really have a curious set-up where the unelected leader of an outside body with no legal ties to the I.E.A.L. has full prerogative powers over the running of the day schools.

It also implies that the head teachers:

- a) do not consider themselves accountable to the Governors (as in a normal school),
- b) are not their own masters and mistress,
- c) are constrained to refer all substantive issues to a third party not visible to the outside world and
- d) are mouthpieces for that third party.

St. James as SES surrogate.

Does this mean that, in reality, the way the St. James operation is run, it is a surrogate for the SES, which really controls it? If the leader of the SES really has a unilateral right to regulate the running of St. James without reference to the Governors then the schools can never be 'Independent' as their name holds them out to be.

This issue is at the heart of the St. James difficulties. I suggested it needed tackling 18 months

ago and on some occasions even earlier than that.

It clearly is of concern to "non-SES" parents who perceive this other secret centre behind the St. James school set-up. Perhaps it is only when the financial numbers get to the size they are now that we reluctantly start to address these matters: I sincerely hope so.

Use of prerogative power

Other recent instances of the exercise of prerogative power behind the scenes include:

a) Unilaterally countermanding a request from the Governors to the heads to write their own understanding of the St. James educational system. The Governors discovered, quite by accident, some weeks later that the leader of the SES had blocked that instruction allegedly on the grounds that L. MacLarens' definition was sufficient.

The purpose of asking the heads to articulate that understanding was, of course, for their own instruction and for the Governors to get a sense of how the heads see the schools today in relation to those founding principles.

b) Unilaterally blocking the continuation of a music group drawn from old boys and girls of St. James and St. Vedast, which was to have performed Dido by Purcell and included two top flight professional singers (ex St. Vedast) in principal roles.

This was prohibited by the leader of the SES on the grounds that "these people want to come and get the goods without doing the work". What an incredible attitude to the very group that, in any other educational establishment, is the lifeblood of donations, bequests and new pupils.

If one applies the rule that "one should not initiate contact with anyone who has left SES" and St. James is a closet surrogate for SES then, of course, the prohibition is entirely consistent, but I don't know, in that case, why we are planning for anything other than the small scale Special SES school option mentioned in Section 7 of this report.

If I was an old boy of St. Vedast I wouldn't send my children to St. James if that is going to be the response to the first contact for some years. I would certainly not feel that unity was a key principle in the philosophy of the schools.

The Foundation Ceremony

The original basis of the Foundation ceremony was inspired by the Christian confirmation Ceremony. A simple personal statement of renewal of faith. When the set-up was a school for children of SES families the Waterperry set-up was entirely appropriate. I suggest this is carefully reconsidered.

The questions here are:

“Is this the only way the threefold bond can be retaken? Is Waterperry the only location?

Is the idea of secrecy borrowed (together with the ceremony itself) from the tradition of meditation initiation?

Is this the necessary / immutable / appropriate form of words? Why is it linked to subsequent attendance at SES? Is the philosophy taught at St. James not valid?

Why is it not an open family event at Twickenham or Chepstow and an integral part of the St. James set up?”

Nowadays (or perhaps always) pupils who don't "go forward" to the foundation ceremony are considered as lesser people. The headmaster of the Senior boys admits he rates boys according to Foundation Group entry. A boy who does not take the ceremony and attend SES is likely to be made head prefect, whatever other qualities he has.

The day schools are a highly prized source of SES students. There is immense pressure exerted on pupils to go forward to the foundation ceremony. Behind that drive is the idea that: "If you don't get them now then you never will. You have to rope them in now."

One boy recently asked the deputy head: “Will you think worse of me if I don't join?” Many boys have spoken of the pressure they have been put under to comply. The fact he even thought that is symptomatic of the way this simple ceremony has been made into a high pressure SES recruitment vehicle.

Fear is frequently expressed even among Junior School parents that children will be "taken away" by the SES. I suggest the key test is one of accountability. Is the form of the practice transparent and justified in every respect? If not, are those aspects that do not stand public examination an integral part of a genuine commitment to the threefold bond or are they stylistic

accretions which can be dispensed with?

Are we covertly trying to create a "new breed" of man under the noses of the community? Is there the secret cherishing of an "ideal life" lived entirely in an SES envelope? Appendix 5 describes what that life might consist of.

Fully addressing the form of the Foundation ceremony is vital in the context of the Twickenham move.

7. Finance and management.

Financial background.

In the 22 years since its foundation St. James has gradually transmuted from a low key "home tuition" set up for four girls taught on a voluntary' basis into a £2M a year business with over 100 staff and net assets of more than £3M. During this time the SES in central London has declined as a source of "new blood" and become an ageing organisation made up predominantly of grandparents rather than parents.

St. James has always tailored its fees to be the lowest that would balance the books rather than the highest the market would bear. St. James has always appeared cheap compared to the best of the rest. As a result it has never built up any reserves on the operating side.

Current losses.

Now the Indians are starting to go to their own school at the temple in Neasden (which we have known for some years they eventually would). St. James is left with the staff for a school of 700 (of which approx 600 were paying) with current pupil numbers declining towards 500 (of which 380 paying). A decrease of approx. 36% in paying pupils. Losses for this academic year they are forecast at between £80,000 and £100,000 per term or nearly £1000/day.

The "free fee" myth.

Towards the end of 1995 a dangerous, emotional and highly seductive idea about "free fees" for all (which its proponents claimed was among Mr. MacLarens' last words and therefore beyond discussion or rational analysis) emerged from some members of the now disbanded Development Committee. It deeply divided the governors and head teachers. The debate culminated in a fudged appeal last December for what was called the Vision fund. The proceeds of which, it was announced, would be going towards reducing fees. It raised £30,000 (which would run the schools "free" for one week!). The false rationale of this concept is now starkly before us.

Appendix 3 is the memorandum on the subject which was issued to the governors but never formally discussed. This could form the basis of a just fee level based on true economic principles but it requires a complete re-examination of accounting conventions. It would be an interesting analysis.

Financial implications.

There are 3 options for a viable operation:

1. Retreat into a shell, reorganise the teaching system, reduce the staff by 40-50% and cater for those who want St. James exactly as it is or,
2. Make ourselves more palatable to the world by a fundamental review of the accretions referred to elsewhere in this report together with a rationalisation of the teaching set up or
3. Wait for the millionaire saviour who will endow the schools with so much money we can offer everyone a free place and subsidise it forever.

Management options.

Option 1 would imply changes of the following kind:

1. "Village school" type classes with more than one year being taught at the same time in the same room and/or mixed boys and girls classes in both senior and junior schools.
2. An immediate reduction in the number of teaching staff by about 30% (weeding out all the doubtful teachers but concentrating mainly on the more junior and part-time elements to achieve an immediate breakeven situation.
3. A further rationalisation of the remainder of the staff to put the schools into "profit" (as measured currently) thus creating a surplus for proper living, medical and pension provision to be made for the staff who remain.

Option 2 would imply:

1. Mixed boys and girls in the junior school enabling this cost centre to rapidly become at least self-financing, hopefully profitable. However, it is doubtful whether village style multi-year classes would be acceptable as a teaching approach.

2. The complete review of all preferences and rules masquerading as principles and of all covert links with a view to clearing the decks of all the debris and re-launching the schools in the community.

3. A rigorous examination of the teaching standards, the curricula, the syllabi, with a view to professionalising the whole operation into something that can consistently and reliably deliver excellence (as measured by the world).

Option 3

David Boddy is working on it. But it is all a matter of timing. And in any event, what use a rich school that reaches only a few? If it is to grow it will still need open up to the community and gain the trust of society but undoubtedly it could do so more gradually if it was funded with £10-40M!

Fundraising: vision and ideas.

The Development committee was set up originally for the purpose of fundraising. Most of the obstacles are referred to elsewhere in this report. The key issue being that of "transparency". Some of the key ideas emerging from the Development committee itself are also beginning to govern peoples' thinking especially elsewhere in the world.

The idea of "free fees" is one.

The idea of a world movement called the "Renaissance" or "Advaita" schools.

The idea of "Advaita" as a system or religion.

Views differ widely on the validity, usefulness or dangers of these ideas. I suspect none of them are useful without the transparency referred to. If they are anything less than unassailably rational and are simply devices to disguise the true picture of a surrogate youth movement for the SES they can only have a negative effect.

What is of concern is the alacrity with which the "overseas" schools seem to latch onto these and the raft of other ideas referred to in this report and put them into operation claiming the blessing

and endorsement of the London school.

The SES "grapevine" is uncontrollable in this respect but the St. James "product quality control" is not consistent enough to market it as a brand. London needs to fully sort out its own inconsistencies before it sets out on a world crusade (If that is a useful objective)

Maybe there is a right-wing multimillionaire ready to put £50m St. James's way for a world moral regeneration / Renaissance movement but is that really what Advaita and these schools are about?

8. Conclusions and recommendations

My views have been asked on what is necessary for the successful continuation of the St. James experiment in the light of the present financial crisis.

There is no doubt that, with the changing demography of the school population and the changing demography of the SES population, radical and daring moves are needed. Some are hard management/marketing decisions which cut across the pure “production” side of the business (i.e. educating children). The decisions needed cut across many of the sacred cows that the schools currently follow.

The schools were founded for the children of SES parents. Initially they were exclusively for them. The form of practices developed was modelled closely on the form of the SES procedures. The SES children are now a minority. The SES does not attract enough students with children to supply St. James. It is also clear that St. James cannot survive financially on the present numbers. It must therefore attract more pupils from “outside” and the SES children must become an ever decreasing minority.

For this to happen the schools must have the courage to examine the whole raft of practices and ways of thought and behaviour which have nothing to do with Advaita but have become fossilised into the system and which make the schools unpalatable to the public at large.

The “Advaita” teaching is said to be what we teach. Yet the form in which we imagine we are putting this teaching into practice continuously sets us apart from the society we are supposed to atone with.

One senior student proclaimed at the time of the Secret Cult book that “the SES is obviously on the right lines since Socrates also ran into opposition from his society”. Many people in senior positions in the schools inwardly believe we are a latter day branch of the Moral Re-Armament movement (though few would openly admit it). For them moral and social reform and the production of a new race of “leaders” is the goal

We must have the courage to examine systematically each and every practice in the school and ask:

Is this practice bringing about Advaita in our society now, today or is it some idea of Leon MacLaren's from his Presbyterian upbringing? or is it some teachers' or SES parents' (erroneous) interpretation of "The Teaching" as it is loosely called in SES jargon? or is it merely an imitation of a pre-war public school custom, a wishful turning back of an imaginary Edwardian clock?

Is this practice an integral part of the Advaita teaching? Can I justify that claim in any company? The burden of proof is with us, not with society. Society couldn't care less. It will go on ignoring / shunning, send its children elsewhere and send St. James to the receivers.

We walk looking over our shoulders. We advertise pre-emptively to overcome the accusation of secrecy. We make great sacrifices and efforts both mental (as in compiling careful, clever ads), financial (as in continuing subsidies and gifts) . We require many of the teachers to live close to the poverty line. All in mitigation of the underlying contradictions. We, the governors, the curious Board of Management and the head teachers are reluctant to address these fundamentals.

We need to make the schools truly independent. Not tied by (we hope) invisible strings to an (at best) odd and (at worst) disreputable organisation in the background.

There is a huge demand for good education out there in society. People will pay very fully for what this costs. But they won't queue up to come to St. James. We are offering a unique product of variable quality in the wrong packaging.

Without a steady influx of pupils and input of funds we cannot improve our facilities and reach the higher academic standards which we should. We will continue on a shoestring. Making do and catering for a declining population of SES children.

In the advertisement that went out after the purchase of Twickenham we said the St James schools had “come of age”. If we mean this anything more than a PR puff we have to take some bold decisions if the excellent product is to be palatable and therefore available to a wider audience.

In the context of appealing to this audience the practices that need examination are referred to throughout this report and need to be reviewed as a whole. They may be summarised as follows:

1. Let the schools be one centred and transparent in their organisation.
2. Have the confidence to let the St. James schools come of age by removing all the SES controls and ties to make them truly independent.
3. Let them run their own foundation and initiation ceremonies in their own premises. No SES involvement. No high-jacking of the meditation ceremony wording. Not secret. Open to parents.
4. Stop looking upon St. James pupils as graded according to spiritual merit and as prize fodder for SES.
5. Remove all the old form masquerading as principle and let the Advaita message be simple and whole without the formal and contradictory accretions.
6. Renounce both the “Christian gentleman” dream and the “Hindu sage” dream in favour of Advaita itself. Sort out the muddle of Hindus and all the other non-Christians at St. James being made to sing about “gazing in rapture upon his scars” whilst at the same time claiming to be truly multi racial and multi-cultural and to teach Advaita, a true message beyond religions.
7. Let the teachers teach to 110% of their ability. No SES duties during term time.
8. Let the Governors govern and the parents see that truly this is the case. Require the teachers (and the heads in particular) to refer to them and not to an SES ‘leader’ who has no locus and is not accountable to the Governors or anyone else.
9. Stop operating on a wing and a prayer and introduce strong independent management into the operation to make the whole operation professional and of consistently high quality.
10. Rectify the exploitation of teachers by a major review of each of their financial situations and the implications thereof.
11. Make full, unqualified and generous links with the old boys and girls; recognise that they are the lifeblood of an ongoing school. Drop ideas about the great majority not being “in SES” and not having “earned” any contact.
12. Ban long skirts immediately.

Historically we have grudgingly made slight concessions here and there to try to minimise change whilst persuading ourselves that we have taken all necessary action. Always too little too late. It will not be enough this time.

The Twickenham move is the opportunity that comes only once in each generation. Reform needs to be across the board to keep the true and simple principles of Advaita in a form that is acceptable and relevant to society today whilst clearing the decks of all the rest of the accretions. Whilst it is understandable that everyone wants the best for the St. James pupils the unfolding of their sanskara is an individual matter which must surely be respected also.

Samashti will certainly not entrust us with anything more than a parochial school for SES families if we don't relinquish these notions of controlling the outcome.

L. MacLaren always used to say (but not always do!): "The Saguna Brahman has been running the universe for a week or two...let Him get on with it!"

The alternative approach is to soldier on until we go down with all guns blazing hoping against hope the Cavalry will ride in with chequebooks drawn.

Appendix 1.

Strengths and weaknesses of St. James education M. Goldschmied to W. Salisbury:
19/11/93

Strengths:

1. Comprehensive / non-selective.
2. Good results if 1. above is taken into account.
3. Unusual curriculum (sanskrit / dance / music / singing).
4. Meditation.
5. Discipline / Law'n'order / Minimal bullying.
6. Caring staff / Happy atmosphere.
7. Strong and uncompromising in relation to drugs etc.

Weaknesses:

1. Comprehensive / non-selective.
2. Mediocre results compared to the best competition because of 1. above and 8 below.
3. Does not offer breaks at 8 and 13 in line with the competition.
4. Does not offer Common Entrance at 13 in line with the competition.
5. Expects parents of 4 year olds to commit to the "pause" and to other practices whose form is alien / not understood.
6. Is smug about having the "truth" which no one else has.
7. Poor contact with Oxbridge does not tutor borderline entrants well.
8. Understaffed owing to SES commitments compared with competition from public schools.
9. Pretends to be a Victorian public school clone (caning / militarism / Royalty and Empire / Establishment) when in truth it is opposed to much of what public schools stand for today. A certain humbug.
10. Inherent strength and vitality of radical/revolutionary aspects of the schools played down in favour of "conformist" image in 9. above.
11. Sanskrita comes across as a mission imbued with kashaya. Total turn-off for upper middle class whites in Kensington / Victoria area. Its' strength as a universal language and key to pronunciation / fluency in all other languages not mastered by teachers. Scholastic / Grammarian aspects emphasised.
12. Schizophrenic in relation to the teaching of modern languages. Half-hearted attempts to introduce first German and then French have been sporadic and at the expense of Latin.

13. Some teachers not up to the job. Only there because in SES.
14. The sense of a "hidden hand" behind the scenes may be sensed and be a cause of suspicion. Headmasters/headmistress not their own masters. Classic case Feb. 1993 of 6th form boy intimate with St. James head girl (at week-ends) being suspended for 2 weeks (3 months before "A" Levels!) and having to wait to hear if he was to be expelled because Head could not see LM. Head would not accept authority / advice of Board of Governors. Boy & parents NOT in SES. Utterly unprofessional. Potentially explosive publicity.
15. Controlled use of cane marks the school out as regressive / blimpish.
16. Run on a shoestring but fees aren't cheap. Currently running at deficit of £38,000/term owing to high proportion of bad debts/uneconomic class sizes.

Appendix 2.

Transcript of two letters from M. Goldschmied to R. Pincham

8th February 1995

Strictly Private and Confidential

Dear Roger.

I am writing to you as agreed following our telephone conversation on Monday afternoon. I was surprised to hear from Bernard Saunders that an announcement was made in the dining room at Waterperry last Sunday to the effect that Laura Hyde was installed as headmistress of St. James Girls School following the retirement of Sheila Caldwell at the end of the summer term.

As far as I am concerned it is a matter for the Governors to decide. I thought possibly that some of the governors and you had met or been consulted but, from what you and Bernard told me, this was not the case. Why, in any event, an announcement had to be made in such a hurry is a mystery.

The double standard which has prevailed for so long seems set to continue: a respectable conventional front of Governors appearing to go through executive motions like any other public school whilst a hidden hand manipulates behind the scenes.

Naively we think no one "outside" notices or senses that this is so because it is unspoken. Yet the truth is that communication in the subtle realm is far more penetrating. The general public is not dumb or unconscious. The perception of a secret operation behind the scenes is a prime cause of the general community shunning of St. James and treating it as alien from itself. It will only lead to trouble if we continue the pretence, like the orange in HH analogy, with a smooth exterior and divisions within.

Much is being made currently of the recent visit by Princess Alexandra to the Girls' school, and the hope has been expressed in some quarters that this might result in HRH becoming a patron of the school.

I am sure there is a very careful vetting process prior to such patronage being granted and here again the secret manipulation may, when it emerges, put the schools' reputation at risk.

When Mrs. Hyde was appointed assistant headmistress she was told quite unequivocally to, and I quote: "get yourself qualified". To my knowledge she has not been able to do this yet (not surprisingly given her young family and all the SES functions). I understand that now it is proposed to overcome this lacuna through the appointment of a Directrice of Studies in the person of Mrs. Valerie Rees.

This may or may not be a workable arrangement subject to the time they have available and their ability to work together (two headstrong jewish ladies are not always the most sattvic mixture!). If we, the Governors, are to be publicly accountable for the appointment, I am of the view that, prior to any public announcement, we need to interview both candidates and satisfy ourselves as to their suitability and their ability to commit the necessary time to the job.

Alternatively, I suggest you should step down as Chairman of the Board in favour of Mr Lambie. Either approach could result in a straightforward and truthful representation.

Yours Sincerely,

Marco Goldschmied

and

17th February 1995

Dear Roger,

I was, to say the least, taken aback to receive a letter last Monday signed by you and sent to me as a parent informing me that "...the Governors are delighted to announce the appointment of Mrs Laura Hyde... etc."

If there was a meeting it certainly passed me by. If there was not I would like an explanation as to how the Governors reached their decision.

Yours Sincerely

Marco Goldschmied.

Appendix 3.

Memorandum to: St. James Governors, Headteachers, T. Graves.

From: M. Goldschmied

Date: 6/2/96

Re: Mr. Debenhams memo to T. Graves, Esq. of 16/1/96

The Economic lie that is "free fees".

The freedom is in the imparting of knowledge. There is no scriptural or valid economic doctrine that espouses a "free" education. There is an emotional hypnotic allure to the clarion call of "free fees for all". It is sadly misguided and is bound to fail. If nothing decisive and clear emerges from the London school governors there will be sporadic uncoordinated attempts around the world to implement these insidious and unlawful socialist ideas of mitigation of poverty.

The attempts will simply result in a continued and gradually worsening situation for the teachers. One in which economic uncertainty and near penury run side by side, impairing the quality of teaching. The first 20 years of St. James have been heralded as a great achievement made possible by the generosity of so many. The teachers are not often mentioned in this context but the fact is that, with full fees, St. James has only just managed to break even due to the complete generosity of teachers accepting a subsistence wage throughout this time.

If a true economic fee is to be arrived at then let us recognise the universal truth of the law of rent coupled with the proper and full provision for teachers and their families and abide by the resulting fee per child, be it higher, lower or the same as that which is charged now.

To do so we would need to recast all costs as follows:

Allow for the full rental value of all school premises and their maintenance.

Allow for the full rental value of all teachers homes and their maintenance.

Allow for all costs associated with the running of the schools including transport, insurance, utilities, books and equipment, teacher training, catering, cleaning, medical etc.

Allow for all costs for adequate provision for all needs of teachers' and their families including full pension and medical provisions.

Allow for all other costs associated with the running of the schools.

Evaluate the notional tax and NI burden which the above provisions would make under present taxation systems and take a view as to their inclusion in the "bottom line cost" in whole or in part.

The figure that emerged from such a study would be both lawful and organic in the sense of reflecting accurately current costs and tracking costs associated with future growth in pupil numbers.

If benefactors appear to assist with this work, well and good. To seek to find one under the banner of free fees would be fruitless. There will never be a benefactor wealthy enough to provide education free of fees for all. Even the Government, having extorted vast sums from the working population, cannot sustain this provision because it contradicts natural law. The only alternative would be to provide free fee education for a few, selected on some notion of intellectual or spiritual merit.

Where is Advaita in that?

The sooner we think and speak clearly on this issue the sooner the dangers and misery that will arise from this muddled dogma can be eliminated.

Appendix 4.

Symptoms

Usually such groups are predominantly white middle class with token people from other races; special preparations and efforts are made to recruit wealthy, well-known, powerful, or influential people; young people with little money are recruited for their free labour.

They consider their group to be the highest and only 'conscious' school only they will establish a new renaissance on earth.

They show a mix of friendliness, superiority, and a slight arrogance.

Use of the word "I" is often substituted with 'It' or 'This one'

A description of this multi-named group is available from:

- The Observer newspaper in England
- Secret Cult by Peter Hounam and Andrew Hogg
- The Secret World of Cults-Inside the Sects that Take Over Lives by Jean Richie
- Call No Man Master - Fifty Years of Spiritual Adventure, In Praise of Teachers but Wary of Gurus by Joyce Collin-Smith.

Errors

There are characteristic errors on the way which people can make in work on themselves. It is necessary to examine yourself regularly for the presence of any of these errors. When you find you have strayed onto one of these false paths, remember yourself and how you fell subject to it, correct the error to return to the way as soon as possible, and do your best to avoid it in future.

Some of these errors feed each other. They include:

'Sacred Science'

Loading the Language

Doctrine over Person

Dispensing of Existence

Talk-Think

Intentional Insincerity/Heavenly Deception

Starry-Eyed Student

Form of the School

Shiny New Mask

Lunatic Super-effort and Competition
Sunday-Go-to-Church
Energy Junkie/Addict
Perpetual Student
False Awakening
Personal Salvation/Cock-on-the-Dungheap
Renaissance Ark
Buy-Your-Way-to-Heaven

'Sacred Science':

Maintains an aura of sacredness around its basic dogma, holding it out as the ultimate moral vision for the ordering of human existence; evident in the prohibition (explicit or implicit) against the questioning of basic assumptions, in the reverence demanded for the originators of the teaching, the present bearers of the teaching, and the teaching itself; while thus transcending ordinary concerns of logic, however, it makes an exaggerated claim of airtight logic, of absolute 'scientific' precision.

Loading the Language:

Uses language characterised by the thought-terminating cliché the most far-reaching and complex of human problems are compressed into brief, highly reductive, definitive-sounding phrases, easily memorised and easily expressed (formatory phrases).

Doctrine over Person:

Subordination of human experience to the claims of doctrine, evident in the continual shift between experience itself and the highly abstract interpretation of such experience, between genuine feelings and a spurious cataloguing of feelings; produces a peculiar aura of half-reality in the environment, at least to the outsider.

Dispensing of Existence:

Draws a sharp line between two groups: those whose right to existence can be recognised (e.g. 'school' people), and those who possess no such right (e.g. 'life' people); but declares that by entering the thought reform environment, such 'life' people can make themselves over into 'school' people.

Talk-Think Error:

Talking and thinking about the work instead of doing it. Mistaking the use of a specialised language for doing the work. Unable to explain work ideas in ordinary language.

Intentional Insincerity/Heavenly Deception Error:

No compunction in deceiving people outside the group to attain the wants of the group, ultimately deceiving oneself; will often think about or express ideas which have an element of truth in them, but which when viewed on a larger scale are false.

Starry-eyed Student Error:

Fanatical devotion to, obedience to, or belief in a teacher or system to exclusion of all others.

Form of the School Error:

Forming a crystallized hierarchy based on elapsed time in the school and closeness to the teacher rather than on personal level of being, and insisting that the 'form of the school' must be maintained exactly as received.

Shiny New Mask Error:

Forming a shiny new mask containing habits of dress, speech, movement, thought, and so on, in imitation of other members of the school or group and mistaking this for real inner development.

Lunatic Super-effort and Competition Error:

Belief that one must approach the Work with a grim determination which produces feelings of tension, discomfort, self-punishment, and competition.

Sunday-Go-To-Church Error:

Habit of making efforts only when in the presence of a teacher or other members of school.

Energy Junkie Error:

Habit of coming to school to feed off the energy of the group without making personal efforts.

Perpetual Student Error:

Staying in a school or group for life without ever graduating.

False Awakening Error:

Delusion that 'Only I truly understand the teacher', or that 'Only I personally am', or 'only my group or school is', 'in contact with higher forces' or 'God'; this error occurs in several forms:

Personal Salvation Error/Cock-on-the-Dungheap (subset of false awakening error):
Delusion that I personally will or can be saved, enter 'heaven', survive death, and so on.

Renaissance Ark (subset of false awakening error):

Delusion that my group is the:

- 'highest'
 - 'only'
 - 'true school'
 - 'conscious school on Earth'
 - 'conscious school since the time of Christ'
 - 'true representatives or heirs of the work'
- or that only my 'school':
- will survive a soon-to-come destruction of civilization
 - has a divine mission to serve as an ark of culture and consciousness for humanity
 - will survive to establish a new civilisation or renaissance on Earth

Buy Your Way to Heaven Error (subset of Renaissance Ark):

Acquiring or displaying pretty objects to 'improve the impressions octave' without corresponding inner work.

Appendix 5.

There appear to be a number of covert categories of St. James pupil. Covert inasmuch as they are "hidden" in the minds of teachers, headteachers and senior SES personnel.

What makes the issue intractable is that almost all the people in authority in SES and St. James would deny that any such classification exists. As matters stand St. James is much closer to a sect than to the open and fully "independent" school that its name and prospectus imply. This cannot be changed until all holders of the idea a) Acknowledge its existence and b) Undergo a process of purification to remove the divisions that it causes.

The "ideal" St. James student.

Here, by way of not too serious illustration, are some of the criteria that make the ideal life of the St. James product!

SES parents of at least 20 years standing. Father preferably on SES Executive.

St. James education from 4 years 4 months. Foundation group at 16.

Career at the Bar or as St. James teacher.

Betrothed to St. James girl at age 17 (when she is 11)

Marries the same St. James girl (now in Foundation group) as she finishes her "A" levels.

Children at St. James within seven years of marriage. Wife returns to full SES duties within 3 weeks of each childbirth.

Active SES members. (3 nights, 2 mornings and most weekends).

Tutor of young St. James groups.

Blissfully married (although rarely meets wife due to SES commitments).

Selected for World Tour tutoring role by age 35.

Inherits large sum of money at age 40 from proceeds of grandfathers lifelong speculation on the stockmarket and in land half of which he gives immediately to SES and St. James Vision fund.

Oldest son marries St. James girl who has just finished her "A" levels to whom he betrothed at age 17 when she was 11.

Grandchildren at St. James within seven years of sons' marriage.

Daughter-in-law returns to full SES duties within 3 weeks of each childbirth.

All offspring active SES members. (3 nights, 2 mornings and most weekends).

Son appointed to tutor young St. James groups.

Son blissfully married (although rarely meets wife due to SES commitments).

Son invited on World Tour tutoring role by age 35.

Inherits large sum of money at age 40 from proceeds of great uncles lifelong speculation on the stockmarket and in land half of which he gives immediately to SES and St. James Vision fund.

Grandchild aged 17 betrothed to St. James girl aged 11 Dies peacefully in his sleep.

Family put his body in the Thame and have a party in the ballroom.

He emerges holding the ring!

Joking aside there do exist subtle gradations in status. Some actions appear to be beyond the pale, others can allow the ex-St. James pupil to squeeze in.

Definite no-no's ensuring "outcast" status are:

Not "going forward" for the Foundation ceremony.

Not attending SES before / during / after university.

Marrying "outside" the organisation.

Not marrying by age 25 (girls).

Putting career before home and home before SES (girls).

Some secondary causes of lower status include:

Getting divorced. (Some allowance made in special circumstances for unlucky choice of recalcitrant first wives).

Parents not in SES.

Wife does not return to SES duties within 3 weeks of childbirth.

Not marrying by age 35 (boys).

Putting home before career and career before SES (boys).