

# the Free Minds Journal

promoting awareness of the Watchtower and other authoritarian religions

## Features:

All You  
Need to  
Know about  
the Trinity  
Doctrine

Writer's  
Forum

A day  
in my life  
by Randy  
Watters

The  
"TRUTH"  
As I Seen It  
by Gary  
Busselman

New books!

vol. 17, no. 2  
Spring 1998



A look at  
"The Report"

The first of many  
organized  
dissenters to  
challenge the  
mother  
organization

Apostasy  
Knocks at  
Bethel's Door





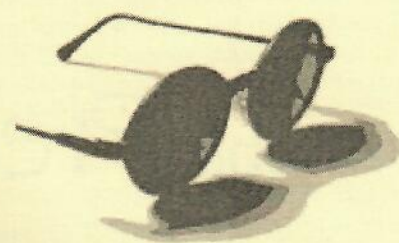
*People tend to think of cults as an information problem, a doctrinal problem. They are missing the point: cults are a family problem, since a cult is an artificial family that seeks to supercede your own and ultimately destroy it.*

It has been 20 years since the above picture was taken. I was on summer vacation from Bethel headquarters in New York and flew out to be with my family in a sleazy motel in Los Angeles, so we could all go to the yearly District Assembly (Divine something-or-other was the theme used back then). These are the members of my family that I brought into the Watchtower organization, brother-in-law Fred, nephew Kenny, sister Sue, me, niece Tami and mother Joy. Two years later, after the 1980 Franz Incident at Bethel, we were all on our way out. I was even going to a Christian church before I disassociated myself. (If you would like the full story on cassette tape, check out "What Happened at Bethel in 1980?" on the order form.)

The Watchtower never managed to separate our family, we were always free to speak our minds and give our opinions. When a family discovers one of their members is in a cult, and contacts me for help, the first thing I ask is, "How does the family get along?" How well does each one relate to the others?" In most cases I know the problem right away. Often the cult involvement is a tool used to either distance or manipulate family members. Yet this is rarely understood, and the family takes a crash course on doctrine and the Bible to try and "correct" the error of the lost sheep. But the solution is more complex, and takes time. If you do, it is worth it. —Randy Watters

Twenty years later we are still having fun. Oh, yes, that's mom on the left now,

Kenny's wife with child, sister Sue and Tami. (Dad took the picture.)



## Free Minds Journal

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Please advise us of any changes of address. The *Journal* is sent via bulk mail and is not forwarded. You are important to us, don't miss an issue!

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# Letters to the Editor

Dear Randy:

My husband and I were part of the WT for 25 years, from 1971 right out of college, until 1996. When we wrote our letter of disassociation on matters of conscience over conflicting Bible doctrines, my husband was still serving as an elder, and I was in the full time ministry. We read Ray Franz's books, and were very troubled and at loss to explain to our grown children (who were born into this religion and trusted us as their parents to have led them in the right way) that we had been greatly misled. We have faith that our loving God, who had by Grace set us free, would heal our family, and direct us to a Bible believing church where we could grow in our relationship with Him. Our Lord has done all this, and more...the people He has put in our path since we left the organization have been such an encouragement to us.

We are presently part of an outreach ministry to reach out to those lost in cults. I have never been happier in my life, and pray that our children will come to know Christ as their Savior very soon.

Giving our testimony at Family Bible Camp (Joy) in Bancroft Ontario, as well as at church functions, has encouraged so many people to NOT GIVE UP if they have friends or family in a cult, but to witness to them with gentleness and LOVE. Thank you again for your web site, you are reaching lives.

Sincerely,  
Linda

Dear Randy,

Enclosed is an article about a dear "ex-friend" of mine who committed suicide. Renata Middleton was one of the most kindest, sweetest and loving persons that I have ever known. Unfortunately, she was a JW up to the time of her death at age 36. I had known her since she was 11.

I blame her death entirely on the Watchtower Society and it's use of mind control, and the shaming and judging techniques so relentlessly placed on victims who are members of the "Society." Renata was SO lonely and so unhappy, but as with mind control, she could see no other way to live but as a JW. She wanted nothing more than to be married and have children. Thanks to the repressive and antiquated belief systems of the JWs these cost my former friend her life!!!

Although I had not seen her since about 1992 and even though I disassociated myself in 1994 I went to the memorial service anyway just to say "goodbye." Her family was very respectful to me and grateful that I came. (My adopted aunt had called me the day after Renata had died). The memorial service was done quite tastefully and to my surprise the elder that gave the talk actually mentioned Renata by name and talked about her qualities. Most witness funerals are very impersonal, barely mentioning the deceased. The funeral then becomes nothing more than a "Public Talk" and an opportunity to shove their erroneous resurrection beliefs on everybody, thereby not allowing any one to appropriately grieve. The elder even frankly talked about suicide and the effects that it has on those left behind. I didn't appreciate the vague references that Renata may be counted among the "wicked" with no chance of resurrection due to committing suicide, but then again this cult has no concept of GRACE!

By Renata's unfortunate and untimely death there was an actual healing process that took place. I was reunited with a high school friend who hasn't been an active Witness since 1980 and she couldn't care less if I'm "disassociated" or not. We've made plans to get together. I also spent over 3 hours talking to my adopted cousin who hasn't been able to talk to me since I disassociated myself in 1994. (We've known each other all our lives, she being born in 1957, me in 1954).

It is so tragic and sad that so many people are trapped on the JW merry-go-round and can't get off. Being a JW can kill not only your soul and spirit - it can cost you your life!!

Sincerely,  
Laura Hubbard

*Only Briefs*  
**A4** Tuesday, March 10, 1998

## Briefs

### Fatal plunge in RPV ruled suicide

A Harbor City woman who plummeted to her death in Rancho Palos Verdes over the weekend apparently suffered from depression and committed suicide, authorities said Monday.

The body of Renata Middleton, 36, was found Saturday morning at the bottom of a 175-foot cliff in the 31500 block of Palos Verdes Drive West, said Scott Carrier, a spokesman for the county Coroner's Office.

An autopsy Sunday determined Middleton died of multiple blunt-force trauma, and her death was ruled a suicide, he said.

Middleton's body was discovered at 10:30 a.m. by sheriff's deputies who found a small compact car near the Point Vicente Interpretive Center.

Unable to locate the registered owner, deputies combed the area and found the body of a woman on a rocky shoreline beneath the cliff, Sgt. Bill Marsh of the county Sheriff's Department said.

Based on information gathered at the scene, Middleton's sister was summoned to the cliffs and made a positive identification of the body, he said.

Renata  
Middleton







## A Day in the Life of Randall Watters

I woke up this morning at 8:30. Normally it would be 7:30, but Daylight Savings Time just changed my sleep habits. The house is cold, the heater hasn't been working in three days.

"Frank, this is Randy. We're cold!" I pester the landlord's assistant, whom I have known for all the 18 years I have lived in this house. "Oookay. I'll give the plumber a call again, he was supposed to be out on Sunday." (Now what does a plumber have to do with the heater?) I was a car mechanic for years with Ford Motor Co. before I went to Bethel in 1980. They taught me an even dirtier job, printing. (It is ironic that now I print things they certainly do not appreciate.)

It's a big beach house on the Strand in Manhattan Beach, about two miles from Los Angeles Airport. When I moved here after leaving Bethel in 1980, I wanted to live in a place that was near L.A. but *not really* L.A., if you know what I mean. It is a little dog-leg off of Manhattan Beach, which was actually called El Porto when I moved here. We still prefer to call it that, and the local surfer residents still resent the presence of the bigger city name. Maybe only a few hundred people live in El Porto. Last week we had a birthday party for Grandma Betty, our local 80-year old icon who has lived in the same beach house for 60 years. She was inter-

viewed by the *L.A. Times* the day before our block party for her. We hired the Hyperion Outfall Serenaders (the main sewage treatment plant for L.A. is about 2 miles away, and it is called the Hyperion Treatment Plant. Most in the band were over 50. The locals loved it.

I have never had an office. Free Minds, Inc. has no employees other than myself, and there are two volunteer board members. My salary is less than \$20,000 a year. My room is my office, and I share this house with three other guys, two are surfers and the other is Robert Sullivan, my old Bethel roommate, who is an engineer and inventor now. Between the neighbors, friends and girlfriends, there is never a dull moment. Sunsets are great and I go for a bike ride every other day or so down to the Redondo Beach Pier. It helps clear my head for the intense schedule I must follow.

The only way one person can do all the tasks I face is to multi-task my time, focusing on one thing while basically ignoring others temporarily. Mail has to be picked up and dropped off, orders filled, letters and e-mail written daily, and every three months I have to shut down most other functions for 2-3 weeks while I work on the *Free Minds Journal*. I get about two e-mail messages a day from active Witnesses, and a lot more from Christians or family members of someone in the Watchtower. Then there is the hate mail. Not too much, really, but it does keep me smiling. Guess I'm doing my job, for some of those even back down and end up asking for more information.

As the cost of printing the *Journal* kept rising, I waited for a printer to be built that could print something this size fairly quick and cheaper than the print shop. This is the first *Journal* done on my new Xerox N32 printer. It will pay for itself within two years. I also have more control over the artwork and final appearance. Perhaps you notice a little cleaner look to the graphics in this issue. My room is also smaller, as the printer is almost as big as my desk!

People who call in often complain about my speakerphone, as I sound like I'm a little distant. Since I can't afford the \$300 for a good speakerphone, and my ear cannot take a phone next to it and I can't use the stupid little headsets that drive me crazy, it will have to do for now. Just pretend it's the WT's

Service Dept. you are calling, and you won't expect so much. But I am more friendly, and twice the fun!

People sometimes ask me why I continue to do this for peanuts, especially since I don't have a retirement fund and finances are always uncertain and sometimes downright scary. It took me 17 years to figure it out. I consider myself an artist, and I like to "paint" people, to put a little color in the drab existence of many who are lost and alone, and sometimes suicidal. If I can survive without an outside job and do what I want to do best, I am happy. I hope it will never change, with God's grace.

My health is pretty good for being 45. I have Crohn's Disease (similar to colitis) and I have had a major operation for skin cancer recently. Yet the former has pretty much been inactive due to diet and reduced stress levels, and the latter was removed with no further complications, and it was benign. I am fortunate to look young for my age.

I have retired from the church scene after preaching and teaching for 18 years, even having been a Foursquare pastor with my own church from 1987 to 1990. Crowds and visitors stir up my Crohn's disease, so I don't entertain formally any more, nor do I do public speaking. That way I can retain my energies for my most productive work, which is writing and correspondence, and lifting the spirits of the sad voice on the other end of the phone line. Hopefully today they will put up with my speaker phone without complaints. :-))

### New Items on the order form:

CD-ROMs

New book by Gary

Busselman

(Armageddon Okies)

Jesus of Nazareth

New listing of Free Minds  
Journal backissues

New video and cassette  
listings!



# All You Need To Know about the Trinity Doctrine

by  
Randall  
Watters

(If you INSIST on knowing more, you can order my books, *Refuting Jehovah's Witnesses* and *Apostolic Fathers*, both on the attached order form)

## Why is the Trinity such an emotional topic?

People generally settle in to a comfortable "picture" of God in their minds, or at least a way of perceiving him. Any threat to that picture sparks deep internal unrest (called *cognitive dissonance*) when that picture is challenged, out of fear that one's concept of God and the universe may not be so accurate after all. This is especially true if God was "seen" or perceived as a man on a throne in their minds. Pictures of Jesus are also popular for the same reason.

When a model of God is then introduced that cannot be visually grasped, the common image of a loving father who can nurture us just like a real father is threatened, implying that the universe is not so friendly and understandable as once thought. To the strict monotheist, accepting the concept of the Trinity is just as strange as embracing the belief that we were brought here by aliens with strange physical features. One cannot warm up to such a picture, and it is immediately rejected and attacked as heretical to the monotheistic bent of most of the Bible.

## Did the early Christians believe in a Trinity?

The early Jewish Christians attempted to deal with the new charismatic faith towards Jesus and to harmonize it with the existing scriptures. The underlying assumption in their apologetics was that Jesus *was indeed God*, and therefore all scripture passages must harmonize with this experience. Since the doctrine known as the Trinity was only formulated after the third century AD, the early Christians could only have believed in some of its elements, namely that Christ was deity and the Holy Spirit was a person. The rest is abstract philosophy. What the writings of the first three centuries DO reveal is that most of the church Fathers clearly saw Christ as God. Two or three indicated that the Holy Spirit was a person, possessing all the attributes of personality. The concept of eternity, common to the Greeks, was not well-defined in its application to Christ, however. Some of the writings are more in the style of a born-again pastor instructing his flock than the more ethereal style of theologians. Not many were yet acquainted with the style of Greek thought and apologetics so as to

"formulate" their ideas as we have in modern Christian theology.

The church of the first three centuries was occupied with preaching the new gospel and avoiding imprisonment and torturous death at the hands of the Romans. Christ, being God to them, mysteriously gave them the power to survive and prosper with incredible grace, and that was their main concern.

When the persecution let up around 251 AD, it gave Christian leaders more time to think about abstract concepts and also to respond to the "alternate" interpretations of Christ and his mission that had developed in the past 200 years. Doctrine began to take precedence over experience. Church politics influenced the development of theology, and the Catholic and Greek Orthodox systems split East and West apart and formed their own distinctive traditions. By the time of the Council of Nicea in 325 AD, the illogical nature of the whole concept of God and Christ that had been argued up to this point was challenged by a number of Bishops of the Church, and Arius became their spokesman. The ecclesiastical battles that ensued allowed each side to gain power over the other politically, making onlookers uneasy as to which tradition would win the title of Orthodoxy. The war was over the question, "Was Jesus only a created being as Arius says, though of the highest order of creatures? Or was he Jehovah incarnate, God in human flesh, according to our tradition?"

Bishop Athanasius eventually outshone Arius, and Roman emperor Constantine promoted the Trinity as "official doctrine" of the Church. Constantine's new "secular" role in the Church initiated a new chapter in church history, as Rome was soon to become known as the Holy Roman Empire.

## How can Christians accept a doctrine that was a product of ecclesiastical argumentation for centuries?

Understanding the politics of the first few centuries actually helps us distinguish among man's politics, the preservation of the history of Jesus and the experience of the early Christians. If the record was without fault, it would certainly create suspicion that the Catholic Church had completely rewritten history to suit itself. This was not so much to its credit as to



the fact that it had so many opposers that their works could not all be burned or hidden by the Church, and much of it has survived being copied to this day. As a result, we now have a fairly clear picture of the different threads of belief in the history of the early Christians.

It might be said that Christ was interpreted in one of two basic ways: experientially or logically (or more accurately, *theologically*). The two do not mix well in actual practice. [For example: people *experience* grace. All is well until they try to write about grace and explain it in some sort of a theological system. Then you have the faith/works wars, and the final absurdity of Calvinism. It is rather ironic that Christians often fight over the subject of *grace*.]

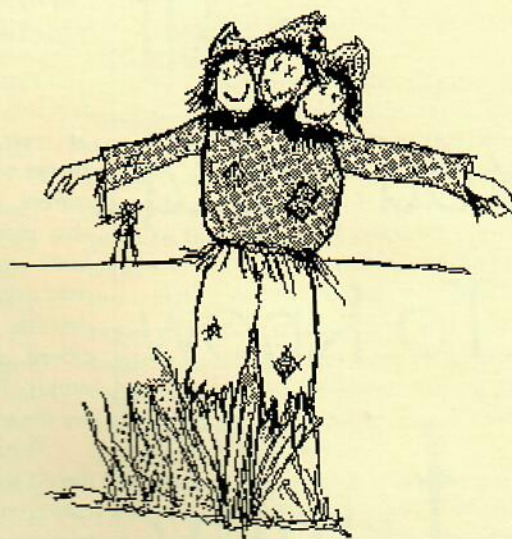
In the book of Acts, we are introduced to the mass conversion of thousands after a charismatic lecture by the apostle Peter. Yet today the scenario is repeated in virtually the same manner, if you have ever been to a Billy Graham event or have heard of revivals by the late evangelists Billy Sunday and Jonathan Edwards. Many modern evangelists also encourage the use of "gifts" such as healing, speaking in tongues, etc. and the practice of such probably does not differ much from the event at Pentecost, except perhaps in scope and power. Those who consider such outward manifestations of charisma "demonic" would no doubt be just as uncomfortable with it in the first century, if the accounts of such early meetings as told by some of the Fathers are any indication.

### Born-Again Experience

To "accept" Christ was the equivalent of being faced with severe trauma and guilt (conviction--see Acts 2:37) and then suddenly being let off the hook by having your death sentence repealed by a kindly saint. Some liken it to your drowning after your ship sinks, and the next thing you know you are jerked up out of the water, rescued and hugged by your father who just happened to be there to save you. The *experience* is so primal and emotional that it is called, "the born-again experience." It happened to me when I was about nine years old at a Billy Graham convention. I was so moved by what was said about Jesus that I was

The doctrine of the Trinity is really a conceptual model of the nature of God, and has nothing to do with what God looks like.

Any efforts to picture God are typically tools of anti-Trinitarians who have little grasp of the history of the early Church and how and why the doctrine was invented.



Attacking the Trinity on the basis of one's conceptualization of God is a "straw man."

bawling and in tears as I went down to the front to give my life to him. No one coerced me, not even my parents. Nothing could stop me from taking that walk. Some call it a "gestalt," or shift in world view and the entire way you interpret life. It is for most an *experiential conversion*, rather than a logical one. Logic is added later, we call it apologetics. (Some call apologetics *apologizing* for the amazing things you believe, using clever arguments).

Yet, others decry the emotional experience, seeking a more logic-oriented view of Christ. Is he called God? It must mean he is "a god," one of many, for there cannot be more than one God or persons called God. Knowledge is the key, more commonly called "gnosis." The Gnostic Christians co-existed with the born-again from the early time of Christ, but their view of Christ was significantly different. Jesus was the key to the knowledge of the universe, he was the Logos, or Word, but he was not timeless deity. The beliefs of the Gnostics lie more in the doors he unlocked in their minds than the concept of sin, salvation and grace. Christ was mysterious and inviting to the Gnostics, and only a few sought him from this elite mindset. The born-again, on the other hand, disparaged such "occult" fantasies and championed the simplicity of Christ, even declaring the entire gospel void if explained in such ways. (Note the attack on Gnosticism in 1 Cor. chapters 1-3.)

The scenario has not really changed

in 2000 years. The Unitarians, Gnostics, and other logic or science-oriented Christian sects focus on the *knowledge* of Christ as empowering, and laugh at the emotional born-again. The born-again focus on the love of Jesus expressed towards each other and the world by means of evangelism, relief projects, hospitals, etc. The Catholics, while additionally possessing a historical foundation for their beliefs, nevertheless fall into the experiential crowd as well. Ritual is a prime-time experience. Thus, it is no mystery that many hospitals and relief agencies are Catholic in nature. Gnostics or logically-oriented Christians generally lack the motivation to embark on such ambitious projects, and their faith is often secret to the outside world.

**In American society this difference in world-view is typically expressed by whether a person believes in the Trinity or not. Why?**

Having been a licensed pastor with Foursquare International for about eight years after leaving the Watchtower, I noted some truth to this stereotype: The conviction of Christians towards the Trinity is based primarily on experience, and the conviction of non-Trinitarians is based on logic.

I found that people who champion the Trinity are the ones who have had an "experience" with Jesus. Not just a study or revelation of the mind, but a



literal experience, often such as that occurred in Acts chapter two. It is as plain as the nose on their faces that to deny the full deity of Christ is to *negate the entire experience*, for they have experienced him as God Almighty. This is of course frustrating and comical to the non-Trinitarian, who sees no logic at all in accepting such metaphysical "malarkey." This debate still rages after 1600 years, causing more verbal argumentation and division than any other Bible topic.

### The real question is, which group best matches the early Christians?

It is important to put aside our ideas of what the early church was like, and read their writings. Of course, the Gnostics and others had their writings, too, but they never claimed the masses of adherents as the Trinitarians. An experientially-motivated community church was more suited to the masses than the eclectic elitism of Gnosticism. Gnosticism was less-defined, allowing many variants of belief with no judicial system or punishment for "heresy." Besides, the issues of sin, punishment and grace were better suited towards enforcement in a social system than one's mathematics about the godhead.

We see the model of the early church present in much of Christendom today. Where the church takes on the role of a parent who must control its

children, authoritarian leaders posing as parents will be present and quite visible. Wherever the crave for power and the satisfaction of the ego are set aside (such as in times of pain or loss), Christ lives once more. If you personally have sat among such ones during their times of prayer and walked with them in their expression of faith and love towards others, you can say you know Jesus, or have at least seen him. There is no greater joy in the realm of faith and love towards others (Mt 18:1-6; 19:14)

### Where Do Jehovah's Witnesses Fit In?

Though Christian gnostics are not numerous, there is a hybrid in modern times that we assign to the label of Arianism. It borrows from the idea that knowledge about Christ is what saves, and often even worships Christ, albeit as a lesser deity. Many of the faith and experiential elements are present, but the level of hype is rather low-key or non-existent. Works or missions generally carry a low importance, and the cosmic world view of angels, demons and persecution are largely absent or ignored. Being born-again, if recognized at all, takes on more of an intellectual assent to Christ as the Savior than any experience. The leadership in such systems may or may not be authoritarian. In the case of the Watchtower, one would wonder if the parenting models were taken from

alcoholic fathers who survived the Korean War!

Rather than asking whether Arians are the real Christians or Trinitarians, we can only *really* ask which flavor best represents what the early church was like. (As one person would say, "Let God sort 'em out, it's not my job.") The evidence I have found indicates it most resembles the mess in Christendom among Trinitarians today. Just read the first three chapters of Revelation and you could swear it was taken from spending a summer in Southern California going church-hopping.

### Is the modern-day evangelical church in America an accurate picture of Christianity?

If fanatical devotion to Jesus, sectarianism, hypocrisy, evangelism campaigns (the dark side) as well as taking care of the sick and elderly and feeding the poor (the bright side) are all traits of the early Christians, the Trinitarians win hands down. Their focus is on the simplicity of Christ and life with him in heaven one day. Jesus is their man, from start to finish. Things have not really changed in 2000 years, and their faith is still "illogical." (Faith in anything usually is, we are simply convinced the pieces will come together someday. In the meantime, we *will* have our experiences.) --Randy Watters

## What the Early Christians REALLY Believed

In a Letter that Pliny the Younger (governor of Bithynia from AD 111 to 113) sent to the Emperor Trajan he makes it clear that the followers of Christ considered Him to be God. Part of that letter declares: "They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang an anthem to Christ as God." This letter was written in the first century following Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and only a few years after the New Testament was written.

### Did they worship Christ as God?

Iraeneus, bishop of Lyons late in the second century, tells us he personally knew several who had seen Christ in the flesh, and even some who were the disciples of John the Beloved. In the account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, taken from the writings of Iraeneus, we find that he refused to say "Caesar is Lord" (8:2), indicating that he understood such to be a title reserved for deity, and that he declared at the time of his death, "We shall never find it possible either to abandon Christ. . . or to worship any other. For him we worship as the Son of God." (17:2,3)

One of the earliest witnesses among the church fathers was Ignatius of Antioch. What did this contemporary of the Apostle John have to say about the person of Jesus Christ? To the Ephesians, he praised them "...because no heresy dwells among you; indeed, you do not even listen to anyone unless he speaks truly of Jesus Christ!" (6:2), then two verses later described that nonheretical view of him: "...both flesh and Spirit, begotten and unbegotten, in man, God, in death, true life; both from Mary and from God, first passable and then impassible, Jesus Christ our Lord."



Did the early Christians speak of a Trinity or tri-unity of God?

From the book *Everyman's Talmud* (a Rabbinical condensation of the Jewish Talmud containing their oral traditions from centuries past), we read, "The Rabbis also had occasion to defend the monotheistic view of God against attack from the early Christians who sought a foundation for their Trinitarian doctrine in the text of the Hebrew Bible." (p. 5)

"Certain doctrines in connection with the Deity were forced into general prominence and received special emphasis at the hands of the Rabbis because of contemporaneous circumstances. The attribute of Unity had to be underlined when a Trinitarian dogma began to be preached by the new sect of Christians. (p. 26)

Were they organized like Jehovah's Witnesses?

"Christianity began in confusion, controversy and schism and so it continued. A dominant orthodox Church, with a recognizable ecclesiastical structure emerged only very gradually and represented a process of natural selection-- a spiritual survival of the fittest. And, as with such struggles, it was not particularly edifying." (*History of Christianity*, p. 43)

Did they use the name YHWH or Jehovah?

Interestingly, Jewish Rabbinical sources indicate that the Jews at one point wanted to reinstitute the public use of the Divine Name so as to distinguish them from Christians. We read: "On the other hand, there was a time when the free end open use of the Name even by the laymen was advocated. The Mishnah teaches. 'It was ordained that a man should greet his friends by mentioning the Name' (Ber. IX. 5.) It has been suggested that the recommendation was based on the desire to distinguish the Israelite from the Samaritan, who referred to God as 'the Name' and not as JHVH, or the Rabbinite Jew from the Jewish-Christian."

What name did they use most of all?

"This custom, however, was soon discontinued, and among those who are excluded from a share in the World to Come is 'he who pronounces the Name according to its letters.' (Sanh. X. 1.) A third-century Rabbi taught: 'Whoever explicitly pronounces the Name is guilty of a capital offence.' (Pesikta 148a) (*Everyman's Talmud*, p. 25, 26)

From a contemporary of the Apostle Paul we read: "Let us therefore prove ourselves worthy of that name which we have received. For whosoever is called by any other name besides this, he is not of God; for he has not received the prophecy which speaks thus concerning us: 'The people shalt be called by a new name, which the Lord shalt name them, and shall be a holy people.' This was first fulfilled in Syria; for 'the disciples were called Christians at Antioch,' when Paul and Peter were laying the foundations of the church. (Ignatius To The Magnesians (circa 107 AD)

Did they believe in a bodily resurrection of Jesus and the Church?

Irenaeus, quoting from Paul in 1 Thes. 5:23, comments appropriately: "And for this cause does the apostle, explaining himself, make it clear that the saved man is a complete man as well as a spiritual man; saying thus in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, 'Now the God of peace sanctify you perfect and may your spirit, and soul, and body be preserved whole without complaint to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.' Now what was his object in praying that these three--that is, soul, body, and spirit--might be preserved to the coming of the Lord, unless he was aware of the [future] reintegration and union of the three, and [that they should be heirs of] one and the same salvation? For this cause also he declares that those are 'the perfect' who present unto the Lord the three (component parts) without offence." (Irenaeus Against Heresies, ch. 6)

What about the soul?

Tertullian, a Christian apologist (145-220 AD), defined death as "the separation of body and soul." (A Treatise On the Soul, ch. 51)

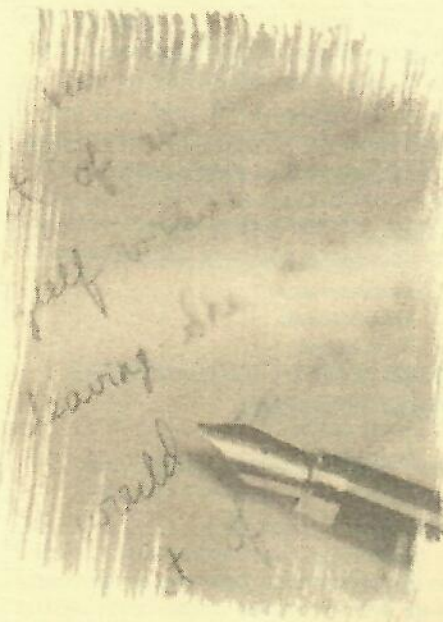
There is overwhelming testimony among the early church fathers that they accepted the "rich man and Lazarus" story as it stands without trying to explain it away in weak allegories. Tertullian wrote, "We, on our part, however, do here maintain, and in a special treatise on the subject prove, that the soul is corporeal, possessing a peculiar kind of solidarity in its nature, such as enables it both to perceive and suffer. That souls are even now susceptible of torment and of blessings in Hades, though they are disembodied, and notwithstanding their banishment from the flesh, is proved by the case of Lazarus." (On The Resurrection Of The Flesh, ch. 17)

Was Jesus returning invisibly?

Ignatius writes about the return of Christ and his resurrected body around 107 AD:

"And I know that He was possessed of a body not only in his being born and crucified, but I also know that He was so after his resurrection, and believe that He is so now. When, for instance, He came to those who were with Peter, He said to them, 'Lay hold, handle Me, and see that I am not an incorporeal spirit.' 'For a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.' And then He says to Thomas, 'Reach hither thy finger into the print of the nails, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side;' and immediately they believed He was Christ. Wherefore Thomas also says to Him, 'My Lord, and My God!' And thus was He, with the flesh, received up in their sight unto Him that sent Him, being with that same flesh to come again, accompanied by glory and power. For, say the [holy] oracles, 'This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen Him go unto heaven.' But if they say that He will come at the end of the world without a body, how shall those 'see Him that pierced Him' and when they recognize Him, 'mourn for themselves?" (Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans, ch. 3)





## Apostasy Knocks at Bethel's Door

### A Look at "The 'Report'"

The first of many organized dissenters to challenge the mother organization

I had heard about "The 'Report'" a few months ago. It was a book that was somehow making its way into a lot of bookstores, a rather unusual phenomena for a self-published work. *Someone* was spending a lot of time and effort to get this message out. After a proponent of the book (which is now printed in three volumes, and in spite of the web site teaser must be purchased for \$12.95 each) joined our Internet mail list, I decided to do a report on "The 'Report'." Surfing on over to their web-site at [www.the-report.com/overview.htm](http://www.the-report.com/overview.htm) I read the following:

#### Overview of The Report

MY colleagues and I are pleased that you are interested in reading the document we call THE "REPORT." We feel sure that you will find this particular information quite beneficial and enlightening as one who "thirsts for truth and righteousness." (Matthew 5:6) In fact, the following material, we think, will help you identify modern-day "Israel" of Bible prophecy, ~ whom we believe to be Jehovah's Witnesses as a nation. But you

must be thinking at this point:

What would make a rational individual think that this small, obscure, and seemingly, odd family of about five million people, scattered throughout the earth, could in any way represent the nation of "Israel," of Bible prophecy? <sup>1</sup>

"Ah, it looks like defectors from the Watchtower, who still haven't completed their homework," I thought. Not that I condemn a person for still holding on to organizational ideas, as most of us can remember how long it took us to get free of their selective indoctrination. It takes a few years unless the person is especially studious and has a good deal of exposure to other people and ideas, as well as a few history lessons. "Apparently these fellows are still trying to piece it all together," I thought. Yet as I read on, it appears they had already come to solid conclusions and bet their money on it, in a most literal way. They even called themselves the "Two Witnesses" of the Apocalypse of John.

The purpose of THE "REPORT" document can best be described in the following words spoken at Ezekiel 21:6, 7 which says: "And as for you, O son of man, sigh with shaking hips. Even with bitterness you should sigh before their eyes. And it must occur that, in case they say to you, 'On account of what are you sighing?' you must say, 'At a report.'" <sup>2</sup>

"The 'Report'" is a moral indictment against the Watchtower, and as it turns out, a *prophecy* regarding them, supposedly backed by Jehovah God himself. Perhaps even a new "faithful and discrete slave" in the works? Unlike the Franz Incident at Bethel in 1980 and other recent forms of dissent in Watchtower history, these authors are attempting to salvage the Watchtower and even declare judgement from God on the powers that be, until only those whom God chose as leaders would be fit to run God's one true organization. Shades of Joe Rutherford! (This stands in stark contrast to those of us who left Bethel in 1980, none of which has desired to return, start our own religion or denomination, or even desired to do so.)

Were it not for the small footprint of these "Two Witnesses," one might think

they pose a formidable threat to the Watchtower leadership. Yet their main web page showed only 5642 visitors since early 1997 (a little over a month's number of visitors for the Free Minds, Inc. website). Yet "The 'Report'" is available from some major bookstores across the country, something Free Minds, Inc. cannot match. Clearly some money has been spent to get this message out. This is a direct threat to the powers that be, a true "apostasy" from the direction of the Governing Body and Service Dept. of the Watchtower.

The writers of "The 'Report'" (who still mirror the mock-humility of the Governing Body in writing a book and refusing to sign their name) declare that God will shortly visit his judgements on this modern Israel of God, namely Jehovah's Witnesses:

Therefore, we say, if the things written about in this document come to pass, and if they come true as they are written in this document, then it could only have happened by the "Hand of God." It would be supernatural intervention. It would have to be considered, an Act of God.— Isaiah 30:26 <sup>3</sup>

The most obvious question to ask at this point is, "Why, if they believe that the Watchtower organization has become corrupt, do they *still* believe it is comprised of God's only true people?" "The 'Report'" website responds with a series of FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) and their answers. They answer the question as follows:

The following characteristics distinguish [Jehovah's Witnesses] as modern-day Israel:

- 1) Called by God's Personal Name
- 2) Monotheistic (nontrinitarian)
- 3) Iconoclastic (no images) <sup>4</sup>

Not satisfied with the Governing Body's list of requirements for identifying God's people, the "Two Witnesses" form their own list of requirements and add, "...it is the 'framework of Truth' that differentiates them from all other religions on the face of the earth today." <sup>5</sup>

Possessing the only true faith is not enough, sayeth the Two Witnesses, since Jehovah God will not tolerate the commercialism, disobedience and twisting of the scriptures as practiced by the current leadership. The Governing



Body, yes, ALL Jehovah's Witnesses must repent and yet still expect persecution in the near future by the hands of God (note the WT writing style):

Yes, these things are now being revealed because Jehovah God has now ordained a "measuring" period to begin upon these wicked, villainous characters who lead this organization of God's Name People, called Jehovah's Witnesses. And after such a "measuring" period, Oh, how they resemble their first century counterparts, the Pharisees and Sadducees! After such a "measuring," it becomes quite clear that there is a need, a REAL NEED for someone to do something. Someone to say something. Someone to act, boldly, in Jehovah's Name. And someone will. Jehovah will "cause" as the Scriptures say, His "Two Witnesses" to speak or "witness." Yes, the beginning of the movement the Bible calls, the "Two Witnesses." And their ministry will indeed place the issue of deception concerning 1914, and other issues, squarely before each and every Jehovah's Witness on earth today, as modern-day Israel. We can know this because it is Jehovah God Himself, the Almighty, who has "caused" such witnessing to happen in the first place. Think about it. -- See Revelation 11:3 <sup>6</sup>

According to "The 'Report,'" Jehovah's Witnesses will have to decide between the current leadership and Jehovah, and it even gives a timetable of events (scriptural, of course):

And after the 3 1/2 year ministry of the "Two Witnesses" has been complete -- then, and only then, will greater acts of "discipline" be administered by the "God of Truth." (Psalms 31:5) These greater acts will be handled by Jehovah God Himself, in His allowing the political nations to overrun His People and render them completely powerless before their enemies. This has happened before in years past to disobedient "Israel." And it will happen again to modern-day "Israel" of our day. This Divine Discipline, upon the nation of Jehovah's Witnesses, will be administered before a worldwide audience for a particularly difficult and trying time of some "42-months," a specific period of time of discipline. Many prophecies testify to this coming judgment upon modern-day "Israel." -- Ezekiel 36:33-36; Daniel 7:25; Daniel 12:7; Revelation 11:2; 12:13, 14; 13:5-7 <sup>7</sup>

Jehovah then rages against his organization. What must they do to be saved from his anger? "Get the Re-

port."

Jehovah now demonstrates "rage" upon His "adversaries," His Own Name People. God's People must "understand what has been heard [Ref. NWT fnt. "the report"]. Yes, they must "understand" the "Report," the "thing heard." -- Isa 28:17-19; Jeremiah 23:19, 20.

Finally, after the "rage," and other disciplinary actions upon His part, Jehovah has thus, taken matters into His Own hands. He brings about what He deems, "necessary" action or "discipline" to cleanse the nation of the wrongdoing or "practiced" sin. This "discipline" could take many forms, like famine, pestilence, being overrun by nearby enemy nations temporarily, or even having their "temple" destroyed and being led into captivity and re-deposited upon foreign soil. Whatever it takes to deal with the situation -- Jehovah now at "war" with His Own People, administering "discipline" as a "father" would upon his "sons," just as the Mosaic Law outlined He would do in keeping HIS end of the Covenant or contract. After which, if His people are "repentant," then he "restores" them. In this way, Jehovah "FIXES IT." -- Please consider Isaiah 30:26; Micah 4:6, 7; 1 Kings 8:46-52; Hebrews 12:5-13. <sup>8</sup>

One suspects at this point that there are politics hidden just beneath the sheets. First of all, the "Two Witnesses," whoever they are in human form, are apparently so overwhelmed by the visual organization's scholarship over the last 100 years that they consider it to be Jehovah's own "framework of Truth," while simultaneously accusing the Governing Body of gross idolatry by putting the "organization" to the fore. They deny the necessity of the door-to-door work as the main way of preaching their message (something the current leadership will no doubt use against them). They oppose the idolatry of the "organization" concept (which begs the question, "What would replace it?"). They oppose the emphasis on chronology and 1914, and they oppose the practice of shunning those who are disassociated or disfellowshipped. Apostasy is considered largely a future *event*, rather than a condition found in dissenting individuals (2 Thes. 2:3).

Perhaps they will continue to research the Watchtower's "framework of Truth" in the days ahead, and discover their complete lack of understanding of historical Christianity. More importantly,

I would hope that they focus on the message of grace and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. What happened to many of us at Bethel in 1979-1980 was proof that even the "Two Witnesses" might see Christianity in a different light.

#### Footnotes:

1. [www.the-report.com/overview.htm](http://www.the-report.com/overview.htm)
2. [../overview.htm](#)
3. [../overview.htm](#)
4. [../3truths.htm](#)
5. [../3truths.htm](#)
6. [../message.htm](#)
7. [../message.htm](#)
8. [../message.htm](#)

Doctrines that make no predictions are less compelling than those which make correct predictions; they are in turn more successful than doctrines that make false predictions. But not always. One prominent American religion confidently predicted that the world would end in 1914. Well, 1914 has come and gone, and -- while the events of that year were certainly of some importance -- the world does not, at least so far as I can see, seem to have ended.

There are at least three responses that an organized religion can make in the face of such a failed and fundamental prophecy. They could have said, "Oh, did we say '1914'? So sorry, we meant '2014'." A slight error in calculation. Hope you weren't inconvenienced in any way." But they did not. They could have said, "Well, the world *\*would\** have ended, except we prayed very hard and interceded with God and He spared the Earth." Instead, they did something much more ingenious. They announced that the world *\*had\** in fact ended in 1914, and if the rest of us hadn't noticed, that was our lookout.

It is astonishing in the face of such transparent evasions that this religion has any adherents at all. But religions are tough. Either they make no contentions which are subject to disproof or they quickly redesign doctrine after disproof. The fact that religions can be so shamelessly dishonest, so contemptuous of the intelligence of their adherents, and still flourish does not speak very well for the tough-mindedness of the believers. But it does indicate, if a demonstration were needed, that near the core of the religious experience is something remarkably resistant to rational inquiry.

— quote from "Broca's Brain" by Carl Sagan, p. 332, twelfth edition



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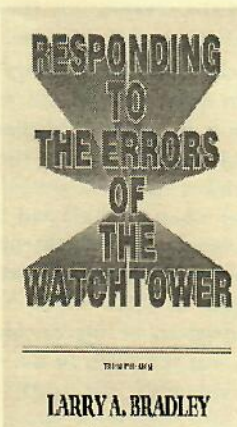
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## Counting the Days to Armageddon

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# The Truth (as I seen it) according to Jehovah's Witnesses by Gary Busselman



God is the creator, but since he only created Michael, and Michael created everything else ("all other things"), that would seem to make Michael the real creator, but only in a sense, since Michael is Jesus and Michael said to Satan, "the Lord rebuke you" makes the Lord powerful over Satan, however when Michael had to throw Satan out of heaven in 1914 he had to do battle with his own creations, Satan and his angels, and in 1918 when he selected Joe Rutherford to be his earthly channel and had to put the truth in the mind of Joe so Joe could write the truth in the Watch Tower and build Beth Sarim.

All this would be hard to understand if it were not for the "salvation" doctrine, which is easy to understand since the living evildoers will all be made dead at Armageddon and the dead evildoers will be made alive at Armageddon, thus the living sinners will die and the dead sinners will live, except the dead who are made alive will not really be made alive again but when they die God kinda makes a makes a computer chip, in a sense, of all the information in their brains, like their memories, thoughts, and personality and keeps this stored in heaven and the angels that don't join up with Satan help and then after Armageddon, God makes a perfect replica body, and somehow inserts this memory chip in the perfect replica body and then he will judge that new creation of the old person who was dead but is now alive by how he treats the anointed who are mostly dead but are represented by the Governing Body, who are not inspired but only receive divine direction, and by how well he follows the directions of the Organization and if he sins he dies.

To survive Armageddon, the only way is to be serving God in the only organization that has the truth, Jehovah's Witnesses. The truth is defined as the current teachings of the Governing Body which largely consist of denying their own past teachings and condemning views that are held by other groups that the Governing Body will someday adopt as their "new light" and "the truth." Serving God is defined as attending the five weekly meetings of Jehovah's Wit-

nesses, reading all of the week's lessons before the meetings, including underlining the answers to the questions at the bottom of the pages in the paragraphs with a red marker (yellow highlighter is optional as long as it is used in moderation), answering any questions you may come up

with by yourself, while you keep those questions secret and to yourself, by looking up the proper subject headings in the Index published by the Society and referencing to the proper Watchtower article while attending meetings for field service and going out in cars to try to recruit new members into the group and to solicit contributions to be turned into the group leaders in exchange for Watchtower publications that members paid for at the Kingdom Hall using the voluntary donation arrangement that was adopted after the Society failed in their attempt to defend Jimmy Swaggart in the Supreme Court of California after the Superior Authorities fell out of love with him and charged him with avoiding sales tax on literature sales and all Witnesses must do this or they die.

Loyalty to "Jehovah's Organization" is important since surviving Armageddon is contingent on how well we vindicate Jehovah's name which is really YHWH and pronounced *Yahweh* by most Biblical scholars only since that was changed to sanctify and it now is to exalt Jehovah's Name, not to vindicate anymore, and to announce the kingdom that was set up in heaven in 1914 after Jesus returned invisibly in 1874 and again in 1914 for the separating of the sheep and the goats by selling Watchtower publications door to door and then in 1995 this was changed to *not* separating the sheep from the goats but to require all Jehovah's Witnesses to believe that the separating of the sheep and the goats will be a future event to begin after the start of the Great Tribulation except that Jesus had to actually start his judging of the sheep and the goats in 33 AD and that he only picked 144,000 Jehovah's Witnesses and the number was filled in 1935 and then the earth was going to be used for the testing ground for all the re-created dead sinners and Jehovah's Witnesses for 1000 years because this all ties into the date of 1914 which was arrived at by Nelson Barbour by adding 30 years to William Miller's failed Apocalypse expectation date of 1844 which was arrived at by adding a year to the previously failed date of 1843, to arrive at 1874, which when the end didn't come, he added 40 more

years to come up with 1914 which Charles Taze Russell adopted and changed to 1915 when the Apocalypse didn't come in 1914 then to 1918 when it didn't come in 1915, then he died.

This is all so simple that a child could understand especially in view of the fact that the seven trumpets of Revelation were the seven Jehovah's Witness District assemblies from 1922 to 1928, starting with Cedar Point, Ohio and ending with Detroit, Michigan, only they weren't called Jehovah's Witnesses then but since Jehovah picked them in 1918 he waited until 1931 to give them his name while the generation living in 1914 and of the age of understanding, about 12 or 15, when World War One broke out, except it had been breaking out for a number of years before 1914, meaning that the generation that saw 1914 would by no means pass away before Armageddon started and "by no means" indicates that the majority would be living and never die since Jesus told Joe Rutherford that "Millions Now Living Will Never Die" by an angel and Joe wrote a book about the dead Princes, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and others who would be resurrected to the earth in 1925 and live in a house he built for them in 1929 in San Diego, CA except he lived in it himself because he thought the start of World War Two would be the beginning of Armageddon and then he died.

Usually this is best understood by believing the truth as Nathan Knorr and Fred Franz wrote about it in the Watchtower since they knew that field service was the answer and that six thousand years since Adam and Eve ended in 1975 and that maybe, might, could, should be the start of Armageddon but they don't remember writing anything about 1975 and they couldn't say for sure when Eve was created and besides so many were going to prison because they were loyal to God by refusing alternative service to active military duty and no one was taking organ transplants or buying Girl Scout Cookies and then they died.

Sometimes the truth comes as flashes of light and the vaccinations, and organ transplants are now all okay and the drafted boys don't go to prison but stay at home to be elders and pioneers instead of going to jail and the sheep are waiting and the goats are waiting too and the generation of 1914 waited too, then they died. ###

