DICTIONARY of JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

V

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V.D.M. QUESTIONS
V.D.M. or "Verbi Dei Minister" refers to "Minister of the Divine Word". In 1916 the WTS prepared a list of 22 "V.D.M." questions which its public speakers had to answer with a correct-score of 85% or better to represent the WTS.

VACATION PIONEER
A JW appointed to proselytise full-time for a brief period, usually two weeks to a few months.

"Vacation pioneering" was introduced to motivate JWs school children to sell WTS publications door to door during school holidays. In 1943 all vacation pioneers were school children. Eventually adults also were encouraged to "vacation pioneer".

Around 1970 the name was changed to "temporary pioneers", then to "auxiliary pioneers". (See also: *PIONEERS*)

VACCINATIONS
In 1905, state and federal courts in the USA upheld compulsory vaccination statutes for adults. State Courts have since required that public-school children be vaccinated.

English physician Edward Jenner (1749-1823) introduced vaccination against smallpox in 1796 which got him acknowledged as the greatest saver of human life in history. Poyntz (1845) describes the initial opposition:

> In London, it was denounced from the pulpit, as an infringement on the dispensation of Providence; and in France, Doctors Vaume, Chapon and others pronounced vaccination to be injurious to the human constitution, and capable of reducing man to the condition of a brute, by the introduction of animal virus into the blood.

Poyntz concludes: "With a few rare exceptions vaccination has proved a security against the small-pox, and the practice ought consequently to become universal."

An anti-vaccination cult

Rutherford endorsed the publishing of many anti-vaccination articles in *The Golden Age* magazine from 1921 onwards. A brief pro-vaccination statement appeared in g1921 10/12 16 between lengthy statements against vaccination. Thereafter, comment was against:

> However, since vaccination began, the types of diseases have increased in number and complexity to such an extent as to warrant the assertion that many of these new forms of disease spring from the vaccination error. (g1921 10/12 14)

> Vaccination never prevented anything and never will, and is the most barbarous practice... We are in the last days; and the devil is slowly losing his hold, making a strenuous effort meanwhile to do all the damage he can, and to his credit can such evils be placed... Use your rights as American citizens to forever abolish the devilish practice of vaccinations. (g1921 10/12 17)

> Vaccination summed up is the most unnatural, unhygienic, barbaric, filthy, abhorrent, and most dangerous system of infection known. Its vile poison taints, corrupts, and pollutes the blood of the healthy, resulting in ulcers, syphilis, scrofula, erysipelas, tuberculosis, cancer, tetanus, insanity, and death. (g1923 1/3 214

> The public is not generally aware of how large an industry is the manufacture of serums, anti-toxins and vaccines, or that big business controls the whole industry ... every little while the boards of health endeavor to start an epidemic of smallpox, diphtheria, or typhoid that they may reap a golden harvest by inoculating an unthinking community for the very purpose of disposing of this manufactured filth...

> Whoever does any thinking on the subject must agree with Mr. S. D. Bingham's opinion: "Vaccination summed up is the most unnatural unhygienic, barbaric, filthy, abhorrent and most dangerous system of infection known. Its vile poison taints, corrupts and pollutes the blood of the healthy, resulting in ulcers, syphilis, scrofula, erysipelas, tuberculosis, cancer, tetanus, insanity and death." (g1923 3/3 214)

> Thinking people would rather have smallpox than vaccination, because the

latter sows the seed of syphilis, cancers, eczema, erysipelas, scrofula, consumption, even leprosy and many other loathsome afflictions. Hence the practice of vaccination is a crime, an outrage and a delusion. (g1929 5/1 502)

Avoid serum inoculations and vaccinations as they pollute the blood stream with their filthy pus. (g1929 11/13 106-107

Of all the inventions that have been foisted upon mankind for their defilement the most subtly devilish is that of vaccination. (g1931 2/4 293)

Vaccination is a direct violation of the everlasting covenant that God made with Noah after the flood. (g1931 2/4 293

Vaccines cause demonism, and are useless. (g1931 2/4 293-294)

Vaccination has never saved a human life — it does not prevent small pox. (g1931 2/4 294, 297)

One of the noticeable marked effects of vaccination upon the human system is that of mental and moral degeneration. (g1931 2/4 298)

We do well to bear in mind that among the drugs, serums, vaccines, surgical operations, etc., of the medical profession, there is nothing of value save an occasional surgical procedure. Their so-called "science" grew out of Egyptian black magic and has not lost its demonological character... (g1931 8/5 727)

A CERTAIN "health" commissioner offered the suggestion a short time ago that no mother could give her child a better present for "Christmas" than diphtheria immunization, meaning an injection of filthy and poisonous serum.

It is said that diphtheria is particularly deadly of late, and that seems likely. Parents cannot give their children the foods needed to build sturdy bodies that can resist the disease. But while parents are not able to get proper foods, they can get the serum injections for their children free. The Devil is bent on destroying the human family, denying them the necessary comforts of life, and urging them to give their children "Christmas" presents of germ-laden pus. What a travesty of civilization! (g1935 3/27 409)

The life is in the blood, and as vaccination is a direct injection of animal matter in the blood stream, vaccination is a direct violation of the law of Jehovah God. (g1935 4/24 471)

…of all the insane things that we have advocated in medicine, that is one of the most insane—to insist on the vaccination of children or anybody else, for the prevention of smallpox, when as a matter of fact, we are never able to prove that vaccination saved one man from small pox. (g1938 9/21 3)

...serums and vaccines are products of contamination... rise in cancer is attributed to the use of serums... One may go through life without having serious manifestations of what has been injected into his blood-stream, thus thinking he was "immunized", but, suddenly, it may begin its satanic work on his child, or even "unto third and fourth generation. (g1939 3/22 21)

Vaccines are a cruel hoax. (g1939 5/31 3)

While the ecclesiastics inoculate the people with spiritually poisonous doctrines, the medicos vaccinate them with deadly serums. (g1939 5/31 3)

A form was published in *The Golden Age* in 1935 (January 30, p.269) for parents to use when refusing vaccinations for their children at school.

In the mid 1940s when 4500 JWs were in US prisons as conscientious objectors, the Washington Health Department ordered that all guards and prisoners be vaccinated. Many JWs refused and faced solitary confinement.

WTS representative A.H. Macmillan visited the prisons to get the prisoners to change their minds. (Macmillan 1957, pp 188-190) In this way the JWs leaders over-rode conscience and "truth" and got them to "violate … the law of Jehovah God."

Since children required small-pox vaccinations to attend school many JWs parents had the vaccination simulated with a drop of acid on the skin. Defectors from Brooklyn Headquarters later claimed that missionaries and WTS leaders avoided vaccinations required for overseas travel by having Bethel doctor A.E. Ilett falsely complete the vaccination certificates. Nevertheless, by 1950 the doctrine interfered with the travel arrangements of the Governing Body and for delegates to international conventions.

A law of Jehovah repealed

A WBTS letter dated 1952, April 15, sent to congregations said:

> …the matter of vaccination is one for the individual that has to face it for himself. Hence all objection to vaccination on Scriptural grounds seems to be lacking.

Thus the JWs leaders repealed a "law of Jehovah God"!

The cult was as dogmatic and irrational in opposing vaccinations as it was after 1945 in opposing blood transfusions.

(See also: *GERM THEORY; MEDICAL QUACKERY*)

VALENTE, BRIA

The stage name of American singer Brenda Fuentes.

Valente released her debut album, *Elixer*, as part of a three-album set with Prince's *LOtUSFLOW3R* and *MPLSoUND* in March 2009.

Valente was born and raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota where she contributed to Prince's vocals to his 2007 album, *Planet Earth*. She became Prince's girlfriend in 2010 and joined JWs soon afterwards.

https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Bria_Valente.htm

VALLEY OF DRY BONES (Ezekiel 37)

The prophet Ezekiel (Chapter 37) describes dry bones returning to life. The vision referred to the reconstruction of Israel after the Exile of 587-538 BC.

Russell gave Ezekiel a further, literal, fulfilment to occur in 1914/1915 when ancient Israelites would start to be resurrected.

Rutherford, similarly, claimed the prophecy foreshadowed the resurrection of literal Israel. (Life 1929, 130-193) This interpretation came: "…in the light of prophecy and of the physical facts constituting its fulfillment."

The alleged "physical facts" commenced in 1878 when Zionism began to flourish. (Comfort for the Jews 1925, 89-90) In 1931-1932, however, the "physical facts" no longer counted and Rutherford called the interpretation "obsolete". He reinterpreted the "dry bones" as symbolizing the Russellites during World War I. (Vindication II, 1932, 278-293; The Nations Shall know Know… 1971, chapter 18) The bones coming to life meant the 1919 recovery of Russell's cult under Rutherford.

Ezekiel also had a vision of two sticks merging to become one stick. (Ezekiel 37:15-20) This in ancient times was fulfilled by the unification of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi with the other ten tribes (referred to as Ephraim).

Rutherford, however, made Ephraim — i.e. the ten tribes — picture the pre-1919 Russellites who, he claimed, compromised with human governments during World War I. The other "stick" — Judah, Benjamin and Levi — pictured Russellites who went "into captivity" in 1918. The two "sticks" became one stick when the faithful of both groups accepted Rutherford's leadership:

> The physical facts prove the fulfillment of this prophecy beyond any question of doubt. (Vindication II 1932, 295-301)

VAN AMBURGH, W.E. (1863-1947)



From a 1925 handbill

William Edwin Van Amburgh of Minnesota was the secretary-treasurer of the WBTS of Pennsylvania from 1909 to 1946, and a member of *The Watchtower*'s Editorial Board.

Before joining Russellism he was a Methodist for 20 years, "but had never examined its creed." (Convention Report 1912, 260)

Van Amburgh began to publicly promote Russellism in 1897 and soon got letters published in *The Watch Tower*. (wr1898 5/1 2305; wr1900 2/1 2576)

As one of Russell's official travelling representatives or "pilgrims": "He was so full of gentleness toward the 'dearly beloved' that he often made me think of what the beloved apostle John may have been like." (Yearbook 1975, 48) JWs publications, however, contain

unqualified praise of anyone who stayed loyal to the Organization through all its doctrinal changes.

Van Amburgh — A top Watchtower man

Van Amburgh was appointed one of the seven directors of the WBTS in 1903, and as secretary-treasurer (one of the three officers) in 1909. This made him third in the hierarchy of the cult after the president and vice-president.

Van Amburgh also:

- Testified at the miracle wheat trial in 1913;
- Was one of the three WBTS officers who in 1917 cooperated to defeat four directors who opposed Rutherford's takeover;
- Shared Rutherford's prison cell 1918-1919.

He spoke at Russell's funeral services in November 1916 in New York City, stating:

> This great worldwide work is not the work of one person. It is far too great for that. It is God's work and it changes not. God has used many servants in the past and He will doubtless use many in the future. Our consecration is not to a man, or to a man's work, but to do the will of God, as He shall reveal it unto us through His Word and providential leadings. God is still at the helm." (Yearbook 1975, p.80)

Russell's original WBTS charter in 1884 instituted a board of directors that would always have seven members. With Russell's death the remaining six therefore elected a replacement. The seven members of the board at this point were A.I. Ritchie, W.E. Van Amburgh, H.C. Rockwell, D. Wright, I.F. Hoskins, A.N. Pierson and J. F. Rutherford.

The directors then established a three-man Executive Committee, composed of Vice-President Ritchie, Secretary-Treasurer Van Amburgh and legal adviser Rutherford, to manage the WBTS for two months.

In 1917, the annual shareholders meeting of the WBTS in Pittsburgh on January 6-7 elected seven directors of whom three were "officers" — J.F. Rutherford president, A.N. Pierson vice president and Van Amburgh secretary-treasurer. (wr1917 1/15 21-22)

Imprisonment

Slosson (1958) writes:

> The espionage act of June 15, 1917, forbade false statements which might injure the prosecution of the war, incitements to disloyalty, obstruction of recruiting, and similar attempts to impede the activities of the government.

On May 7, 1918, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York issued a warrant for the arrest of eight WBTS men — J.F. Rutherford, W.E. Van Amburgh, C.J. Woodworth and G.H. Fisher (the two who compiled *The Finished Mystery*), F.H. Robison, A.H. Macmillan, R.J. Martin and Giovanni DeCecca.

In June 1918 the eight Russellites entered the federal penitentiary at Atlanta, Georgia where Van Amburgh shared a prison cell with Rutherford. The eight were put to work making prison coats and pants at which Rutherford proved incompetent and was reassigned to the library.

Harland B. Howe, United States District Judge, who had presided at the trial, wrote to the attorney general in March 1919 a letter which read in part:

> Sir: Answering your telegram of the 1st inst., I wired you that evening as follows: 'Recommend immediate commutation for Joseph Rutherford, William E. Van Amburgh, Robert J. Martin, Fred H. Robison, George H. Fisher, Clayton J. Woodworth, Giovanni DeCecca, A. Hugh Macmillan. They were all defendants in same case in Eastern District of New York. My position is to be generous now that the war is over. They did much damage by preaching and publishing their religious doctrines.'
>
> The severe sentence of twenty years was imposed upon each of the defendants except DeCecca. His was ten years. My principal purpose was to make an example, as a warning to others, and I believed that the President would relieve them after the war was over. As I said in my telegram, they did much damage and it may well be claimed they ought not to be set at liberty so soon, but as they cannot do any more harm now, I am in favor of being as lenient as I was severe in imposing sentence… I am not in favor of keeping such persons in confinement after their opportunity for making trouble is past… (From: Yearbook of JWs, 1975)

In the book *Light* Volume 1 (1930) Chapter 11 Rutherford claimed that the 1918 "persecution" of the cult, including, the imprisonment of the eight, fulfilled Revelation

11 which tells of "two witnesses" who prophesy and are killed and then resurrected.

1919 to 1947

After their release from prison Van Amburgh remained secretary-treasurer until 1946.

From 1926 to 1943 he was also assistant secretary/treasurer of the British Corporation, the International Bible Students Association.

Russell in his will and testament, had outlined an arrangement for an Editorial Committee of five to determine the contents of *The Watch Tower* after his death. The five named in the will included Van Amburgh who remained in the Editorial Committee until Rutherford disbanded it in the late 1920s. (w1938 6/15 185)

From 1920 to 1925 Van Amburgh was a prominent public lecturer in the "Millions Now Living Will Never Die" campaign which predicted the resurrection of the ancient biblical "worthies" and the beginning of paradise on Earth in 1925/1926.

The 1925 handbill with a photo of Van Amburgh's on its front page (see above) has three pages of newspaper clippings reporting his public speeches on the "Millions" topic. Only some of the newspapers' names and dates can be deciphered and include:

- Van Amburgh Says Dead Will Rise in Four Years (*The Clarksburg Daily Telegram* November 28, 1921)
- Devil's Day Nearly Done, Thinks Van Amburgh (The Saskatoon, Phoenix, February 4, 1921)
- Raising Of Dead In 1925 Foretold By Bible Student (St. Louis Times, December 16, 1921)
- Sees Paradise On Earth In 1925 (*The Boston Herald*)
- Millions Of People Now On Earth Will Live Forever (Boston Daily Free Press)

The handbill is an official publication of the cult, published by its British corporation the IBSA, which therefore approved and endorsed the newspaper reports.

Van Amburgh also authored "A Bible for the Scientist" in *The Golden Age* (May 21, 1924) and revised in the December 31 edition. It was republished as a 54-page paperback by Lulu publisher in 2005. Van Amburgh asserted that Egypt's Great Pyramid is "Bible number one" and its measurements confirm the prophetic dates of 1799, 1874, 1914, 1925 and 1926. This "Bible for the Scientist" impressed few if any scientists because it was nonsense which the cult discarded in 1928.

He also authored *The Way to Paradise* (1924; 1925) an official WTS book wherein he implies that world peace and prosperity would start in 1926 with the resurrection of Abraham, Moses and other Bible worthies. After the third edition in 1925 the book was ignored because the predictions for 1925-1926 failed.

Van Amburgh died on 7th February, 1947.
(See: Investigator Magazine #209, 2023 March)

VAN HELDEN, STEPHAN (1974-)

A former JW who on his website offers free downloads of many JW publications in English and German published up to the 1960s as well as much other material relevant to JWs history.

Van Helden also provides his biography — he lived his early years in the German town of Gädheim; his mother is a JW, his father an atheist.

He portrays his mother as a control freak who believed herself always right and others always wrong and kept him isolated and friendless.

In high school Van Helden obtained a computer and was in regular contact with a software company and began to acquire computer skills.

He was baptized at 18 and eventually married a JW convert and became an elder in the congregation and his wife a "pioneer" putting in 70 hours per month door to door.

The biography describes personal problems, his wife's illness and dismissal from pioneering, the judgmental attitudes of the elders, and his growing doubts about the Organization.

He stopped attending meetings and prepared his disassociation letter in January 2007.

VANUATU

Publishers and Memorial attendance on Vanuatu, a South Pacific island-country, and their ratio to the population:

	Peak	Ratio 1 to	Memorial	Ratio 1 to

1980	53	2,132	189	598
1985	83	1,681	359	389
1990	189	755	1,043	137
1995	222	642	1,284	111
2000	277	682	1,566	121
2005	351	618	1,943	112
2010	513	456	2,470	95
2015	743	363	3,720	73
2018	753	376	3,797	75
	Ave.			
2019	696	431	3,065	98
2020	710	432	2,234	137
2021	715	439	4,114	76
2022	607	530	3,584	90
2023	596	560	4,308	78
2024	642	511	4,046	81
2025	714	483	4,648	74

Note the WTS used to calculate the ratio based on the peak number of publishers, but switched to average in 2019.

VARDY, R.
Rebekah Vardy, 41, wife of a prominent footballer in Leicester (England), recounted on television (in 2023) that she was sexually abused in the JWs community in Norwich at age 12 to 15:

> "... instead of being supported I was blamed, manipulated into believing it wasn't the best thing to take it to the police."

She left JWs after that at age 15.

Non-reporting of sexual abuse, unless specifically mandated by law, is standard JWs procedure.

https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/ may/14/rebekah-vardy-sexual-abuse-jehovahs-witnesses
https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cv06m814068t

VARGAS, PEDRO MATIAS
A JW in Argentina sentenced to 12 years in prison in 2021 for "aggravated sexual abuse and corruption of minors aged 8 to 11, which occurred 2005-2008 and 2010-2011, in the town of Santa Elena in the province Entre Rios.

https://www.jehovahs-witness.com/topic/6017657850036224/abuser-fugitive-jw-pedro-matias-vargas-caught

VASECTOMY
See: *STERILIZATION*

VEIL
A Russellite symbol for death and the separation of life on Earth from life in heaven.

The phrase "this side of the veil" referred to present life on earth. "The other side of the veil" referred to life in heaven after death.

VELASQUEZ, JULIAN (1923-)
A JW woman of Amityville, New York State, baptized in 1959 who left JWs after 40 years at age 75 in 1998, and whose disassociation letter is on the Internet.

VENEZUELA
Publishers and Memorial attendance in Venezuela and their ratio to the population:

	Peak	Ratio 1 to	Memorial	Ratio 1 to
1970	7,387	1,417		
1975	12,546	1,000		
1980	15,867	920	58,400	250
1985	35,200	525	128,600	144
1990	51,900	385	197,200	101
1995	71,700	315	238,000	95
2000	87,200	277	285,800	86
2005	98,800	257	330,300	77
2010	119,455	241	413,400	70
2015	142,100	217	433,800	71
2018	148,042	220	452,717	72
	Ave.			
2019	136,200	209	470,900	61
2020	132,800	214	320,000	89
2021	133,400	215	412,100	70
2022	130,100	221	355,700	81
2023	131,900	215	419,200	68
2024	136,000	209	413,100	69
2025	138,492	206	398,453	72

VERY CLOSE
A phrase used to indicate Armageddon's imminence:

> Here we are, twenty-four years after World War II closed in 1945 and a portion of the anointed remnant of elect ones are still here and the war at Armageddon is still ahead, although getting very close now. (w1970 1/15 52)

> The fulfillment of the "sign" shows that we have been living in the time of Jesus' presence for 71 years, since 1914… Hence, the "great tribulation" must be very close. (w1985 10/1 18)

VERY LATE
Another phrase occasionally used to suggest Armageddon's imminence and motivate JWs to greater zeal:

> The evidence from fulfilled Bible prophecy shows that we are very, very late in the 'last days' of this wicked system of things. (w1977 4/1 198)

VERY NEAR
A commonly-used phrase implying that the time remaining for this world has almost expired:

> …the battle of Armageddon which battle is very near. (Universal War Near 1935, 42)

> During the past few years preparation for the great battle that will vindicate the name of Jehovah God and avenge his faithful servants has been in progress. That crucial hour must now be very near… (w1941 1/1 3)

> We see the evidence corroborating scriptures that Armageddon is very near, when God will avenge the wrongs of his people. The true and faithful ones have no doubt that the outrages recently perpetrated in many parts of the earth against Jehovah's witnesses will have due attention from the Lord in the near future when he literally cuts the enemy to pieces at the battle of Armageddon. (w1941 1/1 11)

> The astounding prophecy told long in advance concerning "the king of the north" and "the king of the south" is now coming to pass and is very near its final stage of fulfillment, proving that we are near the final end of this old world of wickedness. (The New World 1942, 346)

> Already this separating work has been proceeding for many years. It is now very near to its conclusion. (True Peace and Security—From What Source? 1973, 87)

> The time is now very near for the arrival of Jehovah's "new earth". The alarm is sounding, signaling the fast-approaching destruction of this wicked system of things by God's hand. The opportunity to take in life-giving knowledge from God's Word is still before you like the open door of the ark built by Noah before the Flood. But it will soon swing shut. Therefore, now is the time to show that you really want life. (Zephaniah 2:2, 3) Use the remaining time wisely so that when time finally runs out for this system you will be one who has the happy prospect of survival. (g1984 10/22 11)

The phrase "very near" appears 286 times in publications on the *Watchtower Library CD* (2007), mostly in reference to Armageddon or the "new world".

VERY SHORT
Another phrase used by the JWs leaders to motivate people to join the sect and also get JWs to donate more time (going door to door or do other work for the Organization), and more money.

After all, if time is "very short" there's no point in improving one's own life. To be selfish in that way, and spend less time in saving lives by preaching and converting people, could lead to one's own death at Armageddon. One's assets and time should go to the WTS!

> The things in Revelation are to take place in a short period of time from 1914 forward, and now in this fifty-fourth year of that time period the things to happen are very shortly ahead indeed. (w1967 11/1 666)

> The facts show that these are things that God has done in the twentieth century. Christ is already on his heavenly throne and the separation work is nearing its completion. The time left in which you can identify yourself as being on Jehovah's side of the issue of universal sovereignty is very short. The "great tribulation" is near at hand! (True Peace and Security — From What Source? 1973, 71)

Phrases such as very close, very late, very near, very short, very soon, etc, imply that most of the period from 1914 to Armageddon has elapsed. The WTS publications are addressed to human readers and designed to motivate them to reduce or jettison their employment, studies and ambitions so as to do more preaching; therefore such phrases refer to time periods that are "very short" relative to the normal human lifespan and "very short" relative to the time elapsed since 1914.

VERY SOON
Another Governing Body phrase employed to make JWs more zealous:

> Those who long to live under a just and righteous rule in peace and contentment will have their prayers answered, and

that very soon now. The great Theocrat, Jehovah the Almighty, has already begun to rule as King upon his glorious throne in the heavens and, now speedily, he purposes to clean out all rebellion and iniquity, destroy those who now wreck and ruin the earth, and establish a new world wherein will dwell righteousness. (w1951 11/1 647)

The United Nations belongs to this old world, which is facing a disastrous end very soon... The old is bound to pass away in our day. (w1958 4/15 257)

Very soon now, Jehovah God is going to intervene in human affairs and wipe out wickedness from the earth. (Unique Prospect 1998)

The adults of 1951 who "will have their prayers answered, and that very soon now", are almost all dead and did not "get their prayers answered".

VICTORIOUS ORGANIZATION

The WTS along with everything else that the Governing Body controls is viewed as the "earthly part of God's universal organization". They predict ultimate victory of "God's organization" over all political, religious, apostate and legal opposition. People are urged to "Put Faith in a Victorious Organization!" (w1979 3/1)

VIETNAM

Peak publishers and Memorial attendance in Vietnam and their ratio to the population:

	Peak	Ratio	Memorial	Ratio
1970	52	335,000		
1975	127	156,000	135	147,000

VIEW FROM THE TOWER

A section in *The Watch Tower* reserved for comment about the world — discontinued in 1924.

VILLA, DAVID

A former JW who authored *Blood Flowers* (2009) a novel which follows the life of Daniel Verona. Daniel is a devoted JW suffering from haemophilia who sets out to discover the truth about his religion.

VINDICATION

A set of three books authored by Rutherford and published by the WTS in 1931-1932 presenting a new, spiritualized interpretation of Ezekiel.

Prophecies about Israel's restoration, which Russell, and then Rutherford until 1930, had applied to the literal Jews, were discarded and reinterpreted as referring to the JW "remnant" from 1919 onwards.

VINDICATION OF GOD

Vindication of God is the doctrine that God will ultimately be proved good and right in everything, and defeat and destroy all his opponents and the evil they created.

From 1935 Rutherford considered the "vindication of God's name" to be the overall message of the Bible with the Organization of JWs having a central role in that vindication. "Vindication of God's name" included making known the actual name "Jehovah" but more so it meant declaring God's ways and methods to be right, good and finally triumphant over all human disagreement and opposition, and that all reproach from God's name would be removed. The JWs role was to declare God's judgments, and tell everyone else how wrong they are, and bring into the Organization everyone who will survive Armageddon and live forever. (Prophecy 1929, 27-31, 49, 239; w1936 12/15 375)

With God "vindicated" by all of this, no further 7000-year period of human rebellion would be needed or tolerated ever again — the question of whose way is best and right would be forever proved.

The doctrine was emotionally appealing because it gave JWs a sense of importance due to their role in the vindication.

Watchtower Library (2007) lists the occurrence of "vindication" phrases as follows:

Phrase	Last use
vindication of God's name 21 times	1990
God's vindication 12 times	1991
vindication of Jehovah's name 139 times	1995

The doctrine of vindication evidently went out of favour after 1995.

Barbara Anderson, former worker in the Brooklyn Headquarters writing department, reports that in 1992 Governing Body member Karl Klein suggested to the other Governing Body members that Jehovah did not need to vindicate his name; rather his chief purpose

was to "vindicate his sovereignty". This was accepted and became "new light".

Jehovah's sovereignty failed when he failed to fulfil his "promise" to bring Armageddon and global peace in the 20th century!

VIRGIN ISLANDS (BRITISH)
Publishers and Memorial attendance on the Virgin Islands (British) and their ratio to the population:

	Peak	Ratio 1 to	Memorial	Ratio 1 to
1970	53	198		
1975	90	117		
1980	85	140	253	47
1985	91	132	399	30
1990	122	98	421	28
1995	145	117	604	28
2000	166	102	530	32
2005	184	112	634	33
2010	254	96	864	28
2015	263	114	825	36
2018	260	123	699	46
	Ave.			
2019	228	132	733	41
2020	212	142	589	51
2021	225	133	923	32
2022	213	146	765	41
2023	221	140	668	46
2024	217	180	734	53
2025	219	183	634	63

VIRGIN ISLANDS (U.S.)
Publishers and Memorial attendance on the Virgin Islands (U.S.) and their ratio to the population:

	Peak	Ratio 1 to	Memorial	Ratio 1 to
1970	270	249		
1975	442	171		
1980	470	203	1,179	81
1985	473	203	1,691	57
1990	487	197	1,599	60
1995	648	157	1,979	51
2000	651	160	1,798	58
2005	619	177	1,972	56
2010	645	171	1,940	57
2015	626	170	1,743	61
2018	607	173	1,549	68
	Ave.			
2019	554	190	2,012	52
2020	527	197	1,034	101
2021	534	195	1,539	68
2022	521	200	1,289	81
2023	508	205	1,355	77
2024	499	208	1,264	82
2025	502	207	1,197	87

VIRGINS
Jesus taught a parable about ten virgins of whom five were foolish and five were wise. (Matthew 25)

Russell claimed that the virgins represented the Millerites (Second Adventists) who expected Christ's second coming in 1844. The "midnight cry" which awoke the virgins was the announcement by Russell that Christ returned invisibly in 1874.

The wise virgins were the Russellites from 1874 onwards who recognized Christ's invisible return. (wr1881 October/November 288-289; Studies III, 91-94)

Rutherford changed Russell's interpretation and identified the ten virgins as the Russellites of 1914-1918. The five foolish virgins were Russellites who declined to cooperate in the "aggressive work" of selling Rutherford's books from 1919 onwards. The wise virgins cooperated fully with Rutherford and he divided them further into the Mordecai class and Naomi class. (w1935 10/15 310-312; The New World 1942, 237)

(See: *MORDECAI CLASS*; *NAOMI CLASS*)

VITUPERATION
Funk & Wagnalls dictionary defines "Vituperation" as "Finding fault with abusively; berating; scolding". This describes much of JWs preaching from its beginning as Russellism until today.

In an ad for Rutherford's books in his booklet *Crimes and Calamities* (1930) it says:

> Out from under the cloak of mysticism, away from the fogs of clerical stupidity and the rubbish of creeds and religious fanaticism, the Bible arises to take its unimpeachable, its indisputable place as the Word of Almighty God, the very fountain of reason, logic and light. (p.32)

Similar language by Rutherford or approved by him against ministers was common:

> They are an entirely unauthorized class — except by themselves; a self-perpetuating fraud. They have brought upon their heads the blood of all the nations of the earth in this world war... (The Finished Mystery 1917, 228)

> These priests have been at the business of lying for so long that it does not seem to occur to them that there is a limit to human gullibility. (g1936 7/1 619)

> They are fertile liars and supreme frauds… They substitute their own doctrine for the Word of God. (w1936 7/15 213)

> …the religion mongers, who have hypocritically claimed to represent God and his king, but who have represented the Devil and have led the people into the Devil's snare… (Religion 1940, 121)

The accusations continue to this day:

> …tyrannical clergymen have exalted themselves over the laity. (w1988 1/5 12)

WTS publications contain thousands of anti-Christian statements and accusations, which is why JWs were sometimes called "religion of hate".

JWs presented their "hate" statements as part of their "true Christian teaching" which provoked arguments and even riots. Vituperation was a deliberate policy of their leaders to provoke conflict with householders and civil authorities to distract JWs from their false predictions and doctrinal revisions. People arguing regularly with householders had little energy left to disagree with each other or with the WTS or even study the history of their own cult.

The following list shows how JWs regard and portray ministers of Christian churches. Some of the expressions appear often in WTS publications, others only a few times:

Abominable	Ignorant
Aggressive	Immoral
Ambitious	Impious
Anti God	In deep slumber
Apostate	Insincere
Arrogant	Insolent
Austere	Intoxicated
Babblers	Lawless
Babylonish	Liars
Bigheaded	Little men
Blind	Lording it over
Blaspheme God	Lovers of money
Blind guides	Lovers of pleasure
Blood drenched	Malicious
Blood stained	Mean
Boasters	Offended
Bombastic	Opponents of God
Brutish	Opposers of truth
Burdensome	Peevish
Cocksure	Persecutors
Conceited	Pharisees
Contemptible	Philistines
Cowardly	Pious hypocrites
Critical	Polluted
Crooked	Pompous
Cruel	Praise seeking
Cursed	Presumptuous
Death dealing	Pretend to worship God
Deceitful	Proud
Deceivers	Proud apostates
Defamers	Puffed up
Deluded	Racketeers
Demonic	Rebellious
Despicable	Reckless
Devil worshippers	Religious hybrids
Devil's servants	Religious hypocrites
Devilish	Reprehensible
Disgraceful	Scornful
Dishonest to God	Sanctimonious
Doing Satan's work	Satanic
Doomed	Seek flattery
Dreamers	Scoffers
Drunkards	Selfish
Dumb	Self righteous
Duped	Self seeking
D.D.s (dumb dogs)	Servants of Satan
Enemies of God	Slanderous
Entirely blind	Slick and wily
Entirely ignorant	Spiritually dead
Evil	Spiritually sick
Failures	Spiteful
False accusers	Strutting
False prophets	Swine class
False teachers	Tell of their own virtues
Fault finders	Thieves
False Christians	Tickle their own ears
Fiendish	Tools of Satan
Fierce	Tormented
Frauds	Trouble makers
Gangsters	Turn their backs on God
Glory seeking	Tyrannical
Godless	Unbiblical
Good for nothing	Unfaithful
God defaming	Ungodly
Greedy	Unprofitable
In darkness	Unreasonable
Grumblers	Unreliable
Hard hearted	Unspiritual
Haters of God	Untruthful
Haters of good	Vain
Haters of truth	Very sick
Haughty	Vindictive
Heartless	Vicious
High minded	Violent
Horrible	Vipers
Howling	Warmongers
Hurtful	Weak
Hypocrites	Wolves
Hysterical	Worn out
Idlers	Worthless
Idolaters	Wrongdoers

The unrelenting attack on all Churches is contrary to the Bible:

> For certain intruders have stolen in among you … and slander the glorious ones. (Jude 4, 8)
>
> But if that wicked slave says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' and he begins to beat his fellow slaves, and eats and drinks with drunkards, the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know. He will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites… (Matthew 24:48-51)

A report on the Worldwide Web in 2013 said:

> Jehovah's Witnesses under fire
> 25. July 2013
> At the recent summer conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses in Silkeborg and Herlufmagle, speakers likened lapsed members to a deadly virus, snakes and contaminated soil that should not be mixed with clean soil.
>
> The rhetoric was so strong that the movement may have breached article 266b of the Danish Criminal Code, under which "any person who publicly or with the intention of dissemination to a wide circle of people makes a statement or imparts other information threatening, insulting or degrading a group of persons on account of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin, belief or sexual orientation shall be liable to a fine, simple detention or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years".
>
> This is the conclusion of lawyer Niels-Erik Hansen, head of the Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination (DRC), after having read excerpts from the sermons delivered at the summer conventions, reports Danish newspaper *Kristeligt Dagblad*…
>
> "The speeches are the same type of rhetoric that we heard against the Jews in Europe in the 1930s. This is precisely what the anti-discrimination article was introduced to restrain," said Hansen…

People who really are "mentally diseased" are protected under law and not publicly castigated. Some commentators speculated the Governing Body is attempting to stimulate legal intervention so it can cry "Persecution!" and in that way unify JWs and stimulate greater preaching effort. It is the old story of authoritarian rulers creating solidarity by focusing their citizens' hostility onto a relatively defenseless enemy.

In 2012 Barbara Anderson, formerly of the WBTS's writing department, but disfellowshipped for exposing the JWs leniency toward pedophiles, sent an open letter to that department. The following are some extracts:

> February 14th, 2012
>
> In 1517, Martin Luther wrote in a letter to Archbishop Albert of Mainz: "You must graciously forgive that I, that scum of the earth, am so bold as to dare to address a letter to you."
>
> Yes, I know, you think of me as scum, just like Mainz believed of Luther, wondering how I dare write you a letter, someone Jehovah's Witnesses disfellowshipped back in 2002. I was accused of being an unrepentant sinner and condemned for "causing divisions," then labeled "apostate" because I spoke out publicly on NBC's Dateline TV program about the child sexual abuse policies that protected pedophiles…
>
> For acting out of conscience, it's certainly uncalled for to be shunned as an apostate and viewed as dead by family and friends. But according to the July 15, 2011 Watchtower, I'm also "mentally diseased" because it states that all apostates are mentally diseased…
>
> You know that words can cut like knives, and it appears that's why you use words in Watch Tower literature that can damage those who differ with the religion of Jehovah's Witnesses…
>
> In the July 15, 2011 Simplified Version of the Watchtower, published for children and others who have only very basic reading skills, the author placed a box on page 11, where mentally diseased "apostates" and "false teachers" are defined as "people who rebel against true worship and abandon it." …
>
> Our twelve-year old grandson, Luke, aware that his grandparents left the Witness religion in 2002 and are now shunned, has in his mind the frightening thought that we are mentally diseased…
>
> May I remind you of what you wrote in the February 15, 2000 Watchtower:
>
> "The ruling ecclesiastical class … violently silenced a voice [Cyril Lucaris - in 1638] that pointed to some of the errors of their non-Biblical beliefs. They proved to be among the worst enemies

of religious freedom and truth. Sadly, this is a stance that in various ways survives even to our day. It is a sobering reminder of what happens when clergy-instigated intrigues stand in the way of freedom of thought and expression."

For over forty years I thought you were different than those in the clergy who sought to suppress God-given "freedom of thought and expression." But by your words I have come to know that I was wrong!

VOLPE, LEO J. (1916-2000)
JW draft resister during WWII who founded Restored Israel of Yahweh in 1973 whose members believed Volpe to be the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah

In 1940 Volpe begin reading the *Vindication* volumes of J.F. Rutherford and joined JWs.

In 1943 he allegedly received the first of many visions, this one telling him to leave JWs. The next vision, in1945, told him, "You are a Prophet".

Volpe claimed that "Yahshua", the Messiah, returned as a spirit in April 1917 — this being the second coming of Christ — and began to rule for 1000 years. The resurrection of the "Ancient Worthies" would soon follow and make Earth a paradise like the Garden of Eden.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_Volpe.htm

VOLUNTEERS
In Russell's time, persons: "…who systematically undertake the distribution of the WATCH TOWER tracts free, in their own city or town..." (wr1907 6/1 4001)

Nowadays all JWs who do work for the Organization, whether proselytizing, working at conventions or headquarters, and building or cleaning halls are "volunteers".

VOORHIES, LARK (1974-)
Black American, JW female actress born in Nashville, Tennessee, who gained fame playing a fashion-obsessed teenager in the television series *Saved by the Bell*.

Voorhies has appeared in many soap operas and television series (e.g. *The Bold and The Beautiful*, *Loveboat*, *Days of Our Lives*, *Star* Trek*: Deep Space Nine*, *Saved by the Bell*, *Fire & Ice*) and some movies including *How High* (2001) and *Civil Brand* (2003).

VOTING
Although regarded unfavourably by the Russellites voting in political elections was optional.

On the basis of "you do not belong to the world" (John 15:19) Rutherford made neutrality in politics a doctrine and prohibited JWs from holding office in government, voting in elections, or joining the armed forces. JWs children were required to not vote in school elections for prefects or class presidents.

Voting in political elections was made a disfellowshipping offence in the 1950s.

JWs quote "We are ambassadors for Christ" (II Corinthians 5:20) to support political neutrality. But in this verse "we" refers to the Apostles who are distinguished from "you", the Corinthian Christians.

In Russellism each congregation elected its own elders. Rutherford, argued that voting is democratic but Christianity Theocratic, and demoted thousands of elders from that position in 1932-1938, forcing many to leave the congregation, and made new appointments "from above" i.e. by "Jehovah" acting via Rutherford.

The displaced elders were initially replaced with "service committees" re-elected annually in each congregation until 1938 when re-elections were banned and the WTS made appointments directly.

Until 1944 the 7-member board of directors of the WBTS were democratically elected by voting shareholders (limited to 500 members) whose voting powers were proportional to their donations — one vote per $10. In 1944 the charter was amended and votes limited to one per voter. The new arrangement guarded against the possibility of Knorr or Franz ever being voted out of office by a few voters making huge donations.

This change in voting power was viewed as so important that in 1971 Franz interpreted the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 as fulfilled in 1944 with the one-vote-per-person arrangement. (w1971 12/1 724-727)

The annual elections of WTS directors by voting shareholders were seen as consistent with theocracy because the voters were themselves appointed from "above" i.e. by Jehovah via the directors. Thus the directors representing Jehovah appointed the voters who voted for the directors! In this way the ban on voting which JWs leaders enforced on JWs could be suspended for themselves.

In 2000 CE the Governing Body resigned as directors in the WTS and now replenishes itself from among men it trains to assist them and is independent of the WTS shareholders.

In the 1970s and 1980s the Governing Body met privately on Wednesday nights to discuss doctrine, appoint circuit and branch overseers, and consider questions people had sent in by mail. Until 1971 major decisions were made by N.H. Knorr (WTS president) and F.W. Franz (vice president). In 1971 voting on issues by the Governing Body was introduced. Whatever got a 2/3 majority vote became "Bible truth" from Jehovah. (Franz 1983, 62-66, 99-101)

The Governing Body has never explained why majority votes on doctrine and policy in their case provide decisions from God whereas voting in congregations was ended in 1938 because it does not.

A *Watchtower* article in 1999 on voting corroborates by implication Raymond Franz's (1983) description of Governing Body meetings wherein they make decisions by 2/3 majority vote:

> However, there appears to be no principle against the practice of voting itself. For example, <u>there is no reason why a board of directors should not take a vote</u> in order to arrive at decisions affecting their corporation. (w1999 11/1 28-29)

The subsequent paragraph seemingly revokes the ban on JWs from voting in political elections and makes voting or not voting each person's decision:

> As to whether they will personally vote for someone running in an election, each one of Jehovah's Witnesses makes a decision based on his Bible-trained conscience and an understanding of his responsibility to God and to the State.

The article next says "In making this personal decision, the Witnesses consider a number of factors" and then lists the standard reasons why JWs do not vote.

The article then states that JWs can comply with legal obligations to go to the polls and even enter voting booths but:

> So here in the presence of God is where <u>his witnesses must act in harmony with his commandments and in accordance with their faith</u>**.** It is not our responsibility to instruct them what to do with the ballot.

Clearly, JWs still must not vote. The Governing Body is merely shielding itself against the offense at law of interfering with voters' right to vote. Therefore they state that JWs are free to decide for themselves, but if any JW acts on this by voting and admitting to have voted he would be ostracized by other JWs, in effect excommunicated. It is like a robber with a loaded gun saying, "Give me your cash or I'll shoot, but it's your free decision if you give it to me."

VOW

In 1908 many of Russell's followers took a vow never to be alone in a room with a non-relative of the opposite sex. (wr1908 8/15 4226-29; Yearbook 1975, 51-52)

Russell organized the vow in response to accusations he had been immoral. Lists of followers who made the vow were published in *Zion's Watch Tower*.

The vow, like many events in JWs history, was given significance by linking it to alleged Bible prophecy. The theological reason given for the vow was that it would restrain Satan's evil influence until 1918 when the 144,000 would all be chosen and "sealed" and the overthrow of all nations underway. (The Finished Mystery 1917, 128-129)

VOYSEY, SHERIDAN (c.1973-)

Voysey is an Australian speaker, writer and broadcaster on faith and spirituality, who transferred to England in 2011 with his wife Merryn. He left JWs during his teens and later became founding host of the nationally networked radio show *Open House*. He has conducted 2000 radio interviews and authored six books. In *Unseen Footprints* (2016) he describes his upbringing in a "very strict" sect. (p.71)

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