

The Shackled Mind of the Jehovah's Witness

*Why They Surrender Their Lives to
the Watchtower Organization*

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The spiritual man examines all things,
but he himself is not examined by any man

1 Corinthians 2:15 (NWT)

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Bible Translations Referenced

Unless otherwise stated all quotations of the Bible are from the New World Translation - 2013 Edition. Other translations referenced are:

ESV	English Standard Version
ED	Emphatic Diaglott – Benjamin Wilson
KIT	Kingdom Interlinear Translation (Greek-English)
KJV	King James version
KGV	Kingdom of God Version – Ray Faircloth
LXX	Septuagint (Greek Version of the Old Testament)
NAB	New American Bible
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NKJV	New King James Version
NIV	New International Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NOG	The Names of God Bible
MOFF	The Moffat Translation of the Bible
REB	Revised English Bible
S&G	Smith and Goodspeed—An American Translation
UBS	United Bible Societies Interlinear
The Bible in Living English by Stephen Byington	
The Emphasized Bible by J. B. Rotherham	
The New Testament by William Barclay	
The New Testament in Modern Speech by R.F. Weymouth	
Young's Literal Translation	

Introduction

Although industrialist William Conley was the first president of Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society from 1881 to 1884, the Society was incorporated with Charles Taze Russell as president in 1896 and was renamed Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society (WBTS) in 1897. In this respect we may call C. T. Russell the founder of the Watchtower Society and at this point in time its members were called 'Bible Students' up until 1931. After Russell's death in 1916 there was a power struggle, so that Joseph F. Rutherford manoeuvred his way into becoming the second president of the Society and then he proceeded to expel those that Russell had appointed to be the directors of the Society after his death. Rutherford then proceeded to steadily change some of Russell's prophecy teachings as well as making quite a number of rules for the membership to follow. In 1931 Rutherford chose the name 'Jehovah's Witnesses' (JWs) for the members of the Society and so with all these changes the religion of Jehovah's Witnesses became largely the religion of Joseph Rutherford, but based on some of the fundamentals taught by Russell. So, in this respect it could be said that J. F. Rutherford was the founder of 'Jehovah's Witnesses.' However, from the time of Rutherford's take over as president of the Watchtower Society until the present time there has been a notable harshness and authoritarianism from the leadership as well as many flip-flops in teachings. These situations have led to the formation of some nine or so break-away groups from the Watchtower (see Appendix B) since Russell's time and, at least, many hundreds of thousands of individuals who have left this organization over time and now at an accelerating rate. In fact, there are large numbers who are physically in the organization and therefore they attend meetings because of fear of being shunned by family members if they should leave, but they are mentally out of it. In other words, they do not believe the Watchtower's teachings but stay silent. These ones are sometimes called PIMOs (physically in, mentally out) by those who are fully out.

This first book concerning Jehovah's Witnesses deals with the various policies and practices promoted throughout the history of the Watchtower Society and by the modern-day Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. Indeed, on the surface there are many good things in the way of life promoted for Jehovah's Witnesses such as the encouragement toward high moral standards, clean living, and the showing of love, although such love tends to be a conditional love based upon one's agreeing with all of the

teachings of the Society (also called “the Organization”). However, there are also many policies that should give a person pause for thought before considering joining this denomination as well as for those who are already part of it. Indeed, some of these policies are entirely conscience-binding and so effectively removing the free will of the membership. So, the following issues should be of great concern to all who seek biblical truth and wish to lead the Christian life. The issues of prime concern here are:

- The Watchtower’s claim to be God’s organization—His only channel of communication,
- The requirement to use only the literature and internet material produced by the Watchtower Society and never to read or watch any other religious/biblical material,
- A developing requirement of total obedience to the Organization,
- The use of mind control techniques,
- Loss of life because of rejection of essential blood transfusions,
- Disfellowshipping and shunning of dissenters so that one may be cut off from one’s JW family members,
- The “two witness” rule whenever someone is sexually abused and so covering over the actions of paedophiles,
- Pressure to be at every meeting (even if one is not well),
- Pressure to do more in the public ministry.

The key question on these issues is: do these requirements, practices, and policies of the Organization match with the Bible’s teachings? Also are the rank and file Jehovah’s Witnesses aware of all that has gone on and is going on in the Organization? Apart from the above noted major faulty policies there are many more requirements of lesser significance that are also covered in this book. So, any person who is in contact with JWs and perhaps thinking of being baptised to become one of Jehovah’s Witnesses should consider whether or not they have been given the full information on some of the above facts for life in the JWs. Indeed, does such a person realize that one question that is asked of them at their baptism will legally bind them to the Organization if they answer that question in the affirmative. So, regarding youngsters who are below the legal age for being contractually obligated to any organization there is immediately an issue of legality of human rights. Furthermore, little or nothing is initially said to a new convert about what their position will be if they later express disagreement with any teaching of the Organization, namely, that they will be disfellowshipped and then shunned by all JWs including JW family members. In fact, in more recent times, many thousands of individuals have realized that the above noted problems are more than they can bear,

as well as noting the distorted history of the Organization presented by its governing body along with much teaching that is false to the Bible. These numerous points of false teaching are dealt with in my second book concerning the Organization's teachings. Especially since the advent of the internet many hundreds of thousands have left the Watchtower for many sincere reasons, such as "the two witnesses" rule used whereby paedophiles are not reported to the secular authorities. Also, there have been notable flip-flops on the blood transfusion issue, extreme flip-flops on some doctrines, and a recent expanding of the high control system operated by the Organization. So, in this first book we will be taking an in-depth look at all of these issues and the required practices of the Organization to show that they do not match with the biblical requirements for Christians according to the complete and properly analysed teachings of the Holy Scriptures (please see the book *Exegetical Fallacies* by D. A. Carson).

Sadly, the foundational teachers of this organization: Charles Russell and Joseph Rutherford had no professional training in Bible interpretation. Indeed, even the later presidents of the Watchtower Society ("the Organization"), namely, Nathan Knorr, Frederick Franz, and Milton Henschell also had no professional training in Bible interpretation i.e. they, too, were amateurs—and so not really adequately equipped to do accurate Bible study. Yet, it is argued by the Society that only these leading men of the Organization truly had God's spirit, and therefore they must have been right on all points. The same view is taken of the leading men within the Organization today who have formed a governing body since 1977. However, this entire fundamental teaching is proved to be false because of the many changes in doctrine that have occurred over time, including some most ludicrous early teachings presented as truth in the past which are no longer believed by Jehovah's Witnesses. These teachings used to be called "present truth," but that is really an oxymoron as if what is truth can change. However, this is not to say that all past false teachings of the Organization have now been abandoned as we shall see by a thorough comparison of them with the Holy Scriptures. Nevertheless, some new teachings by the Organization of today are equally illogical and unbiblical as, for instance, the "overlapping generations" concept. Furthermore, the same claim of having God's spirit has been misused by the founding teachers of other denominations such as by Ellen G. White of the Seventh-day Adventists, Herbert Armstrong of the World-Wide Church of God, and the two main founders of original Mormonism etc.

The Difficulty in Truth-Seeking for Individual Jehovah's Witnesses

The Bible book of Proverbs gives people the warning that, “*The naive person believes every word, but the shrewd one ponders his step*” (Prov: 14:15). Sadly, individual Jehovah’s Witnesses who follow the rules of the Organization are generally also not adequately equipped to investigate Bible teachings for themselves because they are directed to have a mindset of using only the materials provided by the Watchtower Society and so never using the up-to-date work of Bible scholars for research and, in fact, holding a negative view of such scholars. Indeed, when the Organization has occasionally made quotations from scholarly publications these quotations have been, at times, taken out of context. At other times the Organization has taken a very selective approach to information and so has ignored large amounts of factual information which is contrary to the Organization’s position on various subjects. Therefore, by its one-sided presentation of information the organization has caused Jehovah’s Witnesses to exist in an intellectual bubble and so to have a somewhat distorted understanding of many biblical issues. It is only when an individual makes a personal search using reliable sources that these Watchtower distortions of understanding can be removed from their minds.

The fact is that when an individual JW develops a longing to search for biblical truth, the up-to-date work of Bible scholars contained in Bible encyclopaedias, dictionaries, commentaries and other writings can be very valuable toward gaining a better understanding of Scripture. In fact, Jesus showed that he would make such a scholarly provision when he said, as recorded in Matthew 23:34: “*here I am sending forth to you prophets and wise men and scribes*” (*Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*). Such scribes were not just “public instructors” i.e. public speakers with little scholarly background but, in Bible times, were a class of “experts in the Law” and therefore professional Bible scholars. We, too, need to take advantage of the up-to-date work of such modern-day professionals because they help in the areas of better Bible translation, greater understanding of Jewish culture and ways of Jewish expression, more accurate definitions of Bible terms, and good analysis of the meanings in English. However, this does not detract from the fact that one should certainly use one’s own common sense in reading and studying the Scriptures as well as being discerning about some of the conclusions drawn by these scholars who may have allowed their own church background to affect their conclusions on certain biblical issues.

Seeking the Truth about the Organization’s Policies

Indeed, following the Organization's own principle on the rightness of giving warnings about wrong and dangerous teachings it is clearly right to try to warn Jehovah's Witnesses of those policies and practices which are actually not required according to the Bible and especially those policies which are actually dangerous to the membership—all such being false to the Holy Scriptures. In support of this approach *The Watchtower*, January 15, 1974 stated that:

When persons are in great danger from a source that they do not suspect or are being misled by those they consider their friends, **is it an unkindness to warn them?** They may prefer not to believe the warnings. They may even resent it. But does that free one from the **moral responsibility** to give that warning.

Also, on page 32, paragraph 19 of the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* it says:

There cannot be two sets of truth when one does not agree with the other. One or the other is true, but not both. Sincerely believing something and practicing that belief will not make it right if it really is wrong. How should you feel if proof is given that what you believe is wrong?

Many of the Watchtower's faulty teachings are discussed in my second book on JWs entitled: *Waking Up to the Distortion of Bible Teachings – Analysis of Watchtower Dogma*.

Of course, the Watchtower Society, in its literature, continues to denigrate those who point out the many faults with and wrongness of numerous major Watchtower Society policies and practices as well as the damage caused by them. This is done by calling these whistle-blowers liars, but this is simply damage limitation control on the part of the Organization. In fact, the honest-minded JW will eventually realize that the growing number of ex-witness activists who are being called liars by Watchtower officials are in fact absolutely telling the truth about these issues and, after doing their thorough research of the Watchtower history, teachings, and practices, they have been brave enough to make YouTube and other presentations out of care for the lives of those JWs who remain ignorant of the facts about Watchtower's activities. Even the ex-JWs who are not activists have been open-minded enough to do their own research and now realize that being in the Organization is a dangerous place to be! One ex-JW activist noted the similarity between the way the Organization covers up their lies by calling their critics liars and the way certain politicians who often lie do the same! Of course, the Society harshly calls

these critics “apostates” even though the Society itself has distorted the definition of the term apostate. In fact, the dictionary definition of the term apostate is, “a person who renounces a religious or political belief or principle” and obviously they do this because they can no longer conscientiously agree with that religion or political entity. However, the Society’s definition of an apostate is of one who leaves the Watchtower Organization and is a bad person who wishes to damage their organization for no good reason. This is generally, just not true.

Nevertheless, there is a vast amount of evidence to prove the facts of these issues, such as the Watchtower Organization’s covering up of paedophile issues which has resulted in the Australian Royal Commission’s telling the Watchtower Society in Australia to put its house in order concerning its policy over paedophiles and their victims. Also, there have been the several significant court cases in the United States on this issue that the Society has either lost or had to settle as well as the continuing court cases against the Watchtower over this and other illegal acts committed by it.

Most importantly, and in spite of all the terrible things done by the Watchtower Society, no JW should feel that they have to abandon their faith in God or His word the Bible. So, I encourage all Jehovah’s Witnesses to have a truly open mind and to seek the proofs on all these biblical issues as did the Bereans in the Apostle Paul’s time (Acts 17:11). Sadly, many who leave the Organization fall for the idea that if the Organization is so wrong and so bad then there is nowhere else to go because none of the churches or Christian groups could possibly have any truth and the Bible is wrong and therefore God must actually not even exist! They then lean toward the kind of books that express such atheistic ideas as presented in Richard Dawkins’ book *The God Delusion* and other books which promote the teaching of biological macro-evolution. Out of a very great deal of research over many years I believe that a person’s going in this direction is a mistake for them. Vast numbers of very well-educated scientists and philosophers are against a purely materialistic view of life and there are many websites and much literature which shows biological macro-evolution to actually be merely a hypothesis which the facts do not support (please see my book *Be in Awe of Our Creator!* along with much recommended literature on this subject).

Finally, my reason for presenting the following information is out of a love for what is true and out of great concern for those who are trapped in an intellectual bubble with cultish things being done to them although they do not necessarily realize it. My prayer is that the Watchtower Society would come clean about all the hypocrisy of their past and the present and give their membership the biblical truth rather than just using the Bible to

further their own ends. Most importantly I wish for them to stop being a high control group with a long list of man-made rules and to become a truly Christian group. However, where vast amounts of money are involved as with any corporation, it seems highly unlikely that there will be any changes in the Organization for the better! Indeed, the controlling strangle-hold seems to be increasing!

Furthermore, my feelings go out to those readers who will find some of the facts presented here as very hard to take. I know that some may have a tendency to reject them, but I can assure readers that all of this information is proven and very well known by those who have not remained trapped in the Watchtower bubble. So, I encourage all to be seekers after truth and therefore to search everywhere on these issues.



“A bird may not know it’s in a cage
until you ask why the door is locked

PART ONE

Misguided Loyalty to an Organization

1

Did God Create an Ancient Theocratic Organization?

The founder of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Charles Taze Russell, was very much against the idea of building an organization and often lambasted ‘organized religion’ calling it “a snare and a racket.” However, after Russell’s death in 1916, when Rutherford manoeuvred his way into the position of president of the Society, he immediately promoted the concept of building an organization because he could see certain financial and other advantages in doing so.

So, for some one hundred years of the Society’s history it has claimed that they are ‘God’s Organization’ i.e. the only channel which God uses to disseminate biblical truth. Also, reference was often made to the ancient nation of Israel as being God’s Organization in those times. However, in the 1980s an even greater emphasis began to be laid on these claims. It appears that at that time there was a certain internal struggle which reduced the power of the President of the Society and with a certain increase in the power held by the rest of the Governing Body. The main argument put forward by the rest of the Governing Body for this change was that in the first century the body of Christians—apostles and older men—in Jerusalem operated as a governing body for all Christians worldwide and so this should be the pattern in the twentieth century and onward. However, we must ask the following questions:

- Although recognizing that Jehovah had selected Israel as His people is it really true that Israel was ‘an organization’ rather than simply a nation?

- Is it really true that the apostles and older men in Jerusalem operated as a governing body for all Christians throughout the Roman Empire at that time?

The Holy Angels in Heaven Are Organized

Indeed, it is obviously good to be organized to accomplish God's will, whether this relates to ancient Israel, the first century Christians, or modern-day Christians; and there is certainly the excellent example of God's holy angels in respect of their being highly organized.

ORGANIZED FOR PRAISING GOD

Certainly, we have the example of God's angels as being organized to worship Jehovah. So, part of the second major prophecy in Daniel records that: "*A thousand thousands kept **ministering** to him [the Ancient of Days], and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. **The court took its seat, and books were opened***" (Dan. 7:10). This particular organizing of these heavenly creatures was at a particular time and for a particular purpose as described in verses 11-14 and with further interpretation given in verses 15-27. It is a judgement for the end times i.e. "for a time, times and half a time" (verse 25b) at the end of which the kingdom is set up (verse 27). The description of the holy angels as being *armies* indicates a disciplined and organized system for carrying out God's will as when King David says, "*Praise Jehovah, all you his angels, mighty in power, who carry out his word, obeying his voice. Praise Jehovah all his **armies**, His ministers who **do his will***" (Ps. 103:20, 21). Indeed, in the Scriptures God is often called "Jehovah of armies." These armies are made up of individual spirit beings. However, it would be wrong to imagine that such glorious beings are automatons or are lacking the free-will that the Scriptures indicate is also given to humans.

ORGANIZED FOR PRAISING THE EXALTED JESUS

Similarly, we find in the book of Revelation that the angels are organized to praise the Lord Jesus Christ:

*"And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders, and the number of them was myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, and they were saying with aloud voice: **The Lamb** who was slaughtered is worthy to receive the power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing"* (Rev. 5:11).

ORGANIZED FOR SERVICE TO CHRISTIANS

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews asks: “*Are they [the angels] not all spirits for holy service, sent out to minister for those who are going to inherit salvation?*” (*Heb. 1:14*). However, none of this refers to being organized in the way that the Watchtower Society is organized i.e. as a business—a publishing and printing company sending out organizing directives to its many branches.

God’s Patriarchal Governmental System

From Abraham onward each patriarch was the father, ruler, priest, judge and provider for the family. There were only very few laws needed in this system and the system worked because of the **love a father has for his family** and the **love the family had for the father**. There was no codified system of laws even when Jacob’s large family moved down into Egypt because of famine in their own land. However, in Egypt some degree of local government began to form in the sense that a council of elders [older men] was established i.e. “*the elders of the people*” (*Ex. 19:7*) and “*elders of the congregation*” (*Judges 21:16*). In fact, Moses was sent back to Egypt by Jehovah and was to go to “*the older men of Israel*” (*Ex. 3:16*).

Israel’s Governmental System

The Watchtower organization has many times proposed that the nation of Israel was formed as God’s organization of the past. However, is this a true assessment of Israel’s role? Certainly, from the time of the exodus from Egypt Moses acted as leader, mediator and prophet to Israel because Jehovah said that: “*He is being entrusted with all my house*” (*Num. 12:7*). Yet, after Moses’ death neither Joshua, nor anyone else sons acted as mediator or prophet. So, Moses was unique, and in this respect, he foreshadowed Jesus Christ. Additionally, for the unique situation of the trek through the wilderness and in preparation to enter and conquer the Promised Land, Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro made the following suggestion that, “*You [Moses] should select from the people capable men, fearing God, trustworthy men...as chiefs over thousands, chiefs over hundreds, chiefs over fifties, and chiefs over tens*” (*Ex. 18:21*). However, after the second leader of Israel, namely, Joshua had completed most of the conquest of Canaan and was approaching his death he gave a farewell speech. In this speech he made no mention of handing over executive power to a single individual, but rather the system of councils of elders was to continue so that, “*Joshua summoned all Israel, its **elders**, its **heads**, its **judges**, and its **officers***” (*Josh. 23:2*). In fact, he gave authority for settling disputes to these elders, heads, judges, and

officers in their various tribes and locations so that, “*Israel continued to serve Jehovah all the days of Joshua and all the days of **the elders** who outlived Joshua...*” (Josh. 24:31). So, now **centralized control** by a single individual was no longer needed in Israel. The only organization was that of the family and the councils of elders.

After they were settled in the land of Canaan, Israel had a **body of elders for each city**, each tribe, and the nation as a whole had a council of older men, but no over-arching governing body. These elders were men of wisdom because: “*Is not wisdom found among the aged*” (Job 12:12). Certainly, they were to know the Law of Moses in depth because they were to serve as guides and to serve in a judicial capacity and to be protective of the people (Deut. 19:11, 12; 21:1-8, 18-20; 22:16-19; Josh 20:2-4). This institution of councils of elders was still in operation in Jesus’ day (Luke 7:2-5), but there was no centralized organizing body sending out directives to each city, even though there were local courts as well as the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.

The earlier patriarchal system and the later system of councils of elders meant that God was the governmental head of God’s people. At one point it could be stated that, “*in those days there was **no king** in Israel. Each one was doing what was right in his own eyes*” (Judges 21:25) or “as he saw fit” (NIV). So, Israel operated as one large family with **no centralized government from a single human individual**. This meant that relatives of families represented family members whenever there were cases of dispute, but these were not appointed by God.

Although Israel’s priesthood was highly organized for offering sacrifices, individuals lived according to personal conscience and were individually responsible to God and to the community. This also meant that sanctions would be imposed upon lawbreakers by each local body of elders. However, Israel’s famous judges—Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Barak, Gideon, and Tola—did not operate as a government but rather they were military leaders to fight Israel’s battles. This theocratic arrangement lasted for 350 years; yet when reading the Bible passages of the time of the judges one would certainly not conclude that Israel had become an organization.

ISRAEL BECOMES LIKE THE PAGAN NATIONS

In time the Israelites wished to imitate the surrounding nations who were each ruled by a king. So, the Israelites instructed Samuel with the words: “*Now appoint for us **a king** to judge us **like all the other nations...***” but Jehovah told Samuel, “*it is I whom they have **rejected** as their **king***” (1 Sam. 8:5, 7). So, Samuel then proceeded to warn the Israelites of the harsh yoke they would be putting themselves under by

having a king—i.e. **a centralized government**—“like all the other nations;” but, “...*the people refused to listen to what Samuel told them and they said ‘No, we are determined to have a king over us’*” (1 Sam. 8:19). However, this was not an arrangement that had God’s approval, but rather, although allowing it, He strongly disapproved of it, saying, “*I gave you a king in my anger, and I will take him away in my fury*” (Hos. 13:11), but Israel responded saying, “...*we have added to all our sins another evil by asking for a king*” (1 Sam. 12:19).

One tragic result of this *untheocratic* arrangement was that the kingdom was later split in two with the ten-tribe kingdom setting up an arrangement resulting in false worship under a non-levitical priesthood. Both kingdoms were unfaithful to God; and although they were always classed as God’s people, they were not operating along godly lines even during the rare times when they returned to a purer form of worship. They still had imperfect men as their kings. **Both of these nations had to have prophets sent to them many times to correct them or bring them back to Jehovah.** As the writer to the Hebrews states that, “*Long ago God spoke to our forefathers by means of the prophets*” (Heb. 1:1). Nevertheless, **these prophets did not form an organization for the governing of God’s wayward people,** but served simply to deliver his messages to the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. There was, in fact, no official procedure in the Law of Moses for appointing a prophet. God spoke through these individuals who could be identified by the following features:

- a) The prophet spoke in God’s name Deut. 18:20-22.
- b) The prophecy came true " "
- c) The prophecy promoted pure worship Deut. 13:1-4.

Yet, for the most part, the words of these prophets were not heeded and in time the behaviour of both kingdoms became so bad in God’s eyes that he sent, firstly the Assyrian world power against the northern kingdom, and then the Babylonians against the southern kingdom. However, when pronouncing His judgement on the kingdom of Judah He gave a promise of someone who, in having God’s spirit, actually would rule on God’s behalf for the benefit of the people. Meanwhile God had stated that this human autocracy would come to an end with the words, “*A ruin, a ruin, a ruin I will make it...it will not belong to anyone until the one who has the legal right comes, and I will give it to him*” (Ezek. 21:27). So, after 586 B.C (please see my second book on Watchtower teachings: *Waking Up to the Distortion of Bible Teachings – Analysis of Watchtower Dogma.*) Israel was either scattered or ruled by other nations and clearly did not resemble any form of organization. Its form of worship was

apostate and divided.

This situation of general disarray lasted right through the 400-year gap from Malachi to the time of Jesus with the Israelites being under the authority of the various empires. This shows that there was **nothing about them that significantly functioned as an organization** belonging to God. However, we may ask: did the religious leaders of Jesus' day form 'God's organization'? The answer to this thought must be an emphatic no! In fact, Jesus, during his ministry, condemned much of what the religious leaders were doing; thereby showing that they were **not operating as any organization belonging to God and in fact generally lived out of harmony with Him**. In fact, Jesus' apostles were forced into directly disobeying the High Priest saying: "*We must obey God as ruler rather than men*" (*Acts 5:27-29*). This shows that they did not view Israel's highest religious authority as being God's organization.

God's Future Appointed King

In the Hebrew Scriptures there are many prophecies concerning Earth's final administrative King—one who would be God's Son. For instance, King David of Judah was informed by God that: "*When your days come to an end, and you are laid to rest with your forefathers, then I shall raise up your offspring after you...and I will firmly establish his kingdom ... I will become his father and he himself will become my son...*" (*2 Sam. 7:12-14*). Although this prophecy was initially applied to Solomon, the words in bold are later applied in Hebrews 1:5 to Jesus as *the Son*—he thereby being the son of David. The parallel account recorded in 1 Chronicles 17:14 omits the thought of chastisement which was not necessary or even relevant for the Messiah. So, Isaiah prophesied that, "*A twig [branch] will grow out of the stump of Jesse [David's father]...And the spirit of Jehovah will settle upon him, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding...*" (*Isa. 11:1, 2*). **Therefore, Messiah will not rule Earth by human philosophy** but in justice and righteousness. For this to be the case such a ruler would have to have the power and the same mindset as God i.e. God's spirit as shown by Isaiah.

Summary

So, it is evident that God did not create Israel as an organization that was in any way similar to the Watchtower Society which operates as a business—with its many branches, branch managers, and a world-wide workforce (unpaid). However, although Israel proved not to be God's ancient organization, we now ask: did things change in this respect with

the advent of the Christian congregation in the first century? Did the apostles and elders in Jerusalem become the point of centralized control over the rapidly growing number of Christians and their establishment in congregations?

§

2

Was There a First Century Governing Body in Jerusalem?

In 1971 the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society brought into existence a governing body, initially with Milton Henschel as its president. This was based on the claim that the early Christian council meeting recorded in Acts 15 is an example of the workings of the Christian governing body of the first century. However, there is no biblical proof of this and, indeed, Bible scholar Alexander Strauch in his book *Biblical Eldership* states:

I emphasize these historical facts because Acts 15 is often misused to justify the authority of church councils and permanent church courts...It is a historical fact that no formal interchurch federation, denominational union, or fixed organizational framework linked churches together for the first two hundred years of the Christian era. p. 128.

Evidently the claim by the Watchtower organization that the Jerusalem brothers were the centralized governing body will take some research to come to know the truth about the situation recorded in Acts 15.

THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL—ACTS 15

The following is the only record in the New Testament of a Christian council in operation. It notes that:

*“Now some men came down from Judea and began to teach the brothers: **“Unless you get circumcised** according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved ... it was arranged for Paul, Barnabas, and some of the others to go up to **the apostles and elders in Jerusalem** regarding this issue” (Acts 15:1, 2).*

So did this council of “apostles and older men in Jerusalem” act like a modern-day governing body of Christians? Did it decide on matters of importance for other congregations? Here the issue in Acts 15 was: Should Gentile Christians keep the Law of Moses and get circumcised? So, **Paul from the Antioch congregation** says: “*I again went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas...as a result of a revelation*” (Gal. 2:1, 2). The result of Paul’s revelation and his discussion with those, “who were highly regarded” was as follows: “*For **the holy spirit** (meaning the spirit of the exalted Jesus) and we have favored adding no further burden to you except these necessary things*” (Acts 15:28). So, the Jerusalem congregation did not act as a governing body in making this decision for Christians. This decision came **from Jesus’ use of holy spirit and given as a revelation to Paul**, who was associated with the Antioch congregation. So, Paul then conveyed the message of this revelation to these Jerusalem brothers by way of correcting them. All of these points show that the Jerusalem congregation never served as a model for any modern-day governing body of Christians. This directly contradicts the teaching of the governing body of Jehovah’s Witnesses that God deals with people only through a single authority structure. According to Alexander Strauch in *Biblical Eldership*: “There is no biblical evidence to suggest that there was an established, supreme court in Jerusalem to which all Christian churches were answerable ...Antioch, not Jerusalem, initiated the conference” p. 126.

PAUL DID NOT GET HIS AUTHORITY FROM THE JERUSALEM ELDERS

Luke describes how Paul and Barnabas, “*sailed off for **Antioch**, where they had been entrusted to the undeserved kindness of God for the work they had now completed*” (Acts 14:26). This indicates that they were never required to report to the Jerusalem congregation which, in any case, had its own separate body of elders. Furthermore, it was **Paul who corrected Peter—a representative of the Jerusalem congregation because:**

*“...before certain men from **James** arrived [at Antioch], he [Peter] used to eat with people of the nations; but when they arrived, he stopped ... But when I [Paul] saw they were not walking in step with the truth of the good news...**I said to Cephas before them all:...how can you** compel people of the nations to live according to Jewish practice?” (Gal. 2:12, 14).*

God Did Not Start an Organization at Pentecost 33 C.E.

The disciples of Jesus were already organically the Body of Christ as branches in him as “the Vine,” but not as an organization. From the time Jesus chose the twelve, many got baptized and, so, were part of that body.

So, well before 33 C.E. Jesus had given them their mission instructions and most of their code of conduct and they had functioned fully on a number of occasions as preachers (seventy on one occasion). Although, after his resurrection, further instructions followed from Jesus through the spirit this did not mean that they were not the Body of Christ before then. The receiving of the gifts of the spirit at Pentecost was indeed a dramatic event giving impetus to the gathering of new disciples as was the giving of the spirit to Gentiles some-time later. Yet these great events were phases in the movement that Jesus started, but not the beginning of it.

The Congregations Were Autonomous

As already shown theologian Alexander Strauch shows there was “no formal interchurch federation” in those early days, but rather Jesus would be in constant contact with his disciples through the holy spirit and obedience to him was what matters. In this way he helps and guides all Christians individually without the help of a **centralised governing bureaucracy**. In fact, in 1895 C.T. Russell said:

Beware of organization. It is wholly unnecessary. The Bible rules will be the only rules you will need. Do not seek to bind other's consciences, and do not permit others to bind yours. *Zion's Watch Tower*, September 15, 1895, reprint page 1866.

For any organization to say that it handles all kingdom affairs on earth is a usurpation of the authority of Christ. **Also, for anyone to mentally elevate an organization to this position becomes idolatry.** Actually, the Watchtower magazine of 1st March 1979 promotes idolatry of the Organization when it asks: “is there any cause for us to lose **faith in** Jehovah's visible organization...? Absolutely not...our unwavering **faith** will be rewarded with victory and the crown of life.” Therefore, the Roman Catholic papal system and any Episcopal system with a governing body would be diametrically opposed to Jesus' teaching on Christian autonomy. It would be insubordination to set up such systems. The only governing arrangement was to be that of a body of elders and a body of ministerial servants (*Gk diakonos*) in each congregation as well as for all congregations to work and co-operate together for the common purpose. Indeed, according to Alexander Strauch in *Biblical Eldership* p. 126, “There is no biblical evidence to suggest that there was an established, supreme court in Jerusalem to which all Christian churches were answerable ... Antioch, not Jerusalem, initiated the conference” described in Acts 15. So, it appears that all of the congregations that were established by various

apostles and disciples in the first century were autonomous and were not under the control of those in Jerusalem, although no doubt, collaborating with them. Indeed, the Watchtower Society’s promotion of its governing body as being God’s only channel is a usurpation of the role of Jesus Christ in directing his disciples through the spirit of Jesus (Acts 13:2; 16:6b-7).

§

3

Is There a “Faithful and Discreet Slave” Organization?

In Matthew 24:45 Jesus presented a parable asking: “*Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics to give them their food at the proper time?*” During the mid-1890s, according to the book *Proclaimers of God’s kingdom* p.143, “Brother Russell’s wife publicly expressed the idea that Russell himself was “the faithful and wise servant” as though it were a *personal appointment of an individual*. So, from 1897 the early followers of Charles Taze Russell, claimed him to be “the faithful and discreet slave” (Watchtower 1st Dec. 1916 p.356). However, in 1927 Rutherford changed this view, saying that Russell never was “the faithful slave” and that this office was not that of a single individual, but of Christians as a collective group since Pentecost of 33 C.E. So, since 1919 Watchtower theology claimed the “faithful slave” to be the *collective group* of the remnant of anointed Christians and with “the domestics” as the *individuals* in this remnant. However, in 2013 this application changed once again. This time the Governing Body claimed that only it is “the faithful and discreet slave” and so making just eight men as a collective body to fulfil this role and to act as the authority over all of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Nevertheless, all of such teaching is biblically incorrect because the term “faithful and discreet slave” refers to *individual* Christians as will be shown shortly.

The Idea of Continuous Uninterrupted Existence of
the Faithful & Discreet Slave

The idea held by Jehovah's Witnesses that the mid 1800s was the time for God to begin using certain people to bring Christianity out of the 1800 year darkness and to spiritually feed "the domestics" **contradicts the Governing Body teaching that** the "faithful and discreet slave" has had a **continuous uninterrupted existence** since 33 C.E. and has been shining an ever increasing light on the truths of the Scriptures with a continuous food supply. However, there is no tracing in history of a "faithful and discreet slave" as a collective body that has had a *continuous uninterrupted existence* since 33 C.E. There is no history of any groups that have had most of the JW beliefs. If there had been such a slave class that has had such an existence since 33 C.E. then C.T. Russell would have received his knowledge of truth from that "slave" and would not have been the one who "revived these great truths taught by Jesus and the apostles." (Please see the "*Divine Purpose*" book p. 17). However, even Russell would not recognize many of the current beliefs of the Governing Body as being those that he held during his lifetime.

Since 2013 the Governing Body Has Become "The Faithful and Discreet Slave"

For most of the history of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society it taught that new light was provided when the members of the 'anointed remnant' (see NOTE) as the "faithful and discreet slave" mailed their thoughts on spiritual matters to the leaders at the Watchtower headquarters who then processed these spiritual 'truths' and later published such new teaching in the pages of their literature. In other words, Jehovah's Witnesses were led to believe that their governing body was following the guidance of the 'anointed remnant' around the world as the ones receiving information from God. However, the fact is that very little of this remnant's "new light" was used for teaching Jehovah's Witnesses and, in fact, most Watchtower articles were written by either Fred Franz or the six members of the so-called "other sheep" class who were on the writing committee at the headquarters. So, during the 1980s it started to be revealed that there was no new teaching from the 'anointed remnant' i.e. the so-called "faithful and discreet slave." This was eventually admitted in a 2009 Watchtower magazine when it stated that:

"the Governing Body represents the faithful and discreet slave class." It also stated that: "Christians who have truly received this anointing do not demand special attention. They do not believe that their being of the anointed gives them special insights beyond what even some

experienced members of the "great crowd" may have." *The Watchtower*, 15th June, 2009.

This was an official demoting of the 'anointed remnant' in stating that they do not have any "**special insights**" so that all decisions on what is 'truth' are now in the hands of the Governing Body as it really already was! So, it was a lie that "the Governing Body **represents** the faithful and discreet slave class" when it itself was acting as that class. So, since 2013 the Governing Body came clean and now claims itself to be the "faithful and discreet slave." This also means that the previous 'truth' that the 'anointed remnant' had dispensed all of the 'spiritual food' was not true at least since the 1980s if not even further back in time. One wonders why the Governing Body or individual members did not reveal this fact many decades earlier.

So, because up to now, the members of the Governing Body are also of the 'anointed remnant' and yet "they do not believe their being of the anointed gives them special insights beyond what even some experienced members of the "great crowd" may have" then those of the "**great crowd**" class who are biblically studious potentially have special 'spiritual insight' equal to any member of the Governing Body. Nevertheless, from all of this it is rather evident that neither the 'anointed remnant'/'faithful and discreet slave' nor the Governing Body have ever significantly had any "**special insights**" revealed to them by Jehovah.

NOTE: Since 2006 the number of 'anointed remnant' memorial partakers has been growing from 9,000 until now it is over 18,000. This is contrary to Watchtower projections according to their theology.

JESUS - MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND THE GOVERNING BODY!!

Because the Governing Body has for several decades taught that Jesus is not the mediator between God and mankind, but that he is the mediator between God and only the "faithful and discreet slave," this must now switch to a mediatorship between God and only the Governing Body, even though this is in contradiction of 1 Timothy 2:5. So, because the Governing Body demands that all other Jehovah's Witnesses accept its teachings and its changes of teachings as being from God, the everlasting future of rank and file Jehovah's Witnesses is totally dependent on their obedience to this Governing Body who must be trusted. The reason given for having such trust is that:

Since Jehovah God and Jesus Christ completely trust the faithful and discreet slave, should we not do the same? *The Watchtower*, 15th Feb., 2009, p. 27.

However, the evidence stated above and further on in this book is such that the Governing Body/'faithful and discreet slave' does not warrant anyone's trust at all. It engages in a definite form of dishonesty with the membership and promotes ideas which would usurp the true position of Jesus as the "*one mediator between God and men*" (1 Tim. 2:5), whereby all true Christians can have a direct relationship with Jesus. But what did Jesus really mean when he spoke of a "faithful and discreet slave"?

The Phrase "Faithful and Discreet Slave" Refers to Individuals and Not to a Governing Body

The Watchtower generally references only the Matthew 24:45-47 account of Jesus' words on the issue of, "who really is the faithful and discreet slave." However, this same subject is expanded in the parallel account in Luke 12:42-48 and gives clarification and additional features to this picture in contrast to what has been taught by the Watchtower for over 100 years. The Watchtower presents this as concerning two different slaves, whereas a simple reading shows Matthew 24 to be concerning one single individual slave who is initially faithful, but who turns bad. Jesus rhetorically asks in this parable:

*"Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics ("household servants" is better) **to give them their food** at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so! Truly I will say to you, he will **appoint him over all his belongings**" (Matt. 24:45-47).*

Certainly, this passage shows that there is a degree of authority granted by the master to certain individuals such as the twelve Apostles. However, this authority is primarily in regard to the giving of "their food at the proper time." Then Jesus continues to say concerning this same slave:

*"But if ever that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is delaying,' and he starts to **beat his fellow slaves** and should eat and drink with the confirmed drunkards, the master of that slave ... will punish him with the greatest severity and will assign him his place with the hypocrites" (Matt. 24:48-51).*

The fact of this one servant being portrayed as turning from being faithful to being bad is proven by referencing the parallel account in **Luke 12:42-48** which after speaking of the "faithful steward" in verse 42 says, in verses 45-46:

*"But if ever **that slave** should say in his heart, 'My master delays*

coming,' and starts to beat the male and female servants and to eat and drink and get drunk, ⁴⁶the master of that slave will come on a day that he is not expecting him, and at an hour that he does not know, and he will punish him with the greatest severity and assign him a part with the unfaithful ones."

Indeed, showing that the Organization's application of the phrase "evil slave class" is incorrect is the statement on Matthew 24:45-51 by noted Bible scholar G. H. Lang, who never had any connection to the Watchtower Society. He commented that:

In the explication of this parable the Lord contemplated the business of His house going on so long that **a good slave might degenerate into a bad one**; for he says "My lord delayeth his coming," which it would not occur to any one to say until some considerable lapse of time after the master had left and beyond the full time when he might have returned. **The good servant turning from his fidelity is the clear force of what is said.** It is only when he starts to entertain the notion of the delay of his lord that he "begins" his misconduct, which means that up till then he had done his duty. The pronoun "*that* evil servant" is emphatic: *What* evil servant? And no other person is mentioned than the good servant. The Lord might have said, If an evil servant, or If any evil servant: but He did not so speak. (boldening ours). *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, p.32.

So, it is clear that, according to Jesus, the same servant goes from being faithful to being evil. Indeed, because the Organization's claim is that its own Governing Body is "the faithful and discreet slave" the logical conclusion is that if they ever say, 'My master is delaying' and mistreat the other "slaves" then they have degenerated to become "that evil slave." Evidently there is no separate group or splinter group that becomes "that evil slave." Furthermore, as shown above, Jesus' words about slaves concerns individuals and not classes. So, the Organization should never have used the term "evil slave" in reference to others, but should fear that if it itself should begin to mistreat other "slaves" that it may be viewed by Jesus as an evil slave and later suffer the consequences described by Jesus.

Interestingly, in the Luke 12 account there are further details added concerning the negligent slave "*who understood the will of the master but did not get ready or do what he asked will be beaten with **many strokes***" (vs. 47), but also that the careless one "*who did not understand (the will of the master) and yet did things deserving of strokes will be beaten with **few** (strokes)*" (vs. 48). So, how should these details be

understood? As a starting point the Apostle Peter says: *“To the extent that **each one** has received a gift, use it in ministering to one another as fine stewards of God’s undeserved kindness that is expressed in various ways”* (1 Pet. 4:10). So, each Christian is a steward of God’s things—a faithful slave. Indeed, Peter goes on to state the various ways any individual could minister to one’s brothers and sisters. So, the parable given in both Matthew 24 and Luke 12 concerns the faithfulness of **individual** Christians, especially teachers and leaders, as shown by how they treat their fellow Christians. None of this speaks of a class or organization or composite body of people, but as individual Christians.

The Watchtower’s view that Jesus was referring to a “faithful and discreet slave” **class** i.e. a composite body of anointed slaves is because it was thought that it would be too much for any one slave to be appointed to deal with **all** of Jesus’ belongings and that he would not live long enough during the time of the master’s absence. Indeed, this is true, but the parable is not speaking of only one slave as in the case of C.T. Russell, but of **many individual slaves over the entire length of time**. So, throughout Jesus’ Olivet discourse he refers to the slave in the singular, calling him a “discreet **one**.” There is no hint that a composite slave is in view. In fact, in the illustration given in Matthew 25:14-30 Jesus says that these slaves would be assigned talents individually: *“he gave five talents to **one**, two to another, and one to still another, to **each one** according to **his own ability**.”* Nowhere in the illustration does he allow for the slave to be considered as a group. This is why he praises each loyal individual slave with the words: *“Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things. I will **appoint you over many things**. Enter into the joy of your master”* (Matt. 25:21-23).

Furthermore, none of Jesus’ parables were given to describe classes (*as organized bodies*) of people, but **individual** responses to the master and the kingdom. Otherwise an evil slave organization, a many strokes organization, and a few strokes organization would all have to be identified based on Luke 12:42-48. No such single organizations exist. There would need to be consistent *class* application for all of the parables, requiring the identification of, for example, a ten minas organization and a five minas organization either within or separate from the faithful and discreet slave organization. Rather, each **individual** Christian leader should strive to be a faithful slave and to spiritually feed his fellow slaves as shown in the completion of the parable: *“...**everyone** to whom much was given, much will be demanded of him [the individual], and **the one** who was put in charge of much will have more than usual demanded of **him**”* (Luke 12:48). Therefore, in terms of *an evil slave* as being on the scene, the disciples within the same household could make choices, either

to remain faithful or become evil. However, if we go with the “composite body” interpretation, it would actually mean—according to the layout of Jesus’ words in 24:48—that the entire body would become “that evil slave” and so leaving no one faithful to give the household servants “their food at the proper time.” So, when we combine all the relevant passages it becomes clear that Jesus spoke of responsible individuals as the faithful slaves and of some who would turn bad.

Furthermore, this appointment “over all [the master’s] belongings” will only be granted once Jesus actually literally returns and not using the incorrect concept of a return in 1914. Also, in terms of the reason for this slave to go bad i.e. because of saying “in his heart, ‘My master delays coming’” it would appear that just as others in the distant past have found allegorical ways to deny Jesus’ literal physical return, so too, C.T. Russell turned Jesus’ return into an invisible return, but always remaining in heaven. This means his never actually returning at all!

Sadly, the expression “evil slave class” came to be applied by the Watchtower Organization to any JW who ceased to recognize its authority over them. Furthermore, Rutherford began to promote the idea of organization in contradiction of Russell’s express statement that such a concept is a bad idea for Christians!

§

4

An Organic Union with Christ - Not an Organizational Union

Christians Have an Organic Union with Christ

Very little is said in the Holy Scriptures concerning ‘organization,’ even the word is not used in the Scriptures. In contrast to this, various illustrations of an organic nature were used by Jesus, Paul, and Peter. For instance, Jesus said of himself: “*I am **the vine**, you are the branches. Whoever remains in union with **me**...bears much fruit*” (John 15:5). Similarly, Paul’s use of the body/head illustration shows that there is no intermediary between Christ and each Christian: “...so we, although

many, are **one body...but individually** we are members belonging to one another” (Rom. 12:5). So, Christians are: “...members of the **household of God**, and you have been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, while Christ Jesus himself is the chief corner stone” (Eph. 2:19) and “**He is the head of the body, the congregation**” (Col. 1:18). Furthermore, Peter used a family-based term in speaking of: “...judgment to start with the **house of God**. Now if it starts first with **us...**” (1 Peter. 4:17).

Note: The phrase “house of God” has a meaning similar to a family or local council of elders in Israel in pre-king times.

Serving any organization—however loyally—is not the way to gain one’s salvation. Everything for salvation comes through Jesus. As he said: “**I am the door**; whoever enters through me will be saved” (John 10:9). He also said, “**I am the way** and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). Also, the writer to the Hebrews called Jesus: “**the Chief Agent of their salvation**” (Heb. 2:10). In fact, concerning Jesus, “**there is no salvation in anyone else, for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must get saved**” (Acts 4:12). Therefore, one’s salvation cannot come through any organization or church or mortal individual. It will come only through Jesus. This is because he is the “**one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus**” (1Tim. 2:5) and so Jesus himself said to unbelieving Jews that “**you do not want to come to me so that you may have life**” (John 5:40). Certainly, Peter seems to have received this message loud and clear when he responded, “**Lord whom shall we go away to. You have sayings of everlasting life**” (John 6:68). And Paul confirms that fact with his statement that, “**the gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ our Lord**” (Rom. 6:23). So, if a Christian wants everlasting life, he or she must come to Jesus in a personal relationship because only he has, “sayings of everlasting life.”

The Framework for Christian Society

Similar to the local councils of elders in Israel’s earlier history, each Christian congregation in each city would have its body of elders. It would also have a body of ministering servants as detailed in Acts and by Paul. The writer to the Hebrews showed how this arrangement was supposed to work out, so that individual Christians should:

“Continue being persuaded (Gk peithoo) by those guiding you, and defer to (Gk hupeiko) them. Indeed, they are tireless in their care for you, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this

with joy and not with groaning, because that would be of no advantage to you” (Heb. 13:17 KGV).

POOR RENDERING OF HEBREWS 13:17

However, as with many church-based translations the renderings in the NWT of “be obedient to” and “be submissive” are stronger than the true Christian approach is to be to others and can be misconstrued as referring to leaders as having a demanding authority over individual Christians. In contrast to this, Paul’s way of dealing with others was that of persuasion (2 Cor. 5:11). It is only those who wish to act in an authoritarian way who render *peitheoo* as “obey” rather than “persuade.” Yet, *Mounce’s Expository Dictionary* shows that *peithoo* in all its forms means ‘persuade, be persuaded, and yield to persuasion.’ Furthermore, F. F. Bruce shows that the subject matter is that of doctrines. So, when the context is taken into account Hebrews 13:17 appears to be an admonishment in the sense of the Christian’s **co-operation after having been persuaded** by the Christian teaching.

In regard to the word *hupeiko*, the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation (KIT)* renders it as “be you yielding under” which does not mean to be submissive **to someone’s authority**, but to **submissively listen to, yield to**, or “defer to” and **therefore to co-operate with their guides**. So, in context, this is in the sense of *not putting obstacles in the way of the teacher trying to teach*. In fact, this approach harmonizes with Jesus’ words in Luke 22:25 and 26 that Christians “are not to be that way” i.e. exercising *lordly authority* over others. Even Paul, who was granted authority from Jesus, most often uses the phrase: “I appeal (Gk *parakalein*) to you...” throughout his writings. When he does use terms of command such as “I charge you...” they are not used in any strongly legislative way, but by way of commissioning someone. Essentially the main time for a leader to use strength of authority would be in dealing with those who promote provable false teachings.

APPLYING THE LAW OF THE CHRIST

The law of the Christ is based on “love” as “*the fulfilment of the law*” (Rom. 13:10) and “*the law of faith*” (Rom. 3:27). This is because Christians are “...*a letter of Christ...written...not on stone tablets but on fleshly tablets, on hearts*” (2 Cor. 3:3). This leads them to “*Go on carrying the burdens of one another, and in this way fulfil the law of the Christ*” (Gal. 6:2). In such a beautiful arrangement “*the kingdom of God does not mean eating and drinking, but means righteousness and peace and joy in holy spirit*” (Rom. 14:17).

Conclusion

The disciples were already the Body of Christ as branches in him as “the Vine,” at least from the time he chose the twelve. The receiving of the gifts of the spirit at Pentecost was a major phase in the movement that Jesus started, but not the beginning of it. Therefore, the truly theocratic arrangement is that of individual body members under the personal direction of God and Christ as head of the body through holy spirit. Christians also come together as organized, that is, in individual autonomous congregations, each with their own body of elders and body of ministering servants. This formation would be for the purpose of accomplishing God’s will and in co-operation with other congregations.

§

5

Christians Are to Obey Jesus Rather Than Any Organization

It is Jehovah God who has determined who would be the one that His people must listen to as stated by Moses and quoted from Deuteronomy 18:15 by the apostle Peter who said: “*God will raise up for you from among your brothers a prophet like me [Moses]. You must **listen to whatever he [Jesus] tells you***” (Acts 3:22). Indeed, at the transfiguration God directly commanded the three disciples at that dramatic event: “*This is my Son, the one that has been chosen. **Listen to him***” (Luke 9:35). And Jesus himself linked his statement, “...you are my friends” with “*if you do what I am commanding you*” (John 15:14). And for new converts the disciples must be, “...teaching them to observe **all the things I have commanded you...I am with you all the days until the conclusion...**” (Matt. 28:20). So, it is Jesus who gives all authorization as he said: “*All authority has been given me in heaven and on earth*” (Matt. 28:18). This is because “...he is the head of the body, the congregation” (Col. 1:18). Furthermore, in both Matthew 10:5 for the twelve apostles, and in Luke 10:1 for the 70 evangelists, it was Jesus who authorized them to preach.

The Spirit of Jesus Authorizes Christian Activities

Because Jesus is currently located in heaven, he is able to be empowering and supportive of his disciples by means of his spirit which is really God's holy spirit, as he promised his first followers:

“The Father...will give you another helper to be with you forever...the spirit of the truth” (John 14:16) so that “...he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).

*“Now in Antioch there were prophets and teachers in the local congregation, Barnabas...and Saul ... the **holy spirit** said: ‘Set aside for **me** Barnabas and Saul for the work to which **I** have called them ... So these men, sent out by the holy spirit, went down to Seleucia...” (Acts 13:1-4).*

The proof that, in this case, the holy spirit and the spirit of Jesus are synonymous is the statement that: *“...they were forbidden by **the holy spirit** to speak the word in the district of Asia...they made efforts to go into Bithynia, but **the spirit of Jesus** did not permit them” (Acts 16: 6, 7).* Further proof is also noted by comparing Romans 8:26, 27 with 8:33 and 34 where the spirit and Jesus are shown to be the intercessor for Christians; yet there are not two intercessors. Hence, the spirit mentioned in Romans 8:26, 27 is “the spirit of Jesus.” Galatians 4:6 also speaks of “the spirit of his Son.”

JESUS RULES THROUGH HIS TEACHINGS AND THOSE OF HIS EMISSARIES

Jesus himself explained the meaning and fulfillment of the Scriptures on the road to Emmaus. (Luke 24:27, Acts 1:3). He then gave the disciples further explanations and instructions during his almost six-week seminar prior to his ascension (Acts 1:6-8). This teaching continued by means of the visions he gave to both Paul and John so that Christians have all the teaching they need since the completion of the Christian Greek Scriptures. So, the governing of Christians is only by means of the words of Jesus and the apostles as Jesus said:

*“Everyone that comes to me and **hears my words** and **does them**...He is like a man building a house, who dug and went down deep and laid a foundation on the rock...” (Luke 6:47).*

And Jude admonished Christians to: *“...put up a hard fight for the faith that was once for all time delivered to the holy ones ... call to mind the sayings that have been previously spoken by the apostles of our Lord Jesus. Christ” (Jude 3, 17).* So, if the teachings of any leaders within

Christianity are at variance with the teachings of Jesus and his apostles then the individual Christian must follow Jesus and ignore that leadership.

Taking the Lead by Individual Christians Rather Than by Any Central Organization

Jesus made it clear that leadership of Christians is never to be authoritarian or in any way controlling, but that of being a leader who acts as a servant to his fellow Christians so that Jesus, “*said to them [the disciples]: ‘The kings of the nations **lord it over them**, and those having **authority over them** are called Benefactors. You, though, **are not to be that way**. But let him that is greatest among you become as the youngest, and the one taking the lead as the one ministering. Which one is the greater, the one dining or the one serving? Is it not the one dining? But I am in your midst **as the one serving**’*” (Luke 22:25-27).

This kind of servant leadership was fully demonstrated by the Apostle Paul and his associates. His humble approach to his fellow Christians is seen when he says, “***Not that we are masters over your faith**, but we are fellow workers for your joy, for it is by your faith that you are standing*” (2 Cor. 1:24). So when the writer to the Hebrews in 13:17 later directs fellow Christians to: “*be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive (see previous chapter), for they are keeping watch over you as those who will render an account...*” this must be within the context of such leaders as not being “*masters over your faith*” so that no one would “lord it over” another Christian. So, as above, **Hebrews 13:17** is better translated as: “*continue being persuaded by those guiding you, and defer to them.*” Similarly, Paul, in humility, showed remarkable restraint in his use of any authority.

Paul’s Authority Came Directly from Jesus

It is most likely that the comment on Christian leaders in Hebrews 13:17 concerned those who had been appointed by Jesus or by one of his apostles, rather than any congregation leader today. Certainly, Paul was chosen directly by Jesus as the Lord who said to Ananias: “*Go! because this man [Saul/Paul] is a **chosen** vessel to me to bear my name to the nations...*” (Acts 9:15). Later Paul, in his letter to the Galatians describes himself as:

*“Paul, an apostle, **neither from men** nor through a man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father ... for neither did I receive it [the good news] from man, nor was I taught it, except through a revelation by Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:1, 12).*

Clearly, no earthly organization authorized the choosing of Paul. He was directly chosen by Jesus as had the original twelve.

§

6

Discredited Claims Made by the Watchtower Organization

The Serving of Spiritual Food at the Right Time

In its false claim to be “the faithful and discreet slave” class, the Organization (Governing Body) claims to have been appointed, since 1919, over all of Christ’s “belongings” namely, his **earthly interests**. A further change in identification of “the faithful and discreet slave,” occurred in the 2013, so that now it is only the Governing Body that is this slave. In reality, rather than being a “slave” it maintains excessive control over what the members may believe and how they may act. Its major demand is for the members to display total loyalty to it.

Until the rather arbitrary re-interpretation of these verses in 2013 the organization’s interpretation looked something like the following:

Who really is the faithful and discreet slave **organization** whom **Jesus** appointed over his **disciples**, to give them their **spiritual** food at the proper time? Happy is that slave **organization** if **Jesus** on arriving **in 1914** finds him doing so. Truly I say to you, he will appoint **the Watchtower Society [in 1919]** over all his **earthly interests**.

So, pages 350-355 of the organization’s book *God’s Kingdom of a Thousand Years Has Approached* say:

The serving of food, **the right sort of food** at the proper time **was the issue**. It had to be according to this that a decision must be rendered by the returning master [Jesus]...On **inspecting [the Society] in the year 1919 C.E.**...Jesus did find the appointed “slave” faithful and discreet in the feeding of his [disciples].

So according to the teaching of the Governing Body Jesus, having arrived in 1914, began, in 1918, to make an inspection of all religions claiming to represent him. He completed this inspection in the spring of 1919 and determined that only the Watchtower Society was dispensing the right spiritual food at the right time. He therefore appointed them as his “faithful and discreet slave.” Nevertheless, was the Organization dispensing the right sort of spiritual food up to 1919?

Teachings Taught Between 1876 and 1919 That Are Now Discredited by the Governing Body

According to Charles Taze Russell the following events occurred on God’s dates. Furthermore, these dates were all still taught by the organization in 1918/19:

- 1799 was the beginning of “**The Last Days**”/“Time of the End.”
- 1829 was the beginning of understanding the **mysteries of prophecy**.
- 1844 was when the **Wise Virgins** went forth to meet the bridegroom.
- 1846 was when God’s **Sanctuary** was **cleansed**.
- 1873 was the end of 6,000 years of human existence.
- 1874 was the beginning of the 40-year **harvest**.
- 1874 was the beginning of the Battle of **Armageddon**.
- 1878 was when God’s **Kingdom** was **set up** in heaven.
- 1878 was the fall of **Babylon the Great**.
- 1881 was the close of the ‘**Heavenly Calling**.’
- 1881 was when the **Resurrection** of all the dead in Christ took place.
- 1914 was the final date for anointed Christians to be taken to heaven.
- 1914 was the end of the 40-year **harvest** of preaching work.
- 1914 was when the **Kingdom** would be firmly established in the **Earth**.
- 1914 was when **Jesus would be present** as Earth’s new ruler.
- 1914 was for when the **Gentile nations** were to be **destroyed**.
- 1914 was when **Jerusalem and Israel** were to turn from their blindness.
- 1914 was when “**The Last Days**” would **end**.
- 1915 as a new date for when the **Kingdom** would be fully **established**.
- 1918 **Christendom** would be **destroyed** and millions of members killed.
- 1920 as the beginning of world-wide all-embracing **anarchy**.
- 1920 for when all earthly **Governments** would **pass away**.
- 1925 as a **new date** for when anointed Christians would be taken to **heaven**.
- 2914 as the date for the end of 1,000 years reign of Christ.

All but two of these dates have any relevance for Jehovah’s Witnesses today, but even then, what was to occur on those two dates had drastical-

ly changed from Jesus literally coming to earth to now only turning his attention to earth as an invisible spirit being.

The Claim to Speak in Jehovah's Name

Concerning the Organization as the Jeremiah class, the Watchtower of 9-1-79, p. 29 stated that: "Unlike the clergy class, those of the Jeremiah class have been sent by Jehovah to speak in his name...True, the Jeremiah class back up their message by quoting the words, "This is what Jehovah has said."" However, the reality is that whenever, the subject of the many failed predictions of the Organization arises, the Governing body states that it never claimed to speak in Jehovah's name even though they explain the test for a true prophet as being that: "the Bible itself establishes the rules for testing a prophecy at Deut. 18:20-22, and 13:1-3. (2) it must come to pass" Watchtower of March 1, 1965, p. 151. Indeed, the above failed predictions are all documented in older publications of the Organization, but please note the references below in the book *Proclaimers of God's kingdom* for other rejected teachings:

- **1874** was claimed as the date for **Christ's Second Coming**. This was taught for 67 years from 1876 to 1943 (*Proclaimers* book pp. 46-47 and 133).
- "**Millions Now Living will never Die**" because the 1,000 years reign was to begin in **1925**. This message began to be broadcast in 1918. Clearly the people living in 1918 have mostly all died. The *Proclaimers* book p. 425 admits that Rutherford was mistaken. It was a false message.
- Rather than the remnant of anointed Christians, it was **Russell** who was viewed as the faithful and discrete slave for thirty years from 1897 to 1927, that is, **eight years after** Jesus' so-called inspection in 1918/19. The Organization later taught that Russell never was the slave but that the remnant always was (*Proclaimers* book pages 142 and 143) until the 2013 change. So, what was taught was false for thirty years. If Jesus had tried to appoint them then they obviously rejected that appointment for eight years. Yet in contradiction of these facts page 16 of the January 15, 1994 Watchtower states that "In 1919 that slave was identified as the remnant of anointed Christians."
- Celebration of **Christmas** was still practiced by the Organization up to **seven years after** Jesus' so-called inspection. (*Proclaimers* book p. 200).

- Celebration of **Birthdays** was still practiced **several years after** the imagined 1919 inspection. (*Proclaimers* book, p. 201)
- **The Cross** appeared on the front cover of every issue of the Watchtower magazine until 1931—**twelve years after** the inspection. (*Proclaimers* book, p. 200)
- The **Great Pyramid** of Gizeh was still believed to be God’s stone witness **some nine years after** Jesus’ supposed inspection was finished. This was used to corroborate the date of 1874 by using each inch as equal to one year. (*Proclaimers* book, p. 201)
- To the early Organization (prior to 1914) the end of the **Gentile Times** meant the actual destruction of all nations in 1914 (p. 99 of *The Time Is At Hand*’ published 1889). But nowadays it has the meaning of “the end of their uninterrupted rule.” (1970 yearbook, p72) In other words the rule of the nations has been interrupted by the invisible rulership of Jesus, and yet there has been no destruction of any nations.
- One of the craziest early beliefs was that the **1,600 furlongs** of Revelation 14:20 was supposed to be the distance between the place where the book *‘The Finished Mystery’* was written (Scranton, Pennsylvania) and the place where it was printed (Brooklyn, NY). This was supposedly a fulfilment of Revelation 14:20. (p. 230 of *‘The Finished Mystery’* published in 1917).

For all of these 33 teachings the questions must be asked:

- Was it the right teaching?
- Was it the right time to be teaching it?
- Was it a teaching that was revealed in God’s word?

Evidently the answer to each question is ‘no’ even according to the modern-day Organization. These 33 teachings that are now fully rejected by the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses today are only a small number of the morsels that were **wrongly offered as spiritual food from 1876 to 1919**. The Governing body now rejects entire chapters and complete books and magazines that were published by the Organization during those early years. These wrong teachings went out to hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of people worldwide. Yet these years included the years of Jesus’ inspection to ascertain which religious body was teaching the truth. **So, would Jesus have possibly chosen the Watchtower Society to be God’s organization in view of their dispensing of all this wrong spiritual food up to 1919? The one mistake** that most Jehovah’s Witnesses have made is to have failed to **examine the history of the Organization, especially up to 1919**, to see if it matches its claim to

have been chosen in that year to be Jesus' "faithful and discreet slave."

The Society in Bondage from 1914 To 1918

The November 15, 1980 Watchtower states of the early Bible Students who were only called Jehovah's Witnesses after 1931 that they: "sold themselves because of wrong practices and came into bondage to the world empire of false religion. An outstanding instance of this occurred during World War 1 of 1914-1918. Later the August 15, 1991 Watchtower stated: "In the year 1919...[the Society] came out of Satan's organization." This means that up to 1919 they were all in Satan's organization at a time when Jesus' inspection was going on!! In 1919 the Organization had **not corrected any of the false teachings or practices** of the 1914/1918 period. This further shows that Jesus would not have selected them on the basis of what they were teaching at the time.

§

7

How Does Progressive Light Shining on Key Teachings Work Out?

To allow for the many changes in its teachings over the years the Watchtower Society relies on the biblical thought that, "*the path of the righteous ones is like the bright morning light that grows brighter until full daylight*" (Prov. 4:18). Although this verse is not really talking about the gaining of understanding of the Scriptures it is obviously true that those who personally regularly study the Scriptures will grow in understanding of them. However, under normal circumstances early misunderstandings of significant doctrines are usually held for only a short time; although it is also evident that some aspects of the Scriptures are either ambiguous or lack sufficient data to form concrete conclusions about them at a particular time. Nevertheless, shouldn't a truth-seeking Christian be willing to make any adjustment to clearer understanding as soon as possible? Yet, *The Proclaimers* book p. 708 says:

If a person has been in a dark room for a long period of time, is it not

best if he is exposed to light **gradually**? Jehovah has exposed his people to the light of truth in a similar manner; he has enlightened them **progressively**.

This is very twisted psychology to back-up the Watchtower doctrine of progressive light on teachings. However, is this the way it works when the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses applies it to their teachings that have been changed? No! It seems to be more like a **light on/light off** situation rather than that of increasing light. The faultiness of this approach can be seen in the following examples of the Organization’s changeable teaching over time.

Example 1: Who are represented by the “*Superior Authorities*” in Romans 13:1?

1904-1929	“Superior Authorities”	= Secular Rulers	Light ON
1929-1962	“	“ = Jehovah and Jesus	Light OFF
1962 to date	“	“ = Secular Rulers	Light ON

The history of this teaching makes it evident that the choice made when the light was off was made for reasons of expediency, and not because anything in the Scriptures would lead one to give the interpretation that the “superior authorities” were Jehovah and Jesus. If the 1929 teaching was new light there would never have been a return in 1962 to the old light of 1904 onward.

Example 2: The ever-changing teaching concerning whether or not **the men of Sodom** will be resurrected has been like a light switching on and off some eight or more times. Almost all other changes in teaching have operated as an on/off switch rather than any gradual intensifying of light. So, the theory of *progressive light* based on Proverbs 4:18 is not, in fact, how the Governing Body’s changes in teaching happened in reality; yet amazingly most individual JW’s don’t see this metaphorical sleight of hand happening!

EACH KEY TEACHING MUST ALWAYS REMAIN TRUE

Truth is paramount for the theory of Progressive Light to work. There cannot be a “Present Truth” which later changes. If it changes to what is actually true then the so-called “Present Truth” was a falsehood. In fact, the progression of light would be a steady building on a basic truth, but not a running ahead by adding details that later turn out to be false. Note that Paul says: “*For now we see in hazy outline by means of a metal mirror, but then it will be face to face. At present I know **partially**, but then I shall know **accurately** [**fully** as in other translations]*” (1

Cor.13:12). The rendering “**accurately**” is contextually incorrect because it does not make the point that Paul was actually making, that is, the opposite of “partially” (the rendering “**fully**” is the opposite of “partially”). So, the partial knowledge, which is always truth, is being built upon with added true details until arriving at a full or complete picture. Never would there be falsity if it comes from God. However, the ON/OFF light and the many pronouncements which have turned out to be false are excused by the Governing body by saying that they got it wrong because they are **only imperfect men and that they are not infallible or inspired**. If that is the case, then there should never be the claim to be dispensing God’s spiritual food, because the real food from God is always truthful even if restricted for a time. Hence no claim should be made of being God’s organization. For such a claim to be made one would have to claim infallibility of teaching and with no excuses ever being made for wrong teaching. The fact that the apostles were imperfect men does not validate the excuse because everything the imperfect apostles wrote was **absolute unchangeable truth** just as the apostle John stated: “*the true light is already shining*” (1 John 2:8).

How Proverbs 4:18 Was Meant to Be Applied

It would seem that, in reality, Proverbs 4:18 should not be applied in the way that the Governing Body applies it in an attempt to prove a progressive revealing of truth. Verse 18 gives the simple contrasting statement of: “the way of the wicked is like deep darkness” (verse 19 ESV). So **Old light** is simply darkness—it is not light at all. Evidently both the first president, Charles Russell and the second president Joseph Rutherford were in such “deep darkness” regarding many teachings for all of their lives because much of their teaching is what is now acknowledged by the Governing Body as false. Indeed, the application of Proverbs 4:18 and Matthew 24:45 made by the Governing Body **operates in contradictory ways**. If one processes the above wrong and discredited teachings through the *progressive light theory* then Russell and Rutherford are forgiven for getting it all wrong—they were just imperfect men—provided they did not claim to be God’s channel of truth! If, on the other hand, one processes these wrong teachings through Matthew 24:45 then there is no excuse for Russell and Rutherford—they were giving false teachings as spiritual food in 1914-1919 and therefore **could not have been chosen in 1919 to be God’s organization**. Again, most individual Jehovah’s Witnesses don’t see this metaphorical sleight of hand happening! As the Watchtower magazine 2-1881, p. 188 said:

If we were following a man...undoubtedly one human idea would contradict another and that which was light one or two or six years ago would be regarded as darkness now. But with God there is no variability, neither shadow or turning, and so it is with truth...a new view of truth can never contradict a former truth. "New light" never extinguishes older "light," but adds to it.

Nevertheless, the Watchtower magazine 3-15-1986, p. 14 also stated that: "If we keep listening to subtle arguments and specious reasoning, 'twisted things' can sound as though they were straight." Nevertheless, they only apply this thought to other people and never to their own "specious reasoning"! However, Christians who are really seeking the truth, "...won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth" (*Eph. 4:14 NLT*).

Teachings Still Believed Today by Jehovah's Witnesses

- God is not a trinity (see NOTE)
- Jesus is not God
- The soul is not immortal
- The dead are not conscious
- Hell is not a place of eternal torment
- The earth will not be destroyed.

However, all of these teachings were being taught by **many other religious groups** in 1918/19 at the time of Jesus' supposed inspection. It is just as likely that those churches could have been selected as "the faithful and discrete slave," but they have never made the claim to be God's only organization. It was, in fact, **from these other groups that Russell acquired these biblically correct teachings.**

NOTE: The above teachings are, in fact, completely true. Please see my books: *Can There be Three Persons in One God? – Why You Should Question the Trinity Doctrine* and *Delusions and Truths Concerning the Future Life*.

Questions Raised from the "Proclaimers" Book

- Why didn't the early presidents ever know that Jesus was to have returned in 1914 and not the wrong date of 1874 which they proclaimed?

- Why in 1919 did the Society deny being the “faithful and discrete slave” and not accept the appointment then?
- Why, during the time of Jesus’ inspection, did Rutherford declare the lie that “Millions now living will never die?” There are no longer any people from that time who are still alive!
- Why does page 60 of the *Proclaimers* book present Russell’s 25-year prophecy as being **the beginning of the war** in Europe in 1914 when, in fact, his actual prophecy was a foretelling of the ‘**End of all kingdoms** in 1914’. The August 15, 1989 Watchtower (p.13) shows that *The World Magazine* of August 30, 1914 actually said that it was a prophecy about the “*End of all kingdoms in 1914.*” The prophecy was first given on p. 99 of the 1889 book *The Time Is At Hand* which said:

“Within the coming twenty-six years all present governments will be overthrown and dissolved...we consider it an established truth that the final END OF [ALL] KINGDOMS of this world...will be accomplished by the end of A.D. 1914” – 1889 Edition. (This is also quoted in the Watchtower of March 15, 1955).

This was repeated in the July 1894 Watch Tower which said: “Bear in mind that the end of 1914 is not the date for the beginning, but **the end of the time of trouble.**” Also note the further misrepresentation of Russell’s prophecy on p. 560 of the *Proclaimers* book. However, Russell’s actual prophecy turned out to be false because no kingdoms came to an end in 1914 or even soon after.

- Why, in 1919, did the Organization still dispense ‘food’ that was poisonous—namely the celebration of Christmas and birthdays, the cross and the Great Pyramid of Gizeh? As we have noted above regarding Proverbs 4:18, 19 these are now classed as teachings of darkness. (*Proclaimers* book p. 200).

Tacking – Accounting for the Changing Doctrines of the Watchtower Organization

The 1 January 1981 Watchtower magazine introduced the illustration of tacking whereby a sailing boat which often changes course to accommodate the wind direction yet still reaches its destination. This was used as a way to account for the regular changing of teachings by the Governing Body. However, this illustration of tacking contradicts Volume

2 of *Insight on the Scriptures* which shows that “being the spirit of truth, God’s holy spirit could never be the source of error but would protect Christ’s followers from doctrinal falsehoods, p. 1132. More importantly it contradicts the Apostle Paul’s metaphor for a Christian’s course as being with certainty. He says: “*Therefore, the way I am running is not uncertainly* (“not on a zigzag course” *Anchor Bible*)” (*1 Cor. 9:26*). On that basis the many errors of Russell, Rutherford, and the Governing body of Jehovah’s Witnesses over the past 130 years indicate that they do not have protection from falling into doctrinal falsehood.

§

8

Misleading Impressions Given of the Organization’s History

Because the Watchtower’s book *Proclaimers of God’s Kingdom* presents the Organization’s history in a topical format rather than in chronological format, it is easy for the reader to form incorrect conclusions concerning this history. For example:

- On page 204 of the *Proclaimers* book it states that: “The operation of the organization of Jehovah’s Witnesses has undergone significant changes since Charles Taze Russell and his associates first began to study the Bible together in 1870.” However, this gives the misleading impression that there was **an organization in 1870**, whereas when one examines pages 43-48; 120-122; and 132-135 it becomes clear that C. T. Russell was only 17 years of age in 1870 and was associated with **Adventists from 1869 to the year 1878** when he broke away from Trinitarian Adventist Nelson Barbour and began publishing the Watchtower magazine, the first of which was the July 1879 issue.
- On page 147 of the *Proclaimers* book mention is made of the doctrinal change from believing that “**the superior authorities**” of Romans 13 were Jehovah and Jesus to the belief that they are the secular governments as if this were “progressive understanding.” However, page 190 of the *Proclaimers* book shows that Russell and the Bible

Students had previously held this belief. In fact, it seems that it was held at least from 1904 until 1929. So, it was not, as stated on page 147, an example of “progressive understanding.”

- On page 201 of the *Proclaimers* book a small note is presented concerning the fact that C. T. Russell taught that the Great Pyramid of Gizah was **God’s stone witness**. However, a more honest presentation would have referred to older publications of the Organization revealing that, after Russell’s death, second president of the Watchtower Society Joseph Rutherford continued to teach this idea for a further twelve years and that pyramidology was the basis of much of the Organization’s prediction of future events. In other words, they used occult spiritism for more than forty years. Furthermore, on page 64 there is a photograph of Russell’s rather insignificant headstone; yet any picture of the massive stone pyramid (with an ‘all seeing eye’) marking Watch Tower burial plots is completely missing from the *Proclaimers* book.

The Illusion of Being God’s Organization

UNBIBLICAL TERMINOLOGY

Terms such as, The Society, The Organization, Jehovah’s visible organization, God’s theocratic organization, Jehovah’s earthly organization, God’s channel of communication, and God’s spirit-directed organization are all terms that the Governing Body uses to describe itself as “the faithful and discreet slave.” Evidently their followers use the terms ‘Governing Body’ and ‘Faithful and Discreet Slave’ as the equivalent of **titles**. Yet such a practice is in contradiction of Jesus’ words: “*But you, do not you be called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, and all of you are brothers*” (*Matt. 23:8*).

The illusion for JW’s is that they think they are being loyal to God by being loyal to ‘his organization.’ The reality is that prior to 1976 they were being loyal to a man, the President of the organization, and after 1976 they were being loyal to the men of the Governing Body. During neither of these periods were they being loyal to God or Christ Jesus because there is no proof that the Organization was selected by Jesus in 1919 as his representatives.

A PERFECT ORGANIZATION OF IMPERFECT MEN!!

The claim that the Organization is *perfect* is used to make the membership believe that the Organization is God’s and so must, of necessity, be perfect and therefore must be obeyed. The contradictory claim that the men running the organization are *imperfect* is used by the

Society to excuse its many mistakes, changes, and false prophecies.

1. These claims make no logical sense, in spite of the very contradictory reasoning presented by the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses. If the component parts of an entity are imperfect then logically the entity is imperfect.
2. Since the Governing Body claims not to be inspired by God, how can God “channel” information through this body as he did through the men that He inspired to write the Scriptures?
3. Since God inspired imperfect men to write the Bible, why does an Organization need to be seen as perfect to be used by God to interpret the Scriptures?
4. The Governing Body has occasionally stated that, unlike the Bible writers, the “faithful and discrete slave” is **not inspired of God**. However, they also make the claim that whatever material appears in the Watchtower magazine study articles comes **from Jehovah**. This is another contradictory position because any thoughts from Jehovah must come through men who are inspired by him, even though they are imperfect.

QUESTIONING THE ‘FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE’ TEACHING

- If God planned that the light for correct understanding of the Scriptures was only switched on in the 1880s why did God make the Bible available to people for all the centuries before?
- Why has the identity of the “faithful slave” teaching changed several times between the early 1900’s and now?
- How does a person know that he is of “the anointed class” with a heavenly hope? Anointing with God’s spirit happens the moment anyone sincerely believes and becomes a Christian (Eph. 1:8, 13). All true Christians must have God’s spirit.
- How exactly does God put into the minds of the Governing Body the right slant on the Scriptures so that it becomes spiritual food?



9

Hypocrisy, Double Standards, and Injustices

Watchtower Hypocrisy by Rutherford and the Watch Tower Leaders in Hitler's Germany

When Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933 the German Watchtower representatives attempted to compromise with the Nazi regime over their practices, even opening their 1933 Berlin convention with the music (but not the lyrics) of the German National Anthem, along with having their convention in a hall bedecked, according to Konrad Franke, with swastika flags. There is also some evidence that they worked in harmony with Hitler's policy against the Jews. All of this in contradiction of the Watch Tower's policy of political neutrality!

Notably, after late autumn of 1933, when the German Watchtower leadership's attempts to curry favour with Hitler had failed, the second president of the Organization, J. F. Rutherford, recklessly began writing against Hitler's regime—this through Watch Tower publications translated into German and along with Rutherford's ordering of the German Witnesses to distribute thousands of anti-Nazi tracts throughout Germany. This led to the arrest of 6,263 Witnesses and with 2,074 of them being sent to concentration camps. Added to this disaster was a condemnatory letter written to Hitler by Paul Balzereit—all leading finally to the loss of 1,200 JW lives at the hands of the Nazi's. Clearly, Rutherford's policy in this matter caused or contributed greatly to all this persecution and death of the German Witnesses. However, in the mid-1930s Watchtower representatives gave out vastly exaggerated figures of persecution of some 10,000 arrests. In fact, the true figures of the number of arrests were only released as late as the 1990s in Watchtower magazines. Such exaggeration was done in the 1930s so that Rutherford could promote the cause of Jehovah's Witnesses as being martyrs and so that he could claim Germany as being the "wild beast" of Revelation and as the "King of the North" (Daniel 11). Furthermore, the Watchtower's distorted history of JWs in Germany did not reveal the double standard of many of Watchtower's representatives there.

In 1996 the Organization produced a propaganda video called *Jehovah's Witnesses Stand Firm against Nazi Assault*. The good aspect of

this video was that it presented the genuine bravery of the many rank and file German Witnesses during the time of the Hitler regime. However, it failed to show the early collusion with the Nazis on the part of Watchtower leadership in Germany and their selling-out of their faithful brothers. For instance, in the *Stand Firm* video there is no mention of the fact that Erich Frost, Konrad Franke, and other Watch Tower high officials divulged information to the Gestapo about the JW's underground activities and which negatively and seriously affected many of the brothers and sisters. All of this information and Watchtower failure to reveal all of the truth about what happened during the 1930's in Germany has been very well documented by professor emeritus of history M. James Penton in his book *Jehovah's Witnesses and The Third Reich*.

Watchtower Double Standards Over Neutrality

The following events concerned the JW's in Malawi and those in Mexico. Firstly, the Witnesses in Malawi began to experience severe persecution at a level unequalled in modern times. This occurred in 1964, 1967, 1972, and 1975 and was over the issue of Malawi's one-party state requiring that every citizen should **purchase a party card**. The Watchtower's branch office in Malawi sent out a directive (upheld by the mother organization) that all JW's in the country were to refuse to purchase such a card. The reason given was that to do so would be a violation of Christian neutrality—a thing forbidden by the Organization. So, the brothers and sisters held firm to the Watchtower's directive and did not purchase such cards. This brought down the ire of the Malawian dictatorial government resulting in the country-wide persecution of the JW's with many being tortured or killed. In fact, because Malawi was a one-party state there should never have been a requirement to refuse the purchasing of a party card because this was never a matter of party politics which the Watchtower is against.

The Watchtower's double standard here became evident when we compare this persecution in Malawi over refusal to buy a party card with that of the similar issue in Mexico in 1960 where men of draft-age were required by law to carry **an Identity Cartilla for Military Service**. This "cartilla" (card) meant that all men of draft-age must attend weekly classes for military training for one year and the instructor would mark the card to show that the young man had attended. This card also became a document of identification for whenever a draft-age man was seeking employment or when applying for a driving licence or when applying for a passport etc. Now because the Organization has a policy of refusing any participation in military service these young men were required by the

Organization to refuse to attend such weekly classes. Yet, any breaking of the law in Mexico would lead to their imprisonment for such refusal. Nevertheless, there was a great amount of corruption among the officials in Mexico who ran these classes and many brothers simply paid a **bribe** to them to have their card marked as showing their attendance at these classes. This made this into a falsified document and therefore, became an issue of concern regarding the morality of such bribery for the Mexico Branch Office who then wrote to the Watchtower headquarters to seek advice on this issue. The response from the Society was in the following letter dated June 2, 1960:

As to those who are relieved of military training by a money transaction with the officials who are involved therewith, this is on a par with what is done in other Latin American countries where brothers have paid for their relief through some military official in order to retain their freedom for theocratic activities ... if the consciences of certain brothers allow them to enter into such an arrangement for their continued freedom we have no objection.

Please note that the word “bribe” is replaced here with the euphemistic term “money transaction,” whereas this is clearly the bribing of officials. Indeed, this response from the Society to the Mexico branch shows that there existed one law for those young JW’s in Mexico and a different law later on for JW’s in Malawi—a completely double-standard and so causing unnecessary persecution and the deaths of many in Malawi!

In fact, this double standard also concerned the draft-age brothers in the Dominican Republic where, because of their refusal to do military service, they spent many years in prison. There just was no system of bribing officials in this country—if they broke the law by refusing military service they went to prison! The full story with full documentation of all of this operating by double standards regarding Malawi and Mexico by the Watchtower organization can be read in the book *Crisis of Conscience* by ex-Governing Body member Ray Franz.

A further similar act of hypocrisy by Watchtower leaders concerns the Watchtower’s rule that JW’s in the USA were not to sign the Oath of Allegiance to the USA. However, prior to the 1970s it was required that any American citizen must sign this Oath of Allegiance to the United States if they wished to obtain a passport. The hypocrisy here is shown when one sees copies of the passports of both Presidents Rutherford and Knorr showing that they did actually sign this Oath of Allegiance because it was convenient for them to be able to obtain their passports, again showing the double standards used by leaders of the Watchtower Society.

Hypocrisy Concerning the United Nations

At least since 1961 the Watchtower Organization has taught that the United Nations is symbolized in the book of Revelation as “the wild beast.” This means that the U.N. is representative of Satan’s world of political nations and therefore as an enemy of God’s people. This is why it was so surprising that in 2001 investigative journalist on religious affairs Stephen Bates of the Guardian newspaper of Manchester, England revealed, in two articles, that in 1991 the Watchtower’s main corporation had registered itself as in association with the United Nations as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and such registration was renewed annually to show that they complied with the U.N goals whenever they disseminated U.N based information. As soon as the Watchtower Society became aware of these articles in the Guardian newspaper it immediately withdrew its NGO membership and status with the United Nations. Since then many JW’s have been stumbled by this and have left the Watchtower Organization because of its ten-year hypocrisy in this matter. These ones have made further comments on the internet about this issue and the Watchtower has responded by stating that it had to become a United Nations NGO so that it’s official representatives could obtain the library card which would allow them access to the extensive U.N. library for research purposes. This is a proven lie, yet it is one which the Watchtower Society continues to profess! The fact is that although, for security reasons, one needs a valid UN Headquarters grounds pass to access the U.N.s main library in New York City—one which is not open to the general public—there are some 365 U.N **depository libraries** around the world, four of which are located in New York City and which anyone can visit. So, the Watchtower did not need to become an NGO of the UN to obtain research information. Nevertheless, U.N representative Paul Hoffel showed that the primary purpose of being an NGO is to distribute “*information in order to increase public understanding of the principles, activities, and achievements of the United Nations and its agencies.*”

Along with all that is written on this subject on the internet ex-JW Tami Dickerson has gathered up all of the documentation on the subject and made it available in her book *Jehovah’s Witnesses and the United Nations - How the Watchtower Society fooled millions*. Furthermore, I personally have a letter from the United Nations confirming the Watchtower’s membership of the U.N for that ten-year period.

The Introductory Page to the JW. Org. Website

This website page is for the purpose of drawing members of the public who are searching for biblical truth and good Christian association to join the Watchtower Organization. It presents a wonderfully benign picture of just how loving and kind this organization is. It does this primarily by asking various concerning questions in its FAQ section and then providing answers. However, such answers actually give a very different picture of life in the Organization to the reality. In fact, such answers are actually distortions of the facts concerning the way life actually is for many thousands of JWs, including those tens of thousands who have become ex-JWs and are shunned in spite of the Watchtower's denial of breaking up families.

Watchtower Hypocrisy Concerning Investments

Although the Watchtower Society presents the view that smoking tobacco is wrong for Christians and is a disfellowshipping offence, yet according to some researchers the society has investment hedge funds which include the major cigarette companies. This is gross hypocrisy and cruelty especially for those who get disfellowshipped and therefore get shunned by family and friends because they have great difficulty in breaking from this addiction.

Furthermore, through the Henrietta Trust Fund the Society receives profits which are as a result of the Fund's investment in Lockheed Martin and other weapons producers when in fact, the Watchtower claims that any connection with the military for a JW is also a disfellowshipping offence. The facts of this hypocrisy are again apparently very well documented.

Additionally, the recent appeals on the Watchtower's TV programs for extra money contributions from the rank and file JWs is because of the Watchtower's need to fund the court cases that they have either lost or settled over paedophile cases, blood-transfusion cases, and other types of cases. Such appeals are no better than that which is done by the TV evangelists who are always condemned by the Watchtower Society for this sort of activity.

The Big Money Grab Scam - the Master Plan

In 2014 the Watchtower Society sent out a letter to the bodies of elders in all congregations in the United States saying that they were cancelling all Society loans for kingdom halls taken out by these congregations. Then in 2016 the Society again sent out a letter to each body of elders. However,

only page one of this letter was to be read to the congregation, but the remaining three pages were not to be made available to the congregation members and so leaving them in the dark. This letter concerned a Master Plan to build 1,300 new or refurbished Kingdom halls and because each congregation's loan had been cancelled it would no longer need any monies for hall maintenance. So, for the building of these 1,300 new halls this would require that congregation monies that had been put aside for maintenance of their own existing halls should be sent as donations to the Society and that this should include at least as much as the cancelled loans.

Then in 2017 the Society announced a revised Master Plan because they suddenly realized that they only needed to construct 200 new Kingdom Halls, rather than the 1,300 originally announced. They also suddenly realized that, on average, only 60% of seats were occupied at Kingdom Hall meetings and that these halls could be better utilized. This would mean that if many congregations moved out of their existing halls, most of which were built with free labour, and members merged with nearby congregations for their weekly meetings at the nearby Kingdom Halls this would leave their existing hall empty and which could then be sold by the Society for their now largely bogus expansion program. In fact, the Society has used its authority and manipulation over the JWs to make this whole plan work for them. Throughout this time various Watchtower representatives have spoken on the Society's own TV programs to extol the virtues of this Plan, and to appeal to rank and file JWs to "contribute monetarily," but also to very cleverly cover over how all of this is actually stripping the congregations of their assets. Indeed, so far this Master Plan has netted the Society some \$100 million and is now in operation in the rest of the world to project a further \$100 million gain. They currently have some 4,300 Kingdom Halls on their "for sale" list.

On the personal level this merging of Congregations has meant that those JWs who have given up their local Kingdom Halls must now travel some 30 to 40 minutes extra twice a week to get to their new meeting place. All of this information may be viewed on the YouTube John Cedars Channel and entitled "Unrighteous Riches: How the Watchtower Is Making Millions" On this YouTube Channel you will find all of the documentation available including the Society's letters sent to elders and the Society's videos.

Further to this the Society is trying to sell others of its assets that were purchased, I believe, in the 1960/70s and again originally bought with the donations of the brotherhood. For instance, the England branch has now set up a real estate agency entitled, Ibsa LONDON Properties. On this site are to be found very high-end luxury homes on the Ridgeway, Mill Hill for sale valued at between £1 million and £3 million which must have

originally been used by Watchtower representatives. All this while the rank and file JWs are asked to reduce their assets and send more donations to Watchtower. This information can be watched on YouTube: JW Analyzer.

In 2000 the **Religious Order Jehovah's Witnesses** was formed of which some of the higher non-volunteer officials are stated to earn between \$74.5K and \$104K.

Other Injustices Perpetrated Upon JW Members

- Because of the current downsizing of the number of workers needed in the Watchtower's Bethel homes, some have been **kicked out of their quarters** in Bethel with nowhere to go and no time for finding employment. Sometimes this has been done with very short notice given to the brother or the married couple. This has more implications than one might think. In fact, since the 1980s the **Religious Order of Special Full-time Servants of Jehovah's Witnesses** encompasses Bethelites and Circuit Overseers. Such ones are required to take a vow of obedience and poverty, but do not know what this will mean for them if they ever leave or are fired from the Bethel. In fact, they are recorded in the IRS files as having zero dollars of pay for each year of Bethel service. So, if the now ex-Bethelite ever needs to claim social security, they find that there is nothing there for them and so leaving them with no income whatsoever and then having to throw themselves on the mercy of other JWs. In fact, a vow of poverty in most other churches is based on the existence of a health, incapacity, and old age care system operated by the particular church. However, no such arrangement exists within the Watchtower Organization—it is purely a business, but with no provisions for its workers—the volunteers
- A diminished **respect for women** in the congregations by putting them in belittling positions. Firstly, this is by the requirement for wives to be in total subjection to their JW husbands, but this sometimes becomes a matter of subjection to any baptized man in the congregation. Unfortunately, this is also an issue in many Christian denominations. However, this wrong view of women is because of faulty traditional translations of a couple of Bible verses, including those in the NWT, as well as further faulty interpretation. However, the Organization makes this even more of an issue with significant demarcation as to what women may or may not do in the congregation, such as the fact that they may not become ministerial servants and they may not give instruction talks or public talks so that they are never

“teaching” men anything biblical. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that often women are more intelligent, have greater biblical knowledge, and are more capable than many of the elders in JW congregations. The attitude, which is a lie, is that all women are simply driven by their emotions, rather than using their thinking ability. This is proven to be simply wrong!

- Some who were elders or ministerial servants having been **removed from their positions** because of not indicating sufficient loyalty to the Organization or for asking too many questions or for not being able to comply with all of the Organization’s requirements.
- **Victims of paedophile activity** who have not been believed by the judicial committee of elders and have therefore felt that they could no longer attend the JW meetings. These have then been shunned or even called liars over their accusation made about the brother who is a paedophile (Please see Chapter 24 concerning sexual abuse).
- The production of certain videos specifically aimed at young children. These videos contain very violent images as taken from biblical descriptions and which are psychologically damaging to young children. The showing of these videos to such children often break the government set ratings of age suitability provided in many countries.
- The disfellowshipping and subsequent shunning by their family of **young children** who got baptized at an early age and then, as they got older, changed their minds about their wish to be one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. This also applies in the few cases of someone who is mentally slow and only realizes later that the JW life for is not for them, and yet they now find themselves shunned by those they thought were their friends.

Some of these many thousands of cases of the above injustices can be accessed to be read or viewed on the internet, either websites or YouTube presentations. Of course, the Watchtower Society does not want you to look at any of this information noted in this chapter and they negatively name-call such presenters as liars and mentally diseased etc., in spite of the massive amount of documentation to the truth of such events as well as the hypocritical and unjust actions by the Watchtower Society.



10

The Demand for Unquestioning Loyalty to “The Organization”

Jehovah’s Witnesses understand that the demand for such unquestioning submission is proof that certain organizations must be cults. Yet, they do not make this connection regarding their own Governing Body as indicating that they, too, are a cult (Please see chapters 31-35). The fact is that sometime after one has become a Jehovah’s Witness one has actually relinquished one’s free-will although not realizing it.

Misplaced Loyalty and Twisted Psychology to Keep Members Loyal

It is often stated by the Governing Body that the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram against Moses (Num. 16) pictures rebellion of Christians against “the faithful and discrete slave” class. However, this is a mistaken interpretation and it is also a usurpation of Jesus’ position because Moses does not picture any faithful and discrete slave class. The greater Moses is Jesus (Deut. 18:15, 18).

In 1998 a circuit overseer in Lincoln, UK commented on how Jehovah’s Witnesses could understand the various incorrect understandings held for many decades by their governing body. His subject concerned Jesus words about “this generation.” A transcript of his talk was printed in the *Reachout Quarterly* (Spring 2008). This circuit overseer said:

“Why did Jehovah allow us for 120 years to misunderstand Matthew 24 v 34 about the Generation? Why did He allow us, for He knew we got it wrong for 120 years? Why? I tell you why, because we never, ever, ever would have gotten His preaching work done. Nobody would have been missionaries, nobody would have gone abroad, nobody would have pioneered, they would have all raised children gone to university. There is a hundred years to go yet, well, no need to rush around...you would not have been in the truth today and I wouldn’t, because nobody would have bothered all that much. It was

120 years ago, isn't that right? Marvellous, you fooled me Jehovah, they got it wrong, but it will do them good".

This is really saying that Jehovah firstly lies to his faithful people and then maintains that lie for 120 years because he couldn't rely on them to make their best effort to accomplish the great commission (Matt. 18:19). So, this kind of approach obviously brings into question the level of dedication and the good motives of these faithful ones.

Is the “Organization” Really God’s Channel?

Part of the claim made by the Governing Body for itself as God’s only channel of communication is based on their teaching that the Bible is an organizational book and cannot be understood by individuals without the teachings of the Organization. But such a view leads us to realize that neither Russell nor Rutherford, as individuals, could possibly understand the Bible. Yet famous Bible translator William Tyndale would have strongly disagreed with this view held by the Governing Body. He died to get the Bible translated into the common language so that a ploughboy could understand it!

THE BIBLE IS A BOOK FOR INDIVIDUALS

Paul made it clear that people repent **individually** and based on God’s individual leading of them: “...*you are inexcusable, O man [an individual] whoever you are...because you do not know that God in his kindness is trying to lead you to repentance?*” (Rom. 2:1, 4). So, the Scriptures are written to individuals for them to understand so that they might repent. There are many other Scriptures that show that individuals are meant to be able to understand the Scriptures. However, it is also certainly true that scholarly input contributes to one’s understanding of the Bible, its languages, and the background of the early centuries. Indeed, all this is most valuable.

The Bible Is the Real Tangible Channel of Communication - Not an Organization

God has seen fit to communicate to mankind through a book—the Holy Scriptures, and the basic message of the Scriptures is not too hard to grasp. However, some parts of the Scriptures are difficult to understand as Peter said concerning Paul’s words (2 Pet. 3:15, 16). It is all the statements of Jesus and his emissaries along with the full background of the Hebrew Scriptures which are God’s channel of communication. Furthermore, we are between 1,900+ and 3,500 years away from the time of original

writings, which were done in a very different culture to our twenty first century Western culture. This poses the problem of how to understand some of the details of these writings, the solution to which is to benefit from the discoveries of archaeology and the work of scholars in the biblical field. However, although the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses notes the discoveries of archaeology, it ignores real scholars in the biblical field and so loses that great aid to understanding. Therefore, over the years of its existence the Organization has become less and less of a reliable channel of interpretation, notwithstanding its evident lack of God's spirit as demonstrated by their failure to exhibit 'the spirit of Christ' (see later chapters). So, from the Scriptures and knowledge of their background the individual can come to obey the Messiah.

Christians Are Not to Be Controlled by Any Organization

Because "*the faith was **once for all** delivered to the holy ones*" (*Jude 3b*) and is contained within the writings of those "holy ones," one can "**listen to him**" i.e. Jesus (Luke 9:35) by obeying all that he personally said to his disciples and further said through "the apostles and prophets" in the Christian Greek Scriptures. Paul stated in 2 Corinthians 5:20b (NWT): "**As substitutes for Christ** we beg: 'Become reconciled to God'" or more accurately "*We ask **on behalf of Christ**, be reconciled to God*" (UBS Interlinear). However, this was not an appeal to existing Christians but an appeal to the world to be "reconciled to God" (verse 19). In fact, true Christians were already reconciled to God. So, no one today is acting "as **substitutes for Christ**," in the sense of controlling other Christians, but only "**on behalf of Christ**" asking the world to "be reconciled to God." Furthermore, Jesus said "*I am with you **all the days until the conclusion of the system of things (age)***" (*Matt. 28:20*). So, to benefit from Jesus' presence we have to: "*...remember the sayings previously spoken by the holy prophets and the **commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles***" (*2 Pet. 3:2*).

Christians simply do not need any organization to "plead for them" because Jesus: "*...is able also to save completely those who are approaching God through him, because he is **always alive** to plead for them*" (*Heb. 7:25*).

Early Christians didn't view accepting Jesus as equivalent to joining a religion. They were followers of a person—Jesus. So, they gathered with other believers, not to identify themselves as members of a particular group, but because they felt drawn by family relationship to fellow believers. Certainly, Christians can help, warn of danger, explain truth to,

and encourage one another; but they have no controlling rights over other Christians.

A Law-Based Organization

The Apostle Paul said that Christians “*are not under law, but under undeserved kindness*” (Rom. 6:14-15) and that, “*For such freedom Christ set us free. Therefore, stand firm, and do not let yourselves be confined again in a yoke of slavery*” (Gal. 5:1) such yoke being defined in Acts 15 by Peter as the Mosaic Law. All of this means that Christians are not to be confined under any “law” which would reduce their freedom of conscience. However, the Watchtower operates a complete set of rules so that if these are not complied with by a member then that member will first be counselled and then if he or she does not comply they will be reprovved or marked or even disfellowshipped. Indeed, there is a secret elders’ book entitled *Shepherds of the Flock of God*. This book, which is not available to the membership, is a 100% rules book—it is a law book in fine detail showing elders what rule they should apply to members in various circumstances. There is certainly something very wrong with any organization which keeps information secret from its rank and file members! Paul further said, “*we have been released from the Law, because we have died to that which restrained us, in order that we might be slaves in a new sense by the spirit and not in the old sense by the written code*” (Rom. 7:6). So, Christians are to be under no written code!

Jesus Christ Is the Spiritual “Ark for Salvation”

For Christians there is just “*one baptism,*” (Eph. 4:4) and they are to be “*baptized into Christ Jesus.*” (Rom. 6:3). So, Peter wrote, “**Baptism, which corresponds to this [the ark], is now saving you...through the resurrection of **Jesus Christ****” (1 Pet. 3:21). Indeed, the literal ark only enabled Noah and family to ride out God’s judgment and so it was a temporary provision. Yet if, as the organization teaches, Noah’s wife = 144,000, and the sons and daughters = the great crowd, then they were metaphorically all in the ark at the same time and arrived at the same place; thereby showing that there cannot be two destinies.

SALVATION AND EVERLASTING LIFE ARE ONLY THROUGH JESUS

As shown earlier Jesus said: “*I am **the door**; whoever enters through me will be saved*” (John 10:9). He also said, “*I am **the way** and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*” (John 14:6). Also, the writer to the Hebrews called Jesus: “*the Chief Agent of*

their salvation” (Heb. 2:10). In fact, concerning Jesus, “**there is no salvation in anyone else, for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must get saved**” (Acts 4:12). Therefore, one’s salvation cannot come through any organization or church or mortal individual. It will come only through Jesus. This is because he is the “**one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus**” (1Tim. 2:5) and so Jesus himself said to unbelieving Jews that “**you do not want to come to me so that you may have life**” (John 5:40). Salvation and everlasting life cannot, therefore, come through any organization, even though it has given itself the name Jehovah’s Witnesses to **make it appear that those who serve it are serving Jehovah Himself.**

Conclusions

A comparison of the Organization’s claims with its actual history reveals the following:

1. The Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses was not appointed as God’s organization in 1919 (or at any other time) because it provided unacceptable spiritual food to the domestics through the period of the Organization’s so-called inspection by Jesus and his decision in 1919.
2. The Governing Body has provided to its membership a distorted version of its history relating to the time of Jesus’ so-called inspection. But the true history can be pieced together by careful examination of the Organization’s own publications, in particular the *Proclaimers* book.
3. The Governing Body’s repeated warnings to its membership about former members (name-calling them ‘apostates’) stops individual Jehovah’s Witnesses from discovering the truth about this history, which is a history revealing that there was no appointment of the Organization by Jesus in 1919.
4. These Watchtower warnings turn out to be simply propaganda to protect the Governing Body from being revealed as something that misleads. And, indeed, this propaganda misleads the membership into **trusting** those inside who are not telling them the truth and to **mistrust** those from outside who are trying to tell them the truth.
5. Matthew 24:45-47 and Proverbs 4:18 (as wrongly interpreted by the Governing Body) operate in contradictory ways. Therefore, they can be used independently to maintain the illusion that Jesus chose the

Organization, while at the same time justifying the false teachings of earlier times.

6. The result of this false claim by the Governing Body is that large numbers of Jehovah's Witnesses, rather than having a relationship with God, have a relationship only with the Organization. So, in his book *Blood on the Altar* researcher David A. Reed notes the significance of the "faithful and discreet slave" doctrine:

The key to understanding Jehovah's Witnesses is found in this one doctrine: the alleged appointment of *the* "faithful and wise servant." JW leaders today claim to have inherited the position by virtue of being Russell's successors, and hence God's appointed mouthpieces to humankind. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of this one piece of information. Efforts to understand the sect doctrinally or sociologically—and to debate with members on their beliefs and practices—are doomed to failure when this point is not understood. Once they accept this doctrine, new JWs no longer require other teachings to be based on the Bible or even to be logical; all that is required is for the teaching to come through God's channel of communication. If the Faithful and Wise Servant teaches it, it *must* be true. p.46.

Quotes from the Watchtower Magazine

The following view taught by the Governing Body concerning the Bereans (Acts 17:11) destroys the very biblical point that was made about them; that is, that **they did check the Scriptures** "*as to whether these things were so.*" However, in contradiction of this the Watchtower magazine stated:

...but nowhere do we read that those brothers first, in a sceptical frame of mind, checked the Scriptures to make certain that those letters had scriptural backing. (February 15, 1981, pages 18-19).

Based on double standards the Governing Body, in taking the following view toward others, does not allow its members to take this view with the Organization itself when it gets things wrong. They state that:

It is not religious persecution for an informed person to expose publicly a certain religion as being false, thus allowing persons to see the difference between false and true religion...it is a public service...it leaves the public free to choose. (November 15, 1963 volume, p.688).

Yet they admit that all is not well in paradise:

...some who have been prominent in Jehovah's organisation have succumbed to immoral practices, including homosexuality, wife swapping, and child molesting (Jan 1, 1986, p.13).

However, the later history shows that these prominent ones, rather than being disfellowshipped, were mainly simply moved out of Bethel homes and given important work in other localities. Furthermore, the front cover picture of the May 15, 1984 Watchtower magazine is of sixteen real individual Jehovah's Witnesses and with the caption (repeated on p. 4) "1914: The Generation That Will Not Pass Away." However, it has been noted that all sixteen of these individuals have now passed away, obviously before the New World has arrived. This is testimony to the false hopes that the Governing Body gives to its membership.

§

PART TWO

Misguided Loyalty on the Blood Transfusion Issue

11

The Basis for the Organization's Policy on Blood Transfusions

The Organization Was Not Always Against
Blood Transfusions

In 1934 *The Golden Age* magazine (later called *Consolation* and now called *Awake*) published the following view regarding blood transfusions:

It has been discovered that, if used within a few hours after death, the blood of suicides, or those who die of heart disease, or skull fractures, can be used for transfusion purposes to save the lives of the living. This is now done regularly in a Moscow hospital. 17th January, 1934, volume 15, number 374, p. 242.

In 1940 a similar view was taken by the Organization as reported in the *Consolation* magazine:

In New York City a housewife in moving a boarder's things accidentally shot herself through the heart with his revolver. She was rushed to a hospital...four ribs were cut away, the heart was lifted out, three stitches were taken, one of the attending physicians in the great emergency gave a quart of his blood for transfusion, and today the woman lives and smiles gaily over what happened in the busiest twenty-three minutes of her life. 25th December, 1940, p. 19

The Change of Policy

However, this positive view did not last and by 1943 there was a definite change leading, in 1944, to the Organization coming out as definitely against blood transfusions. Evidently this was viewed as increasing light that they didn't have back in 1934 or 1940. So, since 1944 the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society has urged its members to refuse to accept blood transfusions for themselves and for their minor children. This policy is primarily based upon their interpretation of three passages in the Scriptures which the organization interprets as permanently prohibiting the consuming of blood in any form by anyone of mankind:

Genesis 9:4: "... *Only flesh with its life —its blood—you must not eat.*"

Leviticus 17:12-14: "... *None of you should eat blood and no foreigner who is residing in your midst should eat blood...he must pour its blood [the killed animal's] out...Anyone eating it will be cut off.*"

Acts 15:29, 21:25: "... *to keep abstaining...from blood...*" "...*that they should keep away...from blood...*"

Ever since this policy came into effect some seventy years ago, this life or death issue has resulted in thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses having died

because of their refusal to accept a blood transfusion. These ones are often looked upon as heroes of the faith—as having been loyal to Jehovah. However, has the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses correctly understood the above texts? If not, then one must ask if these dead ‘loyal ones’ have really been the victims of a misguided policy that is not, in fact, according to the will of Jehovah? Clearly, it is necessary to gain as clear an understanding of the above three passages as is possible.

Does the Covenant with Noah Relate to Blood Transfusions?

Genesis 9:1-17

*“Every moving animal that is alive may serve as food for you. ... Only flesh with its life—**its blood—you must not eat.** Besides that, I will demand an accounting for your lifeblood. I will demand an accounting from every living creature; and from each man I will demand an accounting for the life of his brother. Anyone **shedding man's blood**, by man will his own blood be shed, for in God's image he made man. As for you, **be fruitful** and increase abundantly on the earth and multiply” (Gen. 9:3-7).*

“And God added: ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I am making between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations’” (Gen. 9:12).

“And the rainbow will occur in the cloud, and I shall certainly see it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of every kind on the earth. God repeated to Noah: ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I establish between me and all flesh that is on the earth’” (Gen. 9:16, 17).

Because life had become of little value in the pre-flood society this Covenant was made with Noah to highlight the **sanctity of life**. So, in examining this covenant we must bear in mind that there are many metaphorical statements in it and so showing that it is not expressed in literalistic absolute terms.

PART ONE:

An Animal’s “Flesh with Its Life” Must Not Be Eaten

*“Only flesh with its life—**its blood—you must not eat**” (Gen. 9:4).*

THE ORGANIZATION’S EARLIER UNDERSTANDING

All reasonable minds must conclude that it was not the eating of the blood that God objected to, but it was the bringing the blood of the beast in contact with the blood of man. *The Golden Age*, 2/4/31, p. 294 (Golden Age No. 297).

Nevertheless, this command could not be in the literal and absolute sense because it is impossible to remove all of the blood (about half is left). So, the significance of Noah's and his family's pouring out of the animal's blood was simply **out of respect for the life taken** and in recognition of the sacrifice made by the animal for man's benefit.

A COMMAND NOT TO EAT FROM ANIMALS THAT ARE STILL ALIVE

“you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it” (NIV).

“you must never eat any meat that still has the lifeblood in it” (NLT).

“you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood” (NKJ).

These translations indicate that the prohibition concerns the meat to be eaten from living animals and that the term ‘blood’ is here used as a metaphor for the life of the animal, so that **literal blood is not being spoken of here**. This command was, doubtless given because of the wicked habits of pre-flood mankind. The understanding that God in Genesis 9:4 is commanding mankind not to eat from any animal that is still alive, i.e. still has its **lifeblood** within it, is confirmed by the following commentaries starting with Rabbi Raschi (1040-1105 A.D.) who in his commentary on the Talmud, with reference to Genesis 9:4, says: “He here prohibited to them the eating of a limb cut from a living animal that is to say that ‘flesh together with its life’ means: so long as **its life is in it** you shall not eat the flesh.” Also, both the Coffman and the Gill commentaries note that: “**Flesh with its soul [life]**” appears to refer to **living creatures.**” So, Theologian Claus Westermann notes that:

The original meaning of the prohibition. B. Jacob paraphrases: “You may eat all flesh, but not flesh with its life.” The commonly accepted explanation, that the sentence forbids the partaking of blood, is not correct, though one can certainly say that it follows; however, it is not stated expressly. *Genesis 1- A Commentary*, p. 464.

Furthermore, *The Hebrew Union College Annual* comments that:

Rabbinic tradition understands this formula as a prohibition (to all mankind) not to cut steaks from a living animal. Absurd or far-fetched as this interpretation may appear to some moderns, such a practice would preserve the living flesh in a fresh state for later consumption; and has, furthermore, been reported as practiced in parts of Africa—

the related (rabbinic) interpretation, (forbidding) drinking the blood tapped from the veins of living animals is the regular practice of Masai tribesmen...Some sects interpret the prohibition here as interdicting blood transfusions. *On Slaughter and Sacrifice, Blood and Atonement*, vol. XLVII, p. 21.

According to Jaroslav Pelikan (ed.) Martin Luther argues for a similar understanding in his commentary. *Luther's Works*, Vol. 2, 1960, p. 138.

A DIFFERENT COMMAND FROM THAT OF THE MOSAIC LAW ON BLOOD

“**Life** (Soul)” and “**blood**” are equated in Genesis 9:4 in typical Hebrew parallelism. So, this part of the covenant with Noah ensured that humans would only eat what was fully dead. This is all a very different situation and a different command from those of the Mosaic Law which did indeed forbid the literal eating of blood. However, those later commands involved the proper bleeding of animals in which case the animal was obviously fully dead, although such later actions under the Mosaic Law would ensure compliance with the principle in Genesis 9:4.

.....

PART TWO:

**Capital Punishment for Murder
or Manslaughter**

*“Anyone shedding man’s blood by man will his own blood be shed”
(Gen. 9:6).*

This command was, doubtless given because of the violence which had necessitated the great flood of Noah’s day and perhaps because of Cain’s murder of his brother Abel. It was a completely different punishment from that which Cain experienced and so now such capital punishment would act as a deterrent and “shedding man’s blood” is clearly a metaphor for **murder/manslaughter** which may include methods which do **not involve literal blood** e.g. strangulation or poisoning; and so is not taken in the absolutely literal sense.

Also “shedding man’s blood” obviously cannot refer to simply cutting oneself and so it is evident that it cannot apply to the modern-day procedure of taking a blood sample for testing or other similar puncturing of the skin. Furthermore, the Scriptures make it clear that this command in Genesis 9:6 could not refer to the killing of an enemy in warfare and so we understand that Jehovah made exceptions to the Genesis 9:6 command for certain ‘special circumstances.’

Evidently the covenant with Noah is not about ‘absolutes’ and is not to be taken in a strict, literal sense. Therefore, Genesis 9:6 does **not refer to literal blood** but again speaks of it as a **metaphor for life**. If taken literally

then there would be no prohibition against taking someone's life by poisoning, strangulation, or beating to death because one has not literally shed their blood. So, because Genesis 9:6 uses the word 'blood' in a metaphorical way it is clear that it is also used metaphorically in Genesis 9:4. So we must conclude that:

- Blood of a living creature symbolized 'life'.
- Shed blood symbolized 'the wrongful taking of life' i.e. murder.
- Blood that is "poured out" symbolized death.

.....

PART THREE:

The Multiplying of Mankind

"Be fruitful and become many" (Gen. 9:7).

This command to populate the earth was clearly diametrically at odds with murder or manslaughter which reduced the population. So, because the commands in Parts One and Two of the covenant with Noah are in the context of prohibiting wrongful killing and Part Three concerns the growth of population, it is clear that the giving of a blood transfusion harmonizes with the original purpose of the covenant with Noah because it is intended for the preservation of life.

§

12

Leviticus 17:12-14 Applied Only to Israel

Within the Mosaic Law given in Leviticus God commands:

"...None of you should eat blood and no foreigner who is residing in your midst should eat blood...he must pour its blood [the killed animal's] out...Anyone eating it will be cut off."

However, the Gentiles were never under the Mosaic Law covenant just as Paul states that: *"You were...alienated from the state of Israel and strangers to the covenants of the promise" (Eph. 2:12)* and *"...when people of the nations who do not have law do by nature the things of*

the law..." (Rom. 2:14). In any case, even in the time of the operation of the Law, Israelites were told: "...you must not eat any animal that was found dead. You may give it to the **foreign resident** who is inside your cities, and he may eat it; or **it may be sold to a foreigner...**" (Deut. 14:21). So, this later prohibition in the Mosaic Law of the eating of an already dead animal was **limited to Israel** which is why an Israelite could sell it to a Gentile, and thereby showing that the Mosaic law concerning blood was never made binding on the people of the nations.

Under the Mosaic Law Sacrifices Involved Blood and Fat

According to Leviticus 3:2-4, 8-15 for any Israelite's communion sacrifice, he was to use fat to cover its various body parts and the priest was then to make it smoke on the altar and to spatter its blood on the side of the altar. On this *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* states: "Because they embodied life, both blood and fat were allotted by biblical legislation to God," volume 1, p. 761. So, if the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses wishes to apply the Mosaic Law to their policy of denying a blood transfusion it would be consistent for them to **also deny the eating of any animal fat.**

How Did an Israelite Avoid the Blood Left in The Meat?

The Anchor Bible Dictionary notes that:

The biblical sources agreed that a consumption of animal blood by Israelites and the strangers in their midst, even when incidental to eating meat, is a heinous crime equivalent to homicide (Lev. 17:4), and constitutes "treachery" (1 Sam. 14:33) against God. Biblical legislators differed, however, as to how one might eat meat without unlawfully consuming the blood. The solution of Leviticus 17 (P; cf. 1 Sam. 14:34-35) was to make all slaughter of domestic animals sacrificial, thus giving the blood to God...Only after the blood had been dashed against the altar, the fat turned to smoke, and the altar and the priests had taken their share, was the sacrificer permitted to eat the meat. Volume 1. 762.

The Decrees of the Law of Moses Are Not Applicable to Christians

In numerous places in his letters the Apostle Paul showed that, “we have been **released from the law**” (Rom. 7:6) because God had, “...erased the handwritten document, that consisted of decrees and was in opposition to us. He has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the torture stake” (Col. 2:13, 14). So, any attempt to apply the decrees of the Law to Christians would mean that they, “are separated from Christ, you who are trying to be declared righteous by means of law” (Gal. 5:4). In fact, because the Governing Body uses the Mosaic Law as part of the basis for its blood policy it undermines the value of the blood of Christ and its ransoming value (2 Cor. 3:14-15).

THERE IS NOTHING UNCLEAN FOR A CHRISTIAN

Jesus showed that it was not the eating of particular foods that affected their **ritual purity**. He said that, “**nothing** from outside a man **that enters into him** can defile him; but the things that come out of a man are the things that defile him ... Thus he declared all foods clean” (Mark 7:15, 19b). Although Jesus is speaking here of food this principle must also apply to blood transfusions.



13

Life Is More Important than It's Symbol - Blood

Often the Scriptures use certain items as symbols of realities. So, we must ask which is more important, the **symbol** or the **reality**? Here **blood** is a symbol for **life** and clearly life—the reality—is more important than its symbol, namely, blood. To illustrate, in the Lord's evening meal the **red wine** serves as a symbol of the reality of **Jesus' shed blood**. A similar illustration would be: **the wedding ring**, which acts as a symbol of the **marriage** as much less important than the marriage? So, when Abel was murdered his blood was viewed as a symbol of his life. It was the loss of life that was the tragedy and so his blood was only the metaphorical way of referring to his life i.e.: “*Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground*” (Gen. 4:10). A further, biblical illustration is that of King David's men where their blood also represented their lives. The passage reads: “*after a while David expressed his longing and said: If only I*

could have a drink of water from the cistern by the gate of Bethlehem!’ At that the three mighty warriors forced their way into the camp of the Philistines and drew water...and brought it to David; but he refused to drink it and **poured it out to Jehovah**. He said: ... ‘Should I **drink the blood of the men going at the risk of their lives?**’” (2 Sam. 23:15-16). This served as a chastisement of the men for not showing sufficient respect for the sanctity of their own lives. So, David shows that is not the literal blood, as represented by the water poured out here, that is important but the life that it represents.

Pichuach Nefesh - Preservation of Life Takes Precedence over Commandments

The classic case where Jesus shows that life is more important than certain commandments was when, “he said to them [the Pharisees]: ‘Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, **to save a life or to kill?**’” (Mark 3:4, 5). Jesus was here invoking the biblical and rabbinic principle of **pikuach nefesh**: that the obligation to save life supersedes Jewish law. Jesus made the same point when his disciples were accused of law-breaking regarding picking and eating the heads of grain:

*“At this some of the Pharisees said: ‘why are you [the disciples] doing what is **not lawful on the Sabbath?**’ But in reply Jesus said to them: ‘Have you never read what David did when he and the men with him **were hungry?** How he entered into the house of God and received **the loaves of presentation** and **ate** and gave some to the men with him, which it is not lawful for anyone to eat but for the priests only?’ Then he said to them ‘The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath’” (Luke 6:2-4).*

This example used by Jesus is recorded in 1 Samuel 21:1-6. However, the account does not mention the “**hunger**” that is noted by Jesus. He evidently knew of this detail because of what was recorded in the *Jewish Commentary* which states: “...because he found only the bread of the presence there [in the house of God], David said to him, ‘Give me some to eat, so **that we will not die of hunger**. The preservation of life takes precedence over the Sabbath.’” Additionally, the **loaves of presentation** were freshly baked and set on the table **on the Sabbath** (Lev. 24:5, 8). Hence the event of 1 Samuel 21:1-6 occurred on the Sabbath. This fact would have been known by the Pharisees to whom Jesus was speaking and was the very point Jesus was making. The two factors were:

- i. The hunger being life-threatening because David and his men were

- being pursued by Saul's men, so that they needed food to give them the needed strength to escape, and;
- ii. The event having occurred on the Sabbath.

These two points were used by Jesus as an example to answer the accusation about breaking the Sabbath. This same example also shows that the preservation of life takes precedence over the Sabbath. This fits in with the general Jewish tradition that **all commandments of the Scriptures** (except idolatry, incest and murder) **must be suspended to save a human life**. This is why in Mark's account of this confrontation with these Pharisees Jesus says: *"The Sabbath came into existence for the sake of man, and not man for the sake of the Sabbath. So the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath"* (Mark 2:27, 28).

Clearly, from the above, Jesus also makes the preservation of human life take precedence over most commandments.

NOTE: In John 7:22, Jesus shows that it was understood that the prohibition against the work of *cutting* on the Sabbath was to be suspended when the **8th day circumcision rule** happens to fall on a Sabbath. This precedence was not stated in the Law but was interpreted in the Oral Torah for the purpose of avoiding confusion.

Atonement by Blood

In line with the principle of atonement by the shedding of blood Jesus saw the shedding of his blood as bringing about the cleansing of humans from sin if they applied that shed blood to themselves. This means that blood is precious in God's eyes. So, He says to the Israelites: *"I will certainly set my face against the one who is **eating the blood**, and I will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I myself have **given it on the altar for you to make atonement** for yourselves, because **it is the blood that makes atonement** by means of the life in it"* (Lev. 17:10b-11). So, *The Dictionary of Biblical Images* notes that: "As the early Christians came to grasp that atonement is reached through the blood of Christ and not through the blood of bulls and goats (Heb. 10:4), some saw, probably on the basis of Leviticus 17:10-11, that the law forbidding the consumption of animal blood was **no longer binding**." p. 101.

NOTE 1: the phrase "shed blood" really means "the sacrifice of life" and in fact, Jesus actually died by asphyxiation to make atonement for mankind's sin.

NOTE 2: For an Israelite it was the "eating of the blood" that was the

offence and nothing to do with a blood transfusion which is actually an organ transplant.

§

14

What Does “Abstaining from Blood” in Acts 15:29 Mean?

The Issue for the Jerusalem Council

The issue recorded in Acts 15 was: Should **Gentile** Christians observe the Law of Moses? Here four prohibitions are noted:

- *“things polluted by idols.”* This clearly refers to idolatry.
- *“sexual immorality” (Gk *porneia*).*
- *“what is strangled.”* This may refer to the killing of an animal or if translated as “smothered” it may refer to infanticide as the vile Greco-Roman form of birth-control.
- *“blood.”* This may refer to the eating of blood or it may refer to bloodshed (Gen. 4:7-10).

So, we ask: why were only those four things mentioned? Apparently, there is no definitive answer. However, two explanations, contrasting with the Organization’s explanation, will be presented here. The second explanation seems the more plausible but there is considerable uncertainty.

Explanation 1

Temporary Imposing of Four Prohibitions in the Mosaic Law for Foreign Residents

This explanation has been offered by a number of former Jehovah’s Witnesses and with significant support from some Bible commentaries. However, there are a few problems with this explanation which will be noted at the end of the explanation.

THE FOUR PROHIBITIONS

*“James replied ... ‘my decision is not to trouble those **from the nations** who are turning to God but to write **them** to abstain from **things polluted by idols**, from **sexual immorality**, from **what is strangled**, and from **blood**” (Acts 15:13, 19-20).*

James may be referring to Leviticus 17 which gives the command not to eat blood but nothing more than that.

FOR THE SAKE OF HARMONY WITH JEWISH CHRISTIANS

Volume 9, p. 448 of The Expositor’s Bible Commentary notes that:

in reality they [the prohibitions] should be viewed not as dealing with the principle issue of the council but as meeting certain practical concerns; not as being primarily theological but more sociological in nature; **not as divine ordinances** for acceptance before God but as **concessions to the scruples of others** for the sake of harmony within the church and the continuance of the Jewish Christian mission.

In fact, the Watchtower of November 15, 1892 said: “He (*James*) further suggested writing to them merely to abstain from pollutions of idols, and from things strangled and from blood - as by eating such things they might become **stumbling blocks to their Jewish brethren.**” This view was repeated in the Watchtower magazine of April 15, 1909 and is the common understanding of bible scholars. According to the *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* volume VIII:

With the disappearance of the Jewish-Christian community of Jerusalem at the time of the rebellion (AD 67-70), the question about circumcision and the observance of the law ceased to be of importance in the Church, and soon became a dead issue.

As an example, Timothy was circumcised as a concession to Jewish feelings (Acts 16:3). Also, Paul and four men with him purified themselves in deference to the Jewish Law. (Acts 21:20-26). James was, in fact, strongly recommending that Gentile Christians abide by the same rules as for a foreign resident living in Israel as stated in Leviticus 17 and 18 and stated in the same order as the Acts 15:29 and 21:25 requirements. Additionally, the *Word Biblical Commentary* on the Letter of James also takes this view concerning the motive for such abstention mentioned in Acts 15, saying:

A comparable instance would be the use of the Apostolic Decree of Acts 15, which laid down “rules” for promoting table fellowship between Jews and Gentiles in the nascent communities. It may be

argued, from the Jewish Christian side sponsored by James, that such restrictions, listed in **Acts 15:19–20; 21:25**, were *needful, lest Jewish sensitivities should be damaged*. The rules promoted goodwill until the day when a true *koinonia* between both wings of the church could be established on a lasting and theologically valid base. Paul moved to that position more rapidly than other preachers and leaders in his day; hence the debates that run through his epistles (Galatians, 2 Corinthians, Philippians: see Martin, “Setting of 2 Corinthians,” in *2 Corinthians*, WBC 40 [Waco: Word, 1986], lii–lxi) and which caused temporary hostility to his mission as a world-embracing manifesto. The future, however, clearly lay with Paul if the church was to fulfill its role as a truly “catholic” movement with a task to reach out to all nations and proclaim Jesus Christ as universal Lord. **The Apostolic Decree could have no place in such a widened vision**, since, for Paul, it looked back to Mosaic-Levitical regulations and taboos that the advent of a new eschatological age in the coming of Israel’s messiah and the world’s ruler had antiquated. The “husk”—needful at one stage—had to drop away in order to allow the “kernel” to be seen on its own and for what it was.

ACTS 15:20, 28 GIVE ONLY AN ADMONITION RATHER THAN A COMMAND

The reason for this is given in **verse 21**, saying: “...**For** from ancient times **Moses** has had those who **preach him** in city after city, because he is read aloud in the synagogues on every Sabbath.” Hence, the reason for the admonition was because Moses was read throughout the Roman Empire. So, **Gentile** Christians would indeed cause great offence to Jews and Jewish Christians if they did not comply with this admonition because these four activities were all condoned by non-Christian Gentiles and were the things most likely to cause offence to the Jew. However, if the prohibition of these four activities was prolonged it would be putting the Gentile Christians under the same unbearable *yoke*.

“ABSTAIN FROM” IS NEITHER ABSOLUTE NOR INDEFINITE

The phrase “abstain from” is **not** being used in Acts in the **absolute sense** because it is impossible to drain meat of absolutely all blood. Obedience to this command in the absolute sense would require that all Christians should ensure that their meat is koshered, which Jehovah’s Witnesses do not do. Neither would the transfusion of blood components be acceptable. So, the phrase “abstain from” is **not** being used in the **indefinite sense**. In fact, it applied:

- To Gentile Christians, as well as being—
- Only during the time and circumstances of transition from the Jewish

congregation to the Christian congregation.

ABSTAINING FROM THINGS POLLUTED BY IDOLS WAS NOT INDEFINITE

An indication that the Acts 15 and 21 command is not indefinite, is found in the fact that Paul writes concerning one of those four subjects in **1 Corinthians 8:4-12** where he says the following:

*“Now concerning the eating of foods **offered (sacrificed) to idols**, we know that **an idol is nothing ...**” (KIT renders it as “sacrificed”) **8:4.***

*“...but some, because of their former association with the idol, eat food as something **sacrificed to an idol**, and their **conscience being weak is defiled**” **8:7.***

*“Keep watching that your right to choose does not somehow become a stumbling block to those who are weak. For if anyone should see you who have knowledge, having a meal **in an idol temple**, will not the **conscience** of that one who is weak be emboldened to the point of eating foods **offered (sacrificed) to idols?**” **8:9, 10.***

*“...when you sin against your brothers in this way and wound the weak **conscience** you are sinning against Christ” **8:12.***

The subject here in 1 Corinthians 8 is not exactly the same as the issue over eating meat bought at a meat market, but is of a Christian “reclining at a meal in **an idol temple**” and “eating things **sacrificed to idols**” in all **good conscience** because he knows that an idol is nothing. His sin would be the wounding of the brother’s weak **conscience**. Therefore, if by Paul’s time, the issue of “eating food sacrificed to idols” was a matter of not wounding his brother’s weak conscience then the issue of “abstaining from blood” would also be for the same reason. So, with reference to Acts 15:20, 29 it can be seen from 1 Corinthians 8 that Paul did not view the abstaining from “things sacrificed to idols” in an indefinite sense and so indicating that the indefinite sense cannot be applied to the other aspects of Acts 15: 20, 29 including “abstaining from blood.”

NOTE: The aspect of **sexual immorality** is mentioned because it is in the list for the alien resident in Leviticus 17 i.e. a Gentile living in Israel. For a Christian sexual immorality would absolutely be guarded against. **Gentile** Christians would indeed cause great offence to Jews and Jewish Christians if they did not consider their consciences e.g. it was recommended to Paul in Acts 21:23-25 to perform a Jewish ritual for the sake of the Jews.

Problems with This View

- 1) It is faulty to state that the words of Acts 15:20, 28 are only an admonition and not a command just because verse 21 says: "...For from ancient times Moses has had those who preach him in city after city, because he is read aloud in the synagogues on every Sabbath." The reason the view is faulty is because James, in harmony with Peter, was not directing the Gentile Christians to go to Jewish synagogues to hear the decrees of the Mosaic Law Covenant read. James had just said that it was wrong to place the yoke of the Old Covenant on the Gentile believers (Acts 15:10). The fact was that the Old Covenant ended with Jesus' sacrifice. Additionally, the Jerusalem brothers sent Judas and Silas along with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch (vss. 25-27). This was to add to Paul's and Barnabas' testimony that none of the decrees of the Old Covenant were relevant for the Gentile Christians.
- 2) The explanation concerning 1 Corinthians 8:4-12 about meat offered to idols is also faulty because:
 - Paul was never in favour of the eating of meat known to have been offered to idols in an idol's temple because this involved idolatry (1 Cor. 10:19-21). In fact, if the brothers knew for sure that some food or drink had been offered to an idol, they were not to eat or drink it.
 - Paul's statement that, "if anyone should see you...reclining at a meal **in an idol temple**" was not saying that a Christian could frequent an idol temple with impunity, but rather that they actually should not even be in an idol temple. He asks the question, "*will not the conscience of that one who is weak be emboldened to the point of eating foods offered (sacrificed) to idols*" (1Cor. 8:9, 10).
 - At Revelation 2:14 Jesus is against the Christians at Pergamum because, "*you have there those adhering to the teaching of Ba'laam, who taught Ba'lak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to **eat things sacrificed to idols**...*" This contradicts the argument that Paul was removing the prohibition against eating meat offered to idols or even sitting in a pagan temple to do so.

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Explanation 2

Idolatrous Practices Related to Gentile Temples

The command of Acts 15 stated by the Jerusalem brothers was concerning “those from the nations who are turning to God.” That means that it related to the non-Jewish Christians who were living particularly in the Greek and Roman cultures of the time where idol-temples were common in most Greek and Roman cities and often a central feature for the whole city. So, the major problem for the non-Jewish Christians was that many aspects of life involved idolatry-related issues. These pagan temples served as:

1. places of idolatry
2. places of ritual prostitution
3. slaughter-houses
4. eating establishments

Evidently, their Jewish brothers in Jerusalem realised the spiritually difficult situation, and so sent words of guidance for them. So, the four subjects noted in Acts 15:20, 29 related to these matters commonly connected to those pagan temples, namely:

- “things polluted by idols.”
- “sexual immorality” (Gk *porneia*).
- “what is strangled.”
- “blood.”

1) “Abstain from things polluted by idols.”

Paul made it crystal clear that he was against anything related to idolatry when he said: “*What, then, am I saying? That what is sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No; but I say that what the nations sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers with the demons. You cannot be drinking the cup of Jehovah and the cup of demons; you cannot be partaking of “the table of Jehovah” and “the table of demons” (1 Cor. 10:19-21).* So, if the non-Jewish Christians of Corinth knew that some food had been dedicated to an idol, they were not to eat it. This view clearly paralleled the statement in Acts 15:20 on idolatry.

2) “Abstain from sexual immorality (Gk *porneia*).

The main lexicons show that the meaning of *porneia* was originally associated with prostitution. They also show that *pornee*, refers to a woman selling herself, and *pornos*, to a man selling himself. Unlike the standard of morality of the Jewish world the whole Greco-Roman world had a very different and lower standard which included **the pagan temples serving as brothels** for ritual prostitution where both

men and women temple slaves offered their services for payment. So, the reference in Acts 15:20 seems to be for the non-Jewish Christians to keep away from the temple prostitutes and not in any way to prostitute themselves. Jewish Christians would already be aware of the dangers of any sexual immorality.

NOTE. Babylon the great is described literally as “**the mother of the prostitutes**” (Gk *pornee*).

3) “**Abstain from what is strangled**”

Blood from slaughtered animals must be drained immediately, otherwise it quickly coagulates. So, if an animal is strangled it will contain blood which may have been unacceptable to Gentiles as well as Jews. However, it may be that this instruction was given for very different reasons related to the rituals in the pagan temples. In view of the idolatry theme of the first point mentioned in these four issues in Acts 15:20 it seems very likely. It is possible that the Greek word *pniktou* means “smothered” and so could refer to the pagan form of birth control by smothering unwanted new born babies.

NOTE. A.T. Robertson in his *NT Pictures* says concerning Acts 15:20: “Harnack argues ably against the genuineness of the word *pniktou* (strangled) which is absent from D Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian.” Also, some have said that “the Western text omits the word also in verse 29.”

4) “**Abstain from Blood**’.

Was this a reference to blood as mentioned in the decrees of the Old Covenant, or did it refer to something else? As stated above it is clear that all Jewish Christians were free from the decrees of the Mosaic Law and that Gentile Christians were never to come under its yoke. So, there must have been a different reason for the giving of the command to non-Jewish Christians regarding blood. In harmony with the first two issues as related to the Greco-Roman temples which served as places of ritual prostitution, slaughter-houses and eating establishments in relation to idolatry so too, blood seemed to have played some role in the pagan rituals. Certainly, blood was in evidence as the animals were slaughtered. Also, the worship of Artemis (Diana) included the **ritual use of blood**, as did the pagan religion of Mithraism. However, although presently there is uncertainty concerning what exactly was meant by the phrase “abstain from blood” in Acts 15, we do know that, in the context of the other issues raised it did not concern the Mosaic Law but most likely involved the pagan temples of the Greco-Roman world.

Nevertheless, one may wonder why the statement in Acts 15:21 about Moses “being preached” is mentioned. The answer connects with the main thrust of the letter that James was having delivered to the non-Jewish Christians in Antioch and for wider distribution. This was to inform them that they did not have to follow the rules of “the circumcision” party because Christians are not under the Mosaic Law’s decrees, i.e., they were not under the Old covenant. They were to take no notice of the fact that in the many Greek and Roman cities, there were Jews who continued to preach Moses in spite of the Old Covenant having ended with Christ’s death. This was a warning to those Christians to be on guard against any Jews who would persuade them otherwise.

Conclusions Regarding Explanation 2

Because Christians were not under any part of the Mosaic Law these four commands in Acts 15 cannot have been requirements taken from the Hebrew Scriptures for the non-Jewish Christians either permanently (JW teaching) or for any period of transition. Furthermore, because these instructions were for the non-Jewish Christians living in a culture of idolatry and that the instructions begin with a command to avoid idolatry and avoid *porneia* that is connected with temple prostitution it seems most likely that the prohibitions on “strangled/smothered things” and “blood” also relate to the city centre-pieces, namely the pagan temples as places of idolatry, ritual prostitution, slaughter-houses, and eating establishments. It certainly makes no sense to imagine that the Jerusalem brothers were detailing **all the rules** of conduct that all Gentile Christians would have to follow for all times henceforth. This is because Jesus, through his first century emissaries, gave many more and many kinds of instructions and guidelines than just these four aspects of conduct regarding right moral conduct.

NOTE: The phrase “Good health to you!” in the NWT of Acts 15:29 simply means “Farewell!” as in the NWT footnote and has nothing to do with ones having good health because of keeping the four instructions.

This Issue Is Never Mentioned by Jesus – Nor Is It in the Rest of the Christian Scriptures

If abstaining from blood according to the Organization’s interpretation was an important Bible subject for Christians why is it never mentioned in any other context in the Christian Scriptures:

- Either by Jesus.
- Or in 1 Corinthians 5 as a reason to ‘stop mixing’ with someone who is disfellowshipped.
- Or in 1 Corinthians 6 as one of the reasons given for one to be kept out of the kingdom.
- Or in Revelation 21:8 concerning all the evils that make one worthy of second death.

§

15

A History of Tacking Regarding the Blood Doctrine

The Watchtower’s False Analogy

The Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses has claimed that the administering of a blood transfusion is comparable to intravenous feeding and therefore one would effectively be ‘eating blood.’ However, this is not correct. If alcohol or antibiotics are injected into a person the effect is the same as if administered by mouth. This is not the case with blood. If blood is eaten, the digestive process kills this living tissue; but if transfused, it retains its form and so functions fully in the body. This is because it is really an organ transplant similar to a liver transplant, the effect of which is completely different from eating liver. Although modern-day strict orthodox Jews kosher their meat, they would not put that procedure ahead of a life or death situation as shown earlier. Furthermore, they take blood transfusions because they do not view that procedure as comparable to the blood laws given to Israel.

Anomalies in the Organization’s Teaching on Blood

1. Since various blood fractions are permitted by the Governing Body, then doesn’t this invalidate their appeal to the Leviticus 17:3 command to pour out the blood on the ground?

2. The distinction between a non-life-sustaining fraction as acceptable and a life-sustaining fraction as unacceptable has no basis in the Scriptures which gave a straight prohibition against the eating of blood.
3. The medical use of blood is based on the very purpose for which blood was designed—providing nutrients, oxygen etc. and as noted above, the sustaining of life was paramount to Jesus and early Jewish society. Therefore, such usage of blood could be viewed as actual evidence of one’s respect for the sacredness of life and the Organization’s view as the very opposite.

Misrepresentation of the Facts in the Blood Brochure ‘How Blood Can Save Your Life’

In this now defunct Watchtower brochure, page 4 suggests that it was an **emergency situation** that is described in 1 Samuel 14:31-35 which says that the Israelite soldiers “fell to eating along with the blood,” which was not permissible for them. However, in this case, it was not an emergency involving life. They were extremely hungry, but not in fear for their lives as were David and his men in 1 Samuel 21:1-6. Also, they were not executed for breaking this law. Instead sacrifices were made for them.

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Page 5 says: “James referred in Acts 15 to writings containing the commands about blood stated to Noah and to the nation of Israel.”

COMMENT: In fact, James’ only quotation is from Amos 9:11, 12. This has nothing to do with Noah or blood. Although the NASB and NIV Bibles give a cross reference to Genesis 9:4 this is simply a reference to the word “blood” and not a reference to the command given to Noah.

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Page 5 speaks of ‘fundamental ethical norms for Christians’ in Acts 15. However, this is based on the Governing Body’s incorrect understanding of the reference to “blood” in these texts.

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Page 5: Why, in quoting Joseph Priestly, has the brochure referred to the words of the founder of The First Unitarian Church (a member of Christendom in the view of the Watchtower Org)? The unquoted part of Priestley’s statement shows that he never reached a conclusion about blood. Priestly said: “The question concerning the lawfulness of eating blood...not of a moral nature, but as it is a subject of much less importance than the rest and a more doubtful nature...I would not have my reader conclude, that I am fully determined in my judgement of it.”

MISQUOTES FROM EARLY CHRISTIANS

Because there were some versions (based on the Western text) of the Book of Acts where the term “blood” (which seemed strange to Greeks) had been changed to “blood-shedding,” many of the comments by early Christians actually refer to murder. Yet the Watchtower’s brochure quotes them as if they refer to drinking blood. This, of course, is misleading because a rule against murder naturally would be binding on Christians.

INFORMED CHOICE

Because of the faulty explanation of the Scriptures on this issue by the Governing Body, the misinformation shown above and their being selective concerning vital information, the Governing Body is denying the individual Jehovah’s Witness the ability to make an informed choice. This means that the individual makes a life or death choice based on incorrect information.

The Organization’s History Regarding Blood

1945 - Blood transfusions and blood products are officially banned. The policy is based on the false belief that blood was ultimately the food that sustains the body. This belief was known to be wrong in the late 1800s.

1954 - Blood serums (gamma globulin fraction) are put in the same category as transfusions.

1958 - Blood serum like diphtheria antitoxin and gamma globulin are now O.K. i.e. a matter of personal judgment.

1959 – It is now wrong to store one’s own blood and later transfuse it.

1961 – Introduction of the policy of disfellowshipping for one’s acceptance of a blood transfusion. Also, personality traits, murderous or suicidal impulses are attributed to transfused blood.

1963 - The 1958 ruling is overturned. Any blood fraction is now forbidden.

1964 - The 1963 ruling is overturned. Blood serums are now OK. So, Witness doctors may administer blood to non-Witness patients.

1974 - The 1964 ruling is overturned. Blood serums are now a matter of conscience.

1975 - Plasma factors for haemophiliacs are unacceptable. Four months

later in 1975 there is a reversal for the haemophiliacs. But only those who previously gave their address to the Society were informed. This reversal was not made official or published in the Watchtower magazine for another three years in 1978. So other haemophiliacs mistakenly risked losing their lives.

1977 - Blood transfusions are now considered to be **organ transplants**. (The booklet, 'Jehovah's Witnesses and the Question of blood,' p. 41).

1980 - Reversal of the policy on **organ transplants**. Now it is a matter of conscience.

1982 – Introduction of the doctrine of major and minor blood components.

1984 – Use of bone marrow is now a matter of conscience, but such usage is discouraged.

1992 - Whether or not a particular food contains blood is now not of concern to the Christian unless one suspects that it does.

1995 - Brief storing of one's own blood outside the body is now permissible for transfusion. This is termed Normovolemic Hemodilution and autologous blood salvation procedure.

1997 - Elders are now to provide understanding to those who have accepted a transfusion. The governing body allows Jehovah's Witnesses in Australia to accept a new therapy called "autografting." It involves the transfusion of white blood cells.

2000 - In the U.S.A the elders are no longer to disfellowship those who accept a transfusion unless it becomes known and they are deemed unrepentant.

2001 – The Governing Body's new blood policy permits, in essence, 100% of blood in fractionated form.

2004 – Rank and file JW's are told for the first time that they have personal choice re: haemoglobin. (Apparently JW's have been using Polyheme and Hemopure where available in clinical trials).

The Modern-Day Position

INCONSISTENCY OF THE POLICY

The Governing Body requires that Jehovah's Witnesses do not use whole blood or any of the **major fractions** of blood. These are arbitrarily

stated by the Governing Body to be: plasma, red cells, white cells and platelets. Nevertheless, Jehovah's Witnesses are given the choice to use any of the **fractions of the major blood fractions**. So, if, for example, all of the fractions of plasma (water, albumin, immunoglobulins, clotting factors, vitamins, hormones etc) were used at different times this would effectively amount to the taking of plasma. The same principle would apply to all the other fractions so that in effect a person would then have taken whole blood. Furthermore, the Governing Body requires that Jehovah's Witnesses do not use stored blood. However, the use of any of the fractions of blood fractions is equal to the use of stored blood.

WHIT BLOOD CELLS IN MOTHER'S MILK

Interestingly, mother's milk contains millions of white blood cells which is essential food for a new born baby. However, white blood cells are one of the blood fractions that JW's are forbidden to accept into their bodies.

HYPOCRISY

Jehovah's Witnesses are required not to make donations of their own blood. However, they are allowed to use many medical products that are derived from blood. Because of the Governing Body's failure to acknowledge and apply an accurate understanding to this subject but rather to cover over their faults with misinformation leading to the deaths of thousands who have not been able to make a truly informed choice the Governing Body and all who promote such a policy must be seen as blood-guilty. In Jesus' words: "*If you had understood what this means, 'I want mercy, and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless ones'*" (Matt. 12:7).

UNCONSCIONABLE OVERSIGHT

Without the Rho-GAM immune globulin serum being administered to women who are Rh-negative there is a risk to the unborn baby of the development of severe anaemia, which can cause foetal heart failure, or severe haemolytic disease. This could lead to cerebral palsy or death of the baby. When the Awake of 8-22-65, p. 18 stated that the taking of a serum injection was now a matter of conscience for the individual mother concerned the article failed to include the Rho-GAM serum which had been excluded just four months earlier. At least one witness baby was born with severe cerebral palsy. This could have been prevented if the mother had known of the Governing Body's decision to allow a mother to go by her conscience in this matter. Quite likely she would have then received the Rho-GAM shot.

16

Questions of Serious Concern on Refusal of Blood Transfusions

The following questions concern the sanctity of blood which means the sanctity of life:

- If the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses really is God's organization then why did God wait from 1919 till 1944 to reveal this vitally important doctrine?
- How can "abstaining from blood" allow for the use of a fraction of a blood fraction? With reference to blood the Watchtower magazine of September 15, 1961, p. 559 said: "Whether whole or fractional, one's own or someone else's, transfused or injected, it is wrong."
- If this were a real issue in Christianity would the Apostles (if they'd had the technology) have made many picky rules concerning which fraction of blood was allowable and which was not allowable? Does this not smack of legalism worse than that of the Pharisees?
- If blood is to be poured out on the ground, how could it be right for a Jehovah's Witnesses to use a fraction of a blood fraction?
- If even one's own blood must not be stored for later transfusion, can it be right for a JW to allow a blood sample for testing to be taken and then stored? Vaccines are also cultivated in stored blood.
- Why has the Governing Body allowed JWs the use of Hemopure (made from cows' blood) and Polyheme (derived from haemoglobin) for transfusions?

Life or Death Situations

Because of the potentially severe health risk factors involved in the transfusion of blood, the above study is not an endorsement of blood

transfusions **as a general medical treatment**, but rather it is simply for the purpose of demonstrating that the Scriptures cannot legitimately be used to form a dogma for the rejection of the use of blood transfusions in **life or death situations**. Nevertheless, the health risks of receiving a blood transfusion are often not as great as the Governing Body has stated.

The Lengths the Organization Has Gone to in Promoting its Blood Doctrine

The Watchtower, 15th May, 1962 stated:

According to one authority: "the blood in any person is in reality the person himself. It contains all the peculiarities of the individual from whence it comes..." Transfusing blood, then may amount to transfusing personality traits. How great the danger may become if the blood is taken from blood banks to which criminals and other derelicts of society have contributed!

Many decades ago, the following story and its point was published in an *Awake!* magazine:

For forty years Robert Khoury was known as an honest man. Then he was given a blood transfusion after a fall. "I learned that the donor was a thief," Khoury told police. "When I recovered, I found I had a terrible desire to steal." And steal he did. He confessed to stealing £10,000 in six robberies in three months. Khoury threatened to sue the doctor who arranged the blood transfusion, if he receives a severe sentence for his thievery.

Sadly, the unsuspecting majority of individual Jehovah's Witnesses believed such absolutely unscientific nonsense.

Conclusion

The Scriptures used by the Governing Body to back up their policy all refer to animal blood that was not to be **eaten**. In the first instance in Genesis 9 it referred to the practice of the eating of **live animals** because the eating of such fresh meat was very strengthening. For Israel the prohibition went further inasmuch as the Israelite was not to eat the blood of an already **dead animal**. However, Christians are not under the Mosaic Law. Indeed, the eating of blood has an entirely different effect on the body than the transfusing of it. If the **transfusing of human blood** was a serious violation of God's law for all mankind then the practice by the

nations of the mixing of blood as in the blood brotherhood ceremonies would have been condemned; whereas the Scriptures do not even mention it. Nevertheless, much of the Organization's policy on blood transfusions began on the mistaken premise that a transfusion of blood equates with the digesting of blood for the **sustenance** of the body. The fact that a transfusion is actually an **organ transplant** means that the Bible's various prohibitions on the *eating of blood* have nothing to do with blood transfusions. Once these facts were acknowledged by the Governing Body **in 1980** the banning of the administering of any blood product for Christians should have been lifted to make it a matter of the individual's own genuine conscience as with other organ transplants. Because of applying a legalistic western mind set rather than understanding the spirit of the biblical statements in their Hebrew context the Governing Body has arrived at very different conclusions to those of almost all Bible scholars and most of Jewish rabbinic understanding. Because of following the Governing Body's directives regarding blood transfusions thousands of individual Jehovah's Witnesses over many decades have lost their lives or have denied treatment to their family members who have then died. Most have made their decisions based on this faulty biblical understanding, a false analogy, and the misleading historical and medical information presented to them authoritatively by the Organization. The fact is that because of all of the Society's rules for the use of various blood components JW's are **not actually "abstaining" from blood** according to their interpretation of Acts 15! It is only a partial ban on the use of blood products.

So, because of the above information one wonders what will be the eventual position before the various courts of those who have made these policies on blood. More importantly what will be the position of such people before the Almighty God for having naively or arrogantly promoted a dangerous death-dealing teaching which is out of harmony with the facts revealed when one intelligently and diligently investigates the Scriptures and their background on this subject.



PART THREE

Misguided Loyalty on

the Mistreatment of Dissenters

17

First Century Background to Disfellowshipping

A significant cause of the misapplication of the biblical statements on disfellowshipping by the Watchtower Society is a failure to recognize the circumstances and practices of the first century Christians. The following are the relevant factors:

Christian Meetings Were Held in Private Houses

Christians lived according to the Jewish customs of the day which included two kinds of **association** (Gk *koinonia* meaning fellowship or communion) **for religious worship in:**

- The temple and the synagogue for public worship.
- Private homes for meetings of the various Jewish sects. So, Christians met for the “love feast”/i.e. the Lord’s evening meal “**in private houses.**” In fact, Prisca and Aquila, Nympha, and Philemon all had congregations that met in their personal houses. (Rom. 16:3-5, 1 Cor. 16:19, Col. 4:15, and Philemon 2).

The Meeting Was a Shared Meal Fellowship

Acts 2:42 (based on KIT) says: “*And they continued devoting themselves to:*

- *The teaching of the apostles,*
- *The common participation (sharing ‘koinonia,’*
- *The breaking of the bread (in remembrance of Jesus), and to*
- *Prayer.”*

Note: According to Acts 2:46 this dining or table fellowship involved the “*breaking bread from house to house, and they were partaking of food in exultation.*” This was a shared meal, namely, the love feast, called in Greek *the*

agape in Jude 12. This included the Lord's Supper where bread and wine were offered. This fellowship also included the common sharing of goods (Acts 4:32).

Volume One of *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, (p. 66) states of *the agape* that it was the brotherly common meal (table fellowship) connected in some way to the ceremonial act of the breaking of bread in remembrance of Jesus (the Lord's supper) and occurred on the first day of the week. On p. 743 this same volume says of fellowship: "Luke apparently means us to identify, as the activities involved in 'the *koinonia*', the breaking of bread and the prayers, as well as the community of goods which occurred when the need arose."

Disfellowshipping in Context

To deny fellowship meant to deny someone access to the love feast and its celebration of the Lord's evening meal. This clarifies the various biblical exclusion statements regarding **eating**. Someone who was denied fellowship was excluded from the eating of the love feast and the Lord's evening meal and may even have been denied entry to the house where such meeting was being held. This says nothing about a person being denied a meal in a non-religious situation outside of the meeting in the private house.

When a Brother Sins Against a Brother

STAGE 1

Jesus said: "*Moreover, if your brother commits a sin, go and reveal his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother*" (Matt. 18:15).

The ESV, LEB, CSB, NRSV and the vast majority of translations render this verse as: "*if your brother sins **against you**...*" Furthermore, the context gives this thought. Many translations either have the words "against you" or bracket them or footnote them. Hence, the *Word Biblical Commentary* says of these words that: "they may have been omitted for theological reasons." Even so, the context shows that it is **not concerning sin in general**, as if to make one brother check up on another, but of one brother or sister sinning in a very substantial way against another brother or sister. Indicating that this reason is what was in Jesus' mind in verse 15, we note that Peter asks Jesus, "*Lord how many times is my brother to sin **against me** and I am to forgive him?*" (verse 21). Jesus answers with the parable of the unmerciful slave (verses 23-35). The seriousness of the sin would be indicated by noting the sins warranting expulsion from the congregation as stated in the rest of the Christian Greek Scriptures. Of

course, the sin must be one that can be committed against another person. These sins would include: adultery (involving one's partner), extortion (fraud), theft, hostilities, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, divisions, envy, and similar things. Clearly these would include any other abuse, physical or otherwise, of the person, his property or his reputation; for example, slander. If the guilty partner repents there is no need to take the matter any further because the unchristian conduct has ceased being practiced. Of course, those sins which break the criminal law of the land must be reported to the secular authorities (Rom.13), for example sexual abuse. Nevertheless, a Christian would not take a sinning brother or sister to court in a civil case.

STAGE 2

The second step for a Christian who has been sinned against is that, if the offender, *“does not listen, take along with you one or two more, so that on the testimony of two or three witnesses **every matter** may be established”* (Matt. 18:16) (see NOTE). On this verse the *Word Biblical Commentary* notes that:

This procedure is explicitly on the pattern of the OT stipulation in Deut.19:15...**The parallel is not exact**, however, since in the OT the witnesses are witnesses to the deed itself, whereas here they are to serve as **witnesses of the reproof** and appeal for repentance, or, if the person refuses to respond, of his or her recalcitrance.

Evidently Jesus' words here were not meant to require, for instance, that there must be two or three witnesses who must actually witness a case of rape before it is taken seriously.

NOTE: For the phrase **“every matter”** the 1984 edition NWT footnote has **“or everything said.”** The NRSV, Barclay's and the NLT render it in the same way.

STAGE 3

*“If he doesn't listen to them [the 2 or 3 witnesses], speak to the **congregation**”* (Matt. 18:17a). This is the same as with a matter for Israelites being dealt with at the city gate, and therefore out in the open i.e. not a secret meeting with some special committee.

STAGE 4

*“If he does not listen even to the congregation, let him be to **you** just as a man of the nations (a gentile) and as a tax collector”* (Matt. 18:17b).

Here the word **“you”** is singular and therefore personal and applies specifically to the person who has been sinned against, not the entire

congregation; leading to the conclusion **that denial of fellowship in the congregation may not be in view here**. However, because the subject is about any and all individuals at the beginning of Jesus' discourse, this denial of fellowship may also concern the entire congregation as all individually treating the unrepentant person, "as a man of the nations and as a tax collector."

The Unrepentant Wrongdoer Is to Be Treated As Any Other Non-Christian

So, what does it mean to treat someone "*as a man of the nations and as a tax collector*"? This simply involves one's treatment of the individual sinner in just the same way as a Christian would treat any member of the public. Unlike the Pharisees way and the general Jewish way, **Jesus did not shun Gentiles or tax collectors**, but showed them love. He ate with them, **kept company with** them, and taught them with the goal of effecting change in their lives, for example Matthew and Zacchaeus (both tax-collectors), and the Syro-phoenician woman (a Gentile). On one occasion Jesus' disciples were asked by the Pharisees: "*Why is it that your teacher eats with tax-collectors and sinners?*" *Jesus replied that: "Healthy people do not need a physician but those who are ill do"* (Matt. 9:11). So, it was **the religious leaders** who shunned such people. Yet in imitation of their master, Jesus' disciples were to treat Gentiles and even the generally hated tax collectors with love. Therefore, this is to be the case with how a Christian would treat a brother or sister who was now denied fellowship in the congregation until his repentance.

NOTE: Matthew 18:18 may not be applicable to modern-day bodies of elders: "Whatever things you [the apostles] may bind (forbid) on earth will be things already bound in the heavens, and whatever things you may loose (permit) on earth will be things already loosed in the heavens." *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* states: "As with Matthew 16:19, this seems to refer to the general enunciations of principles and policies rather than to specific ...ecclesiastical action." Therefore, this does not appear to refer to decisions of local bodies of elders but to those of the apostles in the first century.

§

18

The Biblical Reasons for Disfellowshipping

Neither the word “disfellowship” nor any of its derivatives appear in the Scriptures. Nevertheless, the phrase “**hand such a man over to Satan**” (1 Cor. 5:5) means that one is transferred out of “*the kingdom of the Son*” (Col. 1:13) and back into Satan’s kingdom i.e. the world and therefore means that one is disfellowshipped. The following biblical information reveals that disfellowshipping is necessary under certain circumstances. However, this section also shows that the basis and the reasons given by the Organization for disfellowshipping are often completely at odds with the biblical basis and reasons expounded in the Scriptures.

The Two Recorded Cases of Disfellowshipping Were To Act as a Rebuke Leading to Recovery

1. FOR SEXUAL IMMORALITY

The apostle Paul said to the Corinthians: “...sexual immorality is reported among you...a man living with his father’s wife ... the man who committed this deed should be taken away from your midst? ... hand such a man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (sinful character), so that the spirit (his total redeemed, regenerated being) may be saved in the Day of the Lord ... Remove the wicked person from among yourselves” (1 Cor. 5:1, 2, 5, 13). However, when the man repented he was *immediately accepted back* into fellowship as shown in the later letter to the Corinthians: “*This rebuke given by the majority is sufficient for such a man; now you should instead kindly forgive and comfort him, so he may not be overwhelmed by excessive sadness*” (2 Cor. 2:6, 7). Beautifully, such immediate forgiveness is reminiscent of Jesus’ illustration of the prodigal son where the father immediately, and with open arms, forgives and accepts his son back. But notice in 2 Corinthians 2 that it was **the majority of the congregation** that was to hear the case and to act in this rebuke/disfellowshipping. This is as in Matthew 18:17 where Jesus counsels one to: “*speak to the congregation*” and so it was not a secret meeting of elders as representatives of the congregation. This is why Paul could say to Timothy: “*Reprove before all onlookers those who practice sin, as a warning to the rest*” (1Tim. 5:20). In fact, the lesson for the congregation would be considerably diminished if the disfellowshipping decision were made behind closed doors and the actual sin and circumstances that led to it remained unknown to the congregation as is the case with the Organization’s procedures.

2. FOR REJECTION OF THE PROVEN TEACHINGS OF AND ABOUT JESUS

Paul spoke of: “...holding **faith** and a good conscience, which **some have thrust aside** ... Hymenaeus and Alexander are among these, and I have handed them over to Satan that they may be taught by discipline not to blaspheme” (1Tim. 1:19, 20). Also:

*“Hymenaeus and Philetus...have **deviated from the truth**, saying that the resurrection has already occurred, and they are subverting the faith of some” (2 Tim. 2:17, 18).*

These three individuals are examples of **apostasy** because of their rejection of the Christian faith and in teaching what was contrary to the teaching of Jesus and the apostles.

The Two Biblical Reasons for Disfellowshipping a Person

1. FOR FOLLOWING A COURSE OF UNCHRISTIAN CONDUCT

Paul counselled the Corinthians to: “...stop keeping company with anyone who is called a brother who is sexually immoral or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man” (1 Cor. 5:11). This list of sins, the practice of which warrants disfellowshipping, is only representative and is not exhaustive. Some of the additional bad practices which are on a par with those above and that will exclude those who practice these things from entering the kingdom include: “...adulterers, men who submit to homosexual acts, men who practice homosexuality, thieves” (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Also, in his letter to the Galatians Paul adds on: “... uncleanness, brazen conduct, idolatry, spiritism, hostilities, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, dissensions, divisions, sects, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and things like these” (Gal. 5:19-21). (This list is partially repeated in Ephesians 5:5).

FAILURE TO DISFELLOWSHIP FOR MANY OF THE SCRIPTURAL REASONS

Hostilities, jealousy, fits of anger, and envy are all excluded from the Organization’s list of reasons for disfellowshipping. Furthermore, the congregation elders generally do not disfellowship members who are greedy, idolatrous (including materialism), revilers, drunkards or extortioners.

2. FOR REJECTION OF THE PROVEN TEACHINGS OF AND ABOUT JESUS

*“For many deceivers...persons **not acknowledging Jesus Christ as***

coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. ... Everyone who pushes ahead and does not remain in the teaching of the Christ does not have God....If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, **do not receive him into your homes** (house) or **say a greeting** (Gk khairo) **to him.** For the one that says a greeting to him is a sharer in his wicked works” (2 John 7, 9-11).

According to *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* Volume 12, p. 365 such antichrist/deceivers are: “those who deny the Son and hate the brethren...and was applied only to anti-Christians who were committed to destroying the faith of the community.” So, in John’s day “persons **not acknowledging Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh**” were primarily those with the Gnostic docetic belief about Jesus (belief that Jesus only seemed to be human). The apostolic belief was that Jesus came “as a human person” (Gk *en sarki*), and not ‘into a human body.’ Any teaching of an incarnation of a previously existing being falls into this category of false teaching. (Please see my book, *Can There Be Three Persons in One God? – Why You Should Question the Trinity Doctrine* re the sections on literal pre-existence). So, leading theologian Raymond E. Brown comments that:

True belief in Jesus is essential to any real worship of the Father, so that the ultimate criterion for Christians is to remain in the traditional teaching of Christ (by him or about him?). The false teachers are to be rejected (a concept of heresy—a teaching so false it broke the *koinonia* or fellowship—was now developing). *The Gospel and Epistles of John*, p.123

Also, those who **teach others to ignore** what Jesus taught personally or through his appointed apostles **or** who purposely **change the meaning** of what they taught (in its first century context) fall into the category of those who do, “*not remain in the teaching of the Christ.*” In such cases the traditional Christian greetings of “rejoice” or “peace be with you” would then be withdrawn from such ones, but this does not mean that a faithful Christian would never speak to that person, but rather that the person would not be accepted as a Christian teacher. So, Professor F.F. Bruce explains that:

The injunction not to receive anyone who does not bring ‘the teaching of Christ’ means that no such person must be accepted as a Christian teacher or one entitled to the fellowship of the church. *The Gospel and Epistles of John* on p. 143.

Clearly, it would have to be proved from the Scriptures that a Christian

was not remaining “*in the teaching of the Christ*” i.e. was going against the clear teaching of the apostles in the Scriptures. Such teaching would include false beliefs that emanated from Judaism and from the pagan Greek world such as the concept of the departing immortal soul going to heaven.

Also please see Appendix D. “Watchtower 1947 Condemnation of Excommunication” as a Roman Catholic practice.

§

19

Activities Which Are Not Scriptural Reasons for Disfellowshipping

The Disfellowshipping Practices of Diotrophes

In a way similar to that of the Watchtower organization there was a Christian called Diotrophes who disfellowshipped those who did not deserve to be disfellowshipped. So, the Apostle John speaks of him saying:

*“Diotrophes...does not accept anything from us with respect... spreading malicious talk about us. Not being content with this, **he refuses to welcome the brothers with respect**, and those who want to welcome them, he tries to hinder and to **throw out of the congregation**” (3 John 9-11).*

So, the NIV notes on John’s third letter say: “Diotrophes—a church leader who was exercising dictatorial power in the church. He must have had considerable influence since he was able to exclude people from the church fellowship.” And the NIV introduction to 3 John notes that: “Itinerant teachers sent out by John were rejected in one of the churches...by a dictatorial leader, Diotrophes.”

The Organization’s Scripturally Invalid Reasons for Disfellowshipping

1. The Governing Body has introduced a policy of disfellowshipping for many practices and situations **not mentioned at all in the Scriptures as reasons for** disfellowshipping. These supposedly are based on the principles of the Scriptures yet are often a misapplication, e.g.

- Independent study and discussion of the Bible.
- The doubting or questioning of any teachings of the Organization.
- Possession of literature written by former members.
- Any criticism of the Organization or its policies.
- Speaking to a disfellowshipped person.
- One's wishing no longer to be called a Jehovah's Witnesses i.e. "no longer called a brother" in JW terms.
- Attending a service of any other religious organization.
- Unapproved employment.
- Conduct classified by the local body of elders as unbecoming a Christian. This covers anything for which that body may choose to disfellowship.

2. The breaking of many rules that are based partly on **the abolished regulations of the Mosaic Law covenant**, e.g.

- Agreeing to have a blood transfusion (misapplied from the law on not drinking blood - see previous section).
- Authorizing a blood transfusion, even to save the life of a child.
- Failing to report a brother for the JW version of wrongdoing.

To use the Mosaic Law covenant in this way devalues the ransom sacrifice as the basis for the New Covenant and begins to be in imitation of the hundreds of laws created by the Pharisees which, of course, Jesus condemned. Also, the whimsical attitude of many local bodies of elders means that the standards vary considerably from congregation to congregation thereby making the entire policy inconsistent. Yet, there are a total of about seventy rules that result in disfellowshipping, of which only some twenty are scripturally stated reasons for disfellowshipping. Certainly, some of these seventy practices, e.g. smoking, are harmful and should be discouraged. However, these are not such practices that warrant a disfellowshipping action. In fact, the loving action that should be taken by spiritually-minded Christians is to give a great amount of attention to helping such struggling Christians to overcome their problems without unduly restricting the amount of time for this to be accomplished.

Any Difference in

One's Genuine Understanding of Scripture

Of all the above unbiblical reasons for disfellowshipping, those which involve any independent or critical thinking are the most concerning to the Organization and so to reiterate: any independent study and discussion of the Organization or possession of literature written by former members or the Bible, any doubting or questioning of any teachings of the slightest criticism of the Organization or its policies will bring one before a three-man judicial committee and likely will lead to one's being disfellowshipped (see later on the legitimacy of such committees). However, one should ask oneself: is it healthy to be expected to agree with everything an organization proclaims as truth and to never show any disagreement? For example, in day to day life it is impossible for a person to agree with one's spouse or closest friend on everything and to never mention those differences of opinion. In fact, the Organization's virtual paranoia about those who hold different opinions on some details of the Scriptures shows that they are not letting their "*reasonableness become known to all men*" (Phil 4:5).

THE REASON FOR THE EXTREME POLICY

A toughened-up disfellowshipping policy of the Organization did not come into effect until 1952 and the current extreme shunning policy did not come into effect until the mid-1980's. This shows that such policies **are in response to circumstances rather than to the Scriptures**. Those who add rules not clearly stated in the Scriptures and the breaking of which is treated as a reason for disfellowshipping step away from Christ Jesus by hampering true Christian freedom, even stifling and grieving the spirit of God. (Eph. 4:30). The biblical position on disfellowshipping does not apply to a Christian who **does not agree with** the teachings of the Governing Body. This is because their claim to speak for God cannot be substantiated and they admit to not being inspired or infallible. In fact, about half of their teachings can be proven to be incorrect or misguided when good Bible scholarship (exegesis) is applied to them (please see my second book on JWs). They also have a record of considerable changeableness with their teachings, but rarely changing to actual biblical truth because of their typical pre-suppositions through Watchtower teachings of the past.

THE CURRENT SITUATION REGARDING DISFELLOWSHIPPING

Jerry Bergman, Ph. D., is the leading American expert on the psychology of Jehovah's Witnesses. In interviews with some of the most prominent contemporary activists against the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, Bergman found that not one of them severed their

relationship with the Jehovah's Witnesses because of disagreements over the moral teachings of the Organization. The reasons given always concerned specific doctrines that did not match with the Scriptures. Bergman also found that those leaving had finely tuned scripturally trained consciences so that they made a choice in favour of actual Scriptural teachings and against the teachings of the Watchtower organization.

The Policy of the Governing Body of “Reporting on one’s Brothers”

In the editions of the New World Translation prior to the 2013 revision there was an incorrect translation which rendered Leviticus 5:1 as: “Now in case a soul sins in that he has heard public **cursing** and he is a witness or he has seen it or has come to know of it, if he does **not report it**, then he must answer for his error” (Lev. 5:1 NWT 1984). This rendering of “cursing” is similar to KJV “swearing” which was corrected in the Revised Version and all translations since as meaning “**a public adjuration to testify.**” (Adjure means “to charge on oath”). All modern translations of *Leviticus 5:1* show that this deals with an Israelite’s failure to respond to **a summons to testify**, not with an Israelite’s initiating some report, so that:

“If anyone sins in that he hears a public adjuration to testify, and though he is a witness, whether he has seen or come to know the matter, yet does not speak, he shall bear his iniquity” (ESV).

“Now if a person sins after he hears a public adjuration to testify when he is a witness, whether he has seen or otherwise known, if he does not tell it, then he will bear his guilt” (NASB).

*“When someone sins in any of these ways: If he has seen, heard, or known about something he has witnessed, and did not **respond to a public call to testify**, he will bear his iniquity” (NIV).*

The sin here is in failing to respond to a public call to testify to what one has seen or known about. Indeed, the 2013 NWT revision of Leviticus 5:1 has now been corrected to read: “*If someone sins because he has heard a public call to testify and he is a witness or has seen or heard or learned about it and he does not **report it**, then he will answer for his error.*” Nevertheless, this text is still misused by the Organization to promote the original mindset of the reporting of one’s brothers in a cult-like way, in spite of the fact that Christians are not under the regulations of the Mosaic Law and so this passage does not directly apply to them. As an example: Joseph felt no obligation to report Mary’s apparent

fornication to anyone, but rather he did not want to “*expose her to public disgrace.*” However, one cannot say ‘while Christians are not strictly under the Law,’ and then propose that they obey its decrees. The fact is that Christians are not under the Law as Romans 6:14 says: “*seeing that you are not under Law, but under undeserved kindness.*”

A PHARISAICAL PRACTICE

The apostle John writes that: “...*many even of the rulers put faith in him [Jesus], but they would not acknowledge him because of the Pharisees, so that they would not to be **expelled from the synagogue**; for they loved the glory of men even more than the glory of God*” (John 12:42). Also, the parents of the man born blind were, “...*in fear of the Jews...that if anyone acknowledged him as Christ, that person should get **expelled from the synagogue***” (John 9:22). Such expulsions from the Synagogue often involved loss of one’s livelihood because synagogue members would not trade with the expelled person. In fact, Jesus stated that this kind of disfellowshipping would reach the extreme of murder because: “*the hour is coming when everyone who **kills you** will think he has offered a sacred service to God*” (John 16:2). This pharisaic attitude is one of self-interest and hatred with a desire to punish.

The Watchtower Society’s Judicial Committees

There appears to be no basis in the Christian Greek Scriptures for the establishment of congregational temporary judicial committees behind closed doors. The biblical way is for the majority of the congregation to deal with actual unrepentant sinners (2 Cor. 2:6, 7, Matt.18:17) rather than a secret meeting of any committee of three elders. The Watchtower Society seems to have established such judicial committees on a misapplied basis of the arrangements under the Mosaic law, the regulations of which were nailed to the stake when Jesus died (Col 2:14) and are therefore obsolete. Furthermore, all courts in ancient Israel were held “at the city gates” (Deut. 16:18) and therefore open, transparent, and with many observers. Even the great Sanhedrin (high council) had 71 members and many observers so that there would be a restricting of the chances of a wrong verdict. Also, the lower courts had 23 members so as to ensure justice.

Any questioning of Watchtower teaching by a JW or raising of issues about it or speaking about one’s doubts about the teaching may lead to a JW being called before a judicial committee. Sadly, the evidence is that they become an accused person and are generally treated by the three-elder committee in a very cold, harsh, and unloving manner and without

receiving answers to their raised questions or doubts. This secretive meeting is actually a trial where the accused is allowed no observers, no supporting person to be with them, no notes in support of their case, and they are not allowed to take notes during this trial. Also, the questioning of the accused by the committee is particularly intrusive, especially for sisters, although not all elders are equally harsh.

Amazingly, the only secretive trial which the Christian Greek Scriptures record is that of Jesus when he was taken at night to the home of Caiaphas (Luke 22:54; John 18:24) and which Watchtower correctly shows to be **an illegal trial**. So evidently any secret trial by a Watchtower Judicial committee fits this pattern, but most rank and file JW's are unaware of how harshly many judicial committees operate and which demonstrates the missing "natural affection" on the part of many elders as noted by Paul in 1 Timothy 3:3. Indeed, on most occasions of such a trial the result is the disfellowshipping of the accused person. This eventually destabilizes the person mentally because they now lose their entire support system of family and friends. This has even led some to self-destructive behaviour or even to commit suicide, but these elders generally do not care, although some elders who have later left the Organization do then regret that they were ever part of such an unjust and damaging procedure.

It seems that the Watchtower Society has such a judicial arrangement to maintain its authority over each congregation so that its members are always in fear of challenging the Society in its teachings or policies, even in a very limited way. Fortunately, one can listen in on these judicial committee meetings because some of them have been recorded by the victims and presented on YouTube.

Conclusions Drawn

- The disfellowshipping policy of the Governing Body is unsupportable once the known first century background of Christianity is taken into account and that any application of the rules of the Mosaic law is seen to be relevant only to ancient Israel and has no place in the Christian arrangement of things.
- Christian fellowship (Gk *koinonia*) in the first century was table fellowship for **their meeting** in their private houses. It involved: the teaching of the apostles, the love feast, the breaking of bread as remembrance of Jesus, and prayer (Acts 2:42, 46). So disfellowshipped ones were excluded from the Christian meetings in private houses.
- Only two occasions of denying fellowship are recorded in the

Christian Greek Scriptures. On both occasions the judgments were made under the direction of Paul who, as an apostle, had “spirit given knowledge”—a factor that does not exist today. This shows how much care must be taken when arriving at decisions about people’s lives.

- The two reasons for denial of fellowship were: a) For serious unchristian conduct and b) For rejecting the teachings of or about Jesus. Denial of fellowship applied to those who were persistently unrepentant.
- Unchristian conduct includes the following: loose conduct, uncleanness, adultery, fornication, homosexual acts, idolatry, greed, extortion, theft, an unwillingness to work, practice of spiritism, enmities, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, contentions, divisions, envies, drunkenness, revelries and things like these.
- Rejecting the actual teachings of or about Jesus included: refusal to remain in the teaching of Christ i.e. blasphemy and promoting an unchristian teaching, such as the prevalent Gnosticism of the first century, which promoted beliefs far beyond what can reasonably be seen in the Scriptures. However, the promoting of a sect did not refer to simple differences in understanding the Scriptures.
- First century denial of fellowship was to act as a rebuke not a complete cutting off.
- Because no single group understands all of the Scriptures and the fact that such groups use different methods of interpretation, some of which are highly questionable, rightfully no individual truth seeker/finder who is not involved in sin should be denied fellowship for his different understanding of the Scriptures. It is unreasonable to think that everyone who disagrees with any particular religious group is an enemy of God. To engage in independent study and discussion of the Scriptures is what God expects of those who serve Him—especially when there are so many variations of teachings proposed by the many denominations in the 21st century.
- The elders of the congregations often disfellowship individuals for scripturally invalid reasons, but often fail to disfellowship for scripturally valid reasons (sexual immorality is an exception). This gives the lie to the claim made by the Governing Body that disfellowshipping is for the purpose of keeping the congregation clean!

- Evidently the prime reason for the distorted disfellowshipping policy of the Governing Body is **to remove those who disagree with the organization** whether rightly or wrongly according to the Scriptures.

§

20

How Christians Should Treat a Teacher of False Doctrine

Avoiding the False Teaching

The text at Romans 16:17-18 applies to those within the Christian congregation who were the Judaizers in the first century. Indeed, when they were involved in the discussions recorded in Acts 15 their teaching was *not shunned*. However, at a later date Paul wrote to the Galatians to prove that keeping the regulations of the Mosaic Law did not apply to Christians. Later still he wrote to the Romans and then to Titus and later again to Timothy directing them to avoid the teaching of such Judaizers. They were not to be listened to as Christian teachers. Therefore, Romans 16:17-18 does not apply to ex-members who have ceased association, but rather Paul states:

*“Now I urge you, brothers, to **keep your eye on** those who create divisions and causes for stumbling contrary to the teaching that you have learned, and **avoid** them. For men of that sort are slaves, not of our Lord Christ, but of their own appetites; and by smooth talk and flattering speech they seduce the hearts of unsuspecting ones” (Rom. 16:17-18).*

Additionally, *Barnes’ Notes on the N.T* explain: “...that is **avoid them** (Judaizers) **as teachers**. It does not mean they were to be treated harshly; but that they were to be avoided in their instructions.” Similarly, Jesus had earlier warned the disciples to watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees so: “*they grasped that he said to watch out, not for the leaven of the loaves, but for **the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees**” (Matt. 16:12). Yet Jesus did not shun Pharisees, but rather he warned against their*

false teaching.

Avoiding Irreverent Controversies

There are only two occasions when the pre-2013 versions of the NWT used the word “shun” in the Christian Scriptures and neither of these refer to the shunning of a person, but only to rejecting irreverent babble. Here Paul said the Christian should: “**reject empty speeches that violate what is holy** (*‘irreverent babble’* ESV); *for they will lead to more and more ungodliness*” (2 Tim. 2:16). This related to the denial of the faith by Hymenaeus and Philetus. Then to Titus Paul wrote, “*But have nothing to do with **foolish arguments** (*‘controversies’* UBS and most translations) and genealogies and disputes and fights over the Law*” (Titus. 3:9). This again relates to the teachings of the Judaizers in the congregation. It is their proven false teaching that is to be avoided. This was just as with Jesus’ rejection of the “leaven of the Pharisees,” but without shunning them.

Rejecting Him as A Divisive Teacher, But Not as a Person

Paul continued by counselling that: “*As for a man that **promotes a sect, reject him** after a first and a second admonition; knowing that such a man has deviated from the way and is sinning and is self-condemned*” (Titus 3:10-11). Again, as in Romans 16:17, 18 and Matthew 16:12, this is rejection of him as a Christian false teacher. This text does not refer to someone who has only a difference of understanding, but to “*a person who stirs up division*” (ESV), “*divisive person*” (NIV), “*factious man*” (NASU, and REB). The context shows that such a man was a Judaizer “*fighting over the Law,*” trying to cause division in the first century true body of Christ. *Barnes Notes on the N.T* tell us that: “This man is a heretic, **not one who merely holds a different doctrine** from that which is regarded as orthodoxy.”

Intensive study of the Scriptures and their background reveals that the Governing Body has itself, indeed, promoted a sect with over thirty significant teachings that can be shown as not matching the data in the Scriptures. This has occurred partly because of their failure to listen to others with specialist knowledge. However, the promoting of a sect also involves the placing of particular doctrinal interpretations above the love, mercy, and forgiveness that promote true Christianity (Matt.23:23). Indeed, there are healthy benefits in having different opinions because, “*there will certainly also be **sects** among you, so that those of you who are approved may also become evident*” (1 Cor. 11:19 NWT). The NJB

renders “sects” as: “*differing groups.*” And the NIV renders it: “*No doubt there have to be differences among you.*” The literal translations render the Greek word as “factions” instead of “sects” (NASU, ESV, NAB, NKJV, and NRSV). Of course, Christian sects today, most of which claim to represent the Truth, need to be careful in applying Titus 3:10-11 to those who disagree with them. When Jesus returns, he may judge them as those performing “many powerful works in [his] name” with the words “*I never knew you! Get away from me you workers of lawlessness*” (Matt. 7:22-23). In fact, *Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary* shows that “apostasy” does not concern differences of interpretation, but defines it as: “the determined **wilful rejection of Christ and His teachings** by a Christian believer.” Evidently this is very different from genuine error, which is the result of ignorance.

“Not a Deceiver or an Antichrist”

Although the Apostle John said that there would be, “*many deceivers*” and “*everyone who pushes ahead and does not remain **in the teaching of the Christ** does not have God*” (2 John 7, 9) this does not mean that that a person “does not have God” because he seeks clarification of “**the teaching of the Christ**” (not that of a particular group) and he comes to a different understanding of certain Scriptures to that of the denomination. Such a person should not be falsely labelled “*deceiver and the antichrist.*” But his honest attitude of searching for truth would be a reason to listen to him and have reasonable discussions on the subject. In the earliest years of the Watchtower magazine Charles Taze Russell viewed the making of all followers think alike on doctrine as the original cause of the Great Apostasy.

Many who disagree with the teachings of any particular denomination may indeed be being fully compliant with the words of Jesus and the apostles. It would indeed be unchristian to treat these ones as if they were sexually immoral, greedy persons, idolaters, revilers, drunkards or extortioners or as antichristian—all things which they definitely are not. There should be no **name-calling** such as the misuse of the word “apostate.” If, however, the individual makes it clear that he has left any and all Christian association permanently and has returned to the world, he would be treated as “a man of the nations” i.e. as not a Christian. So, if he had committed sins, according to the scriptural definition of such, there would be normal constructive discussion of the Scriptures to persuade him toward living a Christian life.

21

Passages Misused to Promote the Practice of Shunning

Shunning someone after they have been disfellowshipped is practiced by the Amish, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Exclusive Brethren, the Mennonites, the Church of Scientology, and some minor cults. Of these denominations the Jehovah's Witnesses operate one of the most extreme sets of rules in regard to the shunning of family members, minor children and those who get baptised without understanding all of the possible future repercussions and so do not comply with all the rules. However, prior to the late 1940s the Watchtower Society condemned the Roman Catholic church for its practices of disfellowshipping (excommunication) and shunning and showed shunning to be a pagan practice.

Shunning is actually a display of fear on the part of the one doing the shunning, rather than a display of the biblical teaching of love. The Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses has changed its mind several times on the issue of who is or is not to be shunned. The current view is expressed in the appendix to their book *Keep Yourselves in God's Love* where they state that for a disfellowshipped person there should be **strict avoidance** of them, supposedly done in love to make the person realize the wrongness of their thinking. However, the statements in this appendix then make several exceptions so that if the disfellowshipped person is part of the household then they may be spoken to on any matter except spiritual things. A further exception concerns a disfellowshipped minor (probably 18 years old or under) living at home for whom, additional to normal conversation, there should be the provision of a personal Bible study for them to lead them to repent. These exceptions are major inconsistencies and in contradiction of the purpose of the rule to strictly avoid the disfellowshipped person as a so-called loving arrangement. Evidently, this is not the real motive for the practice, but rather it is to keep their members from hearing any critical thinking if the person is disfellowshipped for so-called apostasy.

On this subject there are several misunderstandings and misapplications by the Organization of what the Christian Greek Scriptures actually say on these issues because certain phrases are used by the Organization without taking note of their context or the actual meaning of

the terms used in the context of the times. Most importantly there is an ignoring of the caring way Jesus treated those who were outcasts from society. Indeed, **Jesus should be the standard for Christians in how they should treat anybody.**

“Stop Keeping Company with” Those Who Are Lazy Does Not Mean Shunning Them

Rarely does the Watchtower Organization promote the shunning of those who are too lazy to work. However, the very passage which speaks of such Christians is misused by the Organization against those who understand the Scriptures differently from them. Yet in this passage Paul says:

*“...we are giving you instructions...to **withdraw from every brother who is walking disorderly and not according to the tradition that you received from us [the apostles] ... if anyone does not want to work, neither let him eat ...”** (2 Thess. 3:6-10).*

A “brother who is **walking disorderly**” does not refer to someone who disagrees with the teachings of the Organization, but rather it refers here to one who is capable of working, but will not work and who is a burden on the local brothers and sisters. As shown earlier, the associating that must cease refers to denying him access to the meetings for celebrating the Lord’s evening meal until he changes his ways.

Are the Sexually Immoral or Greedy Brothers to Be Shunned?

As noted earlier, those guilty of the following characteristics would be disfellowshipped, and Christians are admonished to:

*“...stop keeping company with sexually immoral people, not meaning entirely with the sexually immoral people of this world or the greedy people or extortioners or idolaters ... But...stop keeping **company with** (same Greek word as in 2 Thess. 3:14, 15) anyone who is **called a brother** who is sexually immoral or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, **not even eating with such a man ... Remove the wicked person from among yourselves”** (1 Cor. 5:9-11, 13).*

Because 1 Corinthians 5:9-11 links together the phrases “stop keeping company with” and “remove the wicked person from among yourselves,” such a lazy brother mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 3, must

also be removed from among Christians so that he would be excluded from Christian meetings. However, such phrases as “**withdraw from**” and “**stop keeping company with**” cannot mean complete shunning because one must “**continue admonishing him as a brother**” even though he was considered to be “*worse than a man without faith*” (1 Tim. 5:8). The phrase “called a brother” implies a “so-called brother” as rendered in many translations and meaning that although he is recognized as a brother he is not acting as one. Indeed, to “remove the wicked person from among yourselves” originally referred to **excluding such a person from the house where the Christian meetings took place** because that is where the love feast and the “breaking of bread” (i.e. “**the eating**”) occurred. However, these texts do not prohibit normal conversation with an unrepentant wrongdoer “called a brother” who is sexually immoral etc. James 5:19 and Galatians 6:1 positively encourage witnessing to such people. Total shunning of these ones would be spiritual abuse.

Furthermore, the phrase, “*Remove the wicked person from among yourselves*” simply means treating the person as “a Gentile or a tax collector” (Matt.18:17), that is, treating them as Jesus would have and not as the religious leaders did (Matt. 9:10-11; Luke 10:25-37).

Shunning Defeats the Claimed Purpose of Disfellowshipping

Apart from the fact that Christians must take care not to follow the same wrong path as the lazy Christian, but rather to “continue admonishing him as a brother” he/she should reprove him or any other sinner with the goal of turning him back to God’s way, even as James showed that, “*If anyone among you is led astray from the truth and another turns him back, know that whoever **turns a sinner back** from the error of his way will save him from death and will cover a multitude of sins*” (Jas 5:19, 20). This text in James refers to someone who is being misled from the clear scriptural teachings of or about Jesus. It is not referring to someone who has some difference with us in his or her interpretation of the Scriptures. Indeed, caring for such a sinning Christian is the responsibility of all of the local Christians: “*Brothers, if indeed a man is overtaken in some transgression, you **the spiritual ones** restore such a man in a spirit of meekness*” (Gal. 6:1 UBS Interlinear also KIT). So, this responsibility was not given exclusively to elders but is the personal responsibility of all in the congregation who are “spiritual.” However, the Governing Body uses Galatians 6:1 in an attempt to prove that the elders, as the only ones who have ‘spiritual qualifications’, should deal with an erring Christian. In this text the NWT spuriously adds the

word ‘qualifications’ which is not in or even implied by the Greek. All literal translations say: “*You who are spiritual*” and not “You who have spiritual qualifications.” The REB renders it: “*You...who live by the spirit.*” All Christians should be attempting to ‘live by the spirit’ i.e. to be spiritual. Furthermore, none of Paul’s letters were addressed specifically to elders. Only in the letter to the Philippians are the overseers and ministerial servants included in an address which is to all the holy ones. Specifically, Galatians 6:1 is addressed “**to the brothers and sisters.**” (Please see NRSV, NLT and the footnote to the ESV). Hence it applies to all, both men and women who are spiritual, as ones to give assistance to an erring one as Priscilla did with Apollos (Acts 18:26).

In either the case of the removal from association at Christian meetings of “a man living with his father’s wife” as described in 1 Corinthians 5 or the case of a different, but rebellious brother in the congregation, Paul returns to this issue in his second letter saying:

*“This **rebuke** given by the majority is sufficient for such a man; now you should instead kindly forgive and comfort him, so that he may not be overwhelmed by excessive sadness. I therefore exhort you to confirm your love for him” (2 Cor. 2:6-8).*

So how could the brothers comfort this brother or confirm their love for him if they had been shunning him? This rebuke by only the majority indicates that at least some, the spiritual ones, were still speaking to him, no doubt, to help him toward repentance and to bring him back to the Christian meetings held in their houses. In fact, the Watchtower’s policy on this does cause excessive sadness when children or others are permanently cut off from their families or friends.

What Does “Marking a Brother” Mean?

In 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15 Paul says:

*“if anyone is not obedient to our [the apostles] word...keep this one **marked**, stop associating with him, so that he may become ashamed. And yet do not be considering him as an enemy, but **continue admonishing him** as a brother.”*

Such marking is not a simple noting that they are not fully living the Christian life. In fact, there is clearly no distinction between one who is “marked” and one with whom one must “stop associating.” Furthermore, there is no difference with what is said about the person who will not work (2 Thess. 6-10) from whom one must “**withdraw**” or from the immoral man in 1 Corinthians 5 from whom one must “**stop keeping company.**”

Evidently, the Watchtower tries to make a distinction in the treatment of each of these categories of persons so that “marked” ones are distinct from those with whom one should “not associate.” This is done so that the Organization does not have to apply Paul’s rule that Christians should, “**continue admonishing him as a brother**” rather than shunning them. So clearly such admonishing him as a brother applies in the cases of all those categories of persons described in 1 Corinthians 5 as well as in 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 and for this there can be no shunning.

What Did the Apostle John Mean by Saying: “Do Not Receive Him into Your House”?

In his second letter the Apostle John wrote:

*“For many deceivers ... those **not acknowledging Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh**. This is the deceiver and the **antichrist**. Everyone who pushes ahead and does not remain **in the teaching of the Christ** does not have God...If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, **do not receive him into your homes** (“houses”) or **say a greeting** (Gk. *khairo*) **to him**. For the one says a greeting to him is a sharer in his wicked works” (2 John 7, 9-11).*

The major fear in the late first century was the teaching of the Gnostics who would not have been welcomed into **the house used for Christian meetings**. (Please see Chapter 16). Second John was written to a single local congregation under the figurative phrase “the chosen lady” who would have held their meetings in the ‘house’ where they were not to receive the false teacher. The Greek word here used for *house* is singular and therefore should not be translated as “homes.” No other translation says ‘homes.’ In fact, *The New International Bible Commentary* says of verse 10: “...**into your house** on our interpretation of ‘the elect lady’ will mean into *church fellowship*...the **welcome** will signify *church approval* or commendation.” So, 2 John 7, 9-11 refers to **any** false-teacher who does not bring this [the apostles’ and therefore Jesus’] **teaching of the Christ**. So, the NIV study notes say:

The instruction does not prohibit greeting or even inviting a person into one’s home for conversation. John was warning against providing food and shelter (for such travelling false teachers) since this would be an investment in his wicked work.

What Does “Not Saying a Greeting to Him” Mean?

The Greek word *khairo* used in 2 John 11 means “be rejoicing” (KIT). It was a warm eastern greeting and not a simple hello, good day (as in the NWT) or daily conversation. Therefore, to tell believers that they mustn’t say “hello” to or engage in conversation with one who “does not remain **in the teaching of the Christ**” is a misapplication of this verse. However, Christians would not address the person in a way that **would imply approval or agreement** with the false teacher. Most of the world are, “those **not acknowledging Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh,**” but this does not mean one must never talk to, greet or accept an invitation for a meal (1 Cor.10:27) with those who do not have exactly the same Christian beliefs as us. Neither does simply conversing with an ex-member mean that one agrees with his viewpoint. If a Christian seeks to understand more accurately “**the teaching of the Christ**” (not that of a particular group) that would be a reason to have discussions on the subject. However, these verses apply to one who tries to introduce teachings from pagan Greek Gnostic or Judaizing sources. Even so, true Christians would not use a threat—a “fleshly weapon” (2 Cor.10:4)—when challenged or questioned about Bible truth.

What Does “Not Even Eating with Him” Mean?

The phrase in 1 Corinthians 5:11 of “not even eating with such a man” applies to the weekly love feasts and Lord’s evening meal at the meetings. The key concern is the damage done to the honour of Jesus Christ if such a wicked man were viewed as representative of the standards of Jesus. This has no bearing on a Christian’s eating an ordinary meal with someone who becomes one treated as “a man of the nations” because:

*“If anyone of **the unbelievers** invites you and you want to go, eat whatever is set before you...” (1 Cor. 10:27).*

This indicates that there is no condemnation of a Christian for socializing with an unbeliever, and the same would apply to someone who is now treated as “a man of the nations.” However, outside of this, conversation with him was encouraged **so that he may be saved** (Jas. 5:19) The exclusion of the disfellowshipped person with the phrases from 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14, and 1 Corinthians 5:11, namely, “withdraw from,” “keep this one marked,” “stop keeping company with” all refer to exclusion from fellowship (Gk. *koinonia*) i.e. exclusion from the weekly Christian meeting and especially from the time in feasting together at that meeting.

Shunning a family member is unnatural, especially in what has been a loving family. Indeed, shunning is a form of hatred even wishing the

shunned person to no longer exist. It fulfils the Apostle Paul's words concerning the missing "natural affection" on the part of those willing to do shunning as noted by Paul in 1 Timothy 3:3.

§

22

Why the Practice of Shunning Is Unchristian!

Jesus indicated that one must not shun people. His teaching was:

*"I say to you: Continue to **love your enemies** and to pray for those who persecute you ... And if you greet your brothers only, what extraordinary thing are you doing? Are not also the people of the nations doing the same thing? You must accordingly be perfect as your father is perfect" (Matt. 5:43, 47-48).*

Luke's parallel account adds Jesus' words "*Continue being merciful, just as your Father is merciful*" (Luke 6:36). Even if one views a disfellowshipped person as an "enemy" shunning them is hardly showing them love or being merciful toward them!

JESUS' ILLUSTRATIONS AGAINST SHUNNING

Jesus' attitude toward the shunning of sinners is further demonstrated in his illustrations of the lost sheep and the weeds among the wheat. Firstly, regarding the lost "sheep" he said, "*If a man has 100 sheep and one of them strays, will he not leave the 99 on the mountains and **set out on a search for the one that is straying***" (Matt. 18:12). Then regarding the wheat and weeds the disciples asked, "*Do you want us, then, to go out and collect them [the weeds]?*" He said '*No, for fear that, while collecting the weeds, you **uproot the wheat with them**. Let both grow together until the harvest*'" (Matt. 13:28-30). (i.e. "the end of the age" verse 39).

In Luke 10:19-37 Jesus gave the illustrative story of the good Samaritan. Here was a man despised by the Jews, and yet the Jew who was beaten up did not reject help from this good neighbour i.e. he did not

shun him. Similarly, in Luke 15:11-52 Jesus gave the illustrative story of the prodigal son where, in spite of a virtual death-wish on the father by the son, the father receives his wayward son back into his open arms without demanding repentance and so making it evident that this loving father would never have shunned his son even though the son had wasted the inheritance that the father prematurely agreed to give him.

Jesus Purposely Spent Time with Those Who Were Shunned

The Sadducees, Pharisees (Heb. *perushim*—the Separated Ones) and Essenes were concerned about purity to an extreme and so they considered the tax-collectors, the prostitutes, the lame, the lepers, and sinners as ones to be avoided i.e. they shunned them. However, Jesus, as the reflection of his heavenly Father, operated his life according to “*the law of love*” and sought out these tax-collectors and other sinners, dining with them in fellowship and endeavouring to help them. Matthew records that:

*“...as he was dining in [Matthew’s] house, look! Many tax collectors and **sinners** came and began dining with Jesus and his disciples. But on seeing this, the Pharisees said to his disciples: “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners? Hearing them Jesus said: “healthy people do not need a physician, but those who are ill do. Go, then, and learn what this means: ‘I want **mercy**, and not sacrifice.’ For I came to call, not righteous people, but sinners” (Matt. 9:10-13 also Mark 2:15).*

Jesus further broke the purity rules by physically touching lepers (Mark 1:40-41) and was unconcerned when the haemorrhaging woman touched him (Mark 5:25-29). Jesus clearly **valued life above the extreme concern about purity laws** which resulted in the shunning of outcasts. Evidently, the tax-collectors, prostitutes and other sinners only repented after Jesus had spent time with them. So, Jesus **went out of his way to be in contact with these shunned ones**.

In Matthew 9:10-13, Jesus did not mean that these Pharisees were in good spiritual health, but only that they mistakenly thought they were in such a fine righteous condition. In fact, the shunning policy applied by the Governing Body also leads its members into mistakenly thinking they too are in a fine righteous condition when in fact they are sinners just as much as those they decide to shun and just as Jesus may have said (although not included in the earliest manuscripts) concerning the woman caught in adultery: “*Let the one of you that is sinless be the first to throw a stone*

at her” (John 8:7). Even regarding genuine enemies his counsel to his followers was to, “Continue to **love** your enemies and to **pray for** those who persecute you” (Matt. 5:44).

Jesus’ Refusal to Shun Known Apostates

Jesus imitated his heavenly Father, who did not shun Satan, but engaged with him in conversation concerning Job. Jehovah also did not shun known apostates i.e. the **apostate nation of Israel** but sent prophets to them for their own good. In contrast to shunning Jesus said, “*Happy are the peacemakers*” (Matt. 5:9). So:

- **Judas** was not shunned by Jesus at any time even though he knew the wickedness that was in his heart.
- **The apostate religious leaders** were not shunned by Jesus at any time even though he knew the wickedness that was in their hearts.
- **Satan**, the ultimate apostate, was not shunned by Jesus, but rather he engaged with him in conversation in the wilderness.

Paul Indicated That One Must Not Shun People

In spite of the misused passages to promote the practice of shunning as explained in the previous chapter, Paul showed that Christians should:

“Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely even if one has a cause for complaint against another. Just as Jehovah freely forgave you, you must also do the same. But beside all these things, clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union” (Col. 3:13-14).

Shunning someone is neither a matter of “forgiving one another freely” nor of clothing oneself with love toward a sinning brother, but simply drives them further away, in fact stumbling them. So instead of the harshness of shunning Paul says that the brothers should:

“...warn the disorderly, speak consolingly to those who are depressed, support the weak, be patient toward all. See that no one repays injury for injury to anyone, but always pursue what is good toward one another and to all others” (1 Thess. 5:14-15).

The Governing Body pretends that the shunning of someone and separating them from their family will be for their good to shame them into better behaviour. However, the reality is that it puts the shunned

person into such bad isolation that they become depressed or begin to seek friendship elsewhere or on occasion even commit suicide. In fact, the family that shuns their child becomes guilty of failing to provide for them in several ways as Paul told Timothy: *“Certainly, if anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household he has disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith”* (1 Tim. 5:8).

True Christians Are Not Judgmental Or Self-Righteous

Although God requires that Christians make certain moral judgements He does not approve of one’s being judgmental because each Christian individually stands before God for judgment. So, if anyone judges his brother so as to reject him, as did Diotrophes (3 John 10) that one will be judged by God on the same basis. Firstly, Jesus said, *“...for with what judgment you are judging, **you will be judged** (Gk krino); and with the measure that you are measuring out, **they will measure out to you”*** (Matt. 7:2). The Greek word *krino* means “to call into question” as well as “to condemn.” Similarly, Paul reasoned, *“who are you to judge the house servant of another? **To his own master** he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for Jehovah can make him stand”* (Rom. 14:4). Hence Christians should be very tolerant of one another to allow for growth in understanding. Interestingly, back in Isaiah’s time God noted that, *“...those walking in the way that is not good ... They say, ‘Keep to yourself; do not approach me, For I am holier than you. These are a smoke in my nostrils...”* (Isa. 65:2, 5 NWT). The ESV renders vs.5 as, *“those...who say, ‘keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am too holy for you’ (Or “For my holiness will infect you” REB). These are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all day.”* So, on page 525 of Motyer’s commentary on Isaiah, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* he says regarding verse 5: *“In consequence they developed their own notion of holiness, in particular a holiness of elitism that stood aloof from fellowship and created divisions...”* Clearly, this is what happens to JW’s who follow the policy of shunning, which denies a person’s free will to analyse the Scriptures.

But just how serious is shunning? Could it be that it is a form of abuse?



Shunning Is Spiritual Abuse

Shunning, as a policy of a religious group, is actually a characteristic of destructive high-control groups. It is one of the most damaging forms of emotional and psychological abuse that is used by some religious groups and is actually used as a weapon. In fact, it may be likened to rape inasmuch as it needs a victim with whom to play its mind games. If the target victim does not play according to the rules and does not allow the abuse then the abuser cannot reinforce this abusive behaviour and the abuser loses his illusion of power. Shunning is also like a drug inasmuch as the long-term continuation of the abuse becomes addictive because the illusion of power over any victim is reinforced. Therefore, not only is it damaging to the one being abused by being shunned, it is also highly **dangerous to the abuser** and leads to the hardening of his conscience, making him capable of other forms of abuse.

The Practice of Shunning Can Lead to Further Serious Sinning

In dealing with the Pharisees Jesus said to them:

*‘You skilfully disregard the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. For example, Moses said, **‘Honor your father and your mother,’** and; ‘Let the one who speaks abusively of his father or mother be put to death.’ But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or his mother: “Whatever I have that could benefit you is corban (that is, a gift dedicated to God),” you **no longer let him do a single thing for his father or his mother. Thus you make the word of God invalid by your tradition...**’ (Mark 7:9-13).*

It is the harsh Jewish system of Jesus’ day that the Watchtower organization imitates in regard to disfellowshipping and shunning. This has led, in many cases, to children of those who have left the Organization shunning their parents and so failing to honour them as they should because such honouring is required by Jehovah. This means that those children have turned themselves into, “murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers” (literally, “*smiters of fathers and smiters of mothers, to murderers of male persons*” (1 Tim. 1:9 KIT) in a metaphorical sense because such children treat their parents as “dead” to them. So, although

this text may refer to literal killing of parents some commentators see it as a reference to **the dishonouring of parents** as pointed out in the *Expositor's Bible Commentary*:

J.H. Bernard writes, "The rendering... 'murderers of fathers' is, no doubt, legitimate, but it is not the sin of *murder*, but of dishonouring parents, which is here uppermost in the writer's thought, and the wider translation is justified by the usage of the words elsewhere. For this extreme and outrageous violation of the Fifth commandment the punishment of death was provided in the Mosaic Law (Ex. 21:15)" (p 27). The fact that "murderers" immediately follows perhaps lends some support to "smiteers of fathers and mothers" as the correct translation here. This is favored by Alford, Fairbairn, Simpson, and others. Volume 11; p. 352.

Even if this text did mean actual murder, the Jehovah's Witness who "cuts off" his/her parent/parents, because of having a different understanding of the Scriptures, is making those parents "dead" to them. This is, therefore, murder in a metaphorical sense. By the application of the Watchtower's "cutting off" policy JW's can be led into the unbiblical position of failing to honour and care for their parents. Because Jehovah made humans with a spiritual dimension to their lives the failure of any Jehovah's Witness to communicate at this level with his/her parents makes them guilty of dishonouring their parents and so they "**make the word of God invalid.**" Such dishonouring of parents puts the JW into the position of sinning against God. Such sinning carries a very serious punishment although, of course, Christians are not under the decrees of the Mosaic Law.

The Injustice of the Governing Body's Policy and Their Deception

Although taught that baptism is an outward symbol of a person's dedication to God, the reality is that, the moment a person gets baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses he or she has committed himself or herself to the rules of the Governing Body in a binding contract. Yet, at least in the past, prior to the time of baptism such person was **given no information concerning the harsh rules** and the resulting disfellowshipping for breaking such rules. This means for them that they had not been informed of all the terms of the contract. It was simply not explained to them that they would face the awful situation of being cut off from their family if they later engage in any of the scripturally invalid reasons for disfellowshipping used by the Organization e.g. discussing Bible subjects

independent of the Governing Body's explanations (see Chapter 19). The situation is even worse in the case of children. In spite of the fact that the Jehovah's Witnesses speak against infant baptism and in favour of the making of a mature decision for baptism, some who are only ten years of age and one as young as six years of age have been allowed to be baptized. Even the law of the land in most countries does not allow a child who is under 18 years of age to enter into any binding contract because they are not viewed as an adult below that age. So, six and ten-year old children have entered into the Organization's binding contract with no mature understanding of the repercussions if they should break it by, for instance, questioning and continuing to question any of the teachings of the Organization. Such repercussions often lead to their being cut off by their JW family. Furthermore, some who are mentally impaired also have been allowed to get baptized and have later been disfellowshipped when they cannot cope with what is required of them by Jehovah's Witnesses. This too has led to their being shunned and even leading some to committing suicide.

The Reinstatement Procedure Is Abusive

This procedure used by the Organization is to require a repentant disfellowshipped person to attend meetings, but he or she **must sit at the back of the Kingdom Hall** with none of the members being allowed to speak to him/her i.e. still shunning them. This may go on for 6 months or even a year before they are fully accepted back and the shunning ceases. This is not biblical and is absolutely not a loving arrangement. It flies in the face of Jesus' illustration of the **prodigal son** whose **father** welcomed him with open arms and **without interrogating the son** concerning the son's changing of his ways. This procedure also flies in the face of the *one lost sheep* illustration noted earlier. Here the sheep did not even have to come back and find the shepherd, but rather the search by the shepherd was motivated by love for the sheep.

Jesus Renders His Judgment When He Comes

Those who wilfully reject God's arrangement through Jesus at the time of his coming will be judged as unworthy of *"life in the age to come."* However, Christians are warned not to make such judgments until that time as the following texts show, namely:

*"...do **not judge** anything before the due time, **until the Lord comes**, who will both bring the secret things of darkness to light*

and make the counsels of the hearts manifest” (1 Cor. 4:5).

“...at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, as **he brings vengeance** on those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus” (1 Thess. 1:7, 8).

“**The Court** took its seat, and there were **books that were opened**...in the visions...someone like a son of man happened to be coming; and to the Ancient of Days he gained access, and they brought him up close even before that One” (Dan. 7:10, 13).

So, the revelation of Jesus is a future event that occurs when he comes and the court takes its seat and judgments are made then. (Please see my second book on JWs which shows that Jesus cannot have returned in 1914).

The Appropriate Action of Christians Toward Sinners

The whole purpose of Christians is to help others to have a right relationship with our heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus the Messiah. If that relationship becomes damaged or broken then the Christian’s role is to try to help reconcile the sinner to God once again. This attitude is shown in James’ words: “*If anyone among you is misled from the truth and another turns him back, know that he who **turns a sinner back** from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins*” (Jas 5:19) and in Paul’s encouragement for, “*the spiritual ones [to] **restore** such a man in a spirit of meekness*” (Gal. 6:1 UBS Interlinear) and to “**continue admonishing** him as a brother” (2 Thess. 3:14, 15). Therefore, the concept of the total shunning of a sinning brother or sister runs completely counter to the biblical admonitions and shows the one doing the shunning to be operating in an unchristian and damaging way.

The Prayers of an Ex-Member Who Still Claims to Be a Christian

The Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses strongly discourages its members from listening to the prayers of those who are not of their denomination. This attitude is also taken with someone who leaves the Organization or is disfellowshipped for disagreeing with them on some point of teaching. In support of this position the Governing Body presents the following Scripture:

*“For the **wicked ... may even his prayer be counted as a sin**” (Ps. 109:2, 7).*

However, this prophecy is primarily with reference to **Judas Iscariot** or others who are wicked and has no application to one who has left any particular Christian group and yet continues to love and serve God and Jesus, especially when the departure has been for the purpose of knowing biblical truth more fully and accurately or to remove himself from an unchristian denomination. However, if the person turns away from God then the situation changes because: *“the one refusing to listen to **the law** – Even his prayer is detestable” (Prov. 28:9)*. Yet, the law of God is not determined by any one group but by the Scriptures and, in particular for Christians, by Jesus and his appointed apostles. Scripturally, therefore, the prayer of any seeker after biblical truth who runs his life according to the Scriptures is acceptable to God. Any organization that forbids the participation in prayer of such a person is usurping God’s position. The problem for those who leave the Watchtower Organization, although maintaining their good relationship with God and Jesus, is that the Governing Body claims to be God’s only channel because of their claim to uniquely have correct teachings. However, this claim is bogus because those teachings have changed significantly throughout the history of the Organization and many of them are proven to be false.

PRAYING WITH AN EX-MEMBER

Because Jesus admonished Christians to, *“continue to **love your enemies and to pray for those who persecute you**” (Matt. 5:44)* how much more so for them to pray with an ex-member of the Organization, even if he has a difference of opinion with the Organization on the meaning of various scriptural positions. After all, the Organization itself has changed its opinion many times on biblical teachings.

The True Christian’s Attitude to Their Being Wrongfully Disfellowshipped and/or Shunned

Shunning i.e. ostracism is a most unnatural and inhumane thing for someone to do to another person. More significantly, being shunned is a very horrible experience when perpetrated by those who had once been one’s good friends and even worse when one is shunned by close family members. However, Jesus encouraged Christians with the reality of such situations and the turning of our natural response to such mistreatment on its head when he said:

“Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and

lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake. Rejoice and be overjoyed” (Matt. 5:11, 12).

Paul followed that encouraging guidance so that he was able to retain his human dignity in the face of certain abuses from those opposing his message. His response was: *“now to me it is of very little importance to be examined by you or **by a human tribunal**. In fact, I do not examine myself” (1 Cor. 4:3).*

Conclusions Drawn

- The shunning policy of the Governing Body and the similar policies of other Christian denominations is unsupportable once the known first century background of Christianity is taken into account and that any application of the Mosaic law such as ‘cutting off a wrongdoer’ is seen to be relevant only to ancient Israel and has no place in the Christian arrangement of things.
- Unlike the harsh expulsion from the first century Jewish Synagogue which often involved one’s loss of livelihood, Christians were not to shun, in daily life, those excluded from their meetings.
- Shunning defeats the Christian purpose of disfellowshipping.
- The true Christian aim is to help wrongdoers to put their lives in order so as to come back into full fellowship. This cannot be accomplished if the wrongdoer is shunned. Neither can it be accomplished by a once a year visit from an elder. Individually, Christians must kindly help the disfellowshipped one whilst guarding their own thinking. To damage disfellowshipped ones psychologically by the harshness of shunning is an unchristian goal.
- Shunning is seen to be unscriptural and characteristic of high control denominations, and cults that are destructive.
- Shunning is an immature way of dealing with differences of viewpoint. It is like the silent treatment one child might give to his or her sibling.
- The dual purpose of the shunning policy of the Governing body of Jehovah’s Witnesses seems to be:
 1. To stop the current membership learning from former members the truths about the actual history of the Watchtower Bible and

Tract Society. This history includes many failed prophetic statements, many unbiblical teachings, lying to and un-Christ-like dealings with its membership along with its double standards.

2. To act as a tool or weapon for making doubting members afraid to leave for fear of the extreme consequences regarding being cut off from their families.
 3. To act as a tool or weapon of emotional blackmail so that former Jehovah's Witnesses whose families are still JW's will be forced to return to the Organization.
- Shunning is spiritual abuse and is a sin against God.

NOTE: Of course, if someone engages in any harassment of a Christian, the Christian would be fully entitled to avoid that person, after having made attempts to get the person to stop their harassment.

§

24

“The Two Witness” Rule Whenever a Child Is Sexually Abused

The reason for considering this subject now, within PART THREE, is because there have been many occasions in congregations where the genuine victim of a paedophile is not believed by the elders and then feels that they can no longer associate with JW's and so they stop attending JW meetings. This often leads to their being shunned by the congregation and as shown above this is a spiritual abuse that is perpetrated upon them.

As with many organizations, religious or otherwise, the religion of Jehovah's Witnesses has many thousands of cases of members who commit child sexual abuse. As of 2019 the Watchtower Society continues to operate a system whereby those of its members who commit such rape or sexual abuse of children i.e. paedophiles are not actually reported to the secular authorities (the police) by elders. The basis for this policy is that of applying the words contained in Deuteronomy 19:15 which say:

“No single witness may convict another for any error or any sin that he may commit. On the testimony of two witnesses or on the testimony of three witnesses the matter should be established.”

In JW circles this has become known as “the two witness” rule in relation to paedophile cases. Nevertheless, this is a general rule and the passage is not specifically applicable to cases of rape or sexual abuse. The actual law regarding several different situations of rape is given in **Deuteronomy 22:23-29** where there is no mention of any requirement for there to be two witnesses to the rape attack because it is extremely unlikely that there will be even one witness to the sexual abuse, let alone two!

Furthermore, these passages were actually a law for Israel only, the regulations of which do not apply to Christians, even though the principles stated in that law are of value to the individual Christian. Therefore, even the principles of this particular law in Deuteronomy cannot be applied in these criminal cases. So, if a JW child (or their parent) reports to the elders of their congregation that they have been sexually abused by another member of the congregation, the elders ask: “who were the witnesses to this event”? To this question the child has to say “there were none.” So, then the child’s reporting of this case is dismissed for lack of witnesses. Does this make any sense? Additionally, in the cases that the elders do accept, the child or his/her parents are told by the elders not to report any of this to the police and that they will handle it “in house.” However, rather than contacting the police they, first of all and directed by the Organization, contact the legal department of the Watchtower Society to ask what they should do. This is because their main concern is: will such reporting of a paedophile reflect badly on the Organization. However, such failure to report these things to the authorities is a breaking of the law of the land—a criminal offence—in most countries, because child sexual abuse is a crime. In fact, the claim by the Watchtower Society that such cases of child sexual abuse are rare is a falsehood because these cases are happening at the same rate as in general society according to Norwegian records. For example, on this subject the Wikipedia article on this states that, “In 2015, it was disclosed that the Australia Branch of Jehovah’s Witnesses had records of 1,006 alleged perpetrators of child sexual abuse, relating to more than 1,800 victims since 1950, none of which were reported to police by the church.” We also learn from the Guardian newspaper in the UK that:

More than 100 people have contacted the Guardian with allegations of child sexual abuse and other mistreatment in Jehovah’s Witness communities across the UK. Former and current members, including

41 alleged victims of child sexual abuse, described a culture of cover-ups and lies, with senior members of the organisation, known as elders, discouraging victims from coming forward for fear of bringing “reproach on Jehovah” and being exiled from the congregation and their families. A Guardian investigation also heard from 48 people who experienced other forms of abuse, including physical violence when they were children, and 35 who witnessed or heard about others who were victims of child grooming and abuse. The stories told to the Guardian ranged from events decades ago to more recent, and many of those who came forward have now contacted the police. They told the Guardian about:

- An organisation that has always policed itself and teaches members to avoid interaction with outside authorities.
- A rule set by the main governing body of the religion that means for child sexual abuse to be taken seriously there must be two witnesses to it.
- Alleged child sex abuse victims claiming they were forced to recount allegations in front of their abuser.
- Young girls who engage in sexual activity before marriage being forced to describe it in detail in front of male elders.

A solicitor [a term for a lawyer in the UK] representing some of the alleged victims said she believed there were thousands of complainants in the UK and that the people who have contacted the Guardian were “just the tip of the iceberg.” One alleged victim, Rachel Evans, who has waived her right to anonymity, claimed there was a paedophile ring active in the 1970s, although details of the case cannot be divulged due to a current investigation. “Within the Jehovah’s Witnesses there is an actual silencing and also a network where if someone went to the elders and said ‘there is a problem with this’ and they believe you, the whole thing will be dealt with in-house. But often these people are not dealt with, they are either moved to another congregation or told to keep their head down for a few years,” she said. Another victim, who did not want to be named, said she was abused by a ministerial servant (someone with congregational responsibilities) in the organisation in the 1970s.

All of this has resulted in many of those who have been sexually abused by another JW (sometimes an elder) being told by the local elders that they do not believe the reported abuse, and then the victim was ordered by these elders to maintain silence to avoid embarrassment to both the accused and the Organization. This has pushed the victim into feeling that they must

leave the Organization, which has led to their being punished by being shunned by their JW family members and friends and so losing their support network. But, just remember that these are often quite young children or young teenagers! As one child abuse lawyer in the UK, Kathleen Hallisey, said, “there were concerns that the Organization’s procedures compromised child safety.” This has also been the conclusion of the recent Australian Royal Commission which completed its work on this in 2017 and which showed that out of the 67,000 JWs in Australia some 1000 had practiced sexual molestation upon 1,400 JW children. Furthermore, in 2013 the Charity Commission of the UK started an inquiry into safeguarding issues in the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Britain and other European countries are following suit. Nevertheless, this is an issue in almost all countries where the Watchtower Society operates. Indeed, a further report in *The Atlantic* magazine in the USA revealed the likely existence of a long-standing database of accused paedophiles within the Organization. This database apparently contained tens of thousands of names and addresses of accused paedophiles within the organization and was formed after a letter was sent by the Governing Body in 1997 to all bodies of elders in U.S. congregations. The letter contained instructions to each body of elders to write a report about all known paedophiles to be sent to Watchtower headquarters in a sealed blue envelope without telling the congregation or the appropriate authorities. Indeed, there have now been a number of class actions in the USA by victims of sexual abuse whereby the Watchtower Society has simply settled or has lost the case and has had to pay out millions of dollars in compensation to the victims of sexual abuse.

Denial or Minimizing of These Issues by the Organization

As said earlier the Organization minimizes this issue by lying to outsiders in stating that such cases of paedophilia within the Organization are only rare and that there is no cover up. But to the rank and file JWs the Organization says that there simply is no real problem and that it is those in Satan’s world who are making up stories against the Witnesses as a form of persecution. Of course, this is the same tactic used by many cults which deny the seriously bad things which occur in their organizations. In fact, it would seem that the percentage of paedophilia cases per capita in the Watchtower organization is one of the highest among all the religious groups, even higher than within the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church which the Watchtower has hypocritically condemned on this issue in the past. Nevertheless, one representative of the Governing Body of

JWs has said that they will never change “the two witness” rule. This remains to be seen as court cases continue and continue to cost the Watchtower Society millions of dollars as they either lose the cases or decide to settle them with a massive payment to the victim. This, most likely, is a reason for their significantly strong appeals for money from the membership in recent times and the selling off of Kingdom halls etc.

The Watchtower magazine of May 2019 contains a very cleverly worded article on this subject entitled, “Love and Justice in the Face of Child Sexual Abuse,” clearly designed to mislead the JWs into thinking that everything is being done by the Watchtower Society to protect children from the actions of paedophiles. In this article the Society calls these paedophiles “imposters” or mere “professed Jehovah’s Witnesses” as if they came from outside of the organization when, in fact, many were appointed elders at the time of their committing of this crime (supposedly appointed by holy spirit). The article then passes off the responsibility to protect the child to the parents and to the child itself rather than the elders who have come to know that someone is a paedophile. Yet, elders are supposed to be “shepherds of the flock.” Clearly, in this, they are failed shepherds! The article only barely notes that paedophile activities are **crimes** and focuses rather on the “sin” aspect of the sexual abuse. This means that if the paedophile “repents” then it may be a matter of the victim simply forgiving the perpetrator of this crime against them and then to continue to sit in the same Kingdom Hall with that paedophile as if nothing bad had happened! Furthermore, it is a very weak thing to say in the article that the elders will “endeavour” to report these things to the secular authorities. As an example of how wrong this is: if it were a case of murder that came to the elders’ attention, it would not be a matter of only “endeavouring” to report the matter to the police. Sexual abuse of a child **is a serious crime** and must be reported to the police before any other action is taken! If this is not done the paedophile will perpetrate his sexual perversion on other JW children and even the children of the general public.

Many countries have a “Register of Sex offenders” so that where there are concerns the police and the public can work toward keeping their children safe from paedophiles. The Watchtower provably also has a data base containing the names of these JW predators and which has been estimated to contain some 23,000 names, but is withheld from the authorities and the public in general and the JW membership.

The Organization discourages its membership from going to get help on any issues from a qualified therapist. It promotes the idea that the victims of sexual abuse can be helped “in house” by JW elders. However, this is ridiculous because elders are not professionally qualified or even

minimally trained to give such help to a victim.

In the various court cases which the Watchtower Society has lost so far on this issue and for the many up-coming court cases which they will have to answer they are now attempting to get “clergy penitent privilege” as does the Roman Catholic Church. However, this is completely hypocritical on their part because throughout their history they have said that having a clergy/laity split is an identifying mark of Christendom (Please see *Proclaimers* book pp. 36, 37). Indeed, it is most unlikely that even the Supreme Court of the United States would grant them this privilege, because it is a quite different situation to that of a Catholic priest. Furthermore, the first elder who is told of this sexual abuse then informs another one or two elders and so the matter is no longer confidential and so “clergy penitent privilege” cannot apply in these court cases. This is further emphasized when the moment the local elders contact the Watchtower’ legal department the confidentiality has also gone.

Clearly, the Organization’s policies on this issue are very damaging to children and teenagers and, as with other issues, God will hold it to account for all the damage it has done and continues to do.

Disobeying God by This Watchtower Policy

The Watchtower’s past and likely present failure to report these crimes to the police is a matter of disobeying “God’s minister”—“the superior authorities.” In Romans 13:1-2 Paul says:

*“Let every person be in subjection to the superior authorities, for there is no authority except by God: the existing authorities stand placed in their relative (this word is not in the Greek) positions by God. Therefore, whoever opposes the authority has **taken a stand against the arrangement of God**; those who have taken a stand against it will bring judgment against themselves.”*

Even though the Watchtower magazine of May 2019 proposes that elders will “endeavour” to report these crimes, it seems that they will be advised by Watchtower’s legal department not to do so because of the two-witness rule. Indeed, by this misguided policy the Watchtower has put its members into the position of taking, “**a stand against the arrangement of God,**” and so bringing, “judgment against themselves.”

Misapplication of “Not Taking a Brother to Court”

The Society also misapplies Paul’s words recorded in 1 Corinthians 6:1-6 concerning, “anyone of you who has a dispute with another” and

then condemns them when, “*brother goes to court against brother.*” However, verse 11 of the previous chapter shows these things to concern “*anyone called a brother who is, sexually immoral or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner.*” These are all sins against another brother or sister, but are not crimes for which the state would act (Rom 13:1ff). In modern-day terms these would be *civil* cases, whereas paedophilia is a crime and so should be processed as a *criminal case* and therefore reported to the police.

Although the Society recognized this distinction regarding rape, child abuse, and murder as noted in section 30 of the Appendix to their 2017 book *How to Remain in God’s Love* they seem to have since reneged on that position according to the February 2018 Watchtower magazine which condemns those who are concerned over their “rights” and their taking of their brother to court. These statements are made without any reference back to the statements on this in the *How to Remain in God’s Love* book and so no qualification has been made regarding the distinction between the criminal issues of rape, child abuse, murder and those of mere business dealings with a fellow Witness. Furthermore, the August 5th comment in the *Examining the Scriptures Daily* booklet of 2019 is of the exact February 2018 Watchtower magazine statement just mentioned and so reinforcing in the mind of the JWs not to take a fellow Witness to court for any reason and therefore not to report the crime of child abuse to the police. At the very least these Watchtower publication statements can cause confusion.

§

PART FOUR

Requirements Which “Go Beyond What Is Written”

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Pleasing or Displeasing God by What One Celebrates

These issues are of lesser importance than issues such as the Watchtower's policy on blood transfusions, the shunning policy, and faulty teachings such as: factors about Jesus' resurrection, his return, the destiny of Christians, and how end-time prophecy will be fulfilled, some of which are topics in my second book, *Waking Up to the Distortion of Bible Teachings – Analysis of Watchtower Dogma*. Nevertheless, Christians still need to know information that will help them decide what position they will take concerning such celebrations.

The subjects of non-participation in certain celebrations affect a relatively small number of denominations, including the World-Wide Church of God, and most notably the Jehovah's Witnesses who, although having celebrated much in their earlier history, do not now celebrate birthdays or Christmas. The primary basis for the Watchtower Society's arguments for their position on these matters is the general pagan background of these celebrations; and indeed the introduction of paganism into Christianity should be of significant concern to true Christians because it has certainly affected the belief systems in the churches so that Christianity after the time of the apostles became a fusion religion—a fusion of pristine Christianity with paganism by the introduction of such teachings as Trinitarianism and immortal soulism. However, we must ask if the Watchtower Society may have failed to take certain biblical aspects of these matters into account.

We hope to show from the following material that there is no legitimate basis to reject the celebration of birthdays or the celebration of Christ's birth. However, we also hope to demonstrate that there are a number of serious problems in the celebration of Christmas by the traditional and general churches and in particular that December 25th is many months away from the most likely time of Christ's birth. Furthermore, the celebration of Easter, Halloween, and St Valentines' Day all have very pagan backgrounds and so are not appropriate for Christians to celebrate. In fact, Jehovah's Witnesses are not the only ones to refrain from such celebrations including Christmas. Indeed, several other denominations and many individuals keep entirely away from these celebrations on their relevant dates.

Sadly, the one significant annual celebration sanctioned by the Watchtower Society, namely, the celebration of the Lord's evening meal is celebrated by the Witnesses in a way which actually insults and rejects Jesus as we shall see when we come to examine this celebration later in

this book. So, for now we will look at some of the background to the celebrating of Christmas.

The Early View of the Watchtower Society Concerning Christmas

From 1903 to 1926 the Watchtower Society made the following comments about Christmas:

It is quite immaterial the day Christmas is celebrated; we may properly join in. (Watchtower 15 December 1903, p.3290)

Don't quibble about the date; join in with the world and celebrate Christmas (Watchtower 1 December 1904, p.3468).

Christmas is so important, regardless of the date (Watchtower 15 December 1926 p.371).

These views changed after 1926 and have remained changed up to the present day. The Organization now states that: "We are to remember Jesus' death not his birth." So, it is now a sin for any JW to celebrate Jesus' birth in any form. They must not give presents, send cards or have parties or a Christmas meal. However, many JW women who have marriage partners who are not JWs, quite reasonably, still prepare special meals on December 25th for their non-JW husbands.

Major Reasons Presented by Several Denominations Against the Celebrating of Christmas.

A). *THE DATE OF DECEMBER 25th FOR JESUS' BIRTH IS INCORRECT*

Whether or not the earliest Christians annually noted or celebrated the time of Jesus birth is not known. However, the first known festive celebrations of his birth occurred in 137 A.D., but on the date of the 6th January. This is still the date of celebration by those of the Eastern Orthodox churches and the Coptic Christians of Egypt. Yet, it was not until A.D. 350 that 25th December became the official birthday of Jesus as the Christ-Mass as decided by Pope Julius 1st. However, it is fairly well documented in various encyclopaedias and can be proved from the Bible record that Jesus could not have been born on December 25th or any time in the mid-winter. Although the exact date of Jesus' birth is unknown and probably unknowable at the present time, some well recognized and intelligent calculations put it as most likely to be around late September/early October.

B). WORSHIP IS BEING OFFERED TO “GOD THE SON” OF THE TRINITY

Because the celebrating of Christmas did not begin in earnest until the third century and was only widely observed well into the fourth century it clearly began as a celebration of the birth of Jesus as being ‘God the Son’ i.e. the God-man—second member of the Trinity arriving by incarnation rather than the human Jesus begotten in Mary’s womb. (Please see my book *Can There Be Three Persons in One God? – Why You Should Question the Trinity Doctrine*).

C). CHRISTMAS HAS PAGAN ORIGINS

December 25th was the date of the pagan Roman Saturnalia—the winter solstice and the use of and the decorating of the Christmas tree is viewed by some as the worship of the tree in the same way that pagans worship trees. Also, Christmas links with the myth of Santa Claus, commonly known as Father Christmas this mythological figure rides an imaginary flying sleigh pulled by reindeer and he supposedly drops down the chimneys of every home to leave presents for the children of each family. This originates from pagan celebrations in Northern Europe and is simply a matter of lying to young and susceptible children.

Lesser Reasons for Avoiding the Celebration of Christmas

1). THERE ARE OFTEN WILD PARTIES

These are the revelries that Christians should not involve themselves in (Gal. 5:21, 1 Pet. 4:3). They often lead to drunkenness, the relaxing of inhibitions and then to sexual immorality especially at Christmas office parties, although less likely in a family setting.

2). MODERN-DAY COMMERCIALISM

One of the most profitable times of the year for retailers is at Christmas. So advertising is at its peak and the pressure is enormous on many who cannot really afford to buy these gifts.

3). THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

The reality of the impact of Christmas is that:

- More families have serious arguments at Christmas-time.
- The suicide rate increases over this season.
- It leaves very many families in serious financial debt for the rest of the year.
- Those who live alone, having no family or having an uncaring family and few or no friends, often find this a most demoralizing

and lonely time.

4). *THE GIFT-GIVING IS NOT ALWAYS FROM THE HEART*

This is obviously because most people expect a present in return for the present they give to any particular person and this can lead to disappointment. Sometimes there is a degree of one-up-manship in the giving of presents.

5). The Watchtower Society adds to the above reasons for avoiding Christmas celebrations the thought that one should only remember Jesus' death rather than his birth recorded in Luke 22:19 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 Jesus gave the command to remember him in relationship to the "proclaiming of his death." Nowhere did Jesus command the celebrating of his birth. However, this view may mean that a biblical factor concerning Jesus' birth has gone unnoticed by the Watchtower Society as we shall see in the next chapter.



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The Appropriate Response to Jesus' Birth

When we examine the birth account as recorded in Luke's gospel, we can see that God's own angels have set the precedent for our response to Jesus' birth? Indeed, these angels demonstrated that God Himself fully approved of celebrating the birth of Christ. However, as shown in the previous chapter Christmas is not an appropriate time and setting in which to do it.

The Angels and the Shepherds Rejoice at Jesus' Birth

Luke records that:

"[Mary] gave birth to her son, the firstborn, and she wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the lodging place. There were also in the same region shepherds living out of doors and keeping watch in the night over their flocks. Suddenly Jehovah's angel stood before them, and Jehovah's glory gleamed around them, and they became very fearful. But the angel said to them: "Do not be afraid, for look! I

am declaring to you **good news of a great joy that all the people will have**. For today there was born to you in David's city a savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this is a sign for you: You will find an infant wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger." Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying: "**Glory in the heights above to God, and on earth peace among men of goodwill.**"

So, when the angels had departed from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another: "Let us by all means go over to Beth'le-hem and **see what has taken place, which Jehovah has made known to us.**" And they went quickly and found Mary as well as Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that they had been told concerning this young child. And all who heard were astonished at what the shepherds told them, but Mary began to preserve all these sayings, drawing conclusions in her heart. Then the shepherds went back, **glorifying and praising God** for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them" (Luke 2:7-20).

Indeed, the shepherds joined with the angels in celebrating the birth of the Messiah—they were thrilled about this wonderful news and made it known to others!

The Gifts from the Magi

In my book *The Veil Removed by Turning to Christ* please see Appendices A, B, and C concerning the Chronology of Jesus. These facts indicate that the magi's visit to Jesus was not that of Satan's agents, as some seem to think, and that it occurred shortly after he was born rather than when he was one to two years old. So, when we examine the birth account recorded in Matthew's gospel, we again notice a proper response to the relatively recent birth of the Messiah:

*"Then Herod secretly summoned the astrologers and carefully ascertained from them the time of the star's appearing. When sending them to Beth'le-hem, he said: "Go make a careful search for the young child, and when you have found him, report back to me so that I too may go and do obeisance to him." After they had heard the king, they went their way, and look! the star they had seen when they were in the East went ahead of them until it came to a stop above where the young child was. On seeing the star, **they rejoiced with great joy**. And when they went into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and **falling down, they***

did obeisance to him. They also opened their treasures and **presented him with gifts**—gold and frankincense and myrrh. However, because they were given divine warning in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way” (Matt. 2:7-12).

Yet it was Satan’s agent, Herod who provided the key opposition to celebrating Messiah’s birth. Even his statement of wishing to pay homage to this new-born king was hypocritical because he really wanted Jesus killed (Matt. 2:3, 9, 12, 16).

Other Human Responses to the Good News of Jesus’ Birth

MARY’S SONG OF PRAISE

“And Mary said: *“My soul magnifies Jehovah, and my spirit cannot keep from being overjoyed at God my Savior, because he has looked upon the low position of his slave girl. For look! from now on all generations will declare me happy, because the powerful One has done great deeds for me, and holy is his name, and for generation after generation his mercy is upon those who fear him. He has acted mightily with his arm; he has scattered those who are haughty in the intention of their hearts. He has brought down powerful men from thrones and has exalted lowly ones; he has fully satisfied hungry ones with good things and has sent away empty-handed those who had wealth. He has come to the aid of Israel his servant, remembering his mercy, just as he spoke to our forefathers, to Abraham and to his offspring, forever”* (Luke 1:46-55).

SIMON’S PRAISING OF GOD FOR JESUS’ BIRTH

“And look! there was a man in Jerusalem named Sim’e-on, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for Israel’s consolation, and holy spirit was upon him. Furthermore, it had been divinely revealed to him by the holy spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Christ of Jehovah. Under the power of the spirit, he now came into the temple, and as the parents brought the young child Jesus in to do for him according to the customary practice of the Law, he took the child into his arms and praised God and said: *“Now, Sovereign Lord, you are letting your slave go in peace according to your declaration, because my eyes have seen your means of salvation that you have prepared in the sight of all the peoples, a light for removing the veil from the nations and a glory of your people Israel.”* And the child’s father and mother

continued wondering at the things being spoken about him. Also, Sim'e-on blessed them and said to Mary, the child's mother: "Look! This child is appointed for the falling and the rising again of many in Israel and for a sign to be spoken against (yes, a long sword will be run through you), in order that the reasonings of many hearts may be revealed'" (Luke 2:25-35).

ANNA'S PRAISING OF GOD FOR JESUS' BIRTH

"Now there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phan'u-el, of Ash'er's tribe. This woman was well along in years and had lived with her husband for seven years after they were married, and she was a widow now 84 years old. She was never missing from the temple, rendering sacred service night and day with fasting and thanks to God and speaking about the child to all who were waiting for Jerusalem's deliverance" (Luke 2:36-38).

So, clearly this very large number of people knew that Jesus' birth was something that should be celebrated and they did so with God's approval. So, it really does seem inconsistent to say that one should not celebrate that birth on its anniversary!

What Might Christians Do on This Issue?

I personally do not subscribe to the argument that because certain famous people's birthdays are celebrated on a different day that we can in good conscience do the same with Jesus' birthday and celebrate it on December 25th anyway. This argument is that it is the memory that matters and not a realistic date. Of course, the memory is what matters and Jesus should be in our thoughts each day, but a three to four-month difference is quite substantial and really not acceptable as can be gleaned if someone every single year acknowledged one of their relative's birthday four months later than it actually was or their wedding anniversary on a much later or earlier date.

So one can either say that because God has not given us sufficient information to know the exact date of Jesus' birth and so He does not see it as important for us to know and therefore we need do nothing about it, or that one can see it as important to celebrate because the angels, the shepherds, and others saw it as an event of monumental importance to mankind because without that birth there would have been no sacrifice on Jesus' part and therefore no coming kingdom. This approach may lead us to celebrate it at a time as close as we can calculate it i.e. within September or early October until further information sheds greater light on this matter. Such a celebration could be a simple reading of all the relevant

Bible accounts and discussion of them at that time.

However, as with the issue of birthdays all Christians must go by their biblically trained consciences working in harmony with all available knowledge about the subject.

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The Issue of Celebrating Birthdays

The historic records show that Origen (c.185-254) was the first Christian leader to state that it would be a sin to celebrate anyone's birth. This position was also taken by the early Catholic Church and so left most people with no knowledge of how old they were or when they had been born. This all began to change in the twelfth and fourteenth centuries when patron saints were assigned to each newly born child at its baptism and a celebration called the "name day" was held, and therefore records of births were now being kept by the church.

Reasons Offered Against the Celebrating of Birthdays

A). *PRESENTED IN AN UNFAVOURABLE LIGHT IN THE BIBLE?*

As well as the several Scriptures that are negative about bringing new people into the world the only two examples of birthday celebrations recorded in the Bible are in association with bad events, involving pagan rulers. These, therefore, put birthday celebrations in an unfavourable light. These are the occasions of:

- Pharaoh's birthday feast, because he ordered the execution of "the chief of the bakers" (Gen. 40:22).
- Herod Antipas' birthday feast, because he ordered the beheading of John the baptizer (Matt. 14:1-12).

Furthermore, the biblical statement that, "*a name is better than good oil, and the day of death than the day of birth*" (Eccl. 7:1) indicates that one's birth day is not so important and so it is assumed that the birth of a new-born child should not be celebrated.

B). JEWS AND EARLY CHRISTIANS DID NOT CELEBRATE BIRTHDAYS

In its *'Reasoning from the Scriptures'* book (p.69) the Watchtower Society quotes from a history of religion encyclopaedia (1848) and a Bible dictionary (1874) to show that Christians did not celebrate birthdays. Certainly, there is no record of birthday celebrations being observed by Christ's followers during his ministry.

C). THE FIRST BIRTHDAYS WERE OF THE PAGAN GODS

The celebrating of birthdays originated with the Gentiles and within a pagan setting. Certainly, the early Greeks and Romans celebrated the birthdays of the gods and in time this **included prominent men**. Part of the reasoning for this was so that accurate records could be kept of when people were born and of their ages. No doubt it only concerned prominent people because these were the only people who could afford such lavish parties, yet there is no reason to imagine that poorer people did not consider the anniversary of their birth as important to them and their close relatives.

D). BIRTHDAYS ELEVATE THE PERSON

When people celebrate someone's birthday that person obviously becomes the centre of attention which may work against humility.

Does the Above Information Provide Any Valid Reasons Against Celebrating Birthdays?

To condemn birthday celebrations on the basis of evil events occurring at the celebrations of the birthdays of pagan rulers means that the conclusion was arrived at by picking very limited information from the Scriptures and not truly reasoning upon it.

PHARAOH'S AND HEROD'S BIRTHDAYS DIDN'T CAUSE THE BAD EVENTS

In fact, what triggered the execution of John the Baptist in the first place, was his condemnation of Herod for his immorality and so leading Herod to want to put him to death (Matt. 14:5). Herod was only held back by his fear of the Jewish crowd; yet Herodias manipulated him at his birthday party to carry out this execution. If it had not been at that party Herodias would have looked for another occasion—perhaps at another feast-time. So, it was not the birthday party that was the problem but the wickedness of Herod and Herodias.

Similarly, with Pharaoh it was not his birthday party that caused the execution of "the chief of the bakers." It appears from the account that he deserved that punishment and would have received it at any time. It was therefore coincidental that Pharaoh's decision occurred at his birthday

party and could easily have occurred at a different feast time.

Also are we to assume that something bad happened at every birthday celebration of these two prominent men?

From the opposite point of view there were also some legitimate festivals recorded in the Bible where bad things also happened. For instance, Jesus' own death occurred near the time of the Passover. Again, it was fear of the crowd that caused the plotters to say, "*Not at the festival, in order that no uproar may arise among the people*" (Matt. 26:5). So, are we to conclude that the Passover or other such festivals did not have God's blessing just because evil plots were being hatched at those times? Clearly, it is not the celebration that is at fault but the individuals who planned and performed such evil things. However, in addition to the above two accounts there may be a couple of other instances of birthday celebrations that have no issues about them.

CELEBRATIONS BY JOB'S SONS

*"His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of **each one on his day**, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. When the days of feasting had completed their cycle Job would send and consecrate them...; for Job said, 'Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.' Thus Job did continually" (Job 1:4, 5 NASB).*

Several other translations are more interpretive, saying:

- *"His sons used to go and feast in the house of **each on his day (birthday)** in turn, and they invited their three sisters to eat and drink with them" (Amplified Version).*
- *"His sons used to hold feasts in their homes **on their birthdays**, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them" (NIV).*

In fact, the *Word Biblical Commentary* states "his day" as: "The "day" of each brother would most naturally be his birthday (cf. "his day" in 3:1; and Hos 7:1) or perhaps is simply equivalent to "on his appointed day, i.e., when his turn came around" (Gordis)." Also, *Ungers Commentary on the Old Testament* says regarding Job 1:4 that it was: "Apparently indicating a round of festivities on certain special occasions, such as birthdays." So, although there is some uncertainty as to what "each on his day" refers to, there are quite a few commentators and Bible translators who feel that it means or includes birthday celebrations. Moreover, as explained from the Scriptures in the previous chapter of this book Jesus' birth caused only rejoicing.

THE FACTORS OF PAGAN ORIGIN ARE VERY LIMITED

The very limited connection with the pagan practice of the Romans to celebrate the birthdays of the gods or of the emperors of the past is not a strong reason for a Christian to negate birthday celebrations. There are many aspects of daily life today which have a pagan origin such as: the **names of the days of the week** or the **names of the months of the year**. Yet no Christian would refuse to use them because of their pagan origin. By their usage no one is recommending the worship of Greek gods by using something common to both the ancient and modern cultures. Furthermore, **the wedding ring** originated with pagans, yet the wearing of such is generally acceptable and even expected by Christians today. In all such activities there is no thought of this minor pagan connection by those involved and although the celebration of birthdays was not recorded as a practice observed during Christ's earthly ministry, it is not appropriate to attack the practice just because of its dim and distant pagan background. Of course, for one to purposely engage in what are generally and currently viewed as a pagan practice during such celebrations would indeed make one guilty of false worship. As with many activities of Christians this one is also a matter of the usage of one's conscience.

NOTHING IN THE BIBLE FORBIDDING THE CELEBRATING OF BIRTHDAYS

There is no command in the Scriptures to refrain from celebrating birthdays. So, some may say: "ah, but just because the Bible doesn't say it doesn't make it right." This is true. However, the fact is that the Bible does not cover in detail every aspect of Christian life. So, it is up to each Christian to use his/her thinking ability to discern whether a particular activity is harmful or not, especially in relation to true worship. In fact, celebrating a person's annual birthday can be edifying for Christians and may have a biblical basis when we consider Job's sons and the angels' response to Jesus' birth. Certainly, when a baby is born it is a joyful time for the parents, relatives and friends, and many Jehovah's Witnesses will send a congratulations card on the birth of a new baby. So why, then, does the Organization treat the anniversary of that birth as of no account and against God's wishes for its celebration? Furthermore, the argument that no one should become the centre of attention is invalid because many who won't celebrate a birthday still become the centre of attention on many other occasions. For instance, at the celebration of a wedding anniversary or when they receive some appointment in a congregation or in relation to work, or indeed at the birth of their new baby.

Is the Bible Really Negative About

the Birth of New Life?

The statement in Ecclesiastes 7:1 which says that, “*the day of death is better than the day of birth*” has to be viewed in its context of, “a good name is better than good oil” and so *The Word Biblical Commentary* on this verse states that:

only with death does the reality of a good reputation exist ... At birth one has a whole life ahead, which may or may not yield a good reputation. As always with Qoheleth, life must be looked at from the point of view of death ... The satirical edge is thus preserved: it is all very well to speak of a good reputation, but not before death!

So, Ecclesiastes 7:1 isn't saying that one should treat the birth of a child in any negative way—as an unhappy occasion. This also implies that there should be no negativity about celebrating the anniversary of that birth.

Summary

It appears that the reasons offered against the celebrating of birthdays by the Watchtower Society and several other denominations do not really support this position. However, all Christians must go by their biblically trained consciences working in harmony with all available knowledge about the subject. This includes the taking into consideration of the effect of their actions upon the consciences of their Christian brothers and sisters, yet no one should be judgmental of others in this matter.

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The Lord's Evening Meal as Arranged by the Organization

With this celebration two significant questions arise concerning the Watchtower Society's arrangement for it:

1. Why is it celebrated annually when most other denominations celebrate “often”—sometimes once a week?

2. Why do the attendees not actually eat of the bread and drink from the cup of wine?

Although Jesus had earlier instituted the Lord's evening meal as recorded in the Gospel accounts, the earliest written account of this celebration was by the Apostle Paul when he wrote to the Corinthians, saying:

*"I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night on which he was going to be betrayed took a loaf, and after giving thanks, he broke it and said: "This means my body, which is in your behalf. Keep doing this in remembrance of me." He did the same with the cup also, after they had the evening meal, saying: "This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood. Keep doing this, **whenever** you drink it, in remembrance of me." For **whenever** you eat this loaf and drink this cup, you keep proclaiming the death of the Lord, until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:23-26).*

How Often Should It Be Celebrated?

The 1984 version of the New World Translation and most other translations (including the Greek interlinear) render the above boldened word as: "**as often as** you eat this loaf (or bread) and drink this cup" which implies that the celebration was often. The book *Reasoning from the Scriptures* states on page 269 under the heading **How often is the Memorial to be commemorated, and when?** says: "Jesus did not specifically state how often it was to be done. He simply said: "Keep doing this in remembrance of me." However, this book then goes on to justify an annual celebration by saying that Paul's phrase, "*as often as*" can also mean annually over a period of many years." This is then based on the concept of an anniversary and the Jewish annual Passover. However, is this the way Paul really meant it to be understood? All reasonable thinking about Paul's phrase would understand that the phrase "**as often as**" is an **inducement to commune frequently**, albeit of indefinite frequency as in Revelation 11:6 which says: "*as often as they wish.*" So, an annual arrangement can hardly fulfil the admonition to commune "*as often as.*" To say, as the Organization has said, that because the Lord's Evening Meal has been celebrated "often" over nearly 2000 years makes no sense in view of Paul's saying this back in the first century. If it was to be annual then "often" would seem strange to those early disciples. So, because "Jesus did not specifically state how often it was to be done" we must look for the pattern and timing applied by those first century disciples in the New Testament record.

BREAKING OF BREAD – PART OF FOUR **DAILY** SPIRITUAL HABITS

Unlike most Christian denominations the Watchtower Society denies that the phrase, “breaking of bread” in Acts 2 refers to the Lord’s Evening Meal. However, the words of Acts 2:42 describe such communing together by the earliest Christians and shows that “breaking of bread” was no ordinary meal, but was synonymous with the Lord’s Evening Meal (1 Cor. 11:20) because:

*“...they [the disciples] continued devoting themselves to the **teaching** of the apostles, to the common participation (**fellowship**), to the **breaking of bread** and to **prayers**” (Acts 2:42 - based on the K I T).*

So, the “breaking of bread” is linked with three other essential spiritual habits. Therefore, they must have been meeting together for these four things. Ignatius shows that the Lord’s Evening Meal [the Eucharist – meaning “giving thanks”] was the focus of the church’s life—Jesus being the “*bread of God.*” This practice was in their homes because such homes were used as “house churches” in the earliest days. Although, verse 46 in the NWT is rendered in such a way as to make these events look like ordinary meals other translations show that this was the “breaking of bread” i.e. the **regular daily** celebration of the Lord’s evening meal. For instance, the ESV renders verse 46: “*And day by day attending the temple together and **breaking bread** in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts*” (Acts 2:46 ESV).

CHANGED TO A **WEEKLY** CUSTOM

This custom of celebrating the Lord’s evening meal daily eventually changed to a **weekly custom** on the first day of the week, which was a Sunday. Luke reports that, “*On the first day of the week when we [Paul and associates] were gathered together **to break bread...***” (Acts 20:7 ESV). So, Barnabas in the second century wrote that: “We keep the 8th day for rejoicing, in which Jesus also rose from the dead,” and the 8th day was what Luke records as “the first day of the week” in Acts.

THE FULFILLMENT OF SEVERAL HEBREW SCRIPTURE SHADOWS

A further reason why the celebrating of the Lord’s evening meal was not an annual celebration was because it fulfilled the Old Covenant practices of:

- a) “*Eating the sacrifices*” (1 Cor.10:18-21; Lev. 7:6). This happened **more often than annually**. Paul’s comparison of the Lord’s Evening Meal with the priests’ regular eating of the sacrifices, which was often, is a strong indicator that the Lord’s Evening Meal should

be eaten much more often than once a year.

- b) “*Christ our Passover **has been** sacrificed*” (1 Cor. 5:7). Hence this is permanent rather than annual. Indeed, the Lord’s Evening Meal is not the annual Passover because Christians are no longer under the Mosaic Law regulations, yet it does also reflect it.

Should the Lord’s Evening Meal Still Be “Observed” by JW’s

“UNTIL HIS RETURN”

A further aspect of the Lord’s Evening Meal that is lost by the Watchtower organization’s arrangement of it is that of Jesus’ future return. Paul said, “*For whenever (Lit. “as often as”) you eat this loaf and drink this cup, you keep proclaiming the death of the Lord, **until he comes***” (1 Cor. 11:26). However, according to the Watchtower Society Jesus returned (his *parousia*), albeit invisibly, in 1914 and set up his invisible kingdom. If that was the case, should the Society still be arranging for a memorial at all? Surely, they should have ceased such an arrangement as “proclaiming the death of the Lord” in harmony with 1 Corinthians 11:26 back in 1914. If, however, they conclude that they should continue this arrangement because he hasn’t returned in the sense of his “revelation” to destroy the wicked at Armageddon, then we have a contradiction because Jesus said: “*I will **not drink again** from the product of the vine **until the kingdom of God comes***” (Luke 22:18). So, this aspect of his return concerns his being reunited with his disciples and not the aspect concerned with the destruction of the wicked. Therefore, from the Watchtower Society’s perspective the celebration of their memorial should have ceased in 1914. Furthermore, there is nothing in the context of this verse to indicate that Jesus would do other than resume the drinking of literal wine when reunited with his disciples. So, Jesus must return literally in the future to physically drink wine with his disciples as he promised. However, even this supposed second stage of return is not viewed as a literal physical return by the Organization so that Jesus never literally comes back to do this. The biblical fact is that there is no two-stage coming of Christ. The *parousia* and “the revelation” of Jesus are the same future event. (Please see my second book on JW issues, *Waking Up to the Distortion of Bible Teachings – Analysis of Watchtower Dogma*).

The Organization’s Abnormal Way of Celebrating the Lord’s Evening Meal

A more serious and damaging aspect of the annual Memorial i.e. the

Lord's Evening Meal arranged for by the Watchtower Society is the fact that there is virtually no participation in the celebration in most congregations. This is because as the bread and the wine are passed from person to person the bread is not eaten by anyone and the wine is not sipped by anyone. So, there is no actual communion/sharing with Christ or with other Christians as should be the case. Because of the Organization's false teaching that there are only a literal 144,000 anointed Christians, all those generally in attendance simply classify themselves as observers. However, in most cases there is nothing to observe because, in most congregations, nobody claims to be an anointed Christian. This is, of course, the same as claiming to be not a Christian. All of this absolutely insults Jesus who instructed Christians to observe this by participating in the bread and the wine in remembrance of his death which inaugurated the New Covenant (Luke 22:19-20) and his return when "the kingdom of God comes" (vs. 18).

IS MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE A COMMAND FOR THE 'OTHER SHEEP'

Because the Organization views the Christian Greek Scriptures as a letter directly only to 'the anointed class,' this means that Jesus' words in Luke 22: 19, 20 were directed only to them. So, it seems strange that the Watchtower Society should state in its February 15, 1999 issue of the Watchtower magazine:

One of the finest ways we can show appreciation for the ransom is by attending the memorial of Christ's death which this year is to be held on April 1. This, too, is part of Jesus' word instituting the celebration, Jesus **commanded** his followers: "keep doing this in remembrance of me" (emphasis ours).

This is a very clever way of wording this issue, such that it leads those of the so-called 'other sheep' class to believe that they are commanded by Jesus to attend what is really a celebration only for anointed Christians, while they are excluded from that class of Christians.

THE WATCHTOWER'S MEMORIAL INSULTS AND REJECTS CHRIST

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, a kind of strange ritual takes place inasmuch as each person first takes the plate with the bread and then declines to eat the piece of bread and then passes the plate to the next person. The same is done with the glass of wine because no one takes a sip of it. In doing this it appears to be an actual **rejecting of Jesus' sacrifice for themselves!**

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Is a Door to Door Ministry a Scriptural Requirement?

This question is not to criticize those who preach from door to door, but to show that it is not actually a scriptural requirement. So, for a person to be told that they must use this method of preaching is simply wrong. Certainly, Jesus commanded his followers to preach and to teach (Matt: 28:19), but he did not stipulate which method. Nevertheless, the following Scriptures are used by the Watchtower Society as the basis for requiring each Jehovah's Witness to go preaching sequentially from door to door/house to house. Firstly, Paul's statement that:

*"I did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you **publicly** and **from house to house** (Gk. kat' oikon). But I thoroughly bore witness both to Jews and to Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus" (Acts 20:20).*

Then Luke's description of early Christian activity was that:

*"Every day **in the temple** and **from house to house** they continued without let up teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus" (Acts 5:42).*

So, is it a legitimate application of this last verse to require a person to use such a method of preaching? If it is then one must also preach in the Jerusalem temple, which of course no longer exists! Yet, even if one should understand these words as referring to "temples" i.e. religious venues in general we find that it is not the Organization's policy for Jehovah's Witnesses to preach in any form of religious venue (temple/church) other than their own. Indeed, the following study reveals that the Organization misapplies the phrase "from house to house."

It is very well documented that the first century Christians met in the temple, the synagogues, and in private homes ('house churches') (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19). So, there is a parallel seen in the statements of Acts of, "*teaching you publicly and from house to house*" (Acts 20:20) and "*in the temple and from house to house...teaching and declaring the good news*" (Acts 5:42). So, the **public** teaching was in the synagogues

and/or the **temple**, and the “**house to house**” teaching was in the **various ‘house churches.’**

Paul Was Teaching Other Christians as Well as Unbelievers

As well as Paul’s statement of, “*I did not hold back from telling you [the Ephesian elders] any of the things that were profitable nor (“and” Kingdom Interlinear Translation) from teaching you [the Ephesian elders] **publicly and from house to house** (Gk. *kat’ oikon*)”* he wrote to the Christians in Rome to say that there was, “*an eagerness on my part to declare the good news also to you there in Rome*” (Rom.1:15). Yet this was a letter to ones who had already accepted the good news. Therefore, Paul’s desire must have been to give these Christians all the additional information of “the good news” that can be found in the letter to the Romans. Similarly, Paul’s words in Acts 20:20, 21 were spoken to the elders of Ephesus and were likely concerning instruction for them to do their work well i.e. “the things that were profitable” as Christian elders. This instruction would have been given in their ‘house churches.’ Furthermore, Paul’s statement about “preaching the kingdom” does not have to be an initial preaching, but rather just as when the resurrected Jesus spent 40 days “telling the things about the kingdom of God” to his apostles and disciples (Acts 1:3). Also, Paul’s comment about his bearing “witness both to Jews and to Greeks about repentance” was also done initially in public i.e. sometimes in synagogues and later in the house churches.

Is “from House to House” the Same as “from Door to Door”?

The Greek phrase *kat’ oikon* as meaning “from house to house” is used in *the distributive sense*. But this does **not mean consecutively**, that is, it does not mean door to door calling, but in the same sense as when a doctor may make house calls. Literally *kat’ oikon* means “according to house” and is translated as “**in different homes**” in the NWT (2013) in Acts 2:46: “...and they took their meals in different homes...” or simply “in their homes” or similar as in the NAB, NJB, NEB/REB, Rotherham, Translator’s New Testament, Philips, Weymouth, and Barclay which all translate Acts 20:20 as “in your homes.” In *An American Translation* Goodspeed renders it as, “at your houses.” So, the meaning of Acts 20:20, 21 is that Paul preached publicly (in synagogues and open spaces) to unbelievers, and also **in the homes that were used for Christian meetings**—teaching elders, other Christians, and newly interested ones. This should never be miscon-

strued as meaning calling from one house to the next consecutively.

Misapplied Texts

1. **Matthew 10:11-14.** When Jesus sent out the twelve apostles he said:
*“Into whatever city or village you enter, search out who in it is deserving, and **stay there until you leave**. When you enter the house, greet the household. If the house is deserving, let the peace you wish it come upon it; but if it is not deserving, let the peace from you return upon you. Wherever anyone does not **receive you** or listen to your words, on going out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet.”*
2. **Luke 10:1, 5, 7.** When Jesus sent out the Seventy:
*“...the Lord designated 70 others and sent them forth by twos **ahead of him** into every city and place that he himself was to go ... Wherever you enter into a house ... So **stay in that house**, eating and drinking the things they provide ... Do **not keep transferring from house to house**.”*

These texts are misapplied by the Organization to door to door work, but as the context shows they apply to the **obtaining of lodging** as a base for the preaching work that would take place in a public location and in preparation for the arrival of Jesus.

WHAT IS THE MOTIVE?

In fact, there are no texts which, when properly interpreted, require any JW to call from door to door. However, the witnessing work of Jehovah’s Witnesses has been expressed as being “in hopes of catching householders during a time that something adverse had happened in their lives since they were last visited.” So, Jehovah’s Witnesses who are engaged in door to door work are unwittingly looking for people experiencing difficulties in life and who were therefore susceptible to or **vulnerable** to the Organization’s message.

Reporting Time Spent in the Ministry

This is a most peculiar requirement made by the Watchtower Society, but which is explained as essential so that the Society can know how much preaching work is being done worldwide each month by Jehovah’s Witnesses and therefore annually. However, how does one really measure preaching time?

Technically this should be a counting of the time spent in actually

preaching to a non-believer. However, the Organization promotes the idea that the time begins when one knocks on the first door during a ministry session or the first return visit is made; yet, the much greater percentage of so-called ministry time is spent walking from one house to the next and for the most part not even finding anyone at home. In fact, a Witness may speak to only a few people or on occasion not actually speak to anyone during the entire time of being engaged in this activity—and yet the time is counted! Even worse is when a person goes on ‘return visits’ and may spend hours just walking or cycling between each call and obviously with no actual preaching work being done at all during those times, but the time is still counted. This often leaves the ethically minded JW with the problem of just how much time should be written on their personal report slip. Indeed, the whole thing is extremely fluid and really farcical simply so that the Watchtower organization can boast about being the greatest preaching organization in existence!

A more insidious aspect of such reporting of time spent in the ministry is that one’s spirituality is gauged by the elders by how much time is entered on the report slip. In fact, a proposed quota is set at ten hours per month and if one does not reach this number then one may be looked upon by the elders as becoming “spiritually weak.” Furthermore, for the men in the congregation, this report concerning the hours spent is used to determine whether or not such a man is fit to hold one of the two offices in the congregation i.e. as an elder or as a ministerial servant. This has led to those who are less than ethical to report more time than they have actually done – i.e. a lie!

THE CART MINISTRY

In recent times the Society has organized for and promoted a cart ministry to be in operation in the bigger cities, whereby a couple of witnesses will station a cart full of Watchtower literature in a public place where there is a lot of ‘foot fall.’ The two witnesses stand by this cart and hand any literature to passers-by who show some interest in this literature and possibly a conversation on biblical matters may ensue. Yet there is hardly overwhelming interest and with many hours of no preaching to anyone, and yet the two witnesses will count this as preaching time! One issue that has arisen concerns damage done to carts by opposers. When this occurs, the responsible witness is supposed to report this to the police and to say that the cart is their personal property. However, this is an encouragement for the JW to lie because the cart belongs to the local congregation as is stated in the elders manual *Shepherd the Flock of God in Your Care*.

TIME COUNTED FOR NON-MINISTRY

One further anomaly with the counting of preaching time comes from the fact that any brother or sister who volunteers their time toward current Watchtower building projects is allowed, by the Society, to count this as preaching time and to enter it on their monthly report. This is supposedly because it is all toward promotion of the Kingdom work. But surely, this falsifies such reports because these hours spent are not of actual preaching time!

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Other Requirements Which “Go Beyond What Is Written”

The Apostle Paul said, *“do not go beyond the things that are written so that you may not be puffed up with pride”* (1 Cor. 4:6). However, the Watchtower often promotes this statement to apply to their own writings whereas it is plain that Paul meant this to apply to the biblical writings. In fact, there are a number of issues where the Organization itself has gone, “beyond the things that are written.” These concern the following:

1. Men’s growing of a moustache or a beard. Originally, Rutherford brought this unwritten ban in because C. T. Russell had a beard and yet Rutherford, as the new President, wanted JW’s to stop focusing on Russell and his teachings. Furthermore, he wanted the Witnesses to look like professional clean-cut salesmen as of a corporation. The more facial hair a man has the more he is viewed as unspiritual and so is somewhat ostracised by other members. Of course, this contradicts the fact that Jesus had a beard as did Jewish men in Bible times because Leviticus 19:27 and 21:5b showed that a Jew was not to shave off his beard. So, because Christians are not under the regulations of the Mosaic law then for a Christian man there is neither a requirement to have a beard nor to be without one, but certainly there is no biblical ban on having one.
2. For similar reasons as above, men must not wear a very colourful suit and tie at the meetings or for field service. Also, women mustn’t wear

slacks to the meetings or in field service. If these rules are not complied with again the person will be viewed as unspiritual and they become somewhat ostracised. However, the only biblical requirement for women is to dress respectably and modestly (1 Tim. 2:9) and for both sexes to dress with reverence for God and Jesus.

3. The Watchtower's intrusion into the "bedroom" of married couples by telling them what sexual practices they may or may not engage in. This intrusion is in spite of the fact that the Bible says nothing about this subject and gives no legitimate principles on this. Furthermore, because they actually are not God's organization, they have no authority over its married members in this regard. Indeed, what counts is that the married couple are faithful to each other (Heb. 13:4).
4. Similarly, they have no authority over its members who are single in regard to masturbation because this subject is also not mentioned in the Scriptures and neither is there a legitimate principle to show that such a practice displeases Jehovah. Indeed, for the unmarried there is a natural need for legitimate sexual relief. No doubt, there is a lot of hypocrisy by those who demand such compliance with this rule because as one young brother originally in the New York Bethel stated that "when questioned some 90% of young men admit to masturbation and the other 10% are simply liars."
5. The requirement for JW parents to train and encourage their children to preach to their schoolmates when most children are not too confident in their abilities to do this.
6. The requirement for JW children at school to avoid certain subjects, certain celebrations, and any extracurricular activities, as well as being told that they must never make "worldly" friends of those at their school.

Although the Watchtower Society denies that its members are under the Mosaic Law and that they only benefit from the principles contained in that law, the fact is that they do actually apply that law in its full regulatory sense on particular issues or whenever it suits them to do so. Additionally, the Society has made up hundreds of rules which are only vaguely connected to the Bible i.e. man-made rules!

How Cults Operate

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Cults as Toxic Faith Systems

There are many groups or organizations with **transcendent belief systems** which may have certain rules, but they allow their members complete normal freedom of thought and action. They encourage critical thinking, debate, and individuality. However, toxic cults are not like that, neither are they just strange little religious groups with weird beliefs which don't do anyone any harm. In fact, the members of a toxic cult will eventually find that his or her ideas, individuality, and needs are irrelevant to the leaders of the group or organization. Indeed, when a particular group or organization is first formed it may not be a fully-fledged cult, but it may at a later time start to go in that direction. So please watch out for the following signs to note the traits of a fully-fledged cult as described by experts on cults.

Traits of Abusive Organizations as Cults

These toxic groups or organizations are:

- Control-orientated, arrogantly assertive, with power-posturing leadership. These are called High-control groups.
- Authoritarian and legalistic with dictatorial, dogmatic unproven doctrines that are proclaimed to be 'the Truth'.
- Ones who claim that they are the one channel of communication between God and mankind; having unique knowledge that makes them special. If members do not submit to its rule, the leaders emphasise that any waver of support to the organization or church is evidence of a wavering of one's faith in God.
- Demanding of rigid lifestyles and service requirements. Member's lives are controlled by both unscriptural spoken and unspoken rules.
- Intolerant of individual thinking, and of criticism of its religious

system by its members. They foster an unhealthy dependency by focusing on themes of submission, loyalty, and obedience to those in authority.

- There is subtle coercive control and undue influence by the organization over the decisions a member may make concerning their lives and those of their family.

Toxic cults use forms of:

- Manipulation of members by causing guilt, shame, blame, and fear which misleads members into thinking that the only safety is in the group's religious system.
- An “Us-versus-Them” view—a perception of being under persecution.
- Put-downs of other religions beyond simple analysis of the doctrines and practices of those religions.
- Closed communication such that information is only valid if it comes from the top of the religious organization down, and from inside the system to the outside of it.
- Labelling: a technique used to discount a person who opposes the beliefs of the religious system e.g. calling someone an apostate.
- Severe discipline of members and with threats to remove them from the group i.e. disfellowshipping and shunning them.
- Scripture-twisting to fit with organizational policy.
- Scare tactics such as an over-focus on demons.

Toxic cults promote:

- Loss of focus on God, which is replaced by a complicated process of furthering the church or organization and its rules.
- A view that education is bad or unnecessary.
- A view that what you do is more important than who you are, so that, love and acceptance are earned only by doing certain things.

All of this leaves followers “in pain” and hiding their real feelings that oppose or disagree with the religious system and making the leaving of

the religious system painful and difficult.

Extreme Cults

The word ‘cult’ is often used in reference to organizations which operate a set of extreme policies designed to control members so that their free will is substantially denied, even though they are told that, of course, they have free will. This is generally done by mind and behaviour controlling techniques. However, we must balance this with other definitions of the word ‘cult.’ *The Readers Digest Dictionary* also defines this word as:

- A system or community of religious worship and ritual, especially one focusing upon a single deity or spirit.
- An exclusive group of people sharing an esoteric interest.

So clearly not all groups following a transcendent belief system are damaging and many are, in many ways, beneficial for reasons of social, psychological, and physical welfare. But in the second of the above definitions it is mainly secular organizations, perhaps political or commercial which are being referred to. Such members gather for some common purpose and such groups are therefore beneficial as long as there is no hidden agenda and with no intention of misleading. These have their leadership, their rules and their principles of operation.

In the first of the above definitions we may include the Mosaic system of life for the Israelites, and the principles of life followed by Christians under the New Covenant. Various denominations interpret the Bible differently but this does not make anyone of them an extreme cult as long as the Bible is not being used to further some hidden agenda and with the intention of misleading and with excessive control.

Naturally, all such systems have rules, guidelines and principles regarding one’s thinking and behaviour. The primary of these for the Christian must always come from the Bible. Additionally, there will be lesser rules that work toward good order. However, there may come a point where the ‘denomination’ moves to an extremity and becomes an extreme cult and so becomes damaging psychologically, socially and perhaps even physically to its membership.

Characteristics of Extreme Religious Cults

- Members of the group must believe that the doctrines of the group are the one and only “truth.”

- Members must follow the doctrines even if they don't understand them.
- The 'truth' may be changed to fit the needs of the situation or policy.
- The doctrines form the basis of all thoughts, feelings, and actions by the members.
- No independent thinking by members is allowed, including no allowance for interpretation of or deviation from the group's doctrines and interpretations.
- The group is viewed as superior to and different from all other groups and so looks down on other religious groups.
- Members are made to feel elite, chosen by God to lead mankind out of darkness, but must trust the group leaders instead of themselves.
- Members must believe the group is always right, even if it contradicts itself. They are forbidden to think negative thoughts about the group.
- The leadership systematically creates a sense of powerlessness in its members.
- There is an "Us-versus-Them" belief so that no outside group is recognized as godly.
- The group may teach that there is a huge conspiracy (usually non-existent) working to thwart the group. However, there may actually be certain individuals who wish to thwart the group.
- The group teaches that spirit beings are constantly critically observing the members.
- The group causes members to become extremely dependent on its compliance-oriented expressions of love and support, and a dread of losing such support.
- Love Bombing: showering much attention on prospective members.
- Members must project a façade of happiness, but with similar odd mannerisms and modes of speech.
- Members are made to feel an extreme sense of urgency about given tasks and so are kept extremely busy.

- Many groups teach that the apocalypse is just around the corner, and have timetables for its occurrence with dates near enough to carry an emotional punch.
- Members spend more and more time with and under the direction of the group.
- Members are told if they don't fully perform their duties, they are failing in humility or are spiritually weak.
- Members are required to render absolute obedience to their superiors.
- The group uses guilt, shame and fear to control its members.
- Those who do not conform to the group's requirements will, in time, be expelled.
- Disagreement with or doubts about the group's teachings are always the fault of the member, due to lack of faith or lack of understanding.
- The group teaches that there is never a legitimate reason for leaving the group.
- Members are indoctrinated with the belief that if they ever leave the group, terrible consequences will befall them.
- When members do leave the group, the love that was formerly shown to them turns into anger, hatred, and ridicule. This generally leads to the group's use of the weapon of shunning on them.
- Friendships in the group are shallow; the only real allegiance is to the leader/leadership.
- Members are forbidden to have contact with former members of the group and so they shun them, even if this means breaking up families. Many cults do this.

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Mind-Control Used by

The Watchtower Organization

Although there are numerous extreme and damaging cults that use mind-control techniques on their respective memberships, the Watchtower Organization certainly uses a significant number of the following techniques.

The two main researchers in the field of mind control in religion are Robert Lifton and Steve Hassan, neither of whom have ever been Jehovah's Witnesses. Steve Hassan notes that: "The essence of mind control is that it encourages dependence and conformity, and discourages autonomy and individuality. . . [it seeks] to undermine an individual's integrity in making his own decisions."

Cognitive Dissonance

Dissonance is created when a person is exposed to information that conflicts with his or her beliefs. To minimize the internal conflict the person may avoid such information, deny its validity, disbelieve it or seek out consonant information i.e. information which agrees with their view. Following this decision, the person will then seek out further information which helps to justify their conclusions and thereby strengthen the consonance. In the case of the Jehovah's Witness the information sought is from within the Watchtower's own literature or from conversation with other JW's. This removes the effect of factual information from the mind of the Jehovah's Witnesses and confirms and perpetuates the false teaching of the Organization on that particular subject.

Steve Hassan's BITE Model

BEHAVIOUR CONTROL
INFORMATION CONTROL
THOUGHT CONTROL
EMOTIONAL CONTROL

Behaviour Control

Extreme cults lay down rules to bring about conformity and uniformity. These often concern: Use of time, associations, physical appearance, education, career, employment, finance, leisure, medical treatment, marriage, partner selection, sexual activities, and child-training. All of these aspects of life are important to the Christian and the Scriptures give ample guidance on these matters in terms of principles. However, only an

extreme cult would lay down rules, use peer pressure or give strong directives on such matters. Much of this is done by **Behavioural Modification Techniques** such as: Positive and negative reinforcements and punishment. In particular, damaging cults demand large time-commitments from their members for group related activities and indoctrination.

The Watchtower Society substantially controls all of the above, even requiring membership behaviour that is often detrimental or sometimes death-dealing for the member or his/her family e.g.:

- The refusal of a blood transfusion in a life/death issue.
- The earlier refusal to accept organ transplants
- The even earlier refusal to accept any immunization by vaccines.

In cult-like fashion the Organization requires the reporting of members who in some significant way are not conforming. There is persistent strong encouragement for Witnesses to fill all their spare time with meetings, house to house calling, personal study of Watchtower material, and social arrangements with only other Witnesses. The time spent in all house to house calling and related activities must be reported.

All of the above behaviour is linked by the Watchtower to short phrases from Scriptures so that the Bible is diminished to the level of a rule book.

Information Control

A. Use of deception

- Deliberate withholding of information.
- Distorting of information to lead to the ‘correct’ conclusions.
- Misquotations from secular sources so that statements are taken out of context.

B. Access to non-organization sources of religious information is discouraged.

- Books, magazines, articles, radio, TV and the Internet.
- Discussion with former members.
- Keeping members too busy to have time to think and check things.

This is an area of mind control that the Watchtower Society uses to a very large degree to stop the membership viewing the very great amount of legitimate criticism of its teachings, policies and conduct throughout its history. There is a ban on the reading of so-called ‘apostate’ literature and

on the viewing of ‘apostate’ websites on the internet or YouTube presentations or indeed any other Bible promoting or educational sites. Additionally, the Organization’s misquotation from secular sources is well demonstrated in the case of blood transfusions. (See earlier the chapter on “Blood” subheading: SOME FAULTS IN THE BLOOD BROCHURE). Other misquotations have concerned the supposed endorsements of the New World Translation by Hebrew and Greek scholars which have been denied by those scholars. Regarding the withholding of information, it has been demonstrated that the Organization gave only the statistics of earthquakes since 1914 to prove a worsening of these events and purposely withheld the statistics for these events prior to 1914 which would have destroyed their case. This is true also of many other statistics. The colouring of quotations is seen by the Watchtower’s stating that something negative to the Organization’s views was expressed by one of Christendom’s clergy and that something positive to their views was expressed by a Bible scholar when in fact they are one and the same person. This is done to move the JW to accept Watchtower teaching on that issue. The Organization sometimes uses two contradictory pieces of information to prove the same point e.g. A great increase in the numbers proves it is God’s organization. Yet, thousands leaving also proves it is God’s organization because “the love of the greater number will cool off.” It is just that these two angles are not written in close proximity to each other.

Thought Control

The group’s doctrine is internalized as ‘The truth.’

- The use of ‘**loaded language**’. These are special words or clichés which restrict or even block understanding. They function to reduce complexities of experience into trite, platitudinous ‘buzz words.’
- Only ‘positive’ thoughts are encouraged.
- Use of hypnotic techniques.
- Manipulation of memories.
- **Shutting down of ‘reality testing’** by stopping of negative thoughts through:
 - a. Denial, rationalization, justification, and wishful thinking.
 - b. Praying and/or singing that promotes the Organization.
- **Rejection of rational analysis, critical thinking, constructive criticism.**

- Indoctrination into feeling that there is no worthy alternative belief system.

Once again, the Organization uses most of these techniques apparently including a form of hypnosis by the pattern of question and answer meetings; whereby the system of *reader/conductor/microphone attendant* works in a mildly hypnotic manner as explained by one psychologist. Manipulation of memories seems to occur when a Witness is asked to explain what things were like for him/her prior to becoming a Jehovah's Witness i.e. how bad things were 'in the world.' Primarily the Watchtower Society comes down heavily on '**independent thinking**' which could lead to '**rebellious talk**'. Yet a double standard is produced because of the Organization's encouragement for Witnesses to think for themselves when presented with information from an outside source. Of course, for any organization to attempt to quash independent thinking is a sign that that organization is a damaging cult.

Emotional Control

- a. Narrowing the range of a person's feelings.
- b. It is always the individual's fault—never that of the Organization.
- c. Use of Guilt:
 1. Identity guilt (not living up to what is expected).
 2. Social guilt
- d. Use of fear (phobias):
 - Fear of thinking independently
 - Fear of the 'outside world'
 - Fear of losing one's salvation
 - Fear of being shunned if one leaves the group
 - Fear of disapproval/rejection
 - Fear that one could never be happy outside the group.

Indeed, the Watchtower Organization creates an atmosphere of guilt for many things e.g. there is guilt for not supporting all of the pre-arranged activities—especially the missing of meetings for almost any reason. The Organization inculcates phobias about anything they deem to be pagan e.g. going into a church building, things to do with birthdays, Mother's Day, Christmas trees etc; things with a cross on them; things that they consider may be demonized. They also create an atmosphere of fear of one's being seen doing what is unacceptable to the group e.g. searching for Bible related information in a library, bookshop or on the Internet.

Robert Lifton's Eight Mind Control Criteria

1. *MILIEU (ENVIRONMENT) CONTROL*

Extreme cults create some form of isolation from society in general. The Watchtower directs JW's to avoid association with other Christians (non-JW's) and to stay clear of media which might provoke critical thinking.

2. *MYSTICAL MANIPULATION*

The organization is "the Truth" and is given a certain mystique as if it is God Himself watching the individual's every move. Terrible things will befall the person who leaves the organization as God's punishment of them. Many positive stories, often embellished or even made up, are circulated to show how God is using only this organization.

3. *DEMAND FOR PURITY*

Members' conduct must be modelled according to the ideology of the organization. Conduct is polarized and over-simplified as being either good or evil and outside individuals or bodies are categorized as evil.

4. *CONFESSION*

The human tendency toward guilt and shame are played upon so that all sin can be monitored by the confessions of the individual. Additionally, other members are encouraged to report any wrongdoing to those placed in authority.

5. *THE "SACRED SCIENCE"*

The organization's ideology, with its exaggerated claim to have "the Truth", is never to be called into question. It is made to appear that the teachings have no contradictions in them. This provides members a feeling of security and superiority.

6. *LOADING THE LANGUAGE.* As shown earlier these are special words or clichés which restrict or even block understanding. They function to reduce complexities of experience into trite, platitudinous 'buzz words.'

7. *DOCTRINE OVER PERSON*

Human experience is subordinated to the teachings of the organization, no matter how contradictory such experiences seem.

Even the history of the cult is altered to fit the logic of the organization's teachings.

8. *DISPENSING OF EXISTENCE*

The organization decides which individuals have the right to exist and which do not. Any so-called apostates are simply awaiting the completion of their destruction at the time of the end battle i.e. Armageddon. Such individuals count for nothing and so it is ok to deceive or otherwise harm them because they are already effectively dead.

Please bear in mind that many denominations and sects use, at least some of these techniques to maintain and control their membership. So please do not escape one cult only to fall into another cult.

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Propaganda Techniques Used by the Watchtower Organization

Propaganda differs from education inasmuch as the propagandist attempts to make the person reach the propagandist's conclusions by offering no desirable alternative and discouraging any research into the alternatives. The worst of propagandists use unethical tactics so as to mislead people with half-truths and a withholding of relevant information.

USE OF STEREOTYPES

The Watchtower Society stigmatizes all governments, other organizations, and other religions and their leaders (clergy) with this technique. It is done by selectively focusing on the worst aspects of these groups to the total exclusion of any good aspects. All of this creates prejudice in the minds of individual Jehovah's Witness. This technique is also used with regard to information that comes from any source other than the Watchtower or their approved statements. They accomplish this by the extensive production of their own information in the form of: Magazines, newsletters, books, DVDs, TV programs, meetings and special meetings.

Such stereotyping plants powerful world-views in the minds of Jehovah's Witness so that they will accept only the biased information of the Organization as 'the Truth' giving the impression that all the *evidence* points only to them as presenting the correct conclusions. For example, on page 10 of The Watchtower of December 15, 2010 it said:

Though quick to claim stewardship of God's Word, have the clergy of Christendom proved to be faithful to the Master's trust? No. They have been inclined to label what the Bible says as fable or myth. Rather than feeding their flock with spiritual food, thus bringing them comfort and enlightenment, the clergy have tickled the believers' ears with human philosophy. In addition, they have watered down God's moral standards to cater to the so-called new morality - 2Tim. 4:3, 4.

This is a dishonest statement based on the fact that some of the clergy are guilty of this approach. Vast numbers of clergy and their flocks take the Bible as being the final authority from God and do not water down its moral standards, or treat it as fable or myth. At the meetings of most churches their flocks can be seen with their Bible's open and paying attention to scripturally based talks. So, however much we may disagree with the doctrinal conclusions of those churches the above Watchtower statement is misleading to its readers and so acts as propaganda. Yet, by making such statements there is confirmation falsely for the rank and file JWs that they are the only ones who take the Bible seriously.

THE SUBSTITUTION OF NAMES & NAME-CALLING

This is done to enhance one's acceptance of the Watchtower's message or teaching so that, negatively:

All non-JWs are called "worldlings,"

Ex JWs are called "apostates,"

Non-JW Bible scholars/theologians are called "clergy" or "religionists" of Christendom.

Once someone is labelled negatively it becomes very easy to treat them as of no account and show them no respect. The next stage is to mistreat them. This is seen when someone is labelled as 'the enemy' during war time so that it becomes easy to drop bombs on them and remain detached from the deaths and ruined lives it causes. Similarly, when someone is labelled as "disfellowshipped," or "apostate," then they become a target for avoidance, mistreatment, even abuse.

SELECTION & CARD-STACKING

This refers to the selection of information so that it is packaged in such a way that the reader will reach only the preconceived conclusion.

DECEPTION

The Watchtower has a history of misquoting out of context to prove their point. There is a tremendous amount of documented evidence to this practice.

REPETITION

This is a conditioning of the mind to make positive or negative associations. Significant phrases repeated often are: “faithful and discreet slave” (24 times in a single Watchtower magazine article) and “God’s organization.”

GLITTERING GENERALITIES

Examples of this technique are the phrases used in Watchtower literature such as “the only God-approved international brotherhood” and “the most desirable associates.”

PINPOINTING THE ENEMY

Propagandist’s always have a perceived enemy to whom they direct their message. This helps to consolidate the loyalty of the membership. The Organization’s main enemy is anyone who criticizes it and who is therefore labelled as the devil’s agent, hater of God, apostate, “evil slave class” etc. who distributes poison and is likened to a cancerous growth and is “mentally diseased.” Such ones are to be literally hated because they publish supposed “blasphemous lies.”

NOTE: Only legitimate criticism because of Watchtower’s misuse of the Bible or presenting a false teaching has any real value. Simple nit-picking is unwarranted and invalid.

THE TYRRANY OF AUTHORITY

There is nothing wrong with appealing to legitimate authorities on various subjects. However, this becomes tyrannical when the appeal is to any so-called authority that gives support to one’s position. The Watchtower has made such quotations and misquotations, not only of true experts, but also of pseudo-scholars. The *Reasoning from the Scriptures* book carries numerous such quotations giving the false impression of the correctness of the Organization’s position.

Furthermore, the control that the Organization has over its members is seriously dangerous, as with the blood transfusion issue. However, this

also extends to the future end-times scenario where the Governing Body uses the following manipulation technique on its membership, stating that:

At that time, the lifesaving direction that we receive from Jehovah's organization may not appear practical from a human standpoint. All of us must be ready to obey any instructions we may receive, whether these appear sound from a strategic or human standpoint or not *The Watchtower* 11/15/13 (p.20. para 17).

This directive sounds rather similar to the one given by Jim Jones where the members of his church obeyed him by drinking poison thinking they would all get to heaven by dying!

How all this Affects the Thinking of a JW

Individual JWs come to believe that obeying the Organization, whether it is right or wrong, is what God requires. Some are even willing to lie for the greater good of the organization. For example, a witness missionary in Israel was required by the Organization to pose as an eccentric millionaire. To antagonistic enquirers he fabricated the story that he was having his own house built, when in fact it was to be a printing facility for Watchtower literature—something not wanted by the local people. **Lying** is something that is advocated by the Organization as part of a tactic euphemistically called “theocratic warfare.” All of this control gradually affects the mind of the individual Jehovah's Witness so that his or her personality is changed negatively because they are now able to lie, say, and do more hurtful things to others without their conscience being affected as it naturally should be and previously had been.

AN IMAGINARY FREE WILL

Research Scientist Kathleen Taylor stated in her book *Brainwashing—The science of thought control*:

Brainwashed people no longer have free will: they must act as the brainwasher commands. Yet successful brainwashing leaves the victim unaware of their new-found slavery; they still regard themselves as free ... Freedom is rewarding because it implies control. We become extremely stressed when our sense of control is threatened; freedom, therefore, involves the absence of stress ... An organism which persistently thought itself in control when it wasn't, and vice versa, would be less likely to survive than an organism with an accurate awareness of what it could and couldn't change in the world around it, pp. 187, 200, 201.

Not only are there the above described effects of the Watchtower organization's methods on the thinking of the individual Jehovah's Witnesses, but the mental health of these victims is seriously affected too as shown by numerous authorities.

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Mental Problems Among Jehovah's Witnesses

An Example of the Effects of an Extreme Cult

According to various scientific studies in the USA, Jehovah's Witnesses experience mental health problems at a level considerably higher than that found in virtually every other American religious group. Sadly, many Jehovah's Witnesses will view these studies as an attack upon the Watchtower Society and so, in defence of the Organization, they will deny the validity of the studies. This is a grave mistake because it puts the welfare of the Jehovah's Witness at further risk.

Academic Studies on the Mental Health of JW's

THE RYLANDER STUDY (Sweden mid-20th century)

Dr. Rylander studied 126 Jehovah's Witnesses who had been imprisoned as conscientious objectors: 51 were neurotic; 42 psychotic; 32 mentally retarded; 5 were brain-damaged. Of the eligible armed service Swedish population 4% were assessed as psychologically unfit whereas 21% of Jehovah's Witnesses were psychologically unfit. These were strongly active Jehovah's Witnesses. Rylander concluded that the Watchtower Society's influence was detrimental to mental health.

PESCOR STUDY (America)

From a sample of 177 young male Jehovah's Witnesses imprisoned as conscientious objectors 7% were diagnosed as psychotic and 25% as maladjusted. This was 17 times higher than for other prisoners.

JANNER STUDY (Switzerland 1963)

This study of 85 Jehovah's Witnesses imprisoned as conscientious objectors revealed that, compared with the general prison population, they had an abnormally high level of fear anxiety, neuroticism, and introversion and/or social isolation tendencies. Mentally they "were somewhat removed from reality." Janner concluded that the Watchtower Society's influence was often negative and that those with emotional problems when they became Jehovah's Witnesses were not helped by the Organization, but rather it had an adverse effect on them.

SPENCER STUDY (Australia 1973)

This study of active Jehovah's Witnesses who had been admitted to psychiatric hospitals revealed that the rate of serious mental illness among this group was three times higher than that of non-witnesses. Paranoid schizophrenia was four times higher. *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 1975 stated:

During the period of 36 months from January 1971 to December 1973 there were 7,546 inpatient admissions to the West Australian Mental Health Service Psychiatric Hospitals. Of these 50 were reported to be active members of the Jehovah's Witnesses movement ... Of the 50 admitted 22 were diagnosed as schizophrenic, 17 as paranoid schizophrenic, 10 as neurotic and one as alcoholic (p. 557-58).

MONTAGUE STUDY (Ohio 1972-1986)

"The mental illness rate of Jehovah's Witnesses is approximately 10-16 times higher than the rate for the general, non-witness population [and that]...about 10% of the full members in the average congregation are in serious need of professional help...[although they are often] able to hide this fact quite well, especially from outsiders." Montague concluded that persons who had emotional problems were attracted to the Watchtower Society, but involvement with the Organization also caused many of the emotional problems that they suffered.

POTTER STUDY (thesis for Ph.D.)

Potter concluded that there exists "a strong correlation between Witness membership and clinical schizophrenia." Similar studies by Elmer Koppl in Germany and Kjell Totland in Norway reveal the same pattern.

BERGMAN'S STUDIES

The current leading investigator of mental health issues among

Jehovah's Witnesses is Jerry Bergman Ph.D. who was a Jehovah's Witness for twenty years. From this perspective he was able to assess the reasons for the poor mental health of Jehovah's Witnesses better than others in the psychiatric profession. He showed that eventually for most Jehovah's Witnesses there will be a degree of mental conflict. If there is no resolution and they continue to be part of the Jehovah's Witnesses organization they will tend to be putting on an appearance. This means that they will be continually hearing the Watchtower teachings and views at the meetings or from other Witnesses, but deep down they do not really agree with these views. In fact, they themselves will be parroting these same Watchtower views with which they do not really agree e.g. statements which follow the party line or answers parroted from Watchtower literature. Most Jehovah's Witnesses can cope with up to four conflicts and still maintain their confidence in the Organization. However, whilst doing this the toll on their mental health is considerable. Disillusionment usually sets in when the Jehovah's Witness realizes that there are numerous things wrong with the Organization and that these things are never going to be rectified because of the rigidity that occurs (as with all religions over time, i.e. the traditional understanding becomes fixed so that no further progress is made in understanding actual Bible teachings).

The Causes of the Mental Problems

REALITY CONTRADICTS WATCHTOWER STATEMENTS

Within congregations Jehovah's Witnesses usually, at some point in time, experience personality conflicts. This tells them that all is not well in God's 'spiritual paradise' organization. Yet at the same time they are required to tell the general public that Jehovah's Witnesses provide a 'spiritual paradise.' This is very damaging mentally for the JW. Furthermore, Jehovah's Witnesses find that the conduct and attitude that is espoused in the literature does not match with the way the JW hierarchy often deal with them. This is especially true if there is an issue over money.

CONFLICT OVER DOCTRINAL FLIP-FLOPS

If past Watchtower policy has resulted in harm to or death of a JW's loved one and then the policy changes, the result is extreme mental anguish and heartbreak over the damage to or loss of the loved one. It is almost impossible for the Witness to come to terms with the conflicting thoughts and so produces resentment toward the Organization and other Witnesses. The false-encouragement from those who say things like "well she was loyal to Jehovah" is a hollow and very cold consolation.

CONFLICT OVER PROPHECY FAILURE

When flip-flops in teaching keep occurring (see my second book on Watchtower dogma), the process for the individual JW goes from disappointment to confusion and then to explaining it away. This creates a degree of fragmentation of the JWs personality and integrity.

UNHEALTHY SUBORDINATION

This produces in the JW a state of fear, a loss of self-esteem, a loss of control of one's life, and a failure to find self-fulfilment. All of these mental negatives can lead to a variety of health problems.

UNJUSTIFIABLE GUILT

This results from a fear of failing to meet up to the Organization's demanding requirements.

Mental Problems for JW Children

One very notably troubling aspect of the Watchtower's cult mentality and teaching is the damage done to young children as they grow up in the Organization. They are directly exposed to "Armageddon" by means of the powerful pictures and images of death of the wicked and destruction of civilization at that future time. Some, in later years, have admitted to having nightmares about this and living in fear that they may be destroyed if they are not "good enough." Some who later left the Organization have needed to have psychiatric help for them to get over these terrible fears put into their minds by the Organization. In fact, there are much more gentle and non-damaging ways to express to children the Bible's teaching on this subject.

Choosing to Get Help for These Mental Issues

If an active Jehovah's Witnesses goes to a therapist who is also a JW it can be totally counterproductive because such a therapist will feel duty bound to the Organization to inform them of the revealed sins, problems, and doubts that the JW patient has. The psychiatric profession views such informing as utterly unethical. In fact, some JW therapists have requested that the JW patient should sign a waiver concerning normal confidentiality. This is again highly unethical. Also, the opinion of professional psychiatrists and psychologists concerning the counselling and advice as given by JW elders is that it does far more harm than good and it can bring the most disastrous results for the patient. This is because JW elders are mostly uneducated and untrained, especially as regards dealing with the personal problems of individuals. Just knowing Scriptures is not enough

and it is even worse if the Scriptures are misused on the person who has a particular mental problem. The stresses of these issues over Watchtower teachings are similar to the diagnosis provided by one doctor that:

This type of head pain can be caused by a chemical imbalance in your brain, which can be due to stress that is caused by living in a way that is not in agreement with the way you feel internally.

Conclusions

The Organization has provided the occasional article for helping Witnesses with mental problems, but these are mostly ineffective because it is not recognized that it is actually the living of the life of a JW that is the main cause of the mental problems.

- The **enforced field service**, with little or no success for most JWs in finding anyone really interested. This very unrewarding situation creates a sub-conscious lack of self-fulfilment. It is estimated that most Jehovah's Witnesses would be thrilled if the Organization announced that the preaching work was to end forthwith.
- The original joy that a new Jehovah's Witness finds steadily fades into a demoralization, loss of real spirituality, and sometimes even leading to suicide.
- The main general mental health problem of Jehovah's Witnesses is **depression** generally caused by many or all of the above factors including negativity concerning the present.
- According to the psychiatric profession the prime serious mental health problem of Jehovah's Witnesses is **paranoid schizophrenia** which is **four times higher** than for non-Jehovah's Witnesses.

§

35

**Does the Organization Do All Your
Vital Thinking?**

The Watchtower Organization tells its members that they must not do “independent thinking” i.e. any critical thinking about what they are being taught by the Organization. So, one must just accept everything on trust. But is this what the Bible teaches? Furthermore, what is the Organization’s motivation for giving such a rule?

Knowledge and Thinking Ability are Vital

*“The proverbs ... To learn wisdom and discipline, to understand wise sayings; to acquire the discipline that gives insight, righteousness good judgment, and uprightness, to impart shrewdness to the inexperienced, to give a young man knowledge and **thinking ability**. A wise person **listens and takes in more instruction**; a man of understanding acquires skillful direction to understand a proverb and a puzzling saying, the words of the wise and their riddles. **The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge**. Only fools despise wisdom and discipline. Listen, my son, to the discipline of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother. They are an attractive wreath for your head and a fine ornament for your neck” (Prov. 1:1-9).*

Contrary to the above advice from God himself the Organization says: “The most beneficial study you can do is read the Watchtower and Awake! Or a new book by the organization.” (*Watchtower* 6/1/1967, p. 338). However, many articles in those publications are of a non-biblical nature or are of subtle propaganda. Some of the early Watchtower understandings came from the older Bible Commentaries of the time which gave the Organization a certain amount of truth. Furthermore, much of the Bible is quite straight forward and is easily understood even by a newcomer to Bible reading. Yet over time Watchtower’s reading material has become increasingly propagandistic so that Jehovah’s Witnesses do not gain any biblical understanding from their own thought processes.

The Organization’s Total Mind and Emotion Control

MANIPULATION REGARDING GOD’S CHANNEL?

As early as 1957 the Organization said, “Respond to the directions of the organization as you would the voice of God” (*Watchtower* 6/15/1957, p. 370). With this statement the Organization is virtually placing itself in the position of God and is certainly usurping the high office of Jesus

Christ. With no legitimate basis for this claim the Organization says it alone speaks for God. The following quotations from Watchtower literature show how unbiblical the Organization's position is:

"The Lord indicated he would use one member of his Church as the channel..." *The Watchtower* 3/11/1923, p. 68.

At the time this thought was with reference to Joseph Rutherford as that channel. However, the Apostle Paul showed that only Jesus is the mediator for all Christians (1 Tim. 2:5) and is, therefore, the true channel.

THE CONTRADICTORY POSITION

"Examine the evidence. Reasonable persons want to examine both sides of a matter. That is how one arrives at the truth." *Awake* 10/22/1973, p. 6.

"It is important to examine one's religion; there is nothing to fear from such an examination" *TRUTH*, p. 13.

"No creature or organization on earth can truly presume to sit as the supreme tribunal of interpretation of the Holy Bible." *The Watchtower* 7/1/1943, p. 202.

These statements are for the consumption of only members of the public; yet, once a person becomes a Jehovah's Witness this right to continue examining Bible subjects is denied him or her. This is blatant hypocrisy by the Watchtower Society. So, the Jehovah's Witness is guided to do his or her research only within the Organization's publications. It is even frowned upon if a Jehovah's Witness obtains the non-JW publication from which a quotation was taken and can even result in disfellowshipping of the rule-breaking JW. In fact, those who have done such investigation have often discovered that the Watchtower's many quotations from various "worldly" publications were taken out of context!

The Watchtower Society's Most Likely Real Fear

The Watchtower states that it "invites careful and critical examination of its contents in the light of the Scriptures" (*The Watchtower* 8/15/1950, p. 263) and that "There are various publications exposing Jehovah's Witnesses as heretics. We are not afraid of this" (*The Watchtower* 8/1/1978, p. 12). In spite of such bravado it is evident that the Organization is concerned to make sure that its members do not discover the many facts from the Scriptures revealing the falseness of some 50% of its teachings and revealing its very erratic history as well as its very unethical approach

to various matters. This is why they strongly discourage their members from searching the internet or Bible encyclopaedias, commentaries or other scholarly works. They also threaten their members that if they should communicate with an ex-member, they will be disfellowshipped. This is emotional bullying at its worst!

WATCHTOWER HYPOCRISY

Regarding the Organization's disseminating of its information—called “spiritual food” it manipulates the JWs by saying, “Jehovah is not pleased if we receive that food as though it might contain something harmful. We should have confidence in the channel God is using” *The Watchtower* 2/15/1981, p. 19. However, those who have taken the risk of alienating themselves from the Organization and have carefully examined this so-called spiritual food have, in fact, discovered that it does contain harmful things—many dozens of teachings that are false to the Scriptures and much propaganda that can lead to mental and emotional damage.

DISTRACTION FROM OPEN EXAMINATION OF TEACHINGS

“Have No Dealings with Apostates ... For example, what will you do if you receive a letter or some literature, open it, and see right away that it is from an apostate? Will curiosity cause you to read it, just to see what he has to say? You may even reason: ‘It won't affect me; I'm too strong in the truth. **And besides, if we have the truth, we have nothing to fear. The truth will stand the test.**’ In thinking this way, some have fed their minds upon apostate reasoning and have fallen prey to serious questioning and doubt” *The Watchtower* 3/15/1986 p.12.

The fact is that the statement still stands that “if we have the truth, we have nothing to fear. The truth will stand the test.” Even if a Jehovah's Witness falls for a different false doctrine that does not mean that the Watchtower's doctrine should remain unexamined. The above approach is clearly an attempt to distract the membership from the Organization's inability to demonstrate the truth of a great many of its teachings.

SEARCHING FOR BIBLICAL TRUTH DENIED

“Outside the true Christian congregation what alternative organization is there? Only Satan's organization...” *The Watchtower* 3/1/1979, p. 24.

As shown earlier the Organization's claim to be “the true Christian congregation” is bogus and its attempt to make a ‘them and us’ scenario is typical of a cult mentality. The fact is that the alternative to the Watchtower Organization is a rich heritage of biblical research by highly

qualified scholars over a number of centuries. They may not all agree but then one should be allowed the dignity of being treated as an adult so as to make choices according to the information one discovers from the scholarly works and in harmony with one's prayers for God's guidance toward truth. Sadly, many truth-seeking Jehovah's Witnesses never realize this and resign themselves to the thought that there is nowhere else to go, even though Jesus said we were to go to him (John 6:68).

What the Watchtower Has Said About Personal Bible Research

(All boldening is ours)

EARLY ARROGANCE

"Bible classes and Bible studies are all to no purpose until the Lord, in due time, sent them the 'Bible keys,' through the Society" *The Watchtower*, 10/1/1909.

"Furthermore, not only do we find that people cannot see the Divine Plan in studying the Bible by itself, but we see, also, that if anyone **lays the Scripture Studies aside**, even after he has used them, after he has become familiar with them, after he has read them for ten years - if he lays them aside and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience shows that **within two years he goes into darkness**. On the other hand, if he had merely read the Scripture Studies with their references, and had **not read a page of the Bible, as such, he would be in the light** at the end of the two years, because he would have the light of the Scriptures" *The Watchtower* 9/15/1910, p. 298.

"Rather we should seek for dependent Bible study, rather than for independent Bible study" *The Watchtower* 9/15/1911.

CONDEMNING OTHERS FOR WHAT THE ORGANIZATION NOW DOES

"It has long been the practice of clergymen to arrogate to themselves the sole ability to interpret the Scriptures" *Creation* 1927, 2,175,000 ed., p. 148.

"The clergy tell the people that they 'need not study the Bible, because they cannot understand it', that the clergy are the **only ones who can understand it**, and that therefore the people should take their instruction from the clergy and follow what they tell them. That speech tends to turn the people away from Jehovah God and to cause them to forsake his Word." *Prophecy* 1929, p. 21.

"Now, since the Lord has invited us to "reason together," no man can reason unless he puts aside prejudice. **Neither should any man permit any one else to do his thinking**, whether that man be a rabbi or preacher. *Life* 1929, 1,000,000 ed., p. 210.

"They even go to the point of persecuting the humble men and women who try to study and teach the Word of God, which is the truth. Many a member of a church has been **told by his pastor: 'You had better not read any books or study for yourself.** Leave all that to us preachers. We are the guardians of your soul, and your only teachers.'" *Life* 1929, 1,000,000 ed., p. 216.

"The Vatican belittles Bible study by claiming it is the **only organization authorized** and qualified to interpret the Bible." *The Watchtower* 7/1/1943, p. 201.

NOW WE NEED THE WATCHTOWER'S HELP AGAIN

"To respond to this invitation to inquire of Jehovah the Creator, we must go to his written revelation, the Holy Bible, and study it **with the help of** his theocratic organization." *New Heavens and a New Earth* 1953, p. 18.

ONLY THE ORGANIZATION CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE!!

"The Bible is organization-minded it cannot be fully understood without our having the theocratic organization in mind" *The Watchtower* 9/1/1954, p. 164.

"The world is full of Bibles, which Book contains the commandments of God. Why, then, do the people not know which way to go? Because they do not also have the teaching or **law of the mother**, which is light. Jehovah God has provided his holy written Word for all mankind and it contains all the information that is needed for men in taking a course leading to life. But God has not arranged for that Word to speak independently or to shine forth life-giving truths by itself. His Word says: "Light is sown for the righteous." (Ps. 97:11) **It is through his organization that God provides this light** that the proverb says is the teaching or law of the mother. If we are to walk in the light of truth we must recognize not only Jehovah God as our Father but **his organization as our mother**" *The Watchtower* 5/1/1957, p. 274.

Although in the Scriptures "the Jerusalem above...is our mother" it is only "the Father" and "the Son" who provide the necessary 'light.'

NOTE: "The Jerusalem above" refers to the future Jerusalem. (Please see my second book, *Waking Up to the Distortion of Bible Teachings - Analysis of Watchtower Dogma*).

"Thus the **Bible Is an organizational book** and belongs to the Christian congregation as an organization, **not to individuals**, regardless of how sincerely they may believe that they can interpret the Bible. For this reason the Bible cannot be properly understood without Jehovah's visible organization in mind" *The Watchtower* 10/1/1967, p. 587.

This contradicts the entire thrust of the Scriptures concerning individuals as benefitting on their own from applying the Bible's counsel and prophetic statements.

"Only this organization functions for Jehovah's purpose and to his praise. **To it alone** God's Sacred Word, the Bible, is **not a sealed book**" *The Watchtower* 7/1/1973, p. 402.

"They say that it is sufficient to read the Bible exclusively, either alone or in small groups at home. But, strangely, through such 'Bible reading,' they have reverted right back to the apostate doctrines that commentaries by Christendom's clergy were teaching 100 years ago..." *The Watchtower* 8/15/1981, p. 29.

This may be true of some who leave the Jehovah's Witnesses, but many individuals use up-to-date information from modern commentaries, lexicons, and background information that helps them to arrive at very different conclusions to the monolithic churches of Christendom.

"No matter where we may live on earth, God's Word continues to serve as a light to our path and a lamp to our roadway as to our conduct and beliefs. (Ps. 119:105) But Jehovah God has also provided his visible organization, his "faithful and discreet slave," made up of spirit anointed ones, to help Christians in all nations to understand and apply properly the Bible in their lives. **Unless we are in touch with this channel of communication that God is using, we will not progress along the road to life, no matter how much Bible reading we do**" *The Watchtower* 12/1/1981, p. 27.

"An individual must have the Watchtower to understand the Bible." 1983, Yearbook.

"We have the opportunity to show love for our brothers who take the lead in the congregation or in connection with Jehovah's visible organization worldwide. This includes being loyal to "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45-47) Let us face the fact that **no matter how much Bible reading we have done, we would never have learned the truth on our own**" *The Watchtower* 12/1/1990, p. 19.

This is only partly true. Certainly, we all benefit from the research of others—especially professionals. However, research is best done from numerous sources and not as the Organization wishes—from them only! Nevertheless, any individual with a reasonable reading level can learn of the overall truth especially if he comes to the Bible without any preconceived ideas concerning it.

"It is obvious that we need help if we are to understand the Bible. Clergyman Hal Llewellyn, the United Church's secretary of theology, faith, and ecumenism, said: "It is very important to clarify what the Bible means to us and how it is read and interpreted." But even if not all realize it, the fact is that we cannot understand the Bible on our own. We need help" *The Watchtower* 10/1/1994, p. 6.

"All who want to understand the Bible should appreciate that the "greatly diversified wisdom of God" can become known **only through Jehovah's channel** of communication, the faithful and discreet slave." *The Watchtower* 10/1/1994, p. 8.

Much like the Roman Catholic Church the Watchtower, rather than God, determines what the Scriptures mean and all Jehovah's Witnesses are expected to accept the explanation without question or discussion. The earlier criticism by the Watchtower of the Vatican's claim to be 'the only true church' is evidently hypocritical because the Organization itself makes the same bogus claim.

On its Own Terms the Organization Should Be Exposed - (Eph. 5:11)

The Watchtower applies the following statements to all other religions. However, in fairness we should advocate that their own members examine the Organization's teachings and practices in the same light:

"It is not persecution for an informed person to expose a certain religion as being false" *The Watchtower* 11/15/1963, p. 688.

“Some opposers claim that Jehovah’s Witnesses are false prophets. These opponents say that dates have been set, but nothing has happened. Again we ask, what is the motive of these critics?” *The Watchtower 3/15/1986, p. 19.*

One might ask the Organization what its motive is for side-stepping the issue of their often times failed date-setting for when Armageddon would happen and for maintaining so many unscriptural teachings and their denial of access to scholarly works for their members. The motive is certainly not that of love. To treat adults as if they were children who could not possibly make intelligent decisions about how something should be understood is clearly the mark of a high control group. This sort of treatment of their members means that, if you are one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Watchtower organization does do all of your most important thinking on spiritual and other matters for you.

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Personal Responsibility for One’s Own God-Like Thinking

As stated earlier the Watchtower Organization tells JW’s that they must not do any “independent thinking;” but as we saw this command directly contradicts the biblical statement that one should develop one’s own wisdom, insight, judgment, shrewdness, knowledge, and **thinking ability** according to the Proverbs.

The Use of One’s Mind

The development of these abilities did not change with the Christian Greek Scriptures where we have Jesus’ words that: “*You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with **your whole mind***” (Matt. 22:37) and Paul’s assessment that: “*One man **judges** one day as above another; another judges one day as all others; let each one be fully convinced **in his own mind***” (Rom.14:5). For one to allow one’s thinking to be governed by another’s would be

contrary to these statements that involve our worship of God and our dealings with our fellow Christians.

SHOULDN'T WE ALL THINK THE SAME?

Paul exhorted his fellow Christians to, “***all speak in agreement, and to...be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought***” (1 Cor. 1:10). However, does this mean that each Christian will grasp the thoughts of the Scriptures in exactly the same way and so take exactly the same doctrinal position as the Watchtower Organization (which changes its view at various times)? In fact, Paul’s statements here lean far more toward the showing of love for one another and of displaying a humble attitude just as he wrote to the Philippians for them to: “...***make my joy full by being of the same mind and having the same love, being completely united, having the one thought in mind. Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with humility consider others superior to you, as you look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others***” (Phil. 2:2-4). Furthermore, the Apostle Peter wrote that he was, “***stirring up your clear thinking faculties by way of a reminder...***” (2 Pet. 3:1). So, what would be the point of our having “clear thinking faculties” if we must arrive at the same conclusion as that of the Watchtower Organization which has kept changing its mind over time.

Think God’s Thoughts – Not Those of Men

In spite of the claim to be God’s Organization and that all its members must hold and express the same teachings as the Organization, the Governing Body occasionally states that they are imperfect men and that they are not infallible. However, Jesus, “rebuked Peter, and said: “***Get behind me, Satan, because you think, not God’s thoughts, but those of men***” (Mark 8:33). So, if Peter could “think, not God’s thoughts, but those of men” on that occasion, then certainly this could be the case with the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses. After all they view Peter as one who was the leading member of the first century imagined Governing body. Indeed, “***a man may plot out his course in his heart, but it is Jehovah who directs his steps***” (Prov. 16:9). Certainly, God’s thoughts are higher than man’s thoughts (Isa. 55:9), but this does not mean that the imperfect men of the Watchtower Organization are in the unique place of God so as to direct others in their thinking. It is God’s thoughts that we should strive to acquire and live by. No imperfect human can direct us with their interpretation of those thoughts. God does this through the Scriptures and his spirit—not by means of Watchtower propaganda. In fact, through its history the Organization has made many, many mistakes

of interpretation leading people to make disastrous choices at the time. Then at a later time the Organization has changed its mind concerning the interpretation on some of these issues e.g. vaccinations, organ transplants, the details on blood transfusions, to marry or not, substituting civil for military service, and numerous different dates for the coming of Armageddon. As an example, taken from the magazine title which preceded the Awake JW's were told that, "**Vaccination** is a direct violation of the everlasting covenant that God made with Noah after the flood," *The Golden Age* magazine 2/4/1931, p. 293. Many died because of following this directive which later changed to: "Vaccinations appear to have caused a marked decrease in disease" *Awake* 8/22/1965, p.20. This article actually encourages Jehovah's Witnesses to have their children vaccinated. So, in this aspect of life the individual Jehovah's Witness has not been allowed to decide his own course of action. This is in contradiction of the scriptural advice that "**thinking ability itself will keep guard over you**" (*Prov. 2:10-13*).

Be a Berean Truth-Seeker

In spite of the Organization's discouragement of its members in doing research outside of the Watchtower's own publications, the early Christians did do significant biblical research to satisfy themselves that they were hearing the truth from the apostles. So, Luke records that:

*"Immediately by night the brothers sent both Paul and Silas to Berea. On arriving, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they accepted the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully **examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.** Therefore, many of them became believers, and so did quite a few of the reputable Greek women as well as some of the men" (*Acts 17:10-12*).*

There is nothing to show that the Bereans changed this fine habit after they became believers. There would be much to learn for years after they had got baptized and yet the Watchtower stated as quoted earlier:

"Jehovah is not pleased if we receive that food as though it might contain something harmful. We should have confidence in the channel God is using" *The Watchtower* 2/15/1981, p. 19.

So, when a new individual has a Bible study with a Jehovah's Witnesses it is only a study of the basics of Watchtower teaching. There is a vast

amount left to learn about the Bible. So why, once they have been baptized, should any individual give up the God-given right to continue examining these matters and issues from whatever source he or she recognizes as scholarly.

The Watchtower Organization's Apparent Motives

The Organization seems to wish you to:

- **not** discover the many teachings of the Organization that, when honestly examined from a scholarly perspective, are proven to be false.
- **not** discover the great amount of activity of the Organization over the course of its history that has been less than ethical.
- **not** discover the great amount of severely bad treatment the Organization, by its policies, metes out to individual Jehovah's Witnesses who ask questions considered as awkward. It is reminiscent of the Catholic inquisition and early Protestant mistreatment of those they deemed to be heretics e.g. Calvin upon Michael Servetus. The only difference is that today's laws prohibit the Organization from physically executing those who disagree with them on Bible interpretation.

Additionally, the Organization wishes to control your thinking so that you will do their bidding in their goal to build a religious empire with mainly free labour (already worth around \$200 billion as of the early 2000s). Indeed, the current appeals for money on TV make them no better than the TV evangelists who were previously condemned by the Organization for making such appeals.

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Why a Person Might Leave the Watchtower Organization

Is Being a Jehovah's Witness the Very Best Life for a Person?

The Watchtower organization has often promoted the idea that Jehovah's Witnesses have the very best life that they could possibly have right now and better than anyone else's life. In fact, some Jehovah's Witnesses have actually said that even if the Watchtower's teachings were wrong in some aspects or even all wrong, they would still stay as a JW because they couldn't get a better life elsewhere. They mistakenly imagine that this is the only true brotherhood. The fact is that there are many brotherhoods among the various religious and non-religious groups that have a common interest and common goals. So, is it true that JWs actually have the best life possible? Furthermore, is this even the right motive for being part of a religious denomination? Surely the prime reason for being in any Christian denomination is because one actually believes that it is teaching the truth of what is contained in the Bible. In fact, the Bible itself teaches that if a person becomes a Christian, they should not expect an easy and wonderful life, but that it is going to be a life of persecution and difficulties (2 Tim. 3:12).

As has been shown here and in my second book on the subject of the Watchtower Society, it is clear that this organization does, in large measure, not teach the truths of the Bible and therefore gives false hopes to its membership. Furthermore, the Society creates an environment of fear, guilt, and the possibility of losing one's family if one voices the fact that there are many wrong teachings. This may involve losing one's life or seeing a loved one lose their life whenever the blood transfusion issue should come up. Although not recognized by the JW their life is highly controlled by their having to sit and listen to the Watchtower propaganda at most meetings, along with the demoralization that occurs for many in spending years and years of calling from door to door with little or no good response. When one realizes these very negative aspects of the JW life, including children being restricted from playing with non-JW children, it is clear that it certainly is not a good life for anyone—even the so-called good fellowship is actually somewhat phoney, because you would soon be shunned the moment you showed that you disagreed with any of the changeable policies or teachings of the Society.

Conclusions Drawn Concerning Life in the Watchtower Organization

Because the Governing Body is often telling the membership how much they love them and because in public at their conventions the

members of this leadership appear so benign, caring, and wise the average JW is unaware of the realities of the authority structure with its many ways of manipulating JWs into doing just what the Organization wishes them to do and often to the JWs detriment. In fact, the reality of the Governing body fits with Jesus' warning to, "*Be on the watch for the false prophets who come to you in sheep's covering, but inside they are ravenous wolves*" (Matt.7:15). So, because they are "in sheep's covering" it takes quite some time before the individual JW becomes aware of issues concerning the Organization's wrong teachings, its lack of fairness and justice, its lack of real love and mercy, its willingness to bend the law of the land for its own ends, and its real motives.

In fact, on the following major issues the biblical indications are that God will hold the Watchtower Society to account (Rom. 14:12; 1 Cor. 4:5b). These are:

- The blasphemous claim to be God's Organization, when in fact that claim is based on information which does not fit with 1919 when Jesus supposedly appointed them as such. This claim is based on the incorrect timing of 1914 for when God's Kingdom was supposedly established invisibly. Furthermore, the passage in Matthew 24:45 regarding "the faithful and discrete slave" is misapplied to the Governing Body, but which actually applies to individual Christians (Luke 12:42-48).
- The loss of life in life-and-death cases because of the Organization's insistence that blood transfusions be rejected. This is tantamount to manslaughter.
- The breaking up of families by the Organization's policy of shunning those who resign from it or are disfellowshipped for questioning and doubting Watchtower doctrine. Such shunning is contrary to Jesus' statement to "love your enemies" (Matt. 5:44; 2 Thess. 3:15; James 5:19) and God's pattern of family unity in love, but not uniformity (1 Cor: 13:4-7). Shunning is psychologically damaging to the JW shunner as well as the one being shunned.
- The issues of paedophilia and rape within the Organization and the policy of "in house" dealing with these serious crimes rather than reporting them to the proper authorities (Rom. 13:1). This includes the ludicrous "two witness" rule because of a misapplication of Deuteronomy 19:15 leading to the failure of elders to take an accusation of sexual abuse seriously. This policy allows each paedophile to continue sexually abusing other children and teenagers, causing them psychological damage which would happen far less if the Organization changed its policy on this issue.

- Misleading their membership regarding dates for when either “Christ’s reign” began or when Armageddon would occur. Such dates given were: 1873, 1874, 1878, 1914, 1915, 1925, and 1975 and then, after those dates failed, the Organization denied that most of those dates were provided by them, but only “that the brothers read into it more than was said.” Since 1975 the Organization has often stated that “Armageddon” is “just around the corner” or “straight ahead” as if to come very soon and so keeping the membership in false expectations (Matt. 24:36, 45; 25:13, Acts 1:6-7 also see Matt. 24:15, 29 showing the actual things one must see so as to know when the “end” is close). All of this puts the Organization in the position of being a false prophet (Deut. 18:20-22).

Along with these major factors there are all the many faulty teachings (more than thirty) that come from the Watchtower Organization and with their many changes or flip flops. In fact, the requirement to believe all that comes from any organization means that one does not have one’s personal belief system as one reads and understands the Bible. The fact is that Jesus describes Christianity as organic with him as the head of the body and so needing no organization to guide or control them, even though they work as a body under Christ’s headship. Furthermore, no organization can work as a co-mediator with Jesus—he is the only “*mediator between God and men*” (1 Tim. 2:5).

THE CHRISTIAN’S FREEDOM

The New Testament gives no detailed pattern for any kind of control by an organization to run the Christian’s life. The Apostle Paul concludes that, “*for such freedom Christ set us free. Therefore, stand firm and do not let yourselves be confined again in a yoke of slavery*” (Gal. 5:1). Although Paul speaks of slavery under the law of Moses, he clearly does not want his fellow Christians to be put under any “yoke of slavery” by any church system or organization. A much greater test of the genuineness of a Christian is the living of their lives according to the biblical principles without any authoritarian organization providing finely tuned laws i.e. what they may watch on TV, what music they may listen to, what their private sexual lives may or may not include, what kinds of secular work they must not do, etc. Much more important is that such Christians have trained their consciences according to the principles in the Bible without any overlay of Watchtower rules the breaking of which will most likely result in disfellowshipping. However, none of this means that the Christian should live in isolation, but rather he should seek fellowship with other individuals who are also seekers after biblical truth and living the Christian life (Heb. 10:24). In fact, this verse shows that we “mustn’t

abandon our meeting together as is the habit of some.” However, please note that this does not refer to highly organized meetings which one must always attend. The verse refers to those who take Christian fellowship too lightly and rarely or never associate with fellow Christians. Nevertheless, no Christian is ever truly isolated because they will always have their close relationship with the heavenly Father and His Son, Christ Jesus.

Ten Top Things That “Wake Up” a Jehovah’s Witness

On the YouTube presentation entitled *Ex JW Analyser* he shows some of the prime things which begin to make a JW start to question what kind of organization the Watchtower really is. These are:

- The paedophile culture as being no better than in other churches and the Organization’s failure to protect victims from paedophiles i.e. not reporting such to the authorities.
- The hypocrisy over the Watchtower Society’s affiliation with the United Nations for ten years during the 1990s, even though the Organization declared the UN to be the “wild beast” of Revelation 11:7 (See Tami Dickerson’s book).
- That Jesus is the mediator of only the 144,000 in contradiction of 1 Timothy 2:5. This also means that the vast majority of JWs are not in a covenant with God or Christ—an essential for salvation!
- The eight failed dates for the end of this system and the false history of the Organization
- Requirements which go beyond what is in the Scriptures. These include that no man should wear a beard or wear bright clothing and no woman may wear slacks.
- The concept of “spiritual warfare” as used to promote lying and half-truths when issues involving the Organization are concerned.
- Judicial Committees’ harshness and serious mistakes. These include:
 - The cutting-off and shunning of victims of sexual abuse.
 - The appallingly bad advice given by elders to those suffering mental problems who should actually be directed to a qualified therapist.
 - The failure to care for those who are abused in their marriage.
 - The unjust removal of various servants from their position.
- The shunning policy which leads to the break-up of families and/or friendships.
- Watchtower’s indirect unethical investments. Such investments,

hidden in hedge funds, are in cigarette companies and weapons producers (Lockheed Martin). This is hypocritical because the organization will disfellowship anyone who smokes or joins the military.

- The terrible effect of Watchtower teaching and requirements upon Children. Some children live in fear of Armageddon and even have nightmares about it. They are also made to be ostracised in school by being separated from a number of school activities and extra-curricular school activities. Furthermore, they are denied having friends who are not JW's along with going to any birthday parties or to celebrate their own birthday. In fact, as teenagers they are denied seeking any higher education and so are put at a great disadvantage when seeking work to support a future family.

Conclusion

Indeed, the Governing Body has taken possession of its individual members by means of its claim to a mystical relationship and contact with God. However, no denomination should seek to possess its members, although most do so for the purpose of keeping control of the membership and to continue to grow in numbers. In terms of worship the Watchtower Society has led its members into being unable to distinguish between God and the Governing Body and therefore becoming idolatrous i.e. a worshipping of the Society. Certainly, Jehovah Himself does not seek to possess people—He does not apply coercion but simply seeks to persuade by the message of the good news of the Kingdom. Indeed, any such possession would be the same as the actions of the demons and therefore enslavement! Such demon-like possession includes a repressing of one's analytical abilities, that is, the blocking of any questioning as well as blocking of logical comparisons, evaluating, and searching for what is true. Watchtower has enhanced this tactic by making it a sin to do any "independent thinking."

Also, to live in this intellectual bubble leading to the believing of things that are actually not true is psychologically damaging to a person; but the obtaining of proven and documented factual information is the only way for a person to know what is true and what is false and to alter their thinking and lives accordingly. So, to do one's personal research on matters of religion and religious organizations is the only way to access the facts. To commence such a search is a win-win situation for the JW truth-seeker because by doing such uninhibited thorough research one is able to prove for oneself what is right and what is wrong, that is, whether or not the Watchtower's teachings and practices actually match those

contained in the Bible. Indeed, Peter encouraged Christians to be, “*always ready to make a defense before everyone who demands of you a reason for your hope*” (1 Pet. 3:15).

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The Struggle to Leave the Watchtower Organization

The Stages for a JW to Be Able to Leave the Watchtower’s Religion

After some time spent in the Watchtower Organization many JWs become vaguely aware that things are not right within the Organization. If they voice their concerns to other JW members they are usually told to be patient and wait on Jehovah who will correct these things in his own good time or they are reported to the elders. However, the truth is that, with the passage of time, things do not get corrected nor do they noticeably improve. For example, the unloving practice of shunning family members has only become worse, so that now this procedure has strengthened and even those JWs who are simply inactive are starting to be shunned or at least given the cold shoulder by other JWs. So, what happens for a truth-seeking JW who is beginning to wake up to the falseness of this organization? A very good illustration of the process for a JW to become fully awake spiritually is that of the baseball diamond with its four bases:

1st base – **Awareness** that something is wrong e.g., a false teaching or the lack of real Christian love or some form of mistreatment or injustice, but nothing gets corrected over many years.

2nd base – **Analysis** of the issue or issues which the waking up JW, by personal research, confirms his or her concerns i.e. that the teaching is completely false or that the lack of real love becomes fully confirmed.

3rd Base – **Apprehension** over what the repercussions will be if one takes the last step of resigning from the Organization as a false religion. At this

point some may get stuck in the Organization in a physical way although mentally they have really left it, that is, they are mentally out of the Organization, but still attend the meetings for a while. This is sometimes because they think they can effect change by remaining in, but more often it is out of fear of loss of family so that they fail to run for home base and be out of it altogether. This is a state of dissonance and can lead to their agreeing to things which they know to be not true!

Homebase – **Final Leaving** both mentally and physically for those who are prepared to tolerate the repercussions (usually that of being shunned) because they can no longer put up with listening to so many unbiblical attitudes, distortions, half-truths, and occasional lies.

There are three main ways for a truth-seeking person to cut their ties to the Watchtower organization:

1. Being disfellowshipped for questioning Watchtower doctrine.
2. Disassociating oneself by writing a letter of resignation.
3. Fading from the Organization by gradually doing less in the field ministry along with a diminishing attendance at meetings until neither of these practices are in one's life. (Alternatively, one may simply move to another area and never again involve oneself with that organization).

BEING DISFELLOWSHIPED

If one gets into the position of being told by the judicial committee looking into your case that you are now disfellowshipped because you have not complied with their requirement that you repent of your non-Watchtower viewpoint or your disagreement with Watchtower teaching, then an appeal arrangement is supposedly available. However, the time is cut so short for making that appeal that one rarely has time to present a defence of one's position before an announcement is made at the Kingdom hall of the disfellowshipping. However, the reason for the disfellowshipping will not be announced to allow the rest of the congregation to consider whether or not this is a justified disfellowshipping for truly unchristian conduct. So, the final result for such a disfellowshipped person is that they will be immediately shunned by all of their JW (so-called) friends, as well as their JW family members.

DISASSOCIATING

If, however, one disassociates oneself by writing a letter of resignation to one's local body of elders or to the Watchtower headquarters or to one of its branches the reasons you might give will, apparently, be completely ignored, because they are not interested in your reasons or what you have discovered about Bible teaching. They will simply note and record that

you have left the Organization and so you will now be treated the same as a disfellowshipped person i.e. shunned.

FADING

This leaves the last way to leave the Organization, namely, to attempt to fade with the hope that one will simply be seen as having become so-called “spiritually weak” by attending fewer meetings and doing less in the field service. However, in recent times the Watchtower has even attempted to block this way out by requiring the shunning of those who are no longer involved in Watchtower activities. However, if one has also managed to convince one’s immediate family of the falseness of this organization and so to get out of it; or if one is prepared to move a significant distance away from those local JWs and not make oneself known to JWs in the new area as having previously been a JW that may help, but not with one’s more distant JW family members.

So clearly there is no easy way to escape the tentacles of the Watchtower. One simply needs to be determined to be a biblical truth-seeker and fully leave and not be associated with an organization that will have to answer to the Lord Jesus Christ, at his return, for all their wrongdoing and hypocrisy! However, in leaving it should not be only a matter of noting all the faulty teachings and cult-like mentality of the Organization, but to begin the journey of seeking to understand the Bible better. This will not, as Ray Franz shows, be a simple seeking of a denomination with the exact truth—sadly because no such thing exists, although some smaller denominations make sincere attempts to keep close to Bible teaching. Nevertheless, there are many ex-JW individuals who are supportive and can be referenced on their websites and in their YouTube presentations. Furthermore, there are a few non-JW small groups who are much closer to biblical truth than is the Watchtower. These include the Church of God (General Conference) with its college based in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Additionally, I would suggest referencing the modern commentaries and literature of the notable theologians and other researchers and then to determine, on each point, if what they are saying actually fits with what is definite Bible teaching. My hope is that you are a real seeker after biblical truth. If so, then please be aware that some ex-JWs have become atheists or have fallen into some of the clearly faulty teachings of the traditional churches, even joining the Roman Catholic Church.



PART SIX

Examining the New World Translation

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Points of Excellence in the New World Translation

The New World Translation of the Bible was released in six volumes for the benefit of Jehovah’s Witnesses, from 1950 to 1960 and revised in 1981, again in 1984, and again finally in 2013. The original New World Translation Committee stated that its members wished to remain anonymous. However, former members of the Jehovah’s Witnesses organization have identified the members of the Committee as being: Nathan H. Knorr, Frederick W. Franz, George D. Gangas, and Albert D. Schroeder. However, according to Raymond Franz, the “principal translator of the Society’s New World Translation” was Frederick W. Franz. Also M. James Penton concurs in saying: “to all intents and purposes the New World Translation is the work of one man, Frederick Franz.” In the producing of this translation it was realized that the Bible should define its own terms rather than following the phrasing of other English translations. This meant that greater use was made of the Hebrew and Greek lexicons that were based on the original language words.

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

These were primarily translated from Rudolph Kittel’s *Biblia Hebraica*. The points of excellence in the NWT are:

- Use of the Divine Name in all occurrences. (NOTE: There is great uncertainty as to which is more accurate - whether Yahweh, or certain others. However, the word “Jehovah” is not the right spelling or pronunciation of the

divine name for the reasons explained later. Perhaps simply presenting the letters YHWH would have been best).

- Consistency in rendering the word *sheol* as “Grave.”

THE CHRISTIAN GREEK SCRIPTURES (THE NEW TESTAMENT)

- Consistency in rendering the word *hades* as “Grave” instead of the word ‘hell’ in traditional translations.
- Consistency in rendering *Gehenna* as a place name instead of the word ‘hell’.
- Rendering *Tartarus* as a place name instead of the word ‘hell’.
- The fine distinctions in verb forms of the Greek language are demonstrated, no doubt from referencing the renowned translation entitled “*The New Testament in the Language of the People*” (1937) by Charles B. Williams. Examples in the NWT are: Matthew 7:7: “...keep on asking...keep on seeking...” rather than “ask ... seek.” Also, John 17:21: “...are in union with me” rather than “in me.” And Ephesians 5:11 “stop sharing with them in the unfruitful works” rather than “do not share...”
- Legitimate placing of punctuation or rendering of expressions that are in harmony with the teaching of the rest of Scripture e.g.:

Luke 23:43: “*I tell you today, you will be with me in paradise.*”

Romans 9:5: “*God, who is over all, be praised forever...*”

Whereas the standard translations have a Trinitarian bias, the NWT has provided renderings in the relevant texts which harmonize with the immediate or wider contexts, which either mitigate against the Trinitarian rendering or are neutral i.e. could be rendered either way. The relevant texts are:

Acts 20:28: “...with the blood of his own Son.”

Titus 2:13: “...of the great God and of our Savior, Christ Jesus.”

2 Peter 1:1: “...of our God and the Savior Jesus Christ”

- Legitimate word choices harmonizing with the teaching of the rest of Scripture: As with REB and NJB rendering *proskyneo* as “pay homage” the NWT gives “did obeisance” or “bowed down to” rather than ‘worshipped.’ Other examples in the NWT are:

“*I make a covenant with you ... for a kingdom*” rather than “I assign to you a kingdom” Luke 22:29.

“...all those who were **rightly disposed** for everlasting life” rather than “appointed to” Acts 13:48.

“...and the **sharing in the holy spirit**...” rather than “fellowship of the...” 2 Corinthians 13:14.

“...through an **inspired statement** (Literal ‘spirit’)” 2 Thessalonians 2:2. Also, see 1 John 4:1.

“*By faith Enoch was transferred...*” rather than “taken up” which is sometimes mistranslated in the paraphrased Bibles as “taken up to heaven” Hebrews 11:5.

However, most of these renderings are also spread throughout the Bible in a good number of other translations. The following criticisms of the rendering of certain texts in the NWT concern the 2013 revision.



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Faulty Rendering in the NWT of Hebrew Scripture Texts

The Watchtower Organization seems to be paranoid with regard to apostasy from their organization to the point whereby they have purposely and wrongly rendered the Hebrew word for “godlessness” as “apostasy” and the word for “the godless” as “apostates.”

APOSTASY

Jeremiah 23:15 (Heb. *hnuppa* = ungodliness, godlessness, profaneness). NWT- “**apostasy.**” All other translations render the Hebrew word as “ungodliness”, “**godlessness.**” *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology* gives the meaning of *hnuppa* as: “godlessness. ungodliness, perversity” but not as apostasy.

APOSTATE

Proverbs 11:9 (see footnote in NWT); Isaiah 9:17; 10:6; 33:14: (Heb. *hanep* = godless, ungodly). NWT- “**an apostate(s)**” Almost all other translations render the Hebrew word as “the **godless man** (men)” or “impious man (men).” For all of the above texts the *Brown*

Driver Briggs Hebrew Lexicon defines *hanep* as “profane, irreligious ...godless, godless man...profane men” but not apostate in the above texts. The only time the word **apostate** is used in this lexical definition is set within brackets and with reference to the Syriac word in relation to the Muslim religion: “(Syr. profane, hence oft, heathen, **apostate**; inclining to a right state, esp. the true religion, **a Muslim**).” Also, the prestigious *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology* gives the definition of this Hebrew word as: “be godless, defiled, perverse, defiant” but not apostate. Clearly, in the above verses this is a case of purposeful mistranslation by the New World Translation Committee. In fact, the dictionary definition of apostasy is: “An abandonment of one’s religious faith, or any cause or principle to which one was attached. *Apostanai* “to stand away from.” Is it really “an abandonment of one’s religious faith” if one leaves a particular denomination but continues to believe and live in accordance with the Scriptures? But many who leave the Watchtower Organization do not leave God, but by personal study they realize that a great many of the teachings of Jehovah’s Witnesses are simply wrong. The Watchtower Society may view changes in understanding of the Scriptures by an individual as apostasy; yet this is, in fact, exactly what the Organization itself has done throughout its history. Indeed, there is a world of difference between one who is godless and one who is apostate. A person accused of apostasy from the Watchtower organization may not actually be godless, but simply seeks to know the truth of the Scriptures. In reverse a godless person may never have apostatized from a particular religious group. However, the Watchtower Society’s definition of apostasy is different to that which is found in the *Oxford English Dictionary* and likely to be so from any other dictionary.

WISDOM

Proverbs 1:20, 21; 3:14-18; 8:1-3; 9:1-5:

The Hebrew word *hokma* translated as wisdom is **feminine** for the sake of personification of wisdom as a woman. The fact that personification is meant is demonstrated by the entire context of these passages. In Proverbs 8:4-22 **she** speaks as **I, me, and myself** demonstrating the personification. Yet the NWT consistently translates the pronouns associated with *hokma* **as neuter**, that is, **it** and **itself**, and thereby losing the effect of this figure of speech. This is a case of contextual mistranslation. Likely this mistranslation is made because of the false teaching that Proverbs 8 is about a pre-existent person who became Jesus Christ.

ACTIVE FORCE

Genesis 1:1-2: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and desolate, and there was darkness

upon the surface of the watery deep; and **God's active force** was moving about over the surface of the waters." The phrase "**God's active force**" is interpretive rather than translational. The Hebrew is *ruach elohim* which means "spirit of God" as in most translations (with or without a capital "S").

Substituting of Words

Zechariah 12:10. "...they will look to the one whom they pierced..." Here the Hebrew is "*look upon **me** whom they have pierced...*" This can be seen in the Hebrew Interlinear and all other translations.



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Faulty Rendering of Christian Greek Scripture Texts

For the most part the Christian Greek Scripture section of the NWT is fairly literal and is rendered from the Westcott & Hort text, but with consultation of the Nestle-Aland text in its revisions. However, it does have some peculiar non-literal renderings i.e. paraphrases. Some of these appear to be to emphasize certain theological points peculiar to the teachings of the Watchtower organization. There are also words added to and words omitted from the text. Sometimes it is unclear why there is a change from the text. Nevertheless, these are all indicators of a lack of faithfulness to the text and, without doubt, to the principle concerning the scroll of Revelation which applies to all of the holy Scriptures:

*"I am bearing witness to everyone that hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone **makes an addition** to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this scroll; and if anyone **takes anything away from the words** of the scroll of this prophecy, God will take his portion away from the trees of life and out of the holy city, things that are written about in this scroll" (Rev. 22:18, 19).*

Incorrect Translation of Individual Words to Emphasize a Theological Point

Matthew 24:3b:

NWT - “system(s) of things.” This term occurs 34 times, but no other translation uses this or any similar phrase. In fact, *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation* renders this as, “age” (Gk *aionos*) and the Greek interlinears and most modern translations render *aionos* fairly consistently as “age,” “ages,” or “long ago” in all the occurrences that do not mean “forever.” *Aion* always refers to **time** and so because the phrase “system of things” does not refer to time it is as incorrect a rendering as is “world” in the KJV and others. The glossary to the 2013 edition of the NWT explains the Greek word correctly as referring to time in the sense of an epoch. Nevertheless, the phrase “system of things” gives the impression of only a current or modern-day order of things.

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Luke 23:42:

NWT- “...when you **get** into your kingdom.”

KIT- “...*whenever you might come into your kingdom.*”

The various interlinears and all other translations have the word “come.” The NWT seems to have been so rendered as to give the impression that Jesus goes to get into his kingdom in heaven instead of coming into his kingdom on earth as many Scriptures show.

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Luke 24:35:

NWT- “he became known to them **by** the breaking of the bread.”

KIT- “*he became known to them in (Gk *en*) the breaking of the bread.*”

The UBS interlinear and most translations render this as “in” because this is the basic meaning of the Greek word *en*. A few translations render it as, “when,” “as he was” or “at.” Any of these simply link the timing of his recognition to them at the breaking of the bread, not that it was the manner in which he broke it for them to recognize him.

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Acts 3:15:

NWT- “The chief **agent** of life.”

KIT- “*Chief leader (Gk *archegos*) of the life.*”

Moffatt - “Pioneer of life.”

Rotherham - “Princely leader of life.”

Diaglott, NASB, NJB, REB, KJ, NKJ, Young’s - “Prince of life.”

Although UBS, NAB, ESV, NRSV, NIV, NLT wrongly have “author of life,” the Greek-English lexicons show that the Greek word *archegos* used here is **never defined as agent** or agency but is always presented as meaning leadership i.e. Jesus was the first to be resurrected as an immortal person and has led or pioneered the way for others to follow.

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Romans 8:23:

NWT- “Release **from** our bodies by ransom.”

KIT- “*Release by ransom of the body.*”

Most other translations- “Redemption of the body.”

NJB- “For our bodies to be set free.”

REB- “Our liberation from mortality”

The rendering in the NWT of “Release **from** our bodies” indicates the pagan Greek concept of something [spirit, soul, or person] being released heavenward at the point of death whereas the biblical meaning here is release or redemption **of** the Christian’s body from corruption and mortality (1 Cor.15). A Greek noun in the genitive case (such as “the body” in Rom. 8:23) following the Greek word for release (*apolutrosin*) is always the *object* of the releasing e.g. Ephesians 1:14 “Releasing...**of** the thing preserved.” Here Paul uses the identical grammatical construction (*apolutrosin* followed by a genitive case noun) as in Romans 8:23 and so showing that it should be rendered as “Release...**of** the body” as in the KIT and in all other translations.

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Romans 10:13:

NWT – “everyone who calls on the name of **Jehovah** [Gk *kyrios* = Lord] will be saved.

KIT - “...*everyone who likely might call on the name of Lord will be saved.*”

Here, the name Jehovah is not in this Greek text as is the case with the entire Christian Greek Scriptures. Nevertheless, this is the worst distortion involving the insertion of the divine name. The reason is that the earlier context given in Romans 10:9 shows that this is a reference to the Lord Jesus and reads: “If you publicly declare that ‘word in your own mouth’ that Jesus is Lord...you will be saved.” Romans 10:13, therefore, should not have been translated with the word “Jehovah.” The Greek word *kyrios* should have been translated “Lord” in spite of verse 13 being a quotation from Joel 2:32. Indeed, this context shows that Paul’s intention was to apply the thought in Joel to Jesus. There is no legitimate basis for translating the 237 occurrences in the Christian Greek Scriptures of *kyrios*

as “Jehovah.” None of the so-called J references actually supports this action. (Please see section F concerning the introduction of the name ‘Jehovah’ into the Christian Greek Scriptures).

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1 Corinthians 15:23:

NWT - “...during his **presence** (Gk *parousia*)”

KIT - “...in the presence of him.” (Also in Rotherham).

Most other translations - “at his coming.”

Moffatt - “at his arrival.”

Weymouth - “at his return.”

Although the word *parousia* means “presence” in a common setting e.g. “the presence of Stephanas” (1 Cor. 16:17) it does not mean this in regard to the coming of a dignitary, including a royal coming as with Jesus’ return as king. So, in an eschatological setting *parousia* means “advent” (defined as: arrival of a notable person or thing) or “**coming to be present**” according to Adolph Diessmann and almost all biblical linguists and scholars. The Greek term *parousia* was always translated *adventus* in the early Latin Bibles whenever it referred to Jesus’ return.

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Ephesians 4:8:

NWT - “He gave gifts **in** men.”

KIT - “He gave gifts to the (Gk *tois*) men.”

All literal translations and the REB - “He gave gifts to men.”

No other translation says “in” not even in Psalm 68:18 from where this phrase is quoted. Such mistranslation can be used to strengthen congregation authority. However, the gifts to men were most likely the miraculous gifts of the spirit in the first century.

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Incorrect Translation of Phrases to Emphasize a Theological Point

John 8:58:

NWT- “Before Abraham came into existence **I have been.**”

KIT- “Before Abraham to become I am (Gk *ego eimi*).”

Most translations - “Before Abraham came to be I am.”

The cross references to this verse in the NWT are Proverbs 8:22, John 17:5, Phil. 2:6, 7, and Col. 1:15-17 all of which can be shown not to be proof of a literally pre-existent archangel who became Jesus (See my book *Can There Be Three persons in One God? Why You Should Question the Trinity Doctrine* Parts 5 to 8). Most importantly, all other instances of this Greek

phrase *ego eimi* are translated as “**I am (he)**” or “*I am the one*” in John 4:26, 8:24, 8:28, 9:9, 13:9 and 18:5. This is recognized as correct by all Greek scholars. Originally the New World Translation Committee stated that this phrase was in the perfect indefinite tense in English. Later it was stated to be in the perfect tense indicative. Although by comparison with similar phrases in the Scriptures it is possible, it is not accepted as the correct tense by any scholars. They treat it as a present tense phrase.

So why don't the standard translations say “I am he” or “I am the one” in John 8:58 as in all the other verses, rather than simply “I am” (sometimes capitalized)? It is, no doubt, to support the attempt to prove that Jesus is a so-called ‘God the Son’ in part of the Trinity doctrine by connecting this verse with the “I am” phrase in Exodus 3:14 as rendered in most translations. The “I am,” in these other Bible translations refers to God and so the attempt is made to prove that Jesus, in saying, “I am” is also God (Jehovah/Yahweh). The NWT tries to circumvent this problem by translating *ego eimi* as “I have been” and thereby keeping Jesus as appearing to have literally pre-existed, but no part of a Trinity. However, this is inconsistent translating in view of all the *ego eimi* texts in John. Only *Benjamin Wilson's Diaglott* is consistent with John 8:58 in rendering *ego eimi* as “I am he.”

The Jehovah's Witness Greg Stafford shows quite clearly that all the *ego eimi* statements, including John 8:58 are Jesus' self-identification as the Messiah. So even if “I have been” was a correct translation, from the past to the present, it would still refer to him as the Messiah i.e. “*I have been he the Messiah.*” This, however, cannot mean literally so, but only in the ideal sense of being foreordained in God's mind because Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Son of God came into existence only at His conception (Luke1:32, 35).

.....
Acts 2:42, 46, 20:7, 11:

NWT - “...to **take of meals.**”

KIT - “...to the breaking of the bread.”

All other translations - “...to the breaking of bread.”

This appears to be an attempt to make this passage speak of ordinary meals rather than the Lord's Evening Meal which was originally shared in daily i.e. more than once a year. In fact, the context of Acts 2:42 shows that the breaking of bread had spiritual significance because it is listed along with teaching, sharing, and prayers. In Acts 2:46 KIT shows that the breaking of bread was a separate event to the “partaking of food.” In Acts 20:11 KIT reads “Having broken the bread and having tasted.”



Words Added to the Text

It is very valuable when the rendering of certain Greek words is expanded into an English phrase which draws out the fuller meaning. However, there are numerous occurrences of words not in this category which have been added to the English text of the NWT. These words are not in the Greek and are not an expansion into English of the Greek. These words are either not found in any other translations or are only occasionally found in the obscure translations of those not so qualified as translators or of dated versions. Examples are:

John 17:2:

NWT - "...the whole [**number**] whom you have given him."

KIT - "...*in order that all which you have given him.*"

The NWT rendering gives the false impression that there is a specific number of those who are given to Jesus. In Watchtower theology this number is literally 144,000 noted in Revelation 7 and 14. However, there is a very great amount of proof that this number is a symbol and not a literal number.

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Galatians 6:1:

NWT - "You who have spiritual **qualifications** try to readjust..."

KIT - "*You the spiritual ones...*"

Most translations - "You who are spiritual..."

REB - "You, my friends, who live by the Spirit..."

The Watchtower publications give the impression that Galatians 6:1 is proof that only the elders are to "try to readjust such" an erring person. The spurious addition of the word "qualifications" makes it appear to rank and file JW's that this refers specifically to the elders. Yet, obviously, all Christians are either "spiritual" or should be attempting to be so. Hence, this verse encourages all who are spiritual, both men, whether servant leaders (including ministerial servants) in a congregation or not, and women, to "try to readjust such a man" or "restore such a one" (NASB). Furthermore, this passage is addressed to the *adelphoi* which means "**brothers and sisters**" and not simply "brothers." No letter of Paul's was ever addressed directly to the elders. It is only in Philippians that the elders are included in the address to the "holy ones"—the "brothers and sisters" (Phil. 1:1, 12).

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Ephesians 4:9:

NWT- "He descended into the lower regions, **that is**, the earth?"

KIT- *“He stepped down into the lower parts of the earth.”*

Most other translations- *“...descended into the lower parts of the earth.”*

Rotherham- *“...descended into the under parts of the earth.”*

NJB- *“...gone down to the deepest levels of the earth.”*

This simply means that Jesus was in *hades* i.e. the Grave until the third day. In the NWT the words “that is” have been added and the word **of** has been ignored. The REB poor paraphrase of, “descended to the lowest levels, down to the very earth” no doubt, reflects the translators’ Trinitarian incarnation beliefs.

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Hebrews 9:27,

NWT- *“it is reserved for men to die once **for all time**, but after this a judgment...”*

KIT- *“it is lying off to the men once to die, after but this (thing) judgment...”*

Most other translations – *“And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment...”* Also, according to all Greek-English lexicons the Greek term *hapax* means “once” and not “once for all **time**” This mistranslation appears to be for the purpose of fitting in with the Organization’s teaching that when non-JWs die they will not be resurrected at any time.

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Words Missing or Substituted in the Text

Romans 8:1

NWT- *“Therefore those in union with Christ Jesus have no condemnation.”*

KIT- *“Nothing really **now** (Gk nun) condemnation to the ones in Christ Jesus.”*

ESV and all other versions- *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.”* Indeed, the word “**now**” is vital to the continuation of the argument from Chapter 7 of Romans. Why, when the Greek word *nun* is clearly in the text, omit it as the NWT has done?

NOTE: the phrase “in union with” is a legitimate expansion of the Greek word *en* as may be found in a number of other translations.

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42

The Problem with the Rendering: “The Word Was a god.”

Although ‘word for word’ this may seem to be correct, yet grammatically and as a translation it is incorrect because, in its attempt to show an identity, it fails to reflect the **purely qualitative aspect** of the phrase. The overwhelming majority of scholars who have addressed this subject understand John to be emphasizing the qualities or character of *the logos* and **not an identity** as a second god.

In his outstanding study of John 1:1 *Qualitative Anarthrous Predicate Nouns Mark 15:39 and John 1:1*, Philip B. Harner concluded that:

Perhaps the clause could be translated, ‘the Word had the same nature as God.’ This would be one way of representing John’s thought, which is, as I understand it, that *ho logos*, no less than *ho theos*, had the nature of *theos*.

Journal of Biblical Literature, 92, 1 (March 1973), p. 87.

Comments on Anarthrous Nouns

Prior to Harner’s study of qualitative anarthrous predicate nouns (PN), ‘**qualitative**’ nouns were viewed more or less as ‘**indefinite**’ nouns. However, Harner found that 80% are qualitative and 20% are ‘**definite**’ and none are exclusively indefinite. Since then Paul Dixon has shown that of the three semantic forces, namely, the definite, the indefinite, and the qualitative **only one of these three** is John’s intended meaning. Don Hartley took this a stage further in his studies and concluded that “qualitativeness” is a valid semantic category apart from definiteness or indefiniteness. He noted that from the standpoint of pure analysis, ***theos* in John 1:1c is most likely qualitative**. The problem with the rendering “a god” is that it wrongly mixes the categories of *qualitativeness* with that of *indefiniteness* to produce an identity—a second god; whereas the above facts show that John is giving a purely qualitative nuance and not an identity. Although the Watchtower Society quotes Harner as supposedly supporting the NWT rendering of “a god,” his study actually shows this rendering to be incorrect. There are approximately 1,023 occurrences of the word “God” **with the definite article** in the Christian Greek Scriptures and 282 occurrences of the word “God” **without the definite article** i.e. anarthrous.

THE ARGUMENT CONCERNING NWT INCONSISTENCY

Some scholars, for instance, Dr. Robert H. Countess of the University of Tennessee, present the somewhat overstated argument that for the NWT to be consistent with its John 1:1 translation these 282 occurrences of the anarthrous noun should also have been rendered as “a god” and yet only 16 have been so rendered in the NWT. For example, the NWT renders 2 Corinthians 5:19 as “**God** was by means of Christ reconciling the world...” instead of “**a** god was by means of Christ...” to match with “the word was **a** god.” Also, John 1:18 would have to be wrongly rendered: “**A** god no one has seen at any time.” However, as shown above anarthrous nouns may be not only ‘**qualitative**’ or ‘**indefinite**’ but 20% of them are ‘**definite**.’ To determine which, will **depend on the context** and an example is found in Acts 28:6 which is correctly translated in all versions as “a god;” and so the NWT appears to be fairly consistent (but not in John 10:33) in this aspect of translation according to each relevant context. Nevertheless, this does not make the rendering “a god” in John 1:1 correct because, as Harner, Dixon, and Hartley have shown, the anarthrous noun here demonstrates a qualitative aspect and is neither definite nor indefinite and so not that of an identity. Indeed, according to Greek grammarian Daniel B. Wallace, by incorrectly taking *theos* as indefinite in the NWT “the theological implication would be some form of polytheism, perhaps suggesting that the Word was merely a secondary god in a pantheon of deities. (*Greek Grammar – Beyond the Basics*, p.266).

Furthermore, the Greek word order reads *kai theos en ho logos* “and god was the word.” However, this does not mean that it should be translated as: “and God was the word.” The reason is that the subject is “the word” rather than “god” because of the definite article before “word,” which does not occur before “god.” So, this word order is against the Arian rendering in the NWT of “and the Word was a god.” This Arian rendering could only be correct if the Greek word order had been ‘*kai ho logos en theos*,’ which it is not.

Therefore, taking into account the above factors concerning the word order in Greek and the fact that it is neither definite not indefinite and so does **not concern an identity, but is qualitative**, one excellent rendering is that which is found in the NEB and the REB of “*and what God was, the Word was*” although it is unnecessary to capitalize ‘word’ because there are many reasons why *ho logos* does not refer to a person (please see *Can There Be Three Persons in One God? – Why You Should Question the Trinity Doctrine*).

What the Greek Scholars Think of the Rendering of

John 1:1 in the New World Translation

Please bear in mind that these scholars, although Trinitarian, do not see an equation of *theos* and *logos* in John 1:1 so that *logos* = *theos*. This is because they take *theos* to refer to the Father. So, to present a ‘*logos* = *theos* concept’ would wrongly result in the Modalist thought that ‘the Word was the Father.’ So just as these scholars do not accept *theos* as indefinite in John 1:1, neither do they accept it as definite, as do the many amateur Trinitarians, but as qualitative.

Dr. F. F. Bruce (University of Manchester, England):

Much is made by Arian amateur grammarians of the omission of the definite article with ‘God’ in the phrase ‘And the Word was God’. Such an omission is common with nouns in a predicate construction. ‘a god’ would be totally indefensible.

Dr. William Barclay (University of Glasgow, Scotland) in *The Expository Times*, Nov, 1985:

The deliberate distortion of truth by this sect is seen in their New Testament translations. John 1:1 translated: ‘...the Word was a god’...a translation which is grammatically impossible. It is abundantly clear that a sect which can translate the New Testament like that is intellectually dishonest.

Dr. Julius R. Mantey describes the NWT rendering of John 1:1 as:

A grossly misleading translation. It is neither scholarly nor reasonable to translate John 1:1 “the Word was a god.”

Dr. Charles L. Feinberg (La Mirada California.):

I can assure you that the rendering which the Jehovah’s Witnesses give John 1:1 is not held by any reputable Greek scholar.

Dr. Paul L. Kaufman (Portland Oregon):

The Jehovah’s Witness people evidence an abysmal ignorance of the basic tenets of Greek grammar in their mistranslation of John 1:1.

THE PROBLEM WITH THE RENDERING “THE WORD WAS A GOD”

Dr. Harry A. Sturz (Chairman of the Language Department and Professor of Greek at Biola College): “Therefore, the NWT rendering: “the Word was a god” is not a “literal” but an ungrammatical and tendential translation” *The Bible Collector*, July - December, 1971 p. 12.

DENIAL OF ENDORSEMENTS OF THE NWT

The Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses has in the past quoted a few Hebrew and/or Greek scholars as endorsing the NWT. However, when some of these scholars have later discovered such quotations of their comments, they have invariably denied their support for the NWT and pointed out that they were quoted out of context by the Watchtower Organization.



43

What Should the Divine Name Mean to Christians?

The divine name is represented by the four Hebrew characters יהוה which are read from right to left in Hebrew and so are spelt as *yod he haw he* (YHWH) when presented in English. It is called the tetragrammaton which occurs **6,825+** times in the Masoretic Hebrew text; yet most translations replace the Name entirely by the word LORD. However, a few translations make a choice out of several possibilities as to how the Name should be written. One example is from Exodus 3:15:

“Jehovah (Heb. יהוה)...This is my name to time indefinite...” *NWT*.

“*Yahweh Elohim...this is my name forever. This is my title throughout every generation*” *Names of God Bible*.

“Yahweh (יהוה)...This is my name forever, and my memorial name to all generations” *NJB*.

The Meaning of the Name

Most translations render Exodus 3:14 as “I am who I am” and the interpretation is that God is saying that He is ‘the self-existent one.’ However, the Hebrew phrase *ehyeh asher ehyeh* does not carry a meaning concerning existence and so does not allow for the rendering “I Am” i.e. the self-existent one. Additionally, the Hebrew *ehyeh* is the imperfect of *qal* and so gives the meaning of “I will be.” So Aquilla’s translation from Hebrew into Greek renders it as *esomai esomai* and meaning “I shall be, I shall be.” Also, the Hebrew does not allow for the causal form “I cause to become who I cause to become” because the causative form of the verb

does not exist in Hebrew. So, the actual meaning of the name YHWH is **“I will be what I will be”** as in Moffatt and Byington, and footnotes in most other translations, and this phrase is the source or etymology of the name YHWH. However, Moffatt is incorrect when he translates YHWH as “the Eternal” because the footnote to the RSV says: “The name does not indicate God’s eternal being but **his action and presence in historical affairs.**” So, in the 2013 revision of the NWT there is now a closer to accurate rendering of Exodus 3:14 as: **“I will become what I choose to become.”**

Furthermore, a name reveals the person. Therefore, the symbol [the Name] must be associated with the **character and reputation of God**. He warns about: “...the prophets...who intend to make my people forget my name (authority, character, and reputation) by their dreams” (*Jer. 23:27*).

The Cause of the Failure to Use the Name

At the time when many of the Jews had returned to Jerusalem after the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C.E., they learned to speak and write Aramaic and lost their ability to use Hebrew. So about 460 B.C.E., according to the Talmud (Sanhedrin 21b), Ezra rewrote the Hebrew Scriptures in the square Aramaic characters yet leaving **the name in the older paleo-Hebrew script**. At about this time the Jews stopped using the name when speaking to foreigners. By the third century B.C.E., when Simon the Just was high priest, articulating the Name was reserved for use only in the temple, according to the Talmud (Yoma 39b), substitutes being used elsewhere. Yet, although the Jews had stopped saying the Name it was still written.

LXX MISTRANSLATION

When the Septuagint was produced it mistranslated Leviticus 24:16 to read: “And he that **names the name of the Lord**, let him die the death: let all the congregation of Israel stone him with stones; whether he be a stranger or a native, **let him die for naming the name** of the Lord.” In fact, the original Hebrew had said “*the one who **blasphemes** the name of the LORD (Heb. YHWH) shall be surely put to death.*” However, this threat, as a result of the mistranslation in the Septuagint, resulted in the name being substituted, so that by Jesus’ time these substitutes included: Adonai (Lord), Heaven, Father, the Blessed One, and The Power.

The Shortened Form of the Name

Exodus 15:2 gives the first of 50 occurrences in the Masoretic text of the shortened form of the Name as YH and spelt as “Yah” in the Hebrew-

English Interlinear and Rotherham's Emphasized Bible, and as "Jah" in Young's Literal, Darby, and the NWT. The shortened form is evident in the phrase "*alleluiyah*" in the Revelation 19:1-6 ("Praise Jah" in the NWT). This name continued to be used long after the error of the Septuagint translation of Leviticus 24:16 causing Jews to cease to use the full name.

Ancient Copies of the Septuagint (LXX) Contained the Divine Name

Jewish copies of this text before 150 C.E for the use of **Jewish readers** contained the Name in the square Aramaic letters. The *Septuagint Papyrus Fouad 266* dated to the first century B.C contains the tetragram in square Aramaic letters in 49 places in Deuteronomy. Also, a Qumran LXX fragment of Leviticus 2:4 contains the name. However, copies of the LXX produced for **Gentile readers** did not contain the Name but rather had substituted it with *kyrios* (Lord). There is evidence that the Septuagint was reworked from the Christian Scriptures by Gentile Christian scholars who, in later copies, replaced the divine name with *kyrios*. This reworking is the reverse of the previously held view that the apostles and disciples quoted the name from the Septuagint. If this is true then the inspiration of the Christian Greek Scriptures was fed back into the Septuagint. In reaction to this thought of Gentile tampering with the LXX three other Jewish translations of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek came into being, namely, that of Aquilla (129 C.E), of Symmachus (165 C.E.), and of Theodotian (175 C.E.). These all contain the tetragrammaton written in Hebrew characters. However, the fact that some ancient copies of the Septuagint have the divine Name has no bearing on the fact that it is not contained in the Christian Greek Scripture copies. Please see the Kingdom Interlinear Translation.



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“Jehovah” or “Lord” in the Christian Greek Scriptures?

Does Matthew's Gospel in Hebrew Prove That
His Greek Gospel Contained the Name “Jehovah”?

Ireneus, Origen (quoted by Eusebius), Eusebius himself, and Jerome all testify that Matthew may have rendered a gospel account in the Hebrew dialect i.e. a form of Aramaic. Papias (in 125 A.D.) stated: “Now Matthew compiled **the logia** in the Hebrew dialect” i.e. Aramaic. However, **there is abundant internal and external evidence that Mathew’s Gospel was originally written in Greek.** It certainly does not bear the marks of a translation from Hebrew or Aramaic. This is because it was contrary to Greek practice to name a Greek translation after the author of an original produced in another language. According to Moulton:

As a tax-collector Matthew would have been fully conversant with Greek. Although his Gospel contains Hebrew parallelism, Hebrew elaboration and his thought is Hebraic the language is colourless Hellenistic of the average type.

So, none of these facts prove that Matthew’s Greek gospel ever had ‘the Name’ in it, and all copies give evidence to the contrary.

The Conspiracy Theory That the Name Was Replaced by *Kyrios* in the Christian Greek Scripture Originals

If one examines the Kingdom Interlinear Translation (KIT) Greek text (1969 and 1985 editions) produced by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society one finds the Greek word *kyrios* (meaning ‘lord’ or ‘master’) throughout. Nowhere in this text does one find the word “Jehovah” in either Hebrew or Greek letters. So, it does seem strange that the divine name occurs over 6,800 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and then is not found in any Greek copy of the Christian Scriptures apart from Revelation 19:1, 3, 4 and 6 which contain *halleluYAH* —YAH being the shortened form of YHWH. So, the possibility is proposed by Jehovah’s Witnesses that figurative “wolves” in a time of apostasy tampered with the inspired text in both the Christian Greek Scriptures.

REASONS OFFERED FOR THE SUPPOSED CHANGE TO KYRIOS

1. Legislation on superstitions.
2. Persecution by the Romans because of the Jewish revolts in 66 C.E. and 135. Therefore, Christians would not want to appear Jewish in their writings or the copies thereof.
3. The loss of the Name accompanies the infiltration of Greek pagan philosophy.
4. **The apostasy after the apostles died.**
5. Greek Christian antipathy to things Jewish.

6. A mystical reverence for the Tetragrammaton.

Jewish Alexandrian theology and Gnostic lore was toward a Platonic nameless God as taught by Aristotle, Seneca etc. Justin Martyr (c.160) refers to: “a God who is called by no proper name.” He did not understand that the Tetragrammaton was a proper name, but thought it to be an archaic word for Lord. However, after the death of James, according to Thiede: “it was no longer necessary to show consideration for Jewish sensitivities ... Suddenly...almost at a stroke...holy names were being abbreviated in Christian papyri...when Jews and Christians were becoming estranged.” Also, Gertoux states that the: “‘nomina sacra’ was used in all Christian manuscripts after 135 C.E ... However, Jewish copyists wrote the Name in paleo-Hebrew until 250 C.E.”

Reasoned eclecticism (e.g. the NKJV is based on the Majority Text which is eclectic) is a position taken by some translators wherein they disagree with a master text in certain instances for sound reasons. So, could reasoned eclecticism be appealed to concerning *kyrios* as a substitute for the Name? Some say that the Name falls within the semantic, lexical and dictionary range of *kyrios*. However, this still does not translate what is actually contained in the Greek text. The Watchtower Society generally appeals to #4 above, that after the apostles died apostate Christians decided to replace the Christian documents with new ones that contained *kyrios* rather than YHWH.

NO EVIDENCE FOR THE THEORY

There is no genuine evidence that copyists blanked out God’s Name from the Christian Greek Scripture text. Is such tampering even really possible if **God is the guardian of His Scriptures**? If there had been any tampering with the text then why did Paul not transliterate YHWH from the Hebrew as he had done with Sabaoth? This is rendered, “Lord Sabaoth” (*Rom. 9:29 NJB*) (*kyrios sabaoth* in the KIT Greek text) = “YHWH Sabaoth” in Isaiah 1:9. Also note James 5:4. Nevertheless, the New World Translation Committee has inserted the name ‘Jehovah’ in its translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures some 237 times. Is this going beyond the mandate of a translator?

Insertion of the Name in The Christian Greek Scriptures of the NWT.

The Christian Greek Scriptures do have two Lords—the Lord God and the Lord Messiah and this seems to cause confusion as to who is being spoken of because both are simply titled “Lord.” Furthermore, if one

makes the kind of substitution that the NWT has made then how does one make the correct choice for substitution? Could doctrinal error be created by a wrong choice? Certainly, it can be reasoned that if the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures then perhaps there is justification for the inclusion of the divine name. However, there are only some 50 of these direct quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures and yet the NWT Christian Greek Scriptures contains the name 'Jehovah' 237 times, and careful analysis shows that **only 112** of the 237 'Jehovah' references come from passages in the Hebrew Scriptures. This leaves **125 which do not** come from the Hebrew Scriptures. So, is there any real evidence to back up the choice to render *kyrios* in these 125 instances as 'Jehovah'? Furthermore, the Greek word *kyrios* appears 714 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures of the NWT i.e. in KIT. It is translated 651 times as Lord in reference to Jesus; 62 times as "sir," "master," or "owner," in reference to humans other than Jesus; and 223 times as 'Jehovah'. The remaining 14 'Jehovah' references are renderings of the word 'God.'

AVAILABLE MANUSCRIPTS

There are over 5,000 extant manuscripts of the Christian Greek Scriptures. Yet for support for the word "Jehovah" the New World Translation Committee has cited only 12 Greek manuscripts and 8 early versions. In contrast to this the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament* cites 754 Greek manuscripts, 86 versions, and 149 lectionaries to support the use of the word *kyrios*. However, the Watchtower Society claims that there are a number of what they call "J" references to prove that the Name was originally in the Christian Greek Scriptures. But do they really prove this?

Usage of the 25 Hebrew Versions Called "J" References for the "Name" in the New Testament

In the Reference Edition of the 1984 revision of the *New World Translation* it is stated that:

To know where the divine name was replaced by the Greek words *kyrios* and *theos*, we have determined where the inspired Christian writers have quoted verses, passages and expressions from the Hebrew Scriptures and then we have referred back to the Hebrew text to ascertain whether the divine name appears there. In this way we determined the identity to give *kyrios* and *theos* and the personality with which to clothe them. To avoid overstepping the bounds of a

translator into the field of exegesis, we have been most cautious about rendering the divine name in the Christian Greek Scriptures, always carefully considering the Hebrew Scriptures as a background. We have looked for agreement from the Hebrew versions to confirm our rendering. (Appendix 1D, pp.1564-1565).

Support for this position is appealed to from 27 translations from the Greek into Hebrew and termed “J” references by Jehovah’s Witnesses. However, two of these are not actually Hebrew versions, i.e. J²⁰ is *Moulton and Geddon’s Concordance*, and J²¹ is *The Emphatic Diaglott*. The evidence for the use of *Kyrios* comes from manuscripts as early as 200 C.E., and generally from 300 to 400 C.E.

The ‘J’ References Do Not Support the Watchtower’s Position

However, evidence given for ‘Jehovah’ comes from **translations into Hebrew from the very same Greek manuscripts** which do not contain the name “Jehovah.” The oldest of these translations into Hebrew is J² ‘Matthew in Hebrew’ by Shem-Tob-ben-Shaprut in 1385 C.E. which uses the circumlocution “The Name” throughout rather than the Tetragrammaton. The rest of the “J” references date from 1537 to 1975. So, it appears that the New World Bible Translation Committee attributed greater authority to these Hebrew versions in their 237 ‘Jehovah’ references than to the best Greek manuscripts which universally use *kyrios*. The fact that no extant copy of the original Greek texts of the New Testament contains the divine name should have been a warning to the NWT committee that it would be going beyond the translators’ mandate from God to make such a change from the word ‘Lord.’

NOTE: J¹⁻⁴ may actually be copies and editions that come from Matthew’s Hebrew Gospel rather than translations from a Greek text as do the remainder of the “J” references.

The Trinitarian Bible Society and J¹⁸ by Salkinson and Ginsburg

Two of the Hebrew versions that are cited, namely J¹⁷ and J¹⁸, were produced by **The Society for Distributing the Holy Scriptures for the Jews**. Amazingly J¹⁸ was also published by its associated society: **The Trinitarian Bible Society**. This brings up the question of bias from such publishers in their version. Such Trinitarian Bible publishers would be drawn to attempt

to *unite* the personalities represented by the divine name (יהוה) and Kyrios i.e. Jehovah with Jesus to prove a trinity.

HOW THE WORD 'JEHOVAH' IS USED IN J¹⁷ and J¹⁸

“...provided you have tasted that the Lord is kind”

(1 Pet. 2:3 quoting Ps. 34:8).

“Taste and see that Jehovah (יהוה) is good” (Ps. 34:8).

Yet the Hebrew version translates this verse as:

“If so be ye have tasted that [our] Lord (Heb. *adonenu*) is gracious.”

So, a Hebrew version used by the New World Translation Committee to support the rendering ‘Jehovah’ translates the Greek word *kyrios* as the Hebrew *adonenu*. In doing this it clearly identifies Jesus with Jehovah of Psalm 34:8. Evidently the NWT committee broke its own rule of having “no other recourse,” because of the clear reference to Jesus in 1 Peter 2:3, by failing to translate it using the word ‘Jehovah’ when the original Hebrew text has ‘Jehovah.’

THE TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY’S USE OF haAdhon IN THEIR TEXT

The Hebrew title *haAdhon* means “the Lord” or “the sovereign lord” according to the NW Translation committee and applies only to ‘Jehovah’ as does *adhonai*. Nevertheless, the translators of both J¹⁷ and J¹⁸ have frequently used *haAdhon* to identify the Lord Jesus. E.g. from J¹⁸:

“The Lord (*haAdhon in the Hebrew text*) is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon” (*Luke 24:34*).

“That the Lord (*haAdhon*) Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread” (*1 Cor.11:23*).

“But I will come to you shortly if the Lord (*haAdhon*) (NWT has ‘Jehovah’) wills” (*1 Cor.4:19*).

“And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (*haAdhon*), to the glory of God the Father” (*Phil. 2:11*).

In all these cases the Trinitarian Bible Society is claiming that Jesus is Jehovah by wrongly translating *kyrios* as *haAdhon*, and once again the New World Translation Committee has not followed its own rule in these instances. From 1 Corinthians alone, *haAdohn* appears 19 times in J¹⁷. Of these, in the NWT, it is translated as ‘Lord’ 16 times and as ‘Jehovah’ only 3 times. All of this inconsistency and selectiveness in translating the texts shows the NWT committees’ mistake in not simply following the extant Greek texts from which we have the Christian Scriptures and which give *kyrios* and *theos* and which never use the tetragrammaton.

Further Analysis of the Hebrew Versions

In 1 Corinthians 4:19, 10:9, 21 (twice), 22, and 11:32, the Hebrew versions do not agree regarding the translation of *kyrios* to יהוה. At 1 Corinthians 10:9, and 11:32, there are only three versions that actually use יהוה. In three other instances, there is agreement between only four Hebrew versions. This, therefore, means that the remaining 22 versions do not contain the tetragrammaton. Furthermore, in the three accounts in J¹⁸ and J¹⁷ of Saul's conversion in Acts 9, 22, and 26 the word "lord" is rendered in Hebrew as *haAdhon* and applies only to "Jehovah" Acts 9:1, 2, 10-17). Translated literally, these Hebrew texts are saying, "Jehovah God said 'I am Jesus.'" So, one must ask where was the integrity of the NWT translation committee when it used these very distorted Hebrew versions of the Christian Scriptures and then to have been selective in their use after having stated that they have a policy of consistent translation—all for the purpose of adding the name 'Jehovah' to the text whilst maintaining a theological position. Really the evidence from other early versions should only be sought so as to corroborate what is already certain from the primary extant texts. In the case of the 'divine name' it is simply not in those Greek texts. Yet the NWT committee has given precedence to these "J" references over the known ancient Greek texts from which each Hebrew version was translated and distorted. Clearly, the NWT translation committee has changed what the Christian Greek Scriptures actually say, and for theological reasons. Evidently this part of the Bible does not contain God's name (other than the shortened form in Revelation 19 i.e. "Jah").

It Is Possible That Jesus Spoke the Name When Quoting the Hebrew Scriptures?

When Jesus quoted passages some 18 times either from the Hebrew text or the Septuagint text, he likely used God's name with his hearers. However, because there is no proof of this in any extant manuscript, the Name cannot legitimately be entered in any translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures until such time as an original or a very early copy containing the Name is discovered. However, the biblical evidence is that Jesus used the term "Father" and the commonly used **periphrastics** for the name of God e.g. "Heaven" in Luke 15:18 and "Power" at Mark 14:61, 62. This is similar to when the High Priest used the term "The Blessed One" in the same verses. (Please see *Hard Sayings of the Bible* F.F. Bruce). Yet, this does not mean that Jesus did not on some occasions use the divine name—but if he did it was never recorded.

What Are the Chances of the Existence of an Ancient Copy Containing the Divine Name?

- The very **randomness** of the production, geographical dispersion, and the preservation of the copies of the Christian Greek Scriptures means that the chances of **all** of these copies being replaced with copies without the divine name, according to the conspiracy theory, are so remote as to be nil.
- For there to have been such an intention by apostate Christians to eradicate the Name they would have had to have the co-operation of **all** the faithful Christians.
- Christians were never party to wilful destruction of manuscripts. These were so precious to them that they did their best to preserve them as is evident in the 5,000 copies that are available today.
- It would have been impossible to gather **all** existing manuscripts containing the Name so as to consign them to destruction **at a single time**.
- If such destruction and/or replacement had been accomplished over a period of time there would have been a mix of manuscripts with some using the Name and others using the word *kyrios*. Then newer copies would also have been made from the ones containing the Name so that it would never go out of circulation and still be available today.

Indeed, there is no trace in any records or manuscripts that such a removal of manuscripts containing the Name and replacement with manuscripts containing *kyrios* ever took place. Now because John wrote his three letters at least thirty years after the other Christian Scripture writers he, certainly, would have written a warning to Christians concerning any wrong replacing of the Name. Evidently, he did not do so. Indeed, if there had been an issue concerning a conspiracy to remove the Name and replace it with *kyrios* one would wonder why this issue was never raised by the faithful second and third century Christians, some of whom were prolific writers; yet, there is no record of such concern in the writings of Justin Martyr (110-165), Irenaeus (120-202), or Polycarp who had been taught by the apostle John. Furthermore, whenever any of these writers quoted texts from the Christian Greek Scriptures where the NWT has 'Jehovah' their quotes have "Lord." This is also true of even all later Christian writers. Furthermore, 18 more recently available and even more ancient Greek manuscripts were not available to the NWT committee in 1950 when they produced their Christian Greek Scriptures. At all 63

places where the NWT has “Jehovah” every one of these manuscripts has the word *kyrios*. So, the statement of the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses that eventually manuscripts would be discovered that have the name ‘Jehovah’ has not been born out in sixty years with even one occurrence of the Name in a Greek text.

Regarding the idea of the Name as being in the N.T. the Watchtower Organization appeals to the work of George Howard of the University of Georgia and yet it rejects Howard’s statement that it is **a theory** when he says:

“In the following pages we will set forth **the theory** that the divine name יהוה (and possible abbreviation of it, was originally written in the N[ew] T[estament] quotation of and allusions to the O[ld] T[estament] and that in course of time it was replaced with the surrogate KS [abbreviation for *kyrios*,”Lord”]. Quoted from the *New World Translation Reference edition*, 1984, p.1564.

Problems Created by Insertion of ‘The Name’ in the New Testament

On page 153 of his book *The Tetragrammaton and the Christian Greek Scriptures* L. Lundquist makes the following points of logic:

- Because the Kingdom Interlinear Translation has *kyrios* (meaning Lord) and the NWT has ‘Jehovah’ in the relevant places this is a simultaneous endorsement of two contradictory assertions.
- Because the Watchtower Society insists on the presence of the name ‘Jehovah’ in the Christian Greek Scripture section of the NWT, “we must then concede that Hebrew translations based on early Greek manuscripts carry greater weight than do these same Greek manuscripts themselves.” Clearly, this is circular reasoning.

Lundquist’s conclusion is that: “To bring the Tetragrammaton into the Christian Greek Scriptures requires that we deny the inspiration and authority of the Greek Scriptures themselves and seek a higher authority in the Hebrew translations.”

Likely Reason for the Name Never Being in the NT Autographs

JESUS INHERITS HIS FATHER’S NAME I.E. HIS AUTHORITY

Yeshua means “YHWH is salvation” and so demonstrates God’s entire

character. However, in the Bible record no-one ever addressed Jesus by the name *Yeshua* or even Jesus. The record shows him addressed with the Greek name *Iesou* which via Latin has been anglicised as Jesus. However, the name “Jesus” is recorded in the same proportion in the Christian Greek Scriptures as the name YHWH is recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures. So, God’s name (authority) is now attached to Jesus so that through him God’s redemptive purpose finds its fulfilment: “*For as many as the promises of God are, they have become ‘yes’ in him*” (2 Cor. 1:20 based on KIT). This may indicate why God causes attention to be focused on His Son. The

Father has invested in Jesus full power and authority to act in His name (Matthew 28:18). Indeed, “*...all should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He that does not honour the Son does not honour the Father*” (John 5:23). This is because, as Jesus said, “*all authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth*” (Matt. 28:18). Yes, God, “*...gave him the name [authority] that is above every other name*” (Phil. 2:9) which is why Jesus prayed concerning, “*...your own name [authority] which you have given me*” (John 17:11). Even compared to the angels Jesus, “*...has inherited a name more excellent than theirs*” i.e. the authority of his Father (Heb. 1:4) so that there is, “*...no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12).



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Addressing God in the Christian Greek Scriptures

Jesus Always Addressed God Only as “Father”

There is no record that Jesus ever addressed God as Yehoweh/Jehovah/Yahweh but used Father as a term of respect as any son would.

“I publicly praise you, Father...Yes, O Father...” (Matt. 11:25, 26).

“My Father, if it is possible, let...” (Matt. 26:39).

“Abba, Father, all things are possible to you” (Mark 14:36).

“Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit” (Luke 23:46).

“Father the hour has come” (John 17:1).

“Holy Father watch over them” (John 17:11).

“Righteous Father the world has...” (John 17:25).

JESUS ONLY DIRECTED HIS DISCIPLES TO ADDRESS GOD AS “FATHER”

“Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified...” (Matt. 6:9), and by example as above.

WHEN JESUS SPOKE OF GOD HE SAID “MY FATHER” OR “MY GOD”

“I am going my way to the Father...” ... “I am ascending to my Father...and to my God” (John 14:12; 20:17).

“If, now, God thus clothes the...” ... “My God, my God...”

(Matt. 6:30; 27:46).

JESUS AND PAUL SPOKE OF GOD AS BEING THE FATHER OF OTHERS

*“...give glory to **your Father**”...“as your heavenly Father is perfect”...“Your Father who is looking on in secret”... “Your Father knows you need these things” (Matt. 5:16, 48; 6:4; Luke 12:30).*

*“...we cry out: **Abba, Father**” (Rom. 8:15). In fact, the Christian Greek Scriptures refer to God as Father about 260 times!*

Jesus Highlighted God’s Name i.e. His Attributes and Authority

Statements such as, *“in the name of [authority of] a prophet” (Matt. 10:41 KIT)* and *“baptizing them in the name of [authority of] the holy spirit” (Matt. 28:19)* involve no personal name. Neither is this the case in the following texts:

*“Let **your name** be sanctified” means “May **you** be revered”*

(Matt. 6:9).

“Father glorify your name” means “Father glorify yourself”

(John 12:28).

So, when Jesus prays: *“I have made your name manifest” (John 17:6)* he is referring to God’s character and reputation as being made known rather than a personal name. (Also see John 17:11,26 and Rev. 3:12).

The Christian Greek Scripture Writers Highlighted God’s Attributes and Authority

The same is true in the later parts of the New Testament where Peter shows that “name” means authority, reputation, and character as in: *“a people for his name” means “a people for himself” (Acts 15:14 NIV)* and, *“...people who are called by my name” means “people that have been declared mine” (Acts 15:17 Byington)* and, *“public declaration to his*

name” means “publicly affirm their faith in him” (*Heb. 13:15 Barclay*).

Also, John and the writer of Hebrews show the same when they state that, “...it was in behalf of his name [*as His representatives*] that they went out” (*3 John 1:7*) and “I will declare **your name** to my brothers...I will praise **you**” (*Heb. 2:12*) as in Hebrew parallelism.

Summary of Details Concerning the “Name”

- The Name appears as יהוה (YHWH) in all of its 6,825+ occurrences in the Hebrew Scriptures., yet it must be presented in translations in a way that English readers can read it.
- The literal Name is to be associated with the character, reputation and authority of God.
- God has made His name known as YHWH. It was important to Him from the time of Moses until at least the time of Malachi.
- Scholars of the past did not think the Name is unpronounceable.
- Jewish versions of the Septuagint in Jesus’ time contained the Name.
- Matthew wrote his original Gospel account in Greek and used the word “lord” throughout. From this original he may have translated it into Hebrew.
- Matthew’s Gospel **was not a translation from Hebrew into Greek** because it does not bear the marks of a translation. This is because it was contrary to Greek practice to name a Greek translation after the author of an original produced in another language.
- It is virtually impossible that the Name appeared in the Christian Greek Scripture originals. It defies logic for it to have been replaced in such a short time. This conclusion would only be discounted if an original or a very early copy containing the Name were discovered.
- There is no real evidence either way as to whether or not Jesus and his disciples spoke the Name.
- The New World Translation committee was wrong to have inserted the name Jehovah in its translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures on the basis of a set of later Hebrew translations from the Greek copies which do not contain the name. This is a denial of the inspiration and authority of the Greek Scriptures themselves and gives greater authority to the Hebrew translations.”
- Yet translations, such as the NWT, which wrongly substitute *Kyrios* for the Name (237 times) in the New Testament are no worse than those which substitute the Name for *Kyrios* (6,825+ times) in the Hebrew Scriptures. Both practices are wrong.

- As with the Jewish institutions that have been superseded, so, too, the Christian Greek Scriptures appear to have superseded the Hebrew with regard to the Name.
- We do not certainly know why the copies of the New Testament writings do not have the Name.
- The most likely scriptural reason is that Jesus inherits his Father’s name i.e. all of His authority. Therefore, God causes all attention to be focused on His Son as the bearer of the Name i.e. God’s authority.
- Many quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures applying to God are applied to Jesus in the Christian Greek Scriptures. This is because he has been given all the prerogatives of God as God’s primary agent. Yet this does not make him ‘Jehovah.’
- Jesus always addressed and referred to God as “Father” and instructed his disciples to do the same.

Indeed, there is no proof, that the Name was entered in the New Testament originals (autographs). Hence **to enter the Name in the New Testament would be going beyond the translators’ mandate from God. We must follow the example of Jesus by addressing God as “Father.”** Nevertheless, it is perfectly proper to use the divine name in other writing or speech rather than falling into the bad habit that the Jews fell into after the writing of the Septuagint. The problem for the modern-day Christian is in knowing which pronunciation is correct or is the closest approximation. Should it be the Hebrew name Yahweh or Yehowah, in spite of the fact that all other names in the Hebrew Scriptures have been Latinized and then anglicized, or should it be the form via Latin which was anglicised to ‘Jehovah.’

Although, as some have argued, it is true that it is impossible to have a deep relationship with a god who has no name, Jesus gave Christians the perfectly good substitute in calling God “Father” and so to be in intimate relationship with Him. Yet, those who simply address Him as ‘God’ are using a title and failing to follow Jesus’ lead on this matter for a close relationship.

The one final problem is: how, in the Christian Greek Scriptures (correctly rendered without the word ‘Jehovah’), does one distinguish the Lord God from the Lord Jesus Messiah on those occasions when only the single term “Lord” is used for both? The answer is that in Paul’s writings *kyrios* always applies to Jesus. As for the remaining occurrences, by far the majority of these apply to Jesus and are easily seen in context. These include Hebrew Scriptures passages which contain the name ‘Jehovah,’ but have been applied to Jesus. Nevertheless, those in the Christian Greek

Scriptures which apply to the Lord God must be carefully examined according to the context.



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Summary of Factors Concerning the New World Translation

Perhaps the most incorrect features of the NWT are:

1. The insertion of the name “Jehovah” 237 times (with no legitimate basis) rather than “lord” (Gk *kyrios* in KIT) and so causing confusion with Jesus on some occasions. This goes beyond the mandate for a translator i.e. adding to the Scriptures (Rev. 22:18, 19). There are numerous faults in the explanation given in the KIT because there is no valid evidence that the early Greek text was tampered with.
2. The very Gnostic rendering of Roman 8:23 as “release...from the body.”
3. The christologically distorted rendering of John 1:1 as “a god.”

Additionally, some renderings seem strongly biased toward the Watchtower’s own overly complex eschatology with a two-stage invisible return of Christ, especially by rendering *parousia* as “presence” and then interpreting it as an invisible presence; rather than correctly rendering it as “coming,” advent, arrival, or “coming to be present.”

Certainly, it is a very deceptive thing when the simple change of a word notably creates a change to the meaning of a sentence, so that one arrives at a wrong conclusion and therefore, a wrong belief. This is obvious dishonesty. Such changes should only occur when there are significant or even overwhelming textual and contextual reasons for such renderings or when there are legitimate expansions of the Greek words into phrases to give their full meaning in English. Otherwise there is a subtle form of manipulation of the reader’s mind. The sad thing is that the membership of the Jehovah’s Witnesses is led by the Governing Body to believe that their translation is the best and that it is virtually faultless; whereas, although very accurate in many ways, it is a translation that can lead to

certain false beliefs. However, there are, of course, no perfect translations because all carry the bias (usually Trinitarian) of their translators. Indeed, many paraphrased Bibles are very much worse than the NWT and deserve even greater criticism.



Appendices

Appendix A

“Jehovah’s Witnesses” as a Name for Christians

Is the name “Jehovah’s Witnesses” appropriate as a name for Christians? As said in the introduction to this book the original followers of Charles Taze Russell were called Bible Students. This name continued under the second president of the Watchtower Society, Joseph Rutherford, until 1931 when he chose the name ‘Jehovah’s Witnesses’ for the members of the Organization. He made this choice, apparently rather hastily, based on the thought expressed in Isaiah 43:10, “*You are my witnesses, ’ is the utterance of Jehovah*” (*Isa. 43:10 ASV*). However, this really was a poor choice, firstly because this is a phrase showing a function rather than an actual name and secondly, if one reads the context of Isaiah 43, this utterance in verse 10 was said to Israelites who were **condemned** according to verse 22 because: “*you have not called on me, O Jacob, because you grew weary of me, O Israel.*” The passage continues to reveal Israel’s many **failures**. So, to use this phrase as a name for Christians would associate them with rebellious Israelites and not provide a good picture of the JWs. A third reason that this is a poor choice of name is because it is based on the completely uncertain pronunciation of God’s personal name.

Mispronunciation of God’s Personal Name

In using Jewish sources, the Spanish Dominican monk **Ramundus Martini** in his book *Pugeo Fidei* in 1270 used the spelling of God’s

personal name as **Yohouah** (Iohouah). Later the spelling and pronunciation **Iehouah** (Heb. Yehouah) was first fully recognized by **Pietro Galatino** (1460-1540). Indeed, Michael Servetus, in 1531, concurred with this pronunciation, but then the German scholar **Sebastian Münster** used a Latinized form as **Iehovah** after which William Tyndale (1530s) used this form as did the first copies of the 1611 KJV.

NOTE: No letter J existed in any language until the 15th century but came later from French into the English language.

In general society, personal names are not translated from one language to another e.g. the French name Michel is rarely translated into or spoken of in English as Michael. Also, the biblical name “Satan” is never translated from one language to another. So, too, **with the divine name as being the most important**, one would imagine that translation would be less favoured than **transliteration** and such transliteration results in the name Yahweh or similar. However, all other Bible names have been Latinized and then anglicised and that is what people are used to.

TWO SYLLABLES OR THREE?

One of the initial problems in any attempt to get close to the correct pronunciation is to determine how many syllables there should be in the English rendering—Yahweh or Yehowah. Leading Hebraist Rudolf Kittel felt that Yehowah was the correct Hebrew pronunciation. George Buchanan felt that it should be Yahowah. (Yet there is a difficulty with this because it inverts the Hebrew letters and also the word *howah* means “disaster,” so that Yahowah would mean “Yah is disaster”). The use of three syllables is promoted because the many theophoric names (names that incorporate part of the divine name) are all three syllable words e.g. Yehoram. Yet this in itself is not proof of three syllable pronunciation of God’s name and the current weight of scholarship favours the pronunciation Yahweh as shown by the following authorities: “The true pronunciation was never lost. Several early Greek writers of the Christian church testify that the name was pronounced **Yahweh.**” *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, p.680. “The original pronunciation of which is well attested as Yahweh.” *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*. “The pronunciation Yahweh is indicated by transliteration into Greek *Iaouee.*” *Erdmann’s Bible Dictionary*. Additionally, Professor of Semitic Linguistics at Tel Aviv University, Anson Rainey notes: “I mention the evidence (for Yahweh) from Greek papyri found in Egypt. The best of these is **Iaouee**. Also, Clement of Alexandria said ‘...the tetragrammaton is pronounced Iaouee...’”

COULD THE HEBREW ‘YEHOWAH’ (pronounced Yehouah) BE CORRECT?

However, other scholars and authorities have their legitimate reasons for believing the name in Hebrew to be Yehowah (Anglicized via Latin into *Jehovah*). For instance, the Hebrew letters for Y H W are **used as vowels** as well as consonants, so that the letter Y sounds as I and E, H sounds as H in the middle and aspirated at the end like A, and W sounds as O and U. This gives a pronunciation of IHUA which is similar to **Iehouah** as proposed first by Pietro Galatino in the 1500s, thereby giving a three-syllable name. Furthermore, some scholars demonstrate that there are problems with the choice of **Yahweh**/Yahvé which may be of Samaritan origin or is really hypothetical because it is based on the Greek form “Iabe” and on grammar rather than on biblical explanation. So, it seems that there **must be some uncertainty about the pronunciation of the name.**

THE CLAIM THAT ‘JEHOVAH’ HAS THE VOWEL POINTS OF ‘ADONAI’

This claim has been made for over 400 years. However, from an analysis of both words and connected forms it is evident that this claim is incorrect because the “simple *shewa*” in Yehovah and the *hatef patah* in Adonai are not the same points.

Nevertheless, the important point here is that it was perhaps rather foolish of Joseph Rutherford to have chosen a name for Christians that is in a context reflecting the failures of God’s people, the Israelites, as well as its being based on God’s name with all of the uncertainty regarding its pronunciation. Certainly, it would be wrong to say that the word “Jehovah” is the English translation from the Hebrew of the Name. Indeed, all of this information leads me to conclude that, on balance, it is more likely that the Name was a two-syllable name and that “Yahweh” is the closer pronunciation.

Legitimate Biblical Names for Christians

Throughout the Christian Greek Scriptures there are several names used to refer to the body of Christians. These are:

“Christians” (*Acts 11:26, 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16*).

“Congregation [or Assembly] of God” (*1Cor.1:2, 10:32 and 15:9*).

“Congregation [or Assembly] of the Firstborn” (*Heb. 12:23*).

“Congregations [or Assemblies] of Christ” (*Rom. 16:16*).

“The Way” (*Acts 24:14, 22*).

This is not to say that other similar names are not legitimate.



Appendix B

Groups That Have Broken Away from the Watchtower Organization

There was an early split during the life of Charles Taze Russell and a number of splits immediately after his death and then several in later times. Most of the earlier groups have held to the teachings of Russell and trace their origin to him and denounce Jehovah's Witnesses as not tracing their origin to him. In response to this Jehovah's Witnesses call all of these groups "the evil slave" class. They are:

1. **New Covenant Believers.** This was formed in 1909 by former Society secretary-treasurer E. C. Henninges, the Australia branch manager of the International Bible Students Association. These are also called Free Bible Students and are based in Melbourne.
2. **The Pastoral Bible Institute.** This was founded in 1918 by former directors of the Watchtower Society. It is now defunct but still publishes *The Herald of Christ's Kingdom*, first edited by R. E. Streeter and now with only an editorial committee publishing the magazine.
3. **Berean Bible Institute.** This formed in 1918 in Australia and publishes *The Voice and the People's Paper* magazine. Membership is estimated to be less than 100.
4. **StandFast Bible Students Association** of Portland Oregon. This was formed in 1919 after Charles E. Heard and others had a pacifism issue with Rutherford over purchase of war bonds, which they considered to be wrong.
5. **Laymen's Home Missionary Movement.** This was founded by Paul S. L. Johnson in 1919. He believed he had been appointed by God as Russell's official spiritual successor. Johnson's death in 1950 led to the formation of new splinter groups, such as the **Epiphany Bible Students Association**, and the **Laodicean Home Missionary Movement**.

6. **Christian Millennial Fellowship.** This was formed in 1928 by the Italian Bible Students Association in Hartford, Connecticut after their break with the Watchtower. In 1940 they began publishing *The New Creation, a Herald of God's Kingdom* magazine and later relocated to New Jersey, forming branches in Australia, Austria, England, Ghana, Germany, India, Italy, Japan and Romania. However, eventually they discarded most of Russell's writings and joined the "New Covenant Bible Students" as "Free Bible Students."
7. **Dawn Bible Students Association.** This is the largest of the Bible Student movements. It was formed in 1931 when Norman Woodworth, cousin of C. J. Woodworth resumed publication of Russell's *Studies in the Scriptures*, which the Watchtower Society had ceased to publish in 1927. Their magazine is entitled *Dawn—A Herald of Christ's Presence*. In recent times some have distanced themselves from some of Russell's teachings. In 1974, a splinter group was formed called **Independent Bible Students**.
8. **The Goshen Fellowship.** This was formed by Jesse Hemery in England in 1951. He had been the overseer of the Watchtower's British Isles branch office, appointed by Russell in 1901 and holding that post until 1946.
9. **The True Faith Jehovah's Witnesses Association.** This was formed by Romanian Witnesses after their isolation during the communist era when there was little communication with the Watchtower Society. Evidently this involved a difference of opinion about procedures or in doctrine.

NOTE: The history of Jehovah's Witnesses may be read in the Watchtower produced book *Jehovah's Witnesses - Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*, although there are certain important omission concerning the splits, and a certain gloss and prejudice has been put upon some events.



Appendix C

Jehovah's Judgment When Uniformity

Replaces Truth

Although the Watchtower Society would, no doubt, apply the following words of Isaiah to the churches of Christendom, it is evident from the above widely available information as related in this book that these statements made in the book of Isaiah could easily be applicable to the Governing Body of the Watchtower Society itself, at least in a secondary way. Isaiah prophesies concerning “the stubborn sons” that:

“...they are a rebellious people, deceitful sons, Sons who are unwilling to hear the law of Jehovah.

They say to the seers, ‘Do not see,’ And to the visionaries, ‘Do not tell us truthful visions. Tell us flattering things; envision deceptive illusions. Turn aside from the way; deviate from the path. Quit putting before us the Holy One of Israel.’”

Therefore this is what the Holy One of Israel says: “Since you reject this word And you trust in fraud and deceit And you rely on these, So this error will be for you like a broken wall, Like a bulging high wall ready to fall. It will crash suddenly, in an instant.

It will be broken like a large potter’s jar, So completely smashed that no fragment among its pieces will be left To rake the fire from the fireplace Or to scoop water from a puddle” (Isa. 30:9-14).

Certainly, the members of the Governing Body put themselves in place of Jehovah by simply using His name as a reference for the Organization. This Governing Body does not want to hear about “truthful visions” but only wants to hear “flattering things; envision deceptive illusions.” Furthermore, it is evident that they “trust in fraud and deceit.” For all of this and more it is clear that Jehovah will judge them to their destruction!



Appendix D

Watchtower 1947 Condemnation of Excommunication

The following Awake magazine condemned the Catholic Church for the practice of disfellowshipping stating that:

“The authority for excommunication, they claim, is based on the teachings of Christ and the apostles as found in the following

scriptures: Matthew 18:15-18; 1 Corinthians 5:3-5; Galatians 1:8,9;1 Timothy 1:20; Titus 3:10. But the Hierarchy's excommunication, as punishment, and "medicinal" remedy (Catholic Encyclopedia), finds no support in the scriptures. In fact, it is altogether foreign to Bible teachings—Hebrews 10:26-31...Thereafter, as the pretensions of the Hierarchy increased, the weapon of excommunication became the instrument by which the clergy attained a combination of ecclesiastical power and secular tyranny that finds no parallel in history. Princes and potentates that opposed the dictates of the Vatican were speedily impaled on the tines of excommunication and hung over persecution fires" *Awake* 1947 1/8 p.27.

Just five years after this publication this very practice of disfellowshipping as "foreign to Bible teachings" began to be instituted by the Watchtower Society against their members who did not follow Watchtower policies and teachings.



Suggested Reading and Presentations

Crisis of Conscience Raymond Franz
In Search of Christian Freedom Raymond Franz
Captives of a Concept Don Cameron
Thirty Years a Watchtower Slave William J. Schnell
Jehovah's Witnesses and the United Nations Tami Dickerson
Jehovah's Witnesses and the Third Reich M. James Penton
Spiritual Food at the Proper Time Randall Watters
 (This gives the most comprehensive list of dates set by the Watchtower Society). Available from Freeminds.org
Thus Saith Jehovah's Witnesses Randall Watters
Understanding Mind Control Among Jehovah's Witnesses ...
 Randall Watters
Three Dissertations on the Teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses
 Greg Stafford (*Elihu Books*)

<i>Possession and Persuasion</i>	Robert Hach
<i>Combating Cult Mind Control</i>	Steve Hassan
<i>Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism</i>	Robert Lifton
<i>Brainwashing – The Science of Thought Control</i>	Kathleen Taylor
<i>Twisted Scriptures</i>	Mary Alice Chrnalogar
<i>Exegetical Fallacies</i>	D. A. Carson
 <i>The Birth of Christ Recalculated</i>	 Ernest L. Martin
 <i>The Tetragrammaton and the Christian Greek Scriptures</i>	 L. Lundquist
 <i>The Name of God Y.eH.oW.aH Which is Pronounced as it is Written ...</i>	 Gérard Gertoux

YOUTUBE PRESENTATIONS

Berean Pickets with Eric Wilson
 Spirit Analyser with Jon Leger
 Stop the Shunning with Bethany Leger
 JW Critical Thinker with JT and Lady Cee
 The John Cedars Channel with Lloyd Evans
 JWfacts with Paul Grundy
 JWvictims
 KimMikey

WEBSITES AND WEBPAGES

AJWRB... Advocates for Jehovah’s Witness Reform on Blood.
 Research on the Watchtower <http://Corior.blogspot.com> (especially ‘Notes on the Proclaimers book’).
 Freeminds.org/psychology/shunning.
 Jehovah’s Witness Report
 JWfacts.com
 JWleaks
 JWsurvey
 Silent Lambs
 Watchtower documents.org (Barbara Anderson).
 Watchtower Examination
 Watchtower Society Archive



SUBJECT CONCORDANCE

THE ORGANIC RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

God Did Not Create A Controlling Organization

Num. 12:7; Josh. 23:2; Judges 21:16; Hos. 13:11; Acts 5:27-29; Heb. 1:1.

Christians Are to Obey Jesus

Matt. 28:18, 20; Luke 9:35; John 16:13; 6:68; Acts 4:12; 16: 6, 7; 1 Tim. 2:5; Jude 3, 17.

Servant Leadership Is Not Authoritarian

Luke 22:25-26; 2 Cor. 1:24; Gal. 1:1, 12; Heb. 13: 17.

THE BLOOD TRANSFUSION ISSUE

Texts Used by the Watchtower Society

Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:12-14; Acts 15:29, 21:25.

Noachian Covenant Refers to Living Animals

Gen. 9:1-17.

Blood and Fat Refer to Life

Lev. 3:2-4, 8-15, 17:10b-11; Deut. 14:21; 2 Sam. 23:15-16.

Mosaic Covenant Not Applicable to Christians

Mark 2:27, 28; Rom. 2:14, 7:6; Gal. 5:4; Eph. 2:12; Col. 2:13, 14.

Jesus' View – Pichuach Nefesh (Life Supersedes Commandments)

Mark 3:4-5, 7:15, 19b; Luke 6:2-4.

WATCHTOWER'S DISFELLOWSHIPING POLICY

Denial of House Fellowship

Acts 2:42, 46; Rom. 16:3-5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philemon 2.

Gaining One's Brother, But What If It fails

Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:5; Col. 1:13; 2 Cor. 2:6, 7; 1 Tim. 5:20.

Biblical Reasons for Disfellowshipping

1 Cor. 5:1, 2, 5, 11, 13; 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:19, 20; 2 Tim. 2:17, 18; 2 John 7, 9-11.

Wrong Attitudes in Disfellowshipping

3 John 9-11; Phil 4:5.

Reporting on one's Brothers

Lev 5:1; John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2.

No Secretive Judicial Committees

Deut. 16:18; Matt.18:17; Luke 22:54; John 18:24; 2 Cor. 2:6, 7; Col 2:14.

Rejecting a False Teacher

Matt. 7:22-23; 16:12; Rom. 16:17, 18; 2 Tim. 2:16; Titus. 3:10-11; 2 John 1:7, 9.

WATCHTOWER'S SHUNNING POLICY

Texts Misused to Promote Shunning

1 Cor. 5:9-11, 13; 2 Thess. 3:6-10; 14-15; 2 John 7, 9-11.

Eating with Unbelievers

1 Cor.10:27.

Prayer in Relation to Sinners

Ps. 109:2, 7; Prov. 28:9; Matt. 5:44.

Helping Sinners

2 Cor. 2:6-8; Gal. 6:1 (UBS Interlinear also KIT); Jas 5:19, 20.

The Unchristian Practice of Shunning

Matt. 5:9; 5:43, 44, 47-48; 9:10-13; 13:28-30; 18:12; Luke 6:36; 10:19-37; 15:11-52; John 8:7; Col. 3:13-14; 1 Thess. 5:14-15.

Shunning Is Spiritual Abuse

Isa. 65:2, 5; Matt. 7:2; Mark 7:9-13; Rom. 14:4; 1 Tim. 1:9 (KIT); 3 John 1:10.

Jesus Renders His Judgment When He Comes

Dan. 7:10, 13; 1 Cor. 4:5; 1 Thess. 1:7, 8.

For the Mistreated Person

Matt. 5:11, 12; 1 Cor. 4:3.

Mistreatment of the Sexually Abused

Deut. 19:15; 22:25-29.

REQUIREMENTS WHICH "GO BEYOND WHAT IS WRITTEN"

Ignoring Jesus' Birth

Matt. 2:7-12; Luke 1:46-55; 2:7-20; 2:25-35; 2:36-38.

Texts Misapplied to Birthdays

Gen. 40:22; Eccl. 7:1; Matt. 14:1-12.

Likely Biblical Birthday Celebrations

Job 1:4, 5 (NASB, NIV, Amp).

The Lord's Evening Meal as Arranged by the Organization

Luke 22:19-20; Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7; 1 Cor. 5:7; 10:18-21 (Lev. 7:6); 11:23-26.

Texts Misapplied to a Door to Door Ministry

Matt. 10:11-14; Luke 10:1, 5, 7; Acts 5:42; 20:20.

ESCAPING THE CULT

Unity Is Not Uniformity

1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:2-4.

Use Godly Thinking

Prov. 1:1-9; Matt. 22:37; Mark 8:33; Acts 17:10-12; Rom.14:5; 1 Cor. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:1.



Concise Studies in the Scriptures

Other paperback and Kindle books in this series by Raymond Faircloth are also available from Amazon. These are:

Vol. 1. --- *Can There Be Three Persons in One God? - Why You Should Question the Trinity Doctrine.* This new presentation was previously entitled: *God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit*. It deals with the main subject of Christianity, namely: who is God? Did Jesus literally pre-exist? Is the holy spirit a third person in an essence that makes up the God-head of a trinity? The biblical answers are shown to be that God is ONE person and that Jesus only pre-existed in God's mind, but not literally so (350 pages).

Vol. 2. --- *How God Works in Human Affairs.* This book answers such questions as: Is God really a total controller of all we think, say, and do? It also deals with the subjects of: God's foreknowledge, Christian salvation, universal salvation, and the 'once saved always saved' teaching (215 pages).

Vol. 3. --- *Delusions and Truths Concerning the Future Life.* This book answers the questions: Do people really go to heaven or hell after death? Does the Bible really teach that humans have an immortal soul? The book shows that the real future for faithful Christians is the Kingdom of God on a renewed earth (135 pages).

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Reality of Demonic Forces. This discussion on the reality of a supernatural personal Satan and real demons shows that the so-called Age of Enlightenment led Christian thinkers away from the truths concerning our most powerful enemies (122 pages).

Vol. 5. --- *Tongues Will Cease...But When?* This book examines the modern-day phenomenon of 'speaking in tongues' and compares it with the biblical record. The book also gives the biblical answer to the question on the timing for the ending of the miraculous phenomenon (158 pages).

Vol. 6. --- *When Marriage Goes Wrong...Biblical Answers on Divorce and Remarriage.* Many Christians consider that they already know the answers on this subject. However, in reading one Gospel one would conclude that Jesus allowed for no divorce. In reading another Gospel one's conclusion would contradict that because Jesus allowed for divorce if one of the partners committed adultery. In reading Paul's words on the subject there would appear to be a further inconsistency. The answer to all this confusion is to examine the entire biblical record and context, the meaning of terms used, and the known background of the times. This book helps one to get a clearer picture of God's view of this subject (214 pages).

Vol. 7. --- *Prophecies Related to the Return of Jesus.* This book examines the various approaches to prophecy with all the biblical evidence to show that a Futurist and Post-tribulation approach is the correct one. It also includes a detailed examination of the biblical information recorded by the ancient prophets so that we might have a good picture of what to expect at the time of Jesus' return. It further connects these prophecies with what Jesus himself said in his Olivet Discourse along with the end-time prophecy statements of the Apostle Paul. This is the first of two books on this subject - the second is the commentary on the entire Book of Revelation with all its connections to end-time prophecy involving Jesus' return (285 pages).

Vol. 8. --- *Messiah's Future Triumph - A Commentary on the Book of Revelation.* This book is a brief verse by verse commentary on the entire Book of Revelation (280 pages).

Vol. 9. --- *Be in Awe of Our Creator! - Exploring the Early Chapters of Genesis.* This book provides all the major avenues of evidence for the existence of a personal Creator starting with arguments from logic for His existence, His revelation of Himself, as well as proof

because of the miracle of Christ's resurrection. Further evidence is given from the world of nature through science regarding our fine-tuned Universe, our Solar System, and the many unique factors about Earth. Lastly, the world of biology/chemistry shows the incredible complexity in proteins, DNA, and cells as well as many amazing factors about animals and humans – all leading us to be in awe of our Creator! This book also shows why the neo-Darwinian hypothesis for evolution does not work and is now on the road to being discarded by a growing number of scientists. Finally, there is exploration into the “Days of Creation” and the extent of the great Flood of Noah's day (271 pages).

Vol. 10. --- *The Veil Removed by Turning to Christ - Mosaic Law OR New Covenant?* This book shows how Christians should view the Mosaic law based on all that Jesus and Paul said about it. It also shows why all Christians must be in the New Covenant and what the benefits are for those in this covenant. (161 pages).

Vol. 11. --- *Living the Christian Life According to Jesus.* This book shows what Jesus and his emissaries stated is required for a person to become a Christian, including baptism as full immersion in water and the keeping of the Lord's Supper. It also shows the many ways that love is to permeate the Christian community as well as answering concerns over whether or not women can teach in the church. For caring for the interests of the Christian community it is important to know what the role of elders and deacons is and how they are to be qualified to do this care-giving work for all members of each congregation. Two major issues which the book deals with concern that of homosexuality and that of how far Christian may go in terms of defence of self, family, and community (251 pages).

Vol. 12. --- *Christ Died for Us While We Were Still Sinners - How God, Through Christ, Dealt with Sin.* This book analyses the many models proposed over the centuries to explain why Jesus had to die i.e. the Atonement and describes the multifaceted approach that is necessary and has been put forward by N.T Wright and other skilled theologians.

Waking Up to the Distortion of Bible Teachings - Analysis of Watchtower Dogma. This book reveals the false teachings of the Watchtower Society in the areas of: the separating of true Christians into two classes, the manner of Jesus' resurrection and of his return, the date setting for his second advent in 1914, and things concerning the future hope of true Christians (300 pages).

The Kingdom of God Version - The New Testament (Third

edition). This Third Edition has been further refined for greater ease of reading and further accuracy of terms, especially in the Book of Revelation. It is a literal-idiomatic version, but without the jargon of many other versions. The significant notes at the back provide the reasons for the various word and phrase choices along with explanatory and interpretive comments which make clear that God is one person and not a triadic trinity as well as giving clarity on many other Bible teachings (502 pages).



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