

News Article: DY010

YAHWEH BEN YAHWEH PAROLED

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Yahweh ben Yahweh (God, Son of God), originally named Hulon Mitchell, Jr., and leader of the Nation of Yahweh cult, was paroled after 11 years in prison on conspiracy convictions. In a trial that concluded in 1992, Mitchell was connected to 14 murders committed by cult members, who were tried for the murders they claimed were ordered by Mitchell. They had randomly killed white people and also killed black followers who had become disaffected or were disrespectful to Mitchell. The cult teaches that white people are the incarnation of evil.

At first, two factors stood between Mitchell and parole: payment of \$16,000 in fines and parole conditions barring him from any direct or indirect association with fellow Yahweh cult members. Mitchell initially refused the parole conditions and consequently did not pay the fines. He asserted that such conditions violated his constitutional rights by preventing him from practicing his faith. After several weeks of negotiation with officials, he accepted the conditions and was paroled to live under close supervision in Florida.

Mitchell founded the Nation of Yahweh in 1979, which is also known as the Nation of Israel and the Black Hebrew Israelites. Mitchell, 65, one of 15 children of a fundamentalist Christian pastor from Oklahoma, has taught that he is the Son of God, that blacks are the lost tribe of Judah, and that Jews and other whites are devils. At the group's height in the 1980s, it claimed 10,000 members; controlled \$8 million worth of property, mostly in the Miami area; and had temples in 22 cities.

Current membership and power is much less, although 1,000 followers and supporters appeared at a Mitchell support rally during the summer of 2001 in Canada. The cult's official Web site (<http://yahwehbenyahweh.com/index02.htm>) distances itself from the previous teachings and practices. The Web site claims that Yahwehs are not racist. Their claim to be "law-abiding citizens" is carefully framed within their contention that their duty to Yahweh is to be citizens of his kingdom and obedient to his laws. The site contains an impassioned defense of Yahweh ben Yahweh, declaring that his trial, conviction, and incarceration constitute the "crucifixion" of the Son of God (Yahweh ben Yahweh), betrayed by "Judas," the main prosecution witness, ex-follower and former professional football player Robert Rozier, who confessed to multiple murders, and claimed he did them at the direction of Mitchell.

-- Gretchen Passantino