Conference paper
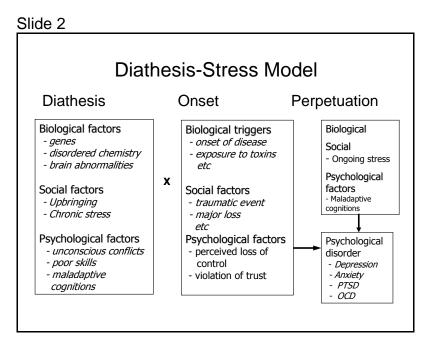
Introduction

When I was a child I believed that having roller skates was evil. I made this assumption because I didn't have any and my world seemed to be a dichotomous one, not technicoloured at all. The things I had were assumed by me to be good and the things that I didn't have I assumed were bad.
It wasn't until a few years ago that I discovered my parents did not regard roller skates as evil – they just didn't know I wanted some.

A trivial example perhaps but I use it to illustrate that children make assumptions in order to understand the world around them, they make interpretations of what their experiences mean. Parents don't always know what is going on in their children's minds so they have a huge responsibility. They get it wrong at times of course. But we survive. All of us in this room are "Survivors of our Childhood".

This paper will be partly based on The Diathesis-Stress model which I will now briefly describe for those who are not familiar with it.

Slide 2

Diathesis-Stress Model

Diathesis	Onset	Perpetuation
Biological factors - *genes* - *disordered chemistry* - *brain abnormalities* **Social factors** - *Upbringing* - *Chronic stress* **Psychological factors** - *unconscious conflicts* - *poor skills* - *maladaptive cognitions*	**Biological triggers** - *onset of disease* - *exposure to toxins etc* **Social factors** - *traumatic event* - *major loss etc* **Psychological factors** - perceived loss of control - violation of trust	Biological Social - Ongoing stress Psychological factors - Maladaptive cognitions

Psychological disorder
- *Depression*
- *Anxiety*
- *PTSD*
- *OCD*

x

This model suggests that people have predispositions or vulnerabilities to psychological difficulties. These are referred to as diatheses and include
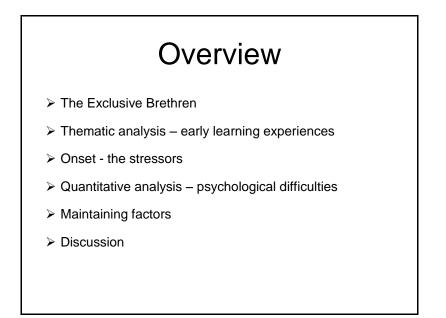- biological – such as our genetic inheritance, brain abnormalities etc,
- sociocultural factors – such as upbringing or chronic stress
- and psychological factors – such as *unconscious conflicts, poor skills maladaptive cognitions*

These vulnerabilities can remain hidden but if the person experiences stress that they are not able to cope with, then the combination of diatheses and stress - such as biological triggers, social and psychological factors lead to psychological problems such as depression, anxiety etc.

The more the inherent vulnerability present, the less environmental stress will be required to cause the person to develop these problems. Models like this of course apply to everyone and not just to former cult members.

There are then also a number of maintaining factors

In this paper today I am focussing on the Exclusive Brethren as an example of a closed or high demand group. I do not intend to get into the semantic and definitional argument here about whether they are a NRM or a fundamentalist sect or even a cult.

Overview

➢ The Exclusive Brethren

➢ Thematic analysis – early learning experiences

➢ Onset - the stressors

➢ Quantitative analysis – psychological difficulties
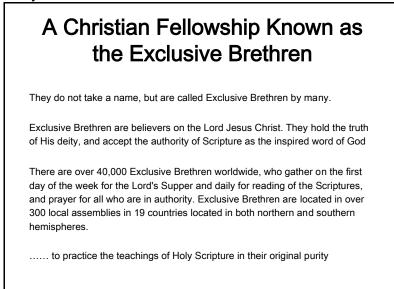
➢ Maintaining factors

➢ Discussion

- To contextualise the paper I will first give a brief overview of this group and their beliefs and practices – the early learning experiences of children in this group being my hypothesised diathesis.
- Then I will present some qualitative research that illustrates how adults who have left experienced that childhood
- Onset – throughout their childhood there will have been events that may have precipitated difficulties but here I will present material around the process of leaving and acculturation
- The psychological difficulties - To demonstrate the outcome of the diatheses combining with life events I will present some quantitative research exploring the mental health of former members in adulthood
- Maintenance – I will provide what I believe are some of the reasons why people are still experiencing difficulty
- Discussion time

A couple more points – I am a psychologist so this paper is written from a psychological perspective.

As an insider researcher I should state that I was born and raised in the EBs and left aged 15 when my parents chose to leave in 1960. The then leader of this group, James Taylor Junior, had brought in a doctrine that stated we should not eat with those not in fellowship with us. To make this clear as I was still at school this would have meant I could no longer have school lunch with my fellow pupils. My father would no longer have been able to have business lunches or even a cup of coffee with his customers. My parents believed that this was not based on scripture and like many others could not keep silent and so were withdrawn from. Being still at home I simply left with them. Tens of thousands left the group at the same time

One final thing – this presentation contains slides with quite a lot of written material on them. I make no apology for this though it is not good practice but the material is important. I am at times going to get you to read it for yourselves from the slides.
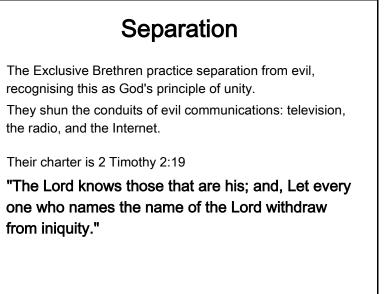
WHO ARE THE EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN –
the next few slides contain information from their website,

They describe themselves as follows

A Christian Fellowship Known as the Exclusive Brethren

They do not take a name, but are called Exclusive Brethren by many.

Exclusive Brethren are believers on the Lord Jesus Christ. They hold the truth of His deity, and accept the authority of Scripture as the inspired word of God

There are over 40,000 Exclusive Brethren worldwide, who gather on the first day of the week for the Lord's Supper and daily for reading of the Scriptures, and prayer for all who are in authority. Exclusive Brethren are located in over 300 local assemblies in 19 countries located in both northern and southern hemispheres.

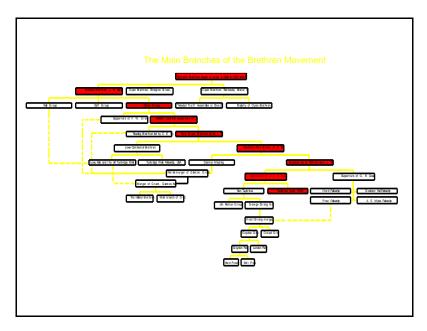…… to practice the teachings of Holy Scripture in their original purity

A relatively small group which began in the 1820s when John Nelson Darby, began the journey that would lead to him leaving the established church, as he said
 " to practice the teachings of Holy Scripture in their original purity "

Again from their website :
The brethren like many groups practice separation

Separation

The Exclusive Brethren practice separation from evil, recognising this as God's principle of unity.

They shun the conduits of evil communications: television, the radio, and the Internet.

Their charter is 2 Timothy 2:19

"The Lord knows those that are his; and, Let every one who names the name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity."
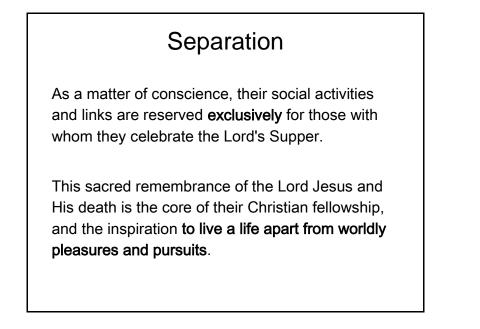
It is this doctrine of separation from evil and the interpretation of it that former members say has led to many difficulties and I would argue plays an important role in a child's early learning experiences.

There have been a number of splits the first already occurring in 1840s when those who took the less drastic line on separation became known as the "Open Brethren". Since then over the last 170 years there have been many other schisms. When we left in 1960 some of those who also left formed new smaller groups of brethren, others joined the Open Brethren, some joined other churches and some did not go anywhere. The same thing happened in 1970 – tens of thousands left again over the alleged sexual misconduct of the then leader James Taylor Junior.

The Main Branches of the Brethren Movement

(note – delegates will be given a decent copy of this showing the names)
A friend of mine also a former member of the brethren, Dr Ian McKay, created a Dendrogram showing most of the splits that have occurred. It is too complex to show really on a slide but you can see the branches and the red highlighted boxes is the line of the most exclusive branch currently led by a man called Bruce Hales – whose picture is on the first slide.

To get some sense of what this doctrine of separation means in practice we can turn again to their website:

Separation

As a matter of conscience, their social activities and links are reserved **exclusively** for those with whom they celebrate the Lord's Supper.

This sacred remembrance of the Lord Jesus and His death is the core of their Christian fellowship, and the inspiration **to live a life apart from worldly pleasures and pursuits**.
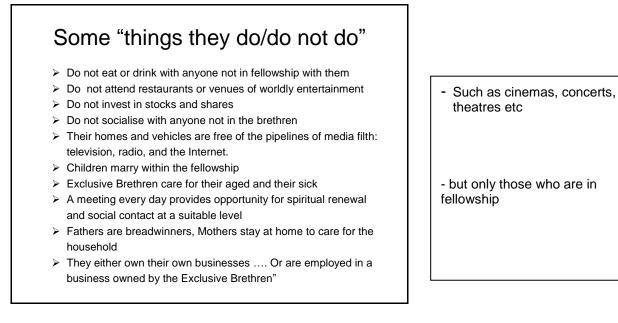
How does this translate into daily life?

A couple of years ago I was privileged to meet a young man I shall call David who had just left the EBs.

David explained to me that the brethren would say that they don't have rules. What the brethren might say is that there are things "we do not do" and there are things that "we do do". Anyone doing any of the things we don't do would bring into question their right to be part of the brethren community. The idea is individual conscience and the sign that your conscience is in line with assembly conscience is that you wouldn't be happy doing any of the things the brethren "don't do".

Turning again to their website their doctrine of separation means that they (and these are taken from the website)

Some "things they do/do not do"

- ➢ Do not eat or drink with anyone not in fellowship with them
- ➢ Do not attend restaurants or venues of worldly entertainment
- ➢ Do not invest in stocks and shares
- ➢ Do not socialise with anyone not in the brethren
- ➢ Their homes and vehicles are free of the pipelines of media filth: television, radio, and the Internet.
- ➢ Children marry within the fellowship
- ➢ Exclusive Brethren care for their aged and their sick
- ➢ A meeting every day provides opportunity for spiritual renewal and social contact at a suitable level
- ➢ Fathers are breadwinners, Mothers stay at home to care for the household
- ➢ They either own their own businesses …. Or are employed in a business owned by the Exclusive Brethren"

- Such as cinemas, concerts, theatres etc

- but only those who are in fellowship

Some more things the brethren do or do not do has been supplied by people leaving – some of these may have changed

Some more "things they do/do not do"

- ➢ Do not share drains
- ➢ Do not live in semi-detached houses or flats
- ➢ Children now attend EB schools
- ➢ Women wear long hair and head scarves
- ➢ Mortgages can only be obtained within the brethren
- ➢ Limited use of computers, fax machines, mobile phones
- ➢ They don't go on to Further Education or have careers

Their whole life – work, play, education, socialising and so on – only occurs within the environment of the brethren. It is a closed system.

The things brethren do or don't do are constantly changing – they emphasise an insistence on divine guidance as an explanation for these changes. Differences have been noted by former members in different localities so there is less consistency than there used to be – this may increase vulnerability because people are less certain about what is acceptable and what is not.

David describes the brethren lifestyle thus:

Diathesis

The lifestyle is restrictive to the point of absurdity, without the consistency of other hyper-conservative sects.

There's a lot of pressure in numbers of ways, mostly a variety of requirements to conform…..
And not least, it gets more tiring than you'd think giving the impression that you believe every single dull yet specific pronouncement

David

What happens then to those who do or do not do these things?

What do the brethren say – they speak of assembly discipline
and it seems this is based on two processes often referred to as 'shutting up' or 'being withdrawn from' .

Onset

Consequences

➢ "Shutting up" or "shrinking from"
  ➢ No contact with family and friends
  ➢ Can last several months - form of house arrest

➢ "Withdrawing from"
  ➢ Loss of family and friends
  ➢ Loss of support network
  ➢ Loss of jobs and money
  ➢ Loss of homes

I asked David about this as things have changed. He said that these two processes were never intended to be sanctions, but are seen as a way of protecting the community from connection with a wrongness.

So if there is a clear wrong, but it isn't clear that the person is beyond hope, and the wrong is not something obvious and public, then "shutting up" is the way forward. The person then no longer takes an active part in the life of the community.

In practice what this can mean is that the person shut up has no contact with anyone, not even their own family, except the priests who visit at intervals. The person does not attend meetings. In some cases this has lasted several months which some have described as a form of house arrest and very isolating.

"Withdrawing from" can also be provisional but is also often quite final if the person themselves is considered no longer fit to be part of the community.

Being withdrawn from can mean losing their families, social networks, jobs, homes, everything really.

Being 'out of fellowship' can mean marriages being ended, children being separated from their parents.

The brethren state on their website that

"Virtually all marriages among the Exclusive Brethren endure for a lifetime"
and
"The Exclusive Brethren believe strongly in the traditional family unit".

Yet when members are 'shut up' or 'withdrawn from' the story seems to be a different one as some former members in this room could tell you, myself included.

DIATHESES
Obviously I cannot explore the genetic and biological diatheses.
To explore how being raised in high demand groups could lead to diatheses of a socio-psychological nature we can now turn to the qualitative research

Of course during childhood itself there may have been incidents or events, such as sexual and physical abuse, deaths in the family, traumatic incidents such as car crashes and so on – which would also of course contribute to the diatheses. All these can be found in the general population too. I am exploring here the diatheses linked to being raised in a high demand group.

The qualitative research happened almost accidentally. I was interested in a number of questions including
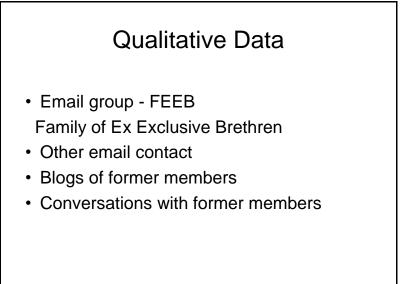 - Why do some former members experience problems and not others
 - What is it about EB life that seemed to make some people vulnerable.

I am attempting here to partially answer these questions – something I am hoping to explore more systematically over the next year.

What I am presenting today is a thematic analysis of themes derived from data

acquired from a number of sources – namely

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:1em;">

Qualitative Data

- Email group - FEEB
  Family of Ex Exclusive Brethren
- Other email contact
- Blogs of former members
- Conversations with former members

</div>

1. Email group - 10 years ago I started an email support group for former members of the exclusive brethren. Over the years the group has developed into quite a community.

2. Other email contact - from other contacts with former members I have collected a considerable quantity of written material.

3. Blogs of former members – one in particular written by the young man David referred to earlier

4. Conversations with former members

<u>Themes</u>
Themes that I have identified go some way towards providing us with diatheses.
- Fear
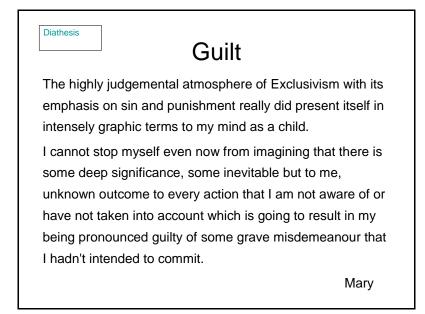One theme that has emerged is the experience of intense fear as children

Fear

Hell fire, brimstone, ashes, burning hell, all very graphic images presented to us as children and all very real, not metaphorical at all.

Jane

Jane was one of many who spoke about the images of hell traumatizing her.

Fear

Fear is a great part of my make-up….. it is always there, ….. everything in my childhood was loaded with such enormous significance. Every action, every decision had the potential for disaster.

Disgrace, humiliation and rejection were parts of everyday life. People were thrown out of the community and never spoken of again....

All the time I could never be sure that my next action or current thought might not be a violation of the unwritten codes .. and all that was needed was for someone to find out about my thoughts or intentions for the weight of the judgement of the righteous to fall upon me.

Mary

Mary seems to have experienced a very invasive sense of fear, a fear of rejection, of judgement and the uncertainty of not knowing the rules

- Guilt
She goes on to speak of her feelings of guilt she experienced as a child which is another theme that emerged.
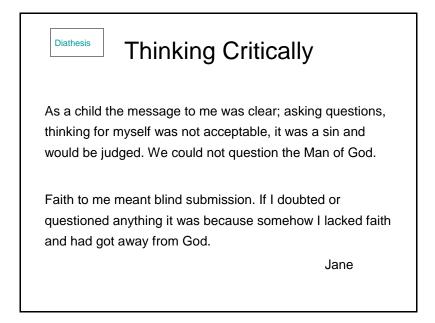
Guilt

The highly judgemental atmosphere of Exclusivism with its emphasis on sin and punishment really did present itself in intensely graphic terms to my mind as a child.

I cannot stop myself even now from imagining that there is some deep significance, some inevitable but to me, unknown outcome to every action that I am not aware of or have not taken into account which is going to result in my being pronounced guilty of some grave misdemeanour that I hadn't intended to commit.

Mary

- Friendships
Children need to play with other children in order to develop social skills. Here are some quotes from leavers about their experiences of making friends

Friendships

In EB life you don't learn to make friends, you just sort of inherit them. So you don't learn the rules of friendship-making, the growing appreciation of the person whom you have chosen to befriend, and the growing trust in that person's reliability and character etc.

Sandy

Within the brethren special friendships were strongly discouraged.

Mark

The intersection of the EB world and the real world could be toxic, or explosive...the artificiality of the restrictions poisoned normal friendships.

Peter

- Critical thinking
In order to maintain boundaries and preserve the purity of a closed group, members, including children, are usually discouraged from asking questions or thinking independently. We find this in many high demand groups or cults.

Thinking Critically

As a child the message to me was clear; asking questions, thinking for myself was not acceptable, it was a sin and would be judged. We could not question the Man of God.

Faith to me meant blind submission. If I doubted or questioned anything it was because somehow I lacked faith and had got away from God.

Jane

There is a sense of that enquiring mind of a child being silenced.

- Dissonance – mixed messages
Members report receiving mixed messages – "we are worthless sinners and we are a special people, the elite". Dissonant feelings were common.

Dissonance

I recall comforting myself as a child when being rejected by my fellow school mates – I would say to myself "I am special because I have seen the light unlike them". And yet at the same time I believed I was worthless. How can I be special AND worthless? Jane

The idea of original sin is fundamental to their teaching and they believe that humans are incapable of pleasing God for we are born corrupt. There are two natures – the natural, the one you are born with, and the spiritual which is based on faith and belief and is the only acceptable nature.

Roger Stott, a dear friend and colleague who died sadly a couple of years ago, wrote this to summarise the message given to the children from his perspective – as he saw it
"The children are taught that their whole natural personality is corrupt, degenerate – and unless they completely denounce their whole natural condition, their thoughts, feelings, actions and instincts they are in an anti-god state and will be damned.

Spiritual health and enlightenment come through the realisation that you are wholly bad. Common sense is worthless, self respect is wrong, the human mind is dark, ignorant and wicked and therefore should not be nurtured or listened to.

The message is that the normal development of the mind, body and personality is to be dismissed and condemned. The normal development of the intellectual capacity to reason and introspect about God and the nature of existence is regarded as something to be put aside, put to death and the naturally enquiring mind of the child is repressed."

Those in the audience who have read Carl Rogers will recognise that what Roger seems to be saying here is that he believes that the Rogerian language of unconditional acceptance is incompatible with the brethren teachings of judgement and worthlessness. The expression and development of the self is repressed in order to gain acceptance but what is accepted is not the real organismic self but a proxy self.

Early learning experiences like these may not be conducive to functional cognitive, moral, interpersonal, and personality development and could be the way in which some children in high demand groups develop a predisposition for psychological problems. I could say much more here but there is no time.

ONSET- PRECIPATING FACTORS

What are the precipitating factors.
I am considering here only the precipitating factors that are linked specifically to their experiences in the brethren for again there are of course events and situations that can occur that are not linked to having been in a high demand group.

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:1em;">

Precipitation

Traumatic experiences of leaving
  – Method of leaving
  – Warnings of consequences
  – Loss
  – The stresses of acculturation

Other non related EB stressors

</div>

1. Method of leaving

Method of Leaving

- Being withdrawn from

- Choose to leave

- Parents choose to leave and child leaves
  with them

There are many different ways which lead to people leaving
  - they may be mad e to leave via the process of being withdrawn from

I have already described how assembly discipline works and I am sure you would agree that for most this would be a traumatic experience. I believe that the process of assembly discipline leads to vulnerability because of the fear and guilt associated with it but it is also clearly a precipitating factor and one that leads often to the person being forced to leave

  - they may choose to leave
  - they made leave simply because their parents left (as I did)

From research we believe that it is those who **choose** to leave who manage the transition best – but that is a generalisation that does not take into account the idiosyncratic diatheses of each individual. I have recently met a few people who have left and most have prepared themselves before doing so.

2 Warnings of consequences
Leaving may have been traumatic for a number of reasons

Former members report fearing leaving because of the consequences in this life and in their eternal life. They report believing that there is no happiness outside the group and this can prevent them from taking the step. Many have also reported being told that there will be terrible consequences if they do leave such as demon possession, incurable disease and even death.

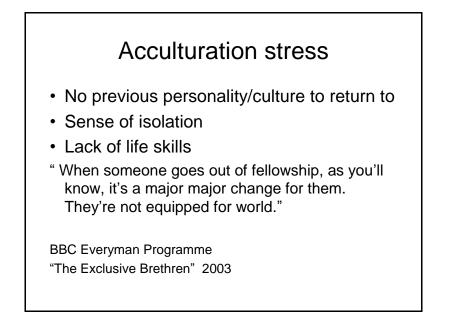Two quotes to illustrate this – the first from someone who has left recently

Warnings of dire consequences

After I had stated I was intending to leave the brethren, I had many dark warnings about the cold hard world outside, telling me that there was nobody caring, that everybody was selfish and nasty and ready to use me for what they could get and treat me as disposable afterwards.

John left 2007

I was told categorically, in words that filled me with terror that if I left God would punish me. The words they used were "God is not mocked", with the warning that the Devil would get me. They also said "God commandeth the lightening where it shall strike". I can tell you that for a few years after I left, I was terrified of thunder storms.   Joy left 1968

3. Loss

Loss

- Family
- Friends – their whole social network
- Jobs
- Financial

Former members of the brethren talk about the loss of family, friends, jobs, houses, their whole structure of life,. It is perhaps interesting to note here that the EBs constantly claim that they do not break up families. But there are people in this room for whom this statement by the EBs is simply not true – myself included.

4. Acculturation stress.

Briefly – this is the process of adjusting and adapting to a new culture
Leavers of any closed group have to enter an entirely new sociocultural environment — they are likely therefore to have difficulties with adjustment. 2nd (or 3rd/4th) generation former members experience particular difficulties on leaving.
Of course for anyone who leaves a closed system such as the Exclusive Brethren there is instantly a significant disparity between the valuing system of that group and that of the broader society. This must be particularly true for leavers who were born and raised in the closed group. The diathesis-stress model suggests that those

raised in high demand groups are not vulnerable to developing psychological problems when they leave. Being raised in an homogenous high demand group in which beliefs about what is good and bad, and about how to respond, are incongruous with those of the environment we step in to when we leave, means that we are particularly vulnerable to stress.
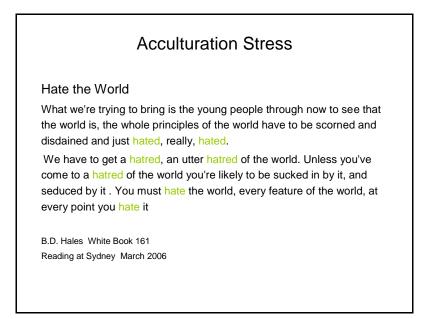

Acculturation stress

- No previous personality/culture to return to
- Sense of isolation
- Lack of life skills

" When someone goes out of fellowship, as you'll know, it's a major major change for them.
They're not equipped for world."

BBC Everyman Programme
"The Exclusive Brethren" 2003

- People born and raised in high demand groups do not have a previous personality or culture to return to so the acculturation stresses may be particularly difficult

- Having lost family and friends and not having the skills to make new friends easily many report a strong sense of isolation and for a group of people used to rarely being alone this is very difficult.

- Having spent all their childhood in the group leavers know little about the world outside and may not have the life skills needed and thus be ill equipped to survive. The EBs themselves seem aware of this

In the BBC Everyman programme one of the brethren interviewed said

" When someone goes out of fellowship, as you'll know, it's a major major change for them. They're not equipped for world."

Leavers are also entering a world they have been taught to hate and fear.
In the words of their current leader:

Acculturation Stress

Hate the World

What we're trying to bring is the young people through now to see that the world is, the whole principles of the world have to be scorned and disdained and just hated, really, hated.

We have to get a hatred, an utter hatred of the world. Unless you've come to a hatred of the world you're likely to be sucked in by it, and seduced by it . You must hate the world, every feature of the world, at every point you hate it

B.D. Hales White Book 161
Reading at Sydney March 2006

Imagine hearing this as a child – what will the child understand?

To illustrate these issues here are some quotes from people who have left

On leaving the brethren you lose your social network so completely it's like an amputation. Making new friends is hard because you don't have 'normal' social skills - even your language is a bit odd … You don't know how to FIND new friends, let alone trust them when you do, you don't know the culture, can't fit in

This person refers to the language being odd – many closed groups develop an idiosyncratic language that helps maintain the boundaries between inside and outside. This accentuates their sense of alienation outside.

Traumatic Experiences of Leaving

The process of leaving involved being deceitful, and behaving in ways that seemed separate from and against my nature - whatever that was!

I quickly realised that the scant knowledge I had of the world was at least one generation out of date - so I was still 'special', but in a negative, strange, humiliating way.

Iris

Traumatic Experiences of Leaving

The process of leaving felt crucial and fundamental, like crossing from one side of a chasm to the other. The combination of feeling alienated from this world on the one hand and 'special' on the other ie. not of 'this' world, was in my bones - put there from day one, by parents that loved me.

In leaving, I felt a great, almost overwhelming fear of the unknown and being literally, completely on my own in a world I was ignorant of. Also I carried a huge sadness at distressing my parents, particularly the fact that I couldn't make them understand that I still loved THEM.   Iris

---

Psychological Difficulties

In the early 1990s I carried out some research into the mental health of former members.
At this time I was noting my own struggles in life and wondered to what extent was I alone in them.

So I carried out a quantitative study to explore the question. Do people raised in high demand groups and leave experience problems.

The overall hypothesis was -

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 1em;">

Hypothesis

- The experience of being raised in a high demand group like the Exclusive Brethren will have consequences on mental health in those who leave.

</div>

I also had a number of sub hypotheses which I wont have time for here today but if anyone would like to read the dissertation please let me know.

Participants
Using a snowball technique of collecting participants (this was in the days before the internet was in such wide usage) I ended up with 295 completed questionnaires.

They completed a battery of questionnaires

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 1em;">

Questionnaires

1. Demographic and Biographic
2. Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI)
3. Inventory of Interpersonal Problems
4. "Things they said"

</div>

I am going to focus on the results from the BSI and questionnaire 4. Scores on the BSI were compared with scores from general population norms created in the UK.

Looking at this graph – which shows average scores for my sample of former brethren and average scores for the general population.

Brief Symptom Inventory

We can see that the overall measure of psychological distress is significantly higher amongst the leavers when compared to the general population.

I was therefore not surprised that one third of the participants have sought help from various sources including therapists, doctors and other professionals.

The BSI also yields some subscales.

Obsessive Compulsive Behaviour
Reflects perhaps the constant vigilance former members have described developing as children to ensure their safety in terms of rejection and judgement from the brethren and from god – a watchfulness

Interpersonal sensitivity
What emerged here was a sense of personal inadequacy and inferiority.

Depression – an association between life events or chronic difficulties and depression has been long established.

Anxiety – I think we have heard enough about why people might be fearful

Paranoid Ideation – reflects perhaps thoughts that are being watched or talked about by others as indeed many reported they were when in the group

Psychoticism – this scale actually measure a sense of alienation from the world and perhaps reflects the experience of being raised in a group whose holds strongly to a doctrine of separation They now live in a world that is alien to them. This links strongly with the acculturation theories.

From the 4th Questionniare which was made up of quotes from letters I had received from former members I extracted a number of statements that seemed to me to be reflecting symptoms of PTSD. I don't have time to go into this here suffice it to say

that I did find strong evidence that some of my sample were exhibiting symptoms of PTSD

Just briefly here is an example of the statements they endorsed.

Re-experiencing Phenomena	
"At times upsetting memories of the time in the EBs push themselves into my mind	50%
"Things that remind me of my time in the EBs upset me a great deal"	29%
Avoiding and Numbing Phenomena	
"I try to avoid thinking about the EBs or feelings associated with them"	36%
"I avoid activities or situations that remind me of the EBs"	34%
"Sometimes I find I cannot remember things or people to do with the time when I left the EBs"	39%

Symptoms of Increased Arousal	
BSI no25 Trouble falling asleep	37%
BSI no6 Feeling easily annoyed or irritated	66%
BSI no36 Trouble concentrating	67%

Returning to the qualitative research again the following themes of current psychological problems emerged – I don't have time to say more today.

MAINTAINING FACTORS

Maintaining Factors

- The "living dead" - lost families
- Continued acculturation stresses
- Unresolved traumas
- Core beliefs – I am worthless
- Cognitive distortions – eg dichotomous thinking
- Continued experiencing of being an outsider

1. Continued stress from the division in families, children not able to see their parents, parents not able to see their children, husbands and wives separated – I met several fathers last year who had left the group and who were not able to see their children
2. Continued acculturation stress – inability to fully assimilate into mainstream society partly because of the 'hard wired' beliefs and behaviour patterns learned in childhood
3. Unresolved traumas of childhood – including sexual and physical abuse, and also the trauma of leaving. Unresolved for a number of reasons including avoidance of reminders of the past.
4. Core beliefs learnt in their EB childhood – such as "I am worthless" "I am different and not acceptable" "nothing I do is worth anything"
5. Cognitive distortions such as dichotomous thinking
6. Unresolved feelings of being an 'outsider'

Then a scandal split the movement and brought my parents 'out', taking us with them through the mirror into the outside world. Most, if not all, of the constraints upon us were lifted, yet for some time I lived in secret fear of worldly contamination and divine punishment. . My occupation of this outside space has always been ambiguous and my understanding of Otherness tempered by my childhood realisation that I inhabited the spiritual purity of the Brethren community as a secret interloper.

Travelling across the line into the outside world did not make me feel less of an interloper or any more 'at home': my Otherness and that of 'the world' is traced upon me indelibly."

(Rebecca Stott, *The Fabrication of the late-Victorian Femme Fatale*   Macmillan 1992.)