DICTIONARY of JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

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OBEY/OBEDIENCE
Demands for obedience to the WTS began around 1890 when many followers of C.T. Russell began to regard his growing control over their lives as "pope-like power".

From 1920 to 1932 Rutherford reorganized the Russellites into what he called "Theocracy" i.e. rule by God. No disunity or disagreement was permitted:

> Such faithful ones refuse to recognize the rulers of this world as the "higher powers"… They obey God, and not man… All those in Christ and in the covenant, taken out as a people for the name of Jehovah, are, however, bound to be fully and wholly obedient to the great Prophet, Christ Jesus…
>
> Those who insist on following their own selfish desires and ways and on ignoring the instructions that proceed from the temple put themselves outside of the pale of God's favor. Let no one think, because he is in the truth, he is at liberty to do as he pleases. He must do as it pleases the Lord … and the Lord is dealing through his organization, and has one way of doing his work, and not many. (Jehovah 1934, 228-229)

In practice being "fully and wholly obedient to … Jesus" meant fully and wholly obedient to Rutherford.

Obey, or die soon as a gross sinner

JWs leaders claim that the commands they issue are from God and want followers to obey accordingly i.e. without hesitation or dissent:

> Some persons who have been brought into Zion and anointed have failed to see the necessity of being entirely obedient to the instructions coming to them through God's organization. They do not appreciate the fact that the Lord Jesus is the head of Zion and that the instructions come from him. Those heady ones insist on doing 'whatever is right in their own sight', and such is against the commandment of the Lord. (Jehovah 1934, 299)
>
> Why hesitate? Listen and obey! (w1984 5/1 8-10)

Demands for obedience including for more preaching are often linked to reminders that Armageddon is "rapidly approaching". The previous quote, for example, comes with this:

> For earnest Bible students the events since 1914 indicate that we are rapidly approaching that time for execution of judgement. Soon Jehovah and Christ will act to rid the earth of all gross sinners… Maybe some today hold back from a fuller participation in Christian service, even though their circumstances allow for it. For example, some may be in a position to serve as auxiliary or regular pioneers… For Christians today this is no time for hesitation. This corrupt system of things is doomed. Why, then, look back in doubt? Be ready, always, to listen and obey. (w1984 5/1 10)

In other religions people should disobey

People of other religions are told they should question their religion, disobey, and leave it:

> If you find that doctrines, when measured by the Word of God, are contrary to the Word of God, then it is certain that such teachings are lies and that they proceed from the Devil, the originator or father of lies. If you find that a doctrine or teaching is a lie, you should quickly forsake it, regardless of who teaches it or how long you have believed that teaching to be true… If you find that you have been for some time in an organization called "the church", and that such organization teaches that which is contrary to God's Word of truth, then you will have to choose whether you will remain in accord with that so-called "church" organization and its teachings or will forsake the same and rely upon the Word of God. (Riches 1935, 178-179)

In the case of the JWs religion which has more "lies" than most churches the opposite is commanded — followers should wait and be loyal. This is called "waiting on Jehovah" which in practice often means waiting all of one's life.

Obedience to God in practice means obedience to the JWs leaders

The requirement to be "wholly obedient to God" or to "the Lord" means in practice to obey the WTS and Governing Body.:

From 1929 to 1961 JWs had to "refuse to recognize the rulers of this world as the higher powers" (Romans 13) and interpret God and Jesus as the "higher powers". Any JW who studied Romans 13 carefully and insisted "the higher powers" refer to "Caesar" i.e. secular government would have been expelled. Then in 1961 the Governing Body changed the interpretation and "higher powers" referred to secular government. Anyone already expelled on this point received no apology.

Another example is "...vaccination is a direct violation of the law of Jehovah God." (g1935 4/24 471) This doctrine was discarded in 1952 when being unvaccinated hindered the travels of the JWs leaders and missionaries. Prior to 1952 open disagreement on the anti-vaccination doctrine meant expulsion from the sect.

It is clear that calls to obey God are calls to obey the JWs leaders who since 1944 are the Governing Body.

OBEY/OBEDIENCE — IS IT TO GOD?

The leaders of JWs want complete obedience and without delay or criticism:

> Some of the speculating ones are more rebellious than others, disagreeing dogmatically with the discreet slave's provisions, exalting themselves above the Lord's established channel. (w1952 2/1 81)

> If we feel sure something is wrong we will 'keep the commandment' of our Father and take whatever theocratic steps are open to us and then wait on Jehovah. We will not 'forsake our mother's teaching' by immediately beginning to criticize and find fault. We will realize that Jehovah knows what is going on in his organization, and if he is willing to permit it, who are we to insist it should be different? If we really have faith, we will know that if it is wrong he will straighten it out eventually, and we are far safer inside his organization even with these minor difficulties than we would be on the outside where only chaos and destruction await us. (w1957 5/1 284)

> What is your attitude toward directives from "the faithful and discreet slave"? Loyalty should move you to be "ready to obey." (w1981 12/1 14)

Personal decisions as free agents?

In the 1990s the Governing Body advanced the doctrine that JWs study the Bible and "follow the Bible" by their own choice.

Previously JWs often used the expression "the Society teaches" but this expression was now disallowed. The change came about when Bulgaria in return for legal recognition of the WTS required that JWs be permitted to accept blood transfusions without suffering sanctions. (See: *BULGARIA*) The Governing Body seemingly complied but then introduced the policies that:

- Every JW decides on his own initiative to follow the Bible and reject blood;

- Public announcements that someone is disfellowshipped would cease; instead they would be regarded as having disfellowshipped themselves. "Sanctions" therefore remained — transfusion-takers were defined as "disfellowshipping" themselves, and ostracized as before.

All JWs therefore pretend that they got their beliefs from personal Bible study. The Organization still makes all decisions in beliefs, policies and practice, and demands compliance, but each JW has to accept personal responsibility as if he did the research and chose to believe what he discovered.

The policy of coaching JWs to accept personal responsibility for decisions demanded of them by the Organization is seen here:

> JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES believe that their religion will last forever. They therefore anticipate serving God "with spirit and truth" for all eternity. (John 4:23, 24) As free moral agents, these Christians have made an unreserved dedication to Jehovah God and are determined to live up to it. To that end, they rely on God's Word and on his holy spirit…

> In order to avoid misunderstandings, Jehovah's Witnesses try to be careful about how they express themselves. Instead of saying, "the Society teaches," many Witnesses prefer to use such expressions as, "the Bible says" or, "I understand the Bible to teach." In this way they emphasize the personal decision that each Witness has made in accepting Bible teachings and also avoid giving the false impression that

Witnesses are somehow bound to the dictates of some religious sect…

A person who has made a dedication to Jehovah enjoys the freedom that results from guidance by God's spirit. Having made the truth his own, a Christian follows his Bible-trained conscience and relies on God's direction by holy spirit…

But as a free moral agent, each one has personally decided to declare the good news of God's Kingdom, to remain politically neutral, to abstain from blood, to avoid certain types of entertainment, and to live by Bible standards. These are not decisions forced upon them**.** They are decisions that fall within the framework of a way of life freely chosen by potential Witnesses before they ever take the step of Christian dedication…

If a Witness makes decisions on the basis of Bible counsel offered by the Governing Body, he does so of his own volition because his own study of the Bible has convinced him that this is the proper course. Each Witness is influenced by God's own Word to apply sound Scriptural counsel offered by the Governing Body, in full recognition that decisions he makes will affect his *personal* relationship with God, to whom he is dedicated… (w1998 3/15 18-22)

The claim, that JWs "rely on God's Word and on his holy spirit" and "on God's direction by holy spirit", in practice means to study WTS publication and **assume** that these exactly represent the Bible.

The claim "These decisions are not forced" but "freely chosen", imply that the threat of excommunication along with ostracism by one's friends and family members is not "force". It may not be physical force, but it is psychological/emotional coercion so traumatic that it can lead to suicide.

Not by "his own study of the Bible"

Thousands of doctrinal revisions by the Organization with all JWs changing at the same time, and occasionally all in unison reverting back to a previous belief, prove that they did not and do not "make a decision … because of his own study of the Bible".

JWs get their beliefs from WTS publications which indoctrinate them to accept religious belief and practice in harmony with the Organization. If anyone does "study the Bible" directly without the help of WTS publications and disagrees with the Governing Body, he is disfellowshipped (expelled from the sect) and ostracised by JWs.

"Personal decisions" as "free moral agents" after doing one's "own study of the Bible" is a JWs myth imposed by their Governing Body.

(See also: *ORGANIZATION*)

OBITUARIES

Some JWs, particularly those of limited mobility, do some of their "witnessing" by writing to relatives of the deceased about the resurrection. They check the obituary page of the newspaper, compare names of the deceased with the phone book, possibly check by phone that they've got the correct family, and send a letter.

OBJECT AND MANNER OF OUR LORD'S RETURN, THE (1877)

A 64-page booklet by Russell explaining Christ's invisible Second Coming.

The publication date is given variously as:

- 1878 (Convention Report 1916, 324; The Finished Mystery 1917, 386);
- 1873 (Yearbook 1975, 36);
- 1877 (Library of Congress Card);
- 1873 (The Watch Tower Publications Index 1930-1985, 916)
- 1877 (Jehovah's Witnesses Proclaimers… 1993, 47; 718)

JWs still call Russell's doctrines of the 1870s "true light of God's Word". (Divine Purpose 1959, 15) The doctrine that Jesus second coming or return was in 1874 is therefore "true light of God's Word" even though changed in 1930 to 1914!

OBJECTIONS

"Objections" are reasons householders offer for not wanting to talk to JWs such as:

- I'm too busy to talk with you today;
- I've got my own religion;
- I've got a church I go to;
- I'm just getting ready to go out;
- I'm not interested;
- Rather than bother people you should do something useful;
- You people were here just last week.

JWs rehearse common objections at their meetings and practice replies.

The "I'm just getting ready to go out" objection is likely to get the response, "I'll just leave this tract [or magazine] and we'll talk another time." A week later the JW might try, "I met

you last week but you were going out and I promised to return."

The "I'm too busy" objection might get the response, "Lots people are busy so I'll be very brief…"

"I've got my own religion" might get the reply, "It's encouraging to hear you say that since many people are atheists…"

"Do something useful" might get the reply, "There's nothing more useful than saving lives."

"I'm not interested in Jehovah's Witnesses" might get the response, "But you are interested in what's happening in the world and how it's going to affect you…"

If a householder becomes threatening the JW is trained to exit as pleasantly as possible.

OCCULT, THE
JWs stay away from the occult including astrology, horoscopes, séances, Ouija boards, necromancy, all forms of divination, fire walking, as well as all sorts of "New Age" beliefs and practices, believing these invite the demons into their minds and lives.

JWs readily believe in paranormal occurrences seeing these as proof of the existence of demons but are counselled against getting involved.

OFFER
The books or brochures offered door to door in any particular month. The WTS determines the monthly "offer" and informs congregations via the monthly meeting guide *Our Kingdom Ministry*.

OFFSHOOTS OF JWs
See: *DIVISIONS/SPLINTER GROUPS*

OLD LIGHT
"Old light" is any former WTS doctrine or interpretation which has been replaced with "new light" i.e. a new doctrine or new interpretation.

Sometimes old light becomes new light again, or new light returns to old light. Critics may call such changes a "flip flop", but to JWs it's always "the truth" or "Bible truth"..

OLD ORDER
The "old order" or "this system of things" is the current evil world dominated by Satan through his control of politics, commerce and religion, which will be destroyed at Armageddon to make way for God's "New Order" of righteousness and peace.

OLD SYSTEM/OLD SYSTEM OF THINGS
The present corrupt world dominated by Satan's political, religious and commercial organizations soon to perish at Armageddon and replaced by God's "new system" of righteousness.

OLD TESTAMENT
The Bible books from Genesis to Malachi. JWs use the term "Hebrew Scriptures" but may use the term "Old Testament" when speaking to a householder.

OLD THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY
Russellite pamphlets on various doctrinal topics — 83 were published from 1889 to 1909. Most were between two and eight pages. A few were really booklets or books going to over 100 pages rather than pamphlets.

OLD THEOLOGY BOOK HOUSE
A collection and selling centre in Minneapolis, USA for old WTS and Russellite publications, managed by Matthew Alfs. The *O.T.B.H. Newsletter* was started in April 1988 and published monthly to advertise books and auctions of books and to answer questions about the books.

OLD WORLD, THE
The present evil world which will perish at Armageddon.

ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY FOUR THOUSAND
The number of Christians who will live forever in heaven.

Members of the 144,000 who died by 1918 were "resurrected" as ghost-like beings or spirits in 1918; those who die after 1918 ascend as spirits to heaven immediately.

JWs estimate that about 50,000 were selected in the 1st century, another 50,000 in successive centuries and the final 40,000-50,000 in the Russell/Rutherford era until 1935.

The "remnant" of the 144,000 — those alive today — are the only Christians who in JWs theology can validly partake of the bread and

wine at the Memorial of Christ's death (the Lord's Supper).

Partakers numbered 36,700 in 1938 and declined steadily to 8,661 in 2000. In 1935 the partakers in the USA alone numbered 26,800.

Until 2007 JWs believed that the "door" to heaven closed in 1935 except for a few who replace JWs of the "heavenly class" who become unfaithful. However, the 36,700 in 1938 should by 2000 CE have sunk to about 500 rather than 8,661. This can be worked out from statistics used by insurance companies. In other words even if the doctrine about the 144,000 were true and the cut-off date of 1935 correct, the majority of the "remnant" alive in 2000 were frauds falsely claiming "remnant" status. Therefore the belief was revised:

> It appears that we can not set a specific date for when the calling of Christians to the heavenly hope ends. (w2007 5/1 30-31)

The New Testament, according to JWs, is written for the 144,000 and almost nothing is directly addressed to the "other sheep" or the "great crowd". However:

> Just as in ancient Israel Jehovah's laws applied also to the alien residents in their midst, so the commands given to the spiritual Israelites apply to their companions, the "great crowd"... (w1982 2/1 23)

A silly adding-up

The Bible arrives at 144,000 by adding twelve lots of 12,000. (Revelation 7) JWs believe that each lot of 12,000 is symbolic and 12 x 12,000 represents "a balanced organization". (Then Is Finished The Mystery of God 1969, 92) However, to add twelve symbolic numbers and get a literal total is silly. For 144,000 to be literal, each lot of 12,000 must also be literal. But JWs are not allowed to think that far, and if anyone does and shares his insight he'll be in trouble with the elders.

The 144,000 are said to die a sacrificial death because they, "sacrifice forever any hope of life everlasting on earth." (w1985 12/1 11) This would hardly be a sacrifice, however, since according to the Bible it is better to be with Christ than on Earth! (Philippians 1:23; John 12:26; 8:22; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 22:4)

Galatians 4:27 indicates that New Testament Christians would number far more than 144,000. Galatians 4 gives a Christian parallel to the Old Testament story of Sarah and Hagar. JWs argue that Hagar represents literal Jerusalem and the whole Israelite nation. (w1985 3/15 12). Sarah stood for "Jerusalem above" meaning God's organization in heaven. (p.14) The "children" of earthly Jerusalem were Jews and the children of "Jerusalem above" were "spirit begotten Christians".

Galatians says that the "children ... of the free woman" i.e. the "Jerusalem above" are "more numerous". (4:27, 31) In other words the New Testament Christians would outnumber the Jews who in the 1st century numbered about 4 million.

(See also: *MEMORIAL PARTAKERS*)

ONENESS OF SPIRIT

A phrase occasionally used to encourage JWs to think in agreement with the Governing Body and obey them.

ONE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTY DAYS

A period mentioned in Daniel 7:25; 12:7 and Revelation 11:1-3.

Russellites and JWs have changed the interpretation of the 1260 days at least six times:

- **1881** Counted as 1260 years from 538 to 1798, which Russell believed was the "long reign of the Papacy". (wr1881 December p.307)
- **1889** Brought forward one year and counted as 1260 years from 539 to 1799. (w1889 January-February p.1093; Studies III, 58, 63-64)
- **1930** Counted as 1260 literal days starting November 7, 1914, to the arrest order for Rutherford and other WBTS Directors on May 7, 1918. (Light I 1930, 199; Your Will Be Done On Earth 1958, 181, 331)
- **1969** Changed to run from 1914 October 4/5 to the Memorial (of Christ's death) commemorated in 1918 March 26/27. (Then Is Finished The Mystery of God 1969, 261-263)
- **1977** Changed again to run from 1914 December 28 to 1918 June 21 — i.e. from when the Russellites expected persecution to when Rutherford and six other WBTS directors were imprisoned. (Our Incoming World Government—God's Kingdom 1977, 127-133)

- **1988** Changed back to the 1969 interpretation or similar to it. The reference says, "starting from the outbreak of the first world war in the latter part of 1914 and continuing to the early part of 1918." (Revelation—Its Grand Climax Near At hand 1988, 164)

- **1993** Changed back to the 1977 interpretation. (w1993 11/1 9-10; Pay Attention to Daniel's Prophecy 1999, 142-143)

When we consider **all** of the doctrines and interpretations of JWs, not only the 1260 days, the revisions number thousands and involve every major doctrine. If it's all from the Bible — this being one of the few theological claims of JWs that has stayed constant — the Bible must be among the most self-contradicting books on Earth! Either that or the JWs leaders are religious frauds with a secret agenda to undermine the Bible and discredit Christianity.

(Investigator Magazine #107)

1000 YEARS WELL SPENT 1942-1946

A booklet written by JWs imprisoned for draft avoidance. Ray Marsh, one of the authors, left the sect in 1981.

ONE WORLD ONE GOVERNMENT (1944)

A WTS booklet describing how God will bring about "one world one government".

Humans cannot achieve one world because:

> … scientific advance has not wiped out the traditional foundations upon which racial, national and religious groups rest, and upon which their several institutions are built, and according to which these many groups live, work, think, and worship. (p.4)

Page 6 criticises the Pope's hope for "a healthier world, better directed and legally more in harmony with the needs of human nature". Page 7 rejects plans of Allied leaders to "make all the nations live in peace":

> Their imagination of "one world" with a tower of religion and with a city of centralized government as a binder was not according to God's purpose of a new world wherein dwells righteousness. (p.9)

Pages 11 to 18 compare the Vatican's and other religions joining the peace effort to prostitution (Revelation 17:1-5) and predict that "the ruling powers" will destroy all religion:

> Jehovah God will cause confusion to this modern Babylonish setup and will break it up, just as he did at the building of the tower and city of Babel. That will mark the beginning of the battle of Armageddon. (p.17)

> That destruction makes way for the complete establishment of a new world. (p.21)

Therefore, what is the JWs way to "one world" of peace? Their 1914 Kingdom:

> They should have put themselves on the side of God and of his Christ as a result of the proclamation of the Kingdom of God which has been going on since 1914. (p.17)

The alleged "kingdom" "government" is located in heaven and will rule earth via human representatives (p.21ff). It won't rule "a whole medley of politically divided states" (p.22) since they will be removed at Armageddon leaving only JWs alive:

> Vatican City and its triple-crowned king will be dashed to pieces… And all the nations of earth which do business with Vatican City and with organize religion will go down…ground to power and blown into oblivion… (p.23)

> But if all national systems of government are to pass away at Armageddon, how will order and proper relations be maintained between earth's inhabitants thereafter? In this way: The One Government will provide its visible representatives upon the earth to properly administrate the affairs of the people in harmony with Theocratic law from heaven. (25-26)

God has a "visible token" of the coming "One World" in the form of:

> …his faithful witnesses…out of all nations, kindreds and races … bearing witness to the truth of the Kingdom , the One Government of the United New World. (30-31)

Such world government is "near at hand" (p.3) and "soon upon us" (p.30).

The booklet ignores the fact that the JWs religion is more divisive than most due to its ever-changing "truth" which contributes to half of all members eventually getting out.

Also the Kingdom-Government of 1914 is based on faulty chronology, therefore is as unreal as the Kingdom of 1878. (See: *KINGDOM*)

Furthermore, if the plan is to keep preaching until Armageddon comes, but it never comes, then it amounts to a plan of preaching until world rule is gained by the WTS and GB after enough people are converted.

ONE WORLD ONE GOVERNMENT UNDER GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY (1975)
An official WTS booklet, teaching that world peace and unity is failing because nations reject God's sovereignty and don't "submissively cooperate with him".

This issue is now up for settlement:

> In our twentieth century, the world events since the outbreak of World War I in the year 1914 furnish the proof that we have reached the final and full-scale fulfillment of those words of David found in Psalm Two. Now, more than at any time in the past, the issue of divine sovereignty is up for settlement. Our personal decision on the issue will be most serious in consequences to each one of us. (p.14)

Turning to religions other than JWs, or to politics, amounts to turning to the Devil. (pp 17-19)

Pages 23-25 predict world destruction by God's Kingdom at Armageddon:

> This is the heavenly Messianic kingdom that Jehovah's Christian witnesses have been proclaiming world wide since the year of its birth in the heavens at the end of the Gentile Times in the year 1914… The fulfillment of that prophecy is now about to take place.

The "proclaiming" actually did not start "in the year of its birth". It started in the 1920s. (See: *KINGDOM*)

Worldwide destruction spares only JWs and exterminates everyone else and that is how "one world" comes about: "They will all be one human society on a cleansed earth, all of them worshipping the one living and true God…" (p.27)

Others who sought "one world" by killing everyone who disagreed with them were Mongols, Nazis, and Communists!

OPEN LETTERS
Since the 1980s former JWs have been publishing open letters addressed to the Governing Body or the public. Below are three — by James Penton (author of *Apocalypse Delayed*), Gaila Noble, and Mount Carmel Outreach:

August 11, 1995

Milton G. Henschel, President
Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society

OPEN LETTER

Dear Mr Henschel:

Yesterday I obtained a copy of the August 22 Awake! magazine with its articles on "The Holocaust: Who Spoke Out?". On reading the articles in that issue of Awake! I was thoroughly shocked and disgusted.

The Watch Tower Society has long attempted a cover-up of the most dishonest sort. While your organization properly censures other religious communities for their compromise with and support of Nazism, it tries to claim that Jehovah's Witnesses, and Jehovah's Witnesses alone were never guilty of such compromise. Yet history tells a different story. The "Erklarung" or "Declaration" published by the Watch Tower Society at the Berlin Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in June 1933 is, in itself, clear evidence that the Society's president, Judge J. F. Rutherford, as accompanied by N.H. Knorr, manifested anti-Semitism, hostility to Great Britain and the United States and to the League of Nations. Furthermore, the "Erklarung" clearly states that Jehovah's Witnesses supported the aims of the Third Reich.

In addition to the "Erklarung", there is the evidence of the Society's letter to Hitler sent on or immediately following June 25, 1933, and the public statements made about the Berlin convention by Conrad Franke in lectures through out Germany some years ago. All of this I have made public in my book Apocalypse Delayed (1985) — which I know has been read at Watch Tower headquarters both from court documents and inside reports — and in the spring 1990 issue of The Christian Quest. So it is impossible for responsible members of your organization not to know the facts. Thus the August 22 Awake! is nothing

short of an historical abomination.

I am aware of the feeble attempt of the 1974 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses to exculpate Judge Rutherford and the Watch Tower Society in Brooklyn by claiming that the Society's German branch overseer, Paul Balzereit, "weakened" the "Erklarung". But the "Erklarung" or "Declaration" was published in both the German and English versions of the 1934 Year Book of Jehovah's Witnesses as an official statement of the Watch Tower Society. So it is impossible to believe that it was not sanctioned by Rutherford and the man who succeeded him as the Society's president, N H Knorr. Therefore, the leadership of Jehovah's Witnesses of that time attempted to commit what amounted to spiritual whoredom with the Third Reich in the fashion of the two sisters, Oholah and Oholibah of Ezekiel 23, according to the Society's own teachings.

Although I do not expect an answer from you, nor do I want one, to make certain that you personally are aware of the facts, I am sending you the following materials:

(1) A photocopy of the original "Erklarung";
(2) A photocopy of the "Erk1arung" as it appeared in the German edition of the 1934Year Book of Jehovah's Witnesses;
(3) A photocopy of the "Declaration" as it appears in the English edition of the 1934 Year Book of Jehovah's Witnesses;
(4) A photocopy of the Hitler letter, plus an English translation thereof;
(5) A copy of the Spring 1990 issue of The Christian Quest.

Since I am well aware that the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, of which you are a senior member, is carrying on what amounts to a "Big Lie" campaign (1) to make Jehovah's Witnesses appear to be God's faithful and discreet slave class on earth and (2) to discredit other religions, as a former Jehovah's Witness, a professional historian, and as a Christian who believes that God has no need of our lies, I feel forced to expose the facts to the general public.

Hence, I am sending copies of this letter; plus the above listed documents on, to both religious and secular publications throughout the United States and Canada. I will, of course, also make them available to persons in other lands so that they may be made known wherever possible.

In closing, Mr Henschel, I would beg the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, who carry heavy responsibility before God and humankind, to come clean and admit the facts. Hypocrisy and falsifying the historical record are serious sins as I am sure you are aware.

Sincerely yours,

M. James Penton, PhD
Professor Emeritus

OPEN LETTER BY GAILA NOBLE

An Open Letter To Jehovah's Witnesses

You may not remember, but I know you very well. I met you a long time ago when you came to my house with your smiling faces, your neat clothes, and your soft voices, and a Bible tucked neatly under your arm. You told me many beautiful stories of a "paradise earth" and a "righteous new system" which would be established shortly. You beguiled me; I listened and I let you teach me your form of Christ-dignity.

I loved you, I devoted most of my life to you, I was loyal and obedient, never realizing that one day I would come to disagree with everything you had to say. When I first met you and learned of the "paradise," little did I know that in order to get to that paradise I would have to walk over the dead bodies of beloved family, cherished friends, and casual acquaintances because they didn't want to be Jehovah's Witnesses. With your soft, sweet voices, and gentle manner, you convinced me that everything and everyone who did not agree with you was "evil." I came to believe that other churches were bad and of the devil, and so were their members. I became convinced that all the governments were wicked, including my own, and that I was not to support the country in which I lived. I believed you, I loved you, trusted you, and served you and never suspected that you were capable of deceiving me.

I loved you so much that I raised my precious children as Jehovah's Witnesses. I taught them that you were trustworthy and true followers of God and Jesus. I trained them to believe your

every word. How could I have known that in the future you would steal my own flesh and blood from my arms and prevent them from seeing me because I would come to disagree with you? I never noticed the fangs of oppression and tyranny that lurked behind those gentle smiles. I never knew that I would be expected to hand over my mind, soul and spirit to you, and if I were to ever want them back, you would hold my children as hostages and no amount of begging and tears would release them from your firm grip because they had been raised to look at you as being God, rather than mere men.

When I came to you, I was young and pretty and impressionable, looking for a relationship with God, my Creator. But through slick words and empty speeches you convinced me that I was not really a child of God, that my duty was to the organization — that THEY would tell me what to do and how to think. Through years of domination and manipulation I began to accept the meagre food that was being offered to me, and became willing to accept it as the true "spiritual" food from the Master, while all the lime feeling the gnawing at my body.

Finally, I discovered that I had been robbed of my joy, my love, my compassion, and my mercy, and it was replaced with legalistic, doctrinal formula which provided me with fear, guilt, and anxiety to fill my hungry heart. When I said, "I want more than this", you slapped me with your soft little hand, which had now turned into an iron fist of oppression. Yes, you fooled me all along, your deception was because you had been fooled too, a long time ago, by others who had taken you captive to their dictatorial reign of terror. You convinced me that the words of men were the words of God because you really thought it was true. I believed you because you were gentle soft-spoken, and carried the Bible tucked under your arm.

You told me that you had "freedom," and it was only later, when I tried to escape your brand of "freedom" that I discovered that the iron bars of the gate had been shut and I was at your mercy because, by this time, you had already gained control of my mind and my emotions. I cried and begged you to please let me go, and you said, with your firm, roaring voice, "Not until I have stripped you naked," and you did! You stripped me of my dignity, my self-respect, my honor, and my FAMILY. You told all my friends and family that I was demonic, evil, an apostate, a spiritual fornicator, and good for nothing but total destruction by your angry God whom you had tried to pass off as a God of "love."

They believed you, and they still believe you, because their eyes are blinded by the promise of "paradise," and they cannot "see" the Hell that surrounds them. The ever illusive "paradise" is held out to the gullible like a carrot in front of the nose of a rabbit, and causes them to sacrifice their family, friends, careers, education, hopes and dreams on the altar of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society.

Now I'm older, now I'm wiser, but now it is too late — life is fast slipping away. Through my tears, I cry out for my beautiful daughter and grandchildren, but you grip them tighter and tighter and tell them that YOU will be their "mother." And so you are, and so you are! I begged to recapture my honor and my dignity, but you laughed with your bright, shining teeth, and said, "No way, you're on your own. Somehow those soft, pretty words weren't soft and pretty any more, but words of slander, abuse, hatred, and hostility — and you said them in such a way that others would think that you were righteous and I was evil. You lied about me but no one will believe you LIED because they trust you — that's because you are soft spoken, gentle, and carry a Bible tucked neatly under your arm.

Gaila Noble
ARIZONA

OPEN LETTER to a JW
BY MOUNT CARMAL OUTREACH

Dear Friend,

I want to thank you for being concerned about my security in this troubled world. I agree with you that we are living in the last days, but I would like to assure you that I am truly in God's ark of safety because I have put my complete trust in Jesus Christ.

I believe the words of Jesus when He tells me, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not

come into judgment *but* has passed out of death into life." (John 5:24) This is the Good News. Can you think of any news that would be better?

I am not putting trust in men or a church or an organization. While I do feel that my church is a good Bible-believing fellowship, I realize that my salvation depends solely on my trust in Jesus. I believe like the apostle John who wrote, "He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all." (John 3:31)

It is a matter of life and death that we trust Jesus and not men or organizations. Peter said at Acts 4:12, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." That's pretty plain, isn't it? Not in the name of a church or organization, but only in the name of Jesus will we be counted worthy of eternal life.

My heartfelt fear for you and other Jehovah's Witnesses is that you feel you can get eternal life in the name of Jesus plus your association with the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. I fear this is dangerous reasoning, for when we examine the record of the Watchtower, we find that it has been guilty of false prophecy, and Jesus warned us about false prophets. (Matt. 7:15, 24:24)

The Watchtower published in 1889 the book entitled The Time is at Hand, and C. T. Russell prophesied that 1914 would see the "overthrow of earth's present rulership" (p.101). In 1917 the Watchtower book The Finished Mystery predicted that in 1918 all the churches would be destroyed along with millions of church members (p. 485). The same book prophesied that all the "republics will disappear in the fall of 1920" (p. 258). It was predicted that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would be present as earth's new rulers in the year 1925. (Millions Now Living Will Never Die p. 89-90.) In 1938, in a booklet called Face the Facts, it was prophesied that the totalitarian governments in WWII would get control of Great Britain and America (pp 16, 17, 27), and in the 1960's great hopes were stimulated by the Watchtower organization that the millennial reign would begin in 1975.

Such predictions and the failure of them to come about should put us on our guard, especially in view of Jesus words that false prophets would mislead many (Matt. 24:11). Moses told us that we should not be afraid of a false prophet. In other words, we should not fear them nor respect them. Please read Deut. 18:20-21. This is why we can not and must not put trust in men even though they claim to be the anointed of God.

On the other hand, we do know Jesus was anointed of God and had the Spirit of God "without measure" (John 3:34). We can trust Jesus' teachings and doctrines because He was raised from the dead, and that is our guarantee that He told us the truth!

Remember, dear friend, the light has never gotten any brighter than it was 2,000 years ago. Trust Jesus.

Agape

OPEN MINDED

"An open mind is free from the fetters of prejudice…" (g1984 11/22 3)

Householders who listen to JWs and show willingness to "examine their [own] religion" with help from JWs are considered open-minded.

JWs want people to be "open-minded" to their message and supposedly to God and to the Bible, as indicated by statements such as:

Are You Open-Minded Toward God?
…Would it not be wise, then, to listen to their Bible-based conversations when they call at your door? (g1987 3/22 8-9)

However, JWs are not permitted to read other religious publications, or talk to ex-JWs or with anyone who knows about the false prophecies and doctrinal revisions of JWs. Ordinarily such a stance is judged as closed minded or bigoted.

The phrase "open minded" appears 252 times on *Watchtower Library CD* 2007.

OPINION

JWs leaders sometimes excuse their false predictions as having been an "opinion". (eg Yearbook 1980, 61) This contradicts the claim that *The Watchtower* does not teach any "human opinion" but is edited by Jehovah. (See: *INFALLIBLE*)

Viewpoints of people who disagree with JWs are also just "human opinion" or "only their opinion".

The *JW Yearbook* (1984, 43-44) calls the doctrines of 1918 "God's revealed truths" which contrasted with "human opinion". However, the doctrines of 1918 included false predictions and other errors — an estimated 1300 in just one book, *The Finished Mystery*.

To JWs theological rubbish, no matter how big or how much, is always from God and/or the Bible provided the rubbish is dispensed by their leaders and not by another sect.

(See: *FINISHED MYSTERY, THE*)

OPINION OF MAN

A phrase introduced by Rutherford:

> Pastor Russell paid no attention to the word or opinion of man… He listened to the word direct… (The Finished Mystery 1917, 387)
>
> …the Lord permits these truths to be published in The Watchtower. What is said is not the opinion of man, and no man is given the credit therefore. (w1936 4/1 107)
>
> The Watchtower would not and does not give any man's opinion, but, guided by the Lord and used by him, sets forth to the remnant information which Jehovah and the Lord Jesus Christ give concerning the Scriptures… (w1936 3/15 85)

Such claims, given the false predictions and thousands of revisions in JWs theology, appear to be presumptuous attacks on God!

OPPOSER/OPPOSER OF THE TRUTH

"Opposer" is anyone who criticises JWs (including truthful and correct criticisms) or who advocates restrictions to the proselytising activities of JWs.

OPPRESSION (1929)

A booklet by Rutherford with a message intended to rouse oppressed people against their oppressors.

In *Government* (1928) Rutherford predicted that the "great multitude" would rise up against the governments and destroy them. The booklet *Oppression* appears to be intended as a stimulus to that outcome.

One "oppression" the booklet presents is that gasoline companies promoted prohibition — America's ban on alcohol in the 1920s — to prevent farmers from converting potatoes to alcohol to power their tractors, which would force down gasoline prices. (pp 9-12)

The booklet criticises the clergy and predicts takeover by God's government:

> Satan, operating through his instruments the clergy and their allies, blinds the people to God's Word of truth… (p.55)
> These foolish teachers claim to represent God, being blind to the fact that they are representing the Devil. (p.51)
>
> God's righteous government is now to be set up… (p.54)
>
> God's government is at hand… (p.55)
>
> Because the Lord is now proceeding to set up his kingdom… (p.57)

The kingdom's establishment in 1914 had in 1929 already been preached for 4 years, therefore the phrases "now to be set up" and "proceeding to set up" seem to refer to its progressive takeover of the world.

OPTING OUT OF JWs

Constant exposure to WTS propaganda, being kept busy with meetings and door to door activity, fear of Armageddon, and threats of getting shunned keep JWs fearful of leaving the sect. How can JWs overcome these methods of control?

William Schnell (1971) wrote: "…first of all … develop an attitude of take it or leave it. The ability to dissimulate while in good standing in the organization is the first step away from it." (p.111)

Secondly, read the old publications and see the nonsense presented as "God's Word" and "Bible truth". In other words JWs need to study their own religion, perhaps become an "expert":

> A man who studies a matter and develops skill becomes recognized as qualified, even an expert in his field. (w1982 6/15 27)

To leave the sect with a good reputation is impossible. Anyone who criticises doctrine is disfellowshipped and shunned and declared to be "like Satan", "stubborn", "deceived", "lawless", "opposer of God" and "hater of God". Sending a letter of disassociation

likewise makes one an "apostate" and shunned under the same defamatory labels.

If someone simply stays away from JWs meetings and goes to another religion it's counted as disassociation and apostasy, and the same negative labels again apply, and the person is shunned.

No amount of correct conduct, no matter how long maintained, will get the negative labels removed. The person is not "innocent until proved guilty", but is guilty and no evidence of innocence counts.

In the 1950s to 1970s congregation elders chased up inactive publishers to determine whether they had joined another religion or disagree with any current doctrine. If so they were disfellowshipped (excommunicated) and this was announced at meetings.

In the 1980s "witch hunts" decreased — people who stayed away without trying to influence other JWs were often left alone. The congregations were warned about discussing spiritual matters with such people but total shunning was not necessarily imposed. If, however, such people sought to influence other JWs full shunning followed.

JWs encourage new converts to "burn their bridges" by forsaking previous friendships and interests. If the convert later leaves JWs he loses his JWs "friends" and is socially isolated. If an ex JW has family in the sect but not living with him they too have to shun him. If the spouse is a JW and lives in the same house, communication is permitted but not on religion.

Many JWs who want to leave the sect can't or don't because they will lose their family. Their family is in effect held hostage and this is strong inducement to tow the line and keep preaching God's so-called "wonderful truth".

(See: *LEAVING JWs*)

ORDAINED MINISTER/ORDINATION

Until 1964 the JWs Yearbooks contained a list of "Ordained Ministers" these being missionaries, special pioneers and other fulltime workers.

C.T. Russell did not attend Bible College or pass theology exams. He read neither Greek nor Hebrew. His failure rate in prophecy was 100%. Of his theological interpretations about 80% were rejected by the JWs Organization.

Yet we're told:

> He was ordained by the only divine ordination and orthodox by the test of the infallible Word, as presented in 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; Eph. 2:20... [a list of about 40 verses follows]. (The Revelation 1918, 62, 66)

In Christianity "ordination" is the appointment after prescribed study and training to a ministerial office. Often there is an official ceremony where previously ordained persons place hands on the head of the person being ordained, who is a baptized Christian of good character, convinced he has God's "calling", and has taken necessary training.

Ordination began when Jesus selected the 12 Apostles, who in turn ordained others (Acts 6:1-6) and so on down the line. (II Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:5)

By this description Russell was never ordained, nor was any JW leader. On pages 381-390 of *The Finished Mystery* (1917) it is argued that Russell's "Divine Ordination" is proved by the "flood of truths" in his books. But the Bible does not state that a person who writes books is ordained. Also, every prophecy and thousands of statements in this "flood of truths" proved to be false and were rejected not only by other religions but even discarded by JWs! (See: *ERROR*)

Russell, therefore, was not ordained. Because a person cannot pass on to others what he himself does not have, Russell could not have transferred his supposed ordination to others! And anyone who derives his authority to preach from Russell or the WTS cannot therefore not be ordained either!

The "Ordained Ministers" appointed by the WTS and listed in the Yearbooks supposedly "prove" they are "ordained ministers" by "works of preaching" (Yearbook 1948, 22) and by "understanding of the Bible". (Yearbook 1943, 15)

> …the whole organization of Jehovah's witnesses is made up of ordained ministers… (Yearbook 1963, 25)

> On arrival at the police station I was brought before the desk officer, to whom I presented my identification card and *Liberty to Preach.* I told him I was one of Jehovah's witnesses; at the time I was accosted I was preaching the gospel and am an ordained minister to do this work. One of the fourteen officers present asked by what seminary was I ordained. I told him my commission for preaching the gospel came from God's inspired Word, the Bible, and not from any man-

> made institution. Then they wanted to know what I had in my 'brown suitcase'. So I opened my portable Phonograph.... (w1940 9/15 288)

The *Yearbook* 1942 pp 7-8 defines "Ordained ministers" as persons commissioned and selected by God, obedient to God's commands, and going door to door. They are ordained by God, says the *Yearbook*, just as Jesus was according to Isaiah 61:1, 2. Ordination is not ordination by the WTS (p.9), but God ordains people who then prove they have God's ordination by preaching for the WTS!

The WTS in effect took the words "ordination" and "ordained"— words in use for centuries — and gave them different meanings. The new definitions were such that only JWs are "ordained ministers". They are ordained by accepting current WTS doctrine and publicising it — and this is called "ordained of God".

If a critic of JWs were to state "I'm ordained by God" and preaches to JWs when in fact he has merely been encouraged by ex JWs, his claim to ordination would be rejected and JWs elders would oppose him. When JWs publicly presented themselves as "ordained ministers" under similar circumstance it's the same sort of nonsense.

From the New Testament it appears only John the Baptist and Jesus were directly "ordained" (or appointed) by God, and Paul directly by Jesus. God "ordained" Jesus who in turn selected Apostles who, after Jesus' death, conducted further "ordinations" and the process continued.

Therefore Christian ordination for JWs was unattainable because they arrived as interlopers 1800 years after the chain of ordination started.

JWs leaders claimed that JWs are "ordained" or "commissioned" directly by God where "commissioned by God" means "commissioned by the JWs leaders". This was supposedly ordination with "authority from Jehovah". (Yearbook 1942, 28)

By 1970 the concept of "ordained minister" fell into disuse among JWs. But they still used the word "minister". The existence of a "great crowd" of followers is offered as proof that the JWs leaders are "God's true ministers." (w1984 2/1 12)

For positions in their Organization JWs prefer the word "appointment" or "appointed" rather than ordained. Elders, servants, Governing Body members, circuit overseers, etc, are all "appointed".

However, the "2020 Grand Totals" list of the 2020 JWs statistical report on their official website says: "Worldwide, a total of 20,994 ordained ministers staff the branch facilities of Jehovah's Witnesses."

Perhaps the Governing Body is preparing to differentiate the "ordained" workers for the WTS from the "great crowd" of ordinary non-ordained JWs.

ORGANS — TRANSPLANTS & DONATION

In 1968 *Awake!* magazine promoted what it called the "Scriptural Aspect" of organ transplants which regarded "all transplants between humans as cannibalism". (g1968 6/8 21) JWs who accepted tissue or organ transplants faced ostracism including excommunication.

The previous year *The Watchtower* taught:

> Those who submit to such operations [an organ transplanted from another human] are thus living off the flesh of another human. That is cannibalistic… Jehovah God did not grant permission for humans to try to perpetuate their lives by cannibalistically taking into their bodies human flesh, whether chewed or in the form of whole organs or body parts taken from others. (w1967 11/15 702)

What about a human accepting an animal part as a transplant?

> Christians have strong evidence that the new order is near at hand when Jehovah the Great Physician will, through Jesus, do healing beyond the limitations of medical science. (ibid p.703)

What about donating one's body for research?

> Our bodies are the creation of Jehovah God… Christians might allow apparently necessary surgery to be performed, such as to remove a diseased limb, but they do not needlessly mutilate their bodies created by Jehovah. Would allowing a body to be mutilated after death be showing respect for and appreciation of God's creation? (ibid p.703)

Of course "mutilation" and dissection for research come with different methods, different intentions and different results. Similarly autopsies — these too are not a "needless mutilating of their bodies".

In the 1950s cornea transplants already restored people's eyesight. In South Australia the first cornea transplant took place in 1953:

> Mrs Gordon was born with the genetic condition keratoconus and was losing her sight as a teenager.
> "I would have been legally blind when the surgeon suggested the graft and he told me there were risks but it could be beneficial," she said.
> "I was 21 years old and thought I should go for it and ended up with the first two successful corneal grafts in Australia."
> (Sunday Mail, March 2, 2003, p.3)

In the 1960s and 1970s JW's regarded recipients of a cornea transplant as cannibals who should have chosen to stay blind.

The world's first kidney transplant was done in 1954 in Boston on identical twins. In Australia the first kidney transplant was done in Adelaide in1965. Two diseased kidneys were removed from an Italian migrant who received a replacement kidney donated by his father-in-law. (Crouch 2015) The kidney functioned for 12 years after which the person went on renal dialysis and lived another eleven years.

In 1980 the Governing Body rejected the "scriptural aspect" and made "cannibalism" in the form of organ transplants a matter of conscience (w1980 3/15) provided it was done without blood transfusions.

Those already excommunicated over the transplant issue received no apology and remained guilty. JWs who find errors in WTS teaching have to remain silent — this is called "waiting on Jehovah". Otherwise they are "rebels" who "oppose the truth" and "disrupt the unity of God's people". (See: *LOYALTY*)

The WTS has not revealed how many JWs rejected a cornea transplant and chose blindness and how they felt about it when the doctrine was altered.

The anti-transplant doctrine is not discussed in the "Proclaimers" (1993) history-of-JWs book, but 1960s articles on the topic are listed in the *Watchtower Publications Index 1930-1985* under "TRANSPLANTING body parts".

ORGANIZATION

"The Organization" or "God's [earthly] Organization" refers to The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society and associated corporations along with branch offices, printeries, farms, assembly halls, congregations and personnel.

The value of WTS buildings in Brooklyn, New York, by 2005 was more than US$1,000,000,000. Huge printeries and office facilities are located in many other countries. In 1988 the Organization produced 582,000,000 books distributed by 3,593,000 JWs.

"God's organization", according to JWs, is composed of two parts:

1. The heavenly part consisting of Jehovah, Jesus, angels and the 144,000;
2. The earthly part consisting of the corporations, the Governing Body, the Brooklyn headquarters, the other branches, all the congregations, and the communication links between it all.

The phrase "the organization" without further qualification usually refers to the earthly part.

Russell had no doctrine about "organization" and was against the concept:

> We belong to NO *earthly organization;* hence, if you should name the entire list of sects, we should answer, No, to each and to all. We adhere only to that *heavenly organization* — "whose names are written in heaven." (Heb. 12:23; Luke 10:20) All the *saints* now living, or that have lived during this age, belonged to OUR CHURCH ORGANIZATION: such are all one Church, and there is NO OTHER recognized by the Lord. (wr 1884 February, p.584)
>
> Beware of organization. It is wholly unnecessary. (w1895 9/15 216)
>
> …it is plain that the forming of a visible organization of such gathered out ones would be out of harmony with the spirit of the divine plan... (w1894 12/1 384)

Russell himself was in charge of WBTS finances, publications, doctrines and the "pilgrims" (i.e. his representatives who visited the "ecclesias"). This was organization but wasn't referred to as such and was overshadowed by the person of Russell.

In 1918 — the year that Rutherford predicted Christendom would perish — Russell's Organization itself greatly declined. The phrase "restoration of all things" (Acts 3:21) JWs apply to their Organization's recovery and growth from 1919 forward:

> Likewise, since the postwar year of 1919 Jehovah's Witnesses on earth have seen the "restoration of all things of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy

> prophets of old time." They have seen Jehovah's visible organization recovered from the death-dealing blow of World War I and then rebuilt. It is again worshipping Jehovah God, in a spiritual paradise right here on earth. (Isaiah chapter 35) Deliverance has been gained from Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. (w1982 12/15 21)

In *Millions Now Living Will Never Die* (1920) Rutherford predicted:

> Therefore we may confidently expect that 1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the faithful prophets of old.

When this failed, tight organizational control became necessary to avoid disintegration. About 80% of people attending meetings deserted the cult. Therefore in the 1920s and 1930s Rutherford gradually turned the Organization into a dictatorship, called it "Theocracy", and required conformity and obedience. People could no longer merely attend meetings but were pressured to go door to door.

By 1931 membership required selling books door to door which was believed necessary to survive Armageddon. Efficient surveillance by spy-like networks of "servants" weeded out slackers, dissenters and "suckers". The Organization became quasi-military, and daily language included terms like "battle", "fight", "enemy", "action", "victory", "defeat", "war", "attack", "strategy", etc.

Opposed to God's organization, was "Satan's organization". This too had an invisible spiritual part which consisted of Satan and his demons, and a visible earthly part consisting of government, religion and big business. The two organizations, God's and Satan's, were in a "fight to the finish" which would culminate when the heavenly part of God's Organization unleashed Armageddon.

So complete was Rutherford's authority that he could ban (or virtually ban) marriage, sex, singing, movies, the Holy Spirit, and Bible reading, and make his followers declare they are "taught by God" (which in practice meant reading Rutherford's books and *The Watchtower*).

A hierarchical view of the "Modern-Day Theocratic Organization of Jehovah's Christian Witnesses" is shown diagrammatically in w1971 12/15 749 and w1977 1/1 16 and is basically this:

JEHOVAH GOD
Jesus Christ
"Faithful and Discreet Slave" class including the Governing Body [But since 2010 is limited to the Governing Body]
Six Governing Body Committees
Elders in Congregations
Ministerial Servants

A fuller hierarchical sequence is the following:

JEHOVAH GOD
Jesus Christ
The 144,000 in heaven and the Angels
The Governing Body
Six Committees of Governing Body members
WBTS of Pennsylvania
Other corporations
Branch office committees
District overseers
Circuit overseers
Elders in congregations
Ministerial servants
Pioneers
Congregation Publishers

The Organization was run by men who remained semi-anonymous so as to promote the idea that God is in charge. Many commonly-used phrases almost imply the Organization is alive including: "the organization teaches", "the organization's view is", "do not jump ahead of the organization", "provisions of the organization", "submissive to the organization", "view matters in harmony with the organization", "respect the organization". (United in Worship… 1985, 123, 124)

JWs regard the Organization as their "mother":

> We constantly receive counsel from God's organization through the columns of *The Watchtower* telling how we should conduct ourselves in theocratic living. Now if we immediately forget these things and refuse to apply them in our daily lives—not even making the effort—how disrespectful that is of <u>the teaching or law of our mother</u>!…
> Not one of Jehovah's witnesses would deliberately insult either our heavenly Father or his <u>motherly organization</u>, would He?
> …show respect for Jehovah's organization, for <u>she is our mother</u> and the beloved wife of our heavenly Father, Jehovah God. (w1957 5/1 282, 284)

> I have learned to view Jehovah as my Father and <u>his organization as my Mother</u>. (w1995 11/1 25)

JWs believe God deals with people only via the Organization. (United in Worship … 1983, 123) Every doctrinal revision must be accepted and obeyed because:

> [Jehovah] has made understanding the Bible today dependent upon associating with his organization. (w1961 11/1 688)

> [It is] … the only organization on earth that understands the 'deep things of God.' (w1973 7/1 402)

Anyone who disagrees with the Organization is following the Devil and JWs are told to "Allow No Place for the Devil" — (w1986 3/15 15-20)

> [Be]…submissive to the organization …

> do not jump ahead of the organization. (United In Worship 1983, 123)

> Avoid independent thinking … questioning the counsel that is provided by God's visible organization. (w1983 1/15 22)

> My early experience taught me how unsound it is to rely on human reasoning. Once my mind had been resolved on that point, I determined to stay by the faithful organization. How else can one get Jehovah's favor and blessing? (w1996 7/15 20)

The Organization has undergone many changes in doctrine and structure. One major change occurred in 1975. The Governing Body formed itself into six Committees with oversight of different parts of the work. Decision on doctrine by 2/3-majority-vote was introduced. This curtailed the power of the WTS President's and Vice president.

Due to major changes in structure and doctrine it can be argued that "God's organization" is a number of different successive organizations. One psychologist writes:

> An organization, after all, is nothing more than a collection of human objectives, expectations and obligations. It is, in other words, a structure of roles filled by humans. And when a re-organization sharply alters this structure by redefining or redistributing these roles, we can say that the old organization has died and a new one has sprung up to take its place. This is true even if it retains the old name and has the same members as before.

Most of the major changes in structure and doctrine in the WTS occurred when prophecy failed and people were leaving. A sociologist writes:

> All organizations are prone to suffer an attenuation in commitment to their original values… An intense revolutionary spirit is difficult to maintain, especially when it depends upon the expectation of a supernatural sign, the date of which is of necessity frequently postponed.

The growth and size of their Organization is a proof to JWs that they are right:

> It proves indisputably that then the newly arrived Master appointed this "slave" class to be over all his "belongings" on earth. (Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie 1965, 340)

In the past JWs answered people who criticised their low numbers by pointing out that Jesus and the Apostles were a small group. Nowadays the opposite argument is use — the bigness of "Jehovah's organization" constitutes proof of rightness and God's backing. However, in the case of other, even bigger, religions JWs deny that size proves rightness.

The Governing Body goal is for the Organization to fill "the whole earth". (Yearbook 1985, 5) This idea replaced (in the 1920s) the previous teaching that the "heavenly kingdom" of 1878 would rule the world through Bible heroes such as Moses and Samson raised from the dead and based in Jerusalem.

(See: *GOAL OF WORLD DOMINATION*)

ORGANIZATION FOR KINGDOM PREACHING AND DISCIPLE MAKING (1972)

An official WTS book written in a combined effort by Karl Adams (overseer at the time of the Writing Department), Raymond Franz (a Governing Body member), and Ed Dunlap. (Franz 1983 p.68) It describes the structure and policy of the JWs Organization from the top to the bottom.

ORGANIZATION INSTRUCTIONS (1942)

A WTS booklet of 32 pages about meetings, positions of authority, and preaching.

ORGANIZATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR KINGDOM PUBLISHERS (1945)

Booklet about meetings, positions of authority, and procedures for preaching.

ORGANIZATION — WORSHIP OF

> Only Jehovah's Witnesses … as a united organization have any Scriptural hope of surviving the impending end of this doomed system… (w1989 9/1 19)
>
> …come to Jehovah's organization for salvation… (w1981 11/15 21)

Imputing salvation to an organization amounts to worship and constitutes idolatry:

> As Christians, we face up to similar challenges today. We cannot take part in any modern version of idolatry—be it worshipful gestures toward an image or symbol or the imputing of salvation to a person or organization. (w1990 11/1 26)
>
> If one renders obedient service to someone or some organization, whether willingly or under compulsion, looking up to such as possessing a position of superior rulership and great authority, then that one can Scripturally be said to be a worshipper. (w1961 9/1 525)

Only JWs in their Organization will be saved through Armageddon:

> It is vital that we appreciate this fact and respond to the directions of the "slave" as we would to the voice of God, because it is His provision. (w1957 6/15 370)
>
> Sometime in the future a test may be imposed upon us to comply with certain information that God brings to our attention. It may hit something that we love very dearly. What will we do? Will we hesitate in applying counsel, perhaps pondering in our mind as to what *we* want to do about it? If that would be the case, wouldn't we really be asking ourselves the question, 'Do *we* really want the rulership of God?' Would not a failure to respond to direction from God through his organization really indicate a rejection of divine rulership? (w1976 2/15 124)
>
> Similarly, Jehovah is using only one organization today to accomplish his will. To receive everlasting life in the earthly Paradise we must identify that organization and serve God as part of it. (w1983 2/15 12)
>
> Only Jehovah's Witnesses…as a united organization have any Scriptural hope of surviving the impending end of this doomed system… (w1989 9/1 19)
>
> Let us all zealously continue to support the faithful and discreet slave. It is only by doing this that someday very soon all sheeplike ones will be able to hear the happy words: "Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom…" (w1993 1/15 18)
>
> We must also meet the challenge of being loyal to Jehovah's visible organization. We must be loyal to our congregations and loyal to our marriage mates. By meeting the challenge of loyalty successfully, we will be sharing in the vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty, and will be taking his side of the issue. Thereby we will win his favor and will receive the prize of everlasting life. (w1996 3/15 20)
>
> Put Faith in a Victorious Organization. (w1979 3/1 1)

In 1985 the Governing Body took the Holy Spirit out of the baptism formula (Matthew 28:19) and added the Organization, and baptized people in the name of the "spirit-directed organization". (w1985 6/1 30)

It is clear, although JWs would deny it, that their Organization is an idol of worship, the place of salvation, their substitute for God.

(See also: *ORGANIZATION*)

ORGANIZED TO ACCOMPLISH OUR MINISTRY (1983)

Official WTS book with details about conducting JWs meetings, making converts, and training people to preach.

ORR, B.J.

Author of *The Contextual Abuse of the Watchtower Society* 2013, Lulu Publishers.

ORTHODOXY

In Christianity "orthodoxy" means right belief in contrast to heresy. Hence Christian ministers called Russellism "unorthodox". Russellites responded:

> He [Russell] was ordained by the only divine ordination and orthodox by the test of the infallible Word, as presented in 1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:20… (The Revelation 1918, 62, 66)

JWs have rejected most of Russell's interpretations of the Bible. Therefore, if

Russell was "orthodox by the test of the infallible Word", it follows that JWs today are unorthodox and heretics.

OTHER

The *New World Translation* has the word "other" inserted in brackets in Colossians 1:15-17, which has been much criticised.

However, Christ making "all things" (Colossians 1:16) excludes himself and the Father. Hence He made "all [other] things." If, however, Christ and the Father are not "things" then Colossians teaches that Christ "made all things" and to add "other" would be unnecessary.

Similar reasoning is apparent in I Corinthians 15:27-28 where Paul explains Psalm 8:6.

OTHER SHEEP (John 10:16)

JWs believe these are people whose salvation and eternal life will be lived on Earth after Armageddon.

Rutherford equated the other sheep with the "great multitude". Later he clarified that the "other sheep" include all the saved who will live in Paradise on Earth from Abel (Adam's son) to the present, whereas the "great multitude" is people converted to join JWs from 1935 until Armageddon.

The "other sheep" designation comes from John 10:16 which most religions understand to be non-Jews i.e. Gentiles who become Christians. (Acts 10)

OUIJA BOARD

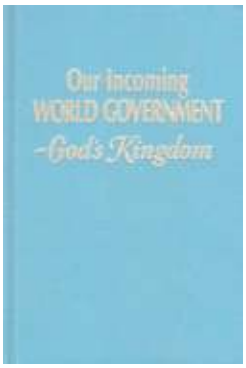
A board inscribed with the alphabet and other symbols which is supposed to permit communication with the spirit-world.

Participating players each place a finger on the rim of a glass (or other object) which moves over the board and spells out answers to questions the participants ask. Ouija boards are condemned by JWs as demonic.

In 1912 a letter in *The Watch Tower* said:

> I spent all my spare time operating the "board," and became so skilled in its manipulation that it would perform rather difficult feats with the least solicitation…
> I can easily see that Satan, the chief operator of all "ouija" and planchette boards, was only trying with all his might to get me more firmly into his clutches…
> I then asked whether the DAWNS are a correct interpretation of God's Word. To this the reply came, "Yes; The DAWNS are correct, not only in doctrine, but in chronology as well." I then asked by what power the board operated. It answered, "By evil, spirit power." It further confessed to me that the spirits who operate the board have no other mission than to hinder all of the Lord's people. It further stated that they took "special delight in buffeting, hindering and endeavoring to ensnare Brother Russell and his co-laborers at the Bethel Home."
> After thus confessing, I concluded to destroy the board, which I finally did. (wr1912 5/1 5024)

OUR INCOMING WORLD GOVERNMENT — GOD'S KINGDOM (1977)



An official WTS book about the supposed 1914 Kingdom and its "imminent" takeover of the world:

- "within our own generation" (p.16)
- "just ahead" (p.22)
- "now so near" (p.119)
- The "time of the end" is now about to close for the nations! (p.120)
- "The … passing away of the present divided world is imminent." (p.175)

"Within our generation" at time of publication still meant the people who experienced 1914, of whom none are left. Therefore it was false prophesying.

Chapters 2-4 survey major empires during the alleged "gentile times" from 607 BC to AD1914. The "Incoming Government" supposedly came in, in 1914 (ch.4) and will destroy all human governments and kill their citizens:

> We, this generation … are about to witness the crashing of the Kingdom "stone" against the Seventh World Power [America & Britain] and all the other political governments inside or outside the United Nations organization. (p.68)

Chapter 5 argues for a 2520-year period — 607 BC to 1914 CE — by giving Nebuchadnezzar's seven-year madness a second fulfilment. The seven years become 7 x 360 days or 2520 days, which then become years again and terminate in 1914:

> Events in fulfillment of Bible prophecies from 1914 C.E. down till now prove that the Son of man's coming occurred in that year. (p.104)

Pages 96-97 mention Rutherford's sentence and imprisonment (June 21 & July 4, 1918) claiming that this climaxed the 3½ "times" of Daniel 7:23-26:

> …seven falsely accused Christian men who were engaged prominently in publishing world wide the good news of God's established kingdom…
> …on July 4, 1918, these seven leading promoters of Bible study were taken…to Atlanta, Georgia. (p.97)

The so-called "established kingdom" that those men preached was the Kingdom of 1878 (which they replaced with the 1914 Kingdom in1925). And does "leading promoters of Bible study" fittingly describe men who promoted *The Finished Mystery* (1917), which had false prophecies for five dates and 1300 theological points that JWs now reject? (See: *FINISHED MYSTERY, THE*; *ERROR*; *DATES*)

Chapter 8 returns to Rutherford's imprisonment:

> As these dedicated, baptised and spirit-anointed Christians had proclaimed the approaching destruction of all the worldly nations, including the British Empire and the United States of America, these nations set out to destroy these proclaimers of God's kingdom by Christ. (p.131)

Actually no, the reason the eight men were imprisoned was because they broke a law known as the Espionage Act. (See: *Espionage Act*) The eight criminals were hardly "dedicated … spirit anointed Christians" — they had forecast the "destruction of all the worldly nations" for 1920 which was a false prediction and Jesus condemned false prophesiers. (Matthew 24:11, 24)

Chapter 7 discusses "the 144,000", the rulers of the 1914 Kingdom.

Chapter 8 discusses "Marked Days During the Time of the End". For example:

> In the latter part of chapter eleven of his prophecy, Daniel prophetically points to our present twentieth century and the unrelenting rivalry between the democratic, liberal, capitalistic group of nations and the communistic, totalitarian type of nations. (p.121)

The same paragraph states that democratic and communist nations will come to their "end", and subsequent paragraphs claim it occurs in "the great tribulation". (122-123)

This turned out false since neither Capitalism nor Communism perished at Armageddon in "our present twentieth century".

Page 131 returns once more to the banning of the cult in 1918 and says "the political authorities were egged on by the clergy of Babylon the Great". No "egging on" by Babylon i.e. by all the religions can be shown. Few people even knew much about the Russellites. Even if "egging on" occurred, shouldn't Christians oppose false prophecy that masquerades as "Bible truth"? The Governing Body itself "eggs on" JWs elders to excommunicate any congregation-members who disagree with just one doctrine. Rutherford's clique promoted hundreds of interpretations each of which would now get a JW excommunicated, yet are glorified as "dedicated, baptized and spirit-anointed Christians"! The Bible condemns such partisan, deceitful judgments — Proverbs 24:24; 18:5; 17:15; 20:23

Page 131 & 134 says the 3½ "times" (in Daniel 7:23-26) extend from December 28, 1914 to June 21, 1918. This conflicted with four previous WTS interpretations and has since been changed twice more. (See: *ONE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTY DAYS*)

Daniel 12:11-12 says: "From the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that desolates is set up, there shall be 1290 days."

Jesus interpreted the "abomination" as the Roman armies in AD 70. (Matthew 24:15-28) But *Our Incoming World Government* (p.135) makes the 1290 days run from the peace conference "in Versailles, France, on January 18, 1919" to when JWs held a convention at Cedar Point, Ohio on September 9, 1922. (p.137)

The "regular burnt offering" of the ancient Jews is also called the "constant feature" and page 135 says:

> By harassing the anointed Kingdom witnesses and finally by dashing to

> pieces their "spiritual" power for proclaiming God's kingdom that must supersede all man-made governments on earth, the warring nations suppressed the Kingdom witness and thus removed the "constant feature."

The "kingdom" which the Russellites were "proclaiming", and were "witnesses" for during WWI, was the 1878 kingdom which was supposed to take over the world in 1915. (See: *KINGDOM*) It didn't happen. And it never will "supersede all man-made governments" because in 1925 the JWs leader, Rutherford, abolished it and replaced it with another imaginary kingdom, that of 1914!

Chapter 9 claims that famines, earthquakes, pestilence and wars since 1914 are the "sign" that Armageddon is almost here:

- The climax of the modern-day "sign" is imminent (p.150)
- Not much longer… (p.151)

Pages 151-152 introduce "this generation" that saw 1914 and also the "remnant of the chosen ones". The chosen ones "witnessed the outbreak of World War I in 1914" (p.155) and of these "chosen ones" we read:

> We know that we are of the "generation" that saw the start of these things in 1914 … and we believe Jesus' assurance that this same "generation" of ours will see the finish of these significant things, all this culminating in the total take-over by the triumphant Kingdom of all human affairs. (p.156)

The "chosen ones" alive during WW1, as well as the entire "generation" alive in 1914, are now deceased and did not see "the finish of these significant things…" Either "Jesus' assurance" was false, deceitful and erroneous or the JWs leaders lied and are themselves false, deceitful and erroneous.

The fulfilment of Matthew 24:23-31, the separating of the sheep and goats by Jesus has, according to Chapter 10, occurred since 1914. Page 160 says, "Many will contest the fulfilment of that inspired prophecy today…" The JW leaders themselves "contested the fulfilment of that inspired prophecy" in 1995 by transferring its fulfilment from the 20th century into the future, apparently to the start of the Millennium. (w1995 10/15)

The worldwide fire predicted in II Peter 3 is explained symbolically — as "The heat of God's anger" (p.180) and "Jehovah's anger is poured out like fire" (p.184). The "elements" that melt is the "coolness" and "equanimity" of the people, and the "heavens" on fire are the governments. (p.180) However, II Peter 3 compares the global fire with the previous judgment of Noah's flood. It was a literal flood of water and not the "wetness of God's anger" or people losing the "dryness of their equanimity". JWs leaders weave their own opinions and fantasies into virtually everything in the Bible, which is why they often need to change their interpretations despite claiming that they alone "understand":

Because *Our Incoming World Government* was published in 1977 the "passing away of the world" being "imminent" no longer meant 1975-1976 as it had since the 1960s, but still meant within the lifetime of people who experienced 1914, and "in the 20th century". (g1961 2/22 5-8)

"Imminent" meant "imminent" from the **human perspective**, the human viewpoint, of **people** who (in other books) were urged to postpone careers, education, marriage and childbearing because the end was "just ahead". The decades that have passed (since 1977) were enough time to get educated or have a useful career or raise a family! If there was time to do these normal activities then the end was not imminent or just ahead at all!

The JWs leaders regularly claim to "understand" but their continual reinterpretations of major doctrines proves otherwise:

> "Daniel "could not understand" what he heard, in his day. But we, in this day, in this "time of the end" since 1914, can understand. (p.132)

OUR KINGDOM MINISTRY

A monthly published guide to the "Service Meeting" usually four or eight pages with outlines of talks for each meeting, instructions for "field service", news about JWs, and items about living life as a JW.

Previous names were:

- *Our Kingdom Service* from 1976 to 1982;
- *Kingdom Ministry* (1956-1976);
- Informant (until 8/1956);
- *The Bulletin* (first issued in 1917).

The change of name to *Our Kingdom Service* in 1976 reflected the temporary teaching that ordinary "publishers" are not ministers which in 1982 returned to the previous view that they are ministers.

(See: *KINGDOM MINISTRY*)

OUR LAST
An article about the forthcoming 2014 Memorial said:

> Will this Memorial be <u>our last</u>? (1 Cor. 11:26) We do not know. But we do know that once it passes, gone will be a unique opportunity to show gratitude… (Our Kingdom Ministry, March 2014, p.4)

The question "will this be our last?" and calling it a "unique opportunity" tweaked publishers' interest, and reminded them that "the end is imminent" without being specific.

Our "our last?" questions were employed during the 20th century at conventions and occasionally in publications. In 1918, for example:

> …we sang a hymn, No. 1, and went out each heart solemn with the thought that this might be our last Memorial this side the vail. (wr 1918 4/1 6234)

OUR LORD'S RETURN (1925/1929)
A book authored by Rutherford about the return of Jesus, and discussing the Greek words "parousia" (presence), "epiphanea" (manifestation) and "apokalupsis" (revealing).

The 1925 and 1929 versions are identical in their text, the latter being a reprint.

Rutherford argues that the time of the end began in 1799 (pp 24, 28) and Christ's invisible second presence in 1874. (pp 27, 33, 37) [Both these "truths" were changed a year later, in 1930.]

Revelation 1:7 "every eye will see" is interpreted to mean "every eye will discern" or "understand" even though understanding is not the function of an eye but of the mind. Rutherford claimed that the Greek for "see" in Revelation 1:7 is "horeo". "Horeo" does sometimes refer to mental illumination — but in Revelation chapter 1 the Greek word is not "horao" but "optomai".

"Coming [Greek: erkomai] as a thief" (Revelation 16:15) Rutherford applied to 1914. (p.10) The WTS now applies it to Armageddon not to 1914.

The booklet is so erroneous it became obsolete the following year. Yet in it Rutherford abuses Christian "clergy" as "ignorant", "intoxicated", "loving slumber", "blind", "greedy" and "D.D.'s ... unable to understand". "D.D.s" meant Dumb Dogs. (See: *DUMB DOGS*)

Neither Rutherford nor his successors in the WTS have ever apologized.

OUTLINE
Printed summaries of talks supplied by the WTS for public speakers; also called a "public talk outline".

An outline gives all the points that the speaker on the platform should make and Bible verses to be quoted. It is not meant to be recited word for word but has to be closely adhered to. The speaker decides on extra scriptures to quote, illustrations or examples of the content, accessories such as drawings or list of points on a chart, and how much repetition to use.

OVERLAND MONTHLY.
See: *WHAT PASTOR RUSSELL WROTE IN THE OVERLAND MONTHLY*

OVERSEER
"Overseer" is an alternative term for "elder". The congregation overseers are:

- Presiding Overseer;
- Secretary;
- Service Overseer;
- Watchtower Study Conductor;
- Theocratic Ministry School conductor.

Overseers are appointed for life or until disqualified but the particular position of oversight is of indefinite duration. If not enough males in a congregation qualify then some overseers hold several positions.

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