

Christ? It is most unfortunate that they remain securely locked in the notion of their importance.

Nothing has really changed. -Updated April 8, 1997. □

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## **A Letter Of Disassociation**

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A growing number of loyal Jehovah's Witnesses are being forced to wrestle with life-altering decisions. This is primarily due to the 'witch-hunt' mentality that now pervades the fellowship. If there is any indication that the person is doubting or questioning the Watch Tower Society he is immediately viewed as a potential apostate. Those who find themselves in this situation soon realize two facts: (1) They cannot express their honest doubts about questions without having their motives questioned and (2) There is no honorable way from an organizational point of view that they can withdraw in good faith. Coupled with these facts is the additional one that an entire social structure stands to be destroyed if one is either disfellowshipped or disassociates. In many instances this involves entire families and lifelong friends and acquaintances. It is not surprising, then, that many try to avoid confrontations with bodies of elders and try to find a comfort zone in which they can maintain a measure of clean conscience while avoiding a radical upheaval in their life that will substantially alter or even destroy their social support system.

Aggressive bodies of elders-spurred on by Watch Tower directives-often force Christians into situations where they must make a choice between loyalty to God and their religion. Recently *Christian Respondent* was sent a copy of a letter of disassociation submitted by a brother and his wife. Because their experience typifies what is happening to many I have asked permission to share parts of it with my readers. To get the setting in which it was written and submitted it should be noted that the brother had stopped sharing in field service and was not attending meetings although his wife continued to attend meetings. Several visits by local elders witnessed a rapid decline in friendliness and took on a more confrontational manner. While the elders were assured by this couple that they were not interested in spreading their doubts and questions to others, the elders were apparently not content with this. And one day they paid them a visit which forced the issue. The following excerpts of the letter sent to *Christian Respondent* describe the dialogue between the brother and the two elders that called on them as well as other portions of the letter:

'Indeed, that is why we also thank God incessantly, because when you received God's word, which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God, which is also at work in you believers.'

'Who does this scripture describe?,' Bob Asked me. 'It sounds like it describes the Christian Congregation of the first century,' I answered. 'Are you saying that it doesn't describe the Organization today?' 'I don't think it does,' I replied. 'Now your teaching false doctrines! Doesn't it sound like he's teaching false doctrines to you, Tom?' 'It sure does!' Tom said. 'I'm not teaching false doctrines,' I said, now thoroughly shaken. 'I only answered your question. How can you construe that into teaching false doctrines? I haven't told anyone how I feel. You asked me a question and I gave you an answer.' 'No, no, no,' Bob said. 'You're trying to teach me a false doctrine. You're telling me that this scripture doesn't apply to the Society.' 'I only gave you my opinion,' I retorted. 'I wouldn't have even done that if you had not asked for it.' 'No, you're trying to teach me a false doctrine. If that's the way you feel, then you have no place in the Christian congregation. '

At that point I entered my house, told my wife that the elders were trying to find grounds to disfellowship me, and retrieved my copy of the *Diaglott*. I looked up Acts 17:11 and showed it to these elders. They left soon afterwards." [the names of the above men are fictional]

Some time after the above conversation the brother was told by phone that he and his wife were to be visited by the circuit servant and a number of elders. As to the nature of this visit he was told that there was to be "No more mysteriousness, no more walking the

fence." This was stated by the presiding overseer who had previously accused him of teaching false doctrine. From the phone conversation and the previous confrontation it became clear to this couple that their days as Jehovah's Witnesses were numbered. They

agreed that they did not want to have to deal with the elders or the circuit overseer and put themselves through further intimidation. Instead, they decided to

disassociate themselves and wrote a lengthy letter to that effect. What follows are excerpts from that letter:

"We have been under enormous pressure from such (elder) visits already and have no desire to submit to more of the same. If we had been left alone, we would not have come to this decision, as we cherish our relationships with our friends, and have no interest in seeing these end ... We have been told that the Elders are simply responding to a new directive from the Society, but we personally know of many who are not being pursued and harassed, and treated with such contempt as we are .

On what grounds is this action being taken against us? Because we are not attending meetings? I was not aware that this was a disfellowshipping offense. or is it because we have honest reservations to some of the things being taught by the organization? This also is not a disfellowshipping offense, is it? or is it? Consider the information in the Choosing the Best Way of Life, book: 'Commenting on how the proponents of error operate, the apostle Peter continues: 'These very ones will quietly bring in destructive sects.' (2 Peter 2: 1 b) The apostle was not writing about persons who simply have difficulty in understanding certain matters, or persons whose views, honestly held, may not coincide in all respects with those of the majority. (Compare Romans 14: 1-6) He deals instead with those who deliberately work to divide and corrupt.' Page 149, par.3 (underlining added in letter)

Could it be that [*wife's name here*] and I have deliberately worked to divide and corrupt? We have been asked by both [*man's name*] and [*man's name*] why we should care if we are disfellowshipped if we don't think that this is Jehovah's organization anyway? I doubt that they would feel the same way about having their friends and family cut off and their good name smeared. 'If any man teaches other doctrine and does not assent to healthful words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor to the teaching that accords with godly devotion, he is puffed up (with pride), not understanding anything, being mentally diseased over questioning and debates about words. From these things spring envy, strife, abusive speeches, wicked suspicions." 1 Timothy 6:3,4 NWT

These are the kind of things we have been subjected to. Especially vs.4. The idea definitely seems to be to cast us in the role of a complainer against God. To question the Society is, in fact, equal to questioning God himself. Our motives have been questioned, our faith in God, even our integrity and truthfulness has been examined. Who among you would not react similarly if treated in such an unchristian manner? I have been told that I do not have the right to teach my own children what I honestly feel is true and correct. We have been labeled, at least unofficially as yet, apostates. An apostate is a rebel against God and Christ. We know, even if no one else does, that we are not apostates! We have not attempted to inculcate our feelings, not because we think they may be wrong, but because Jesus said not to push them on those who do not want them. 'Let them be,' he warned. And so we have. We never really realized just how superficial the love we thought our friends accorded us is. Like the turning on and off of a light switch. Jesus said that we would know who represents him by the love they show. What we have been shown depicts just the opposite. "

The next portion of this extensive letter (there were 25 pages in all) deals with the many problematic teachings and policies of the Society that led to a deterioration of

their faith and confidence in the Society's claim to spiritual authority and divine guidance.

"What should be our course when we discover that things that we are being taught do not line up with the 'healthy words' Paul mentioned? We are told to 'wait on Jehovah,' which, when translated, means: 'ignore it.' However, the Truth book states in the chapter: Why It Is Wise To Examine Your Religion: 'We need to examine, not only what we personally believe, but also what is taught by any religious organization with which we may be associated. Are its teachings in full harmony with God's Word, or are they based on the traditions of men? If we are lovers of the truth, there is nothing to fear from such- an examination. It should be the sincere desire of everyone of us to learn what God's will is for us, and then do it.' John 8:32, Page 13, par.5 (underlining in letter)

While 'waiting on Jehovah,' is the order of the day in the organization, the new Reasoning book says: 'If someone says: 'I don't agree with everything my church teaches, but I don't see the need to change to another. I'd rather

work for improvement within my own.' You might reply: 'I appreciate your telling me that. I am sure you will agree that what is really important to all of us is having God's approval, is it not?' Then perhaps add: (1) 'God gives us all something serious to think about here at Revelation 18:4,5 ... Even if we do not personally practice the wrong things, the Bible shows that we share in the blame if we support these organizations. (See also the main heading 'Babylon the Great' (2) Perhaps also use material on pages 328-330) (3) 'God is looking for people who love truth, and he is bringing them together for united worship.' (John 4:23,24. Reasoning From the Scriptures, Page 331 (underlining in letter)

This is a blatant double standard. Why are we encouraged to question Christendom; ask others at the door about whose religions we may know little-to question their religion; use ingenious arguments to convince them of the rightness of this; and yet are told to 'Wait on Jehovah' when things in our own religion seem wrong?

'Two sorts of weights are detestable to Jehovah, and a cheating pair of scales is not good.' Proverbs 20:23 NW. 'Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are, if you judge; for in the thing in which you judge another, you condemn yourself, inasmuch as you that judge practice the same things.' Romans 2: 1 NW.

The next several pages of this letter dealt with the many historical dates that were supposed to be scripturally marked and significant regarding the fulfillment of Bible prophesy such as 1799, 1874, 1914, 1918 and 1925. It then addressed the more recent speculation regarding the year 1975 and how

expectations were cultivated by the Society's many arguments that pointed to that year. The book *Life Everlasting in Freedom of the Sons of God*, published in 1966, was quoted to illustrate how these expectations were kindled and fueled:

'According to this trustworthy Bible chronology six thousand years from man's creation will end in 1975, and the seventh period of a thousand years of human history will begin in the fall of 1975 C.E ... How appropriate it would be for Jehovah God to make this coming seventh period of a thousand years a Sabbath period of rest and release, a great Jubilee Sabbath for the proclaiming of liberty throughout the earth to all its inhabitants! ... It would not be by mere chance or accident but would be according to the loving purpose of Jehovah God for the reign of Jesus Christ, the 'Lord of the Sabbath,' to run parallel with the seventh millennium of man's existence.' -Pages 29,30. Who would not feel excited when reading such things published by God's 'Faithful and Discreet slave'? Now consider The Approaching Peace of 1000 Years: 'But to God-fearing students of the Holy Bible containing both the ancient Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Greek Scriptures, there is a more important millennium that compels their attention.

That is the seventh millennium! No, not the seventh millennium measured from A.D.I, but the seventh millennium of man's existence here on earth, the seventh millennium measured from God's creation of perfect man and woman in the garden of Eden ... Does this fact have any bearing on the approach of the peace of a thousand years or of a millennium? Very apparently Yes! ... Apart from the global change that present-day world conditions indicate is fast getting near, the arrival of the seventh millennium of man's existence on earth suggests a gladsome change for war stricken humankind ... In order for the Lord Jesus Christ to be 'Lord even of the Sabbath day,' his thousand-year reign would have to be the seventh in a series of thousand-year periods or millenniums ... Would not, then, the end of six millenniums of mankind's laborious enslavement under Satan the Devil be the fitting time for Jehovah God to usher in a Sabbath Millennium for all his human creatures? Yes, Indeed!' ( Pages 24-30)

For those who felt that it would be prudent not to make too much of the dates, considering the Society's history of embarrassing mistakes, they were admonished by The Watchtower 8/15/68: 'One thing is absolutely certain, Bible chronology reinforced with fulfilled Bible prophecy shows that six thousand years of man's existence will soon be up, yes, within this generation! (Matt. 24:84). This is, therefore no time to be indifferent and complacent. This is not the time to be toying with the words of Jesus that 'concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.' (Matt.24:36) To the contrary, it is a time when one should be keenly aware that the end of this system of things is rapidly coming to its violent end. Make no mistake, it is sufficient that the Father himself knows both the 'day and hour'!-Pages 500,501 (underlining in letter)

Editor's Note: The above quotation is taken from the study article: "Why Are You Looking to. 1975?" The thrust of this discussion was two-pronged: (1) That the chronology pointing to 1975 as marking the end of 6000 years of human history was accurate and (2) The strong probability that this period ran *concurrently* with God's 7000-year-long Rest Day. If true, this would mean that the completion of 6000 years of man's history would also conclude 6000 years of God's Rest Day with only 1000 years remaining. This final 1000-year period would have to run concurrently with Christ's Millennial reign. Fixing the creation of Eve as marking the end of the 6th Creative Day and the start

of the 7th Day they strongly suggested that Eve was created within the same calendar year as Adam. If this was the case then man's time on earth and God's 7000-year Rest Day ran *concurrently*. The Watch Tower Society has always argued for this. The book *Aid to Bible Understanding*, under the subject:

"Eve" places her birth-year as the same as Adam's: "At the age of 130 another son was born to her. Eve called his name Seth." (page 538) As the Bible says Adam was 130 years old when he became the father of Seth that would make him and Eve the same age. (see Genesis 5:3)

Now look what the Society said about those who were disappointed. Did they try to console them? Or did they shift the blame again? From the Watchtower of 7/15/76, one year after the promised millennium failed to arrive in 1975: "It may be that some who have been serving God have planned their lives according to a mistaken view of just what was to happen on a certain date or in a certain year. They may have, for this reason, put off or neglected things that they otherwise would have cared for. But they have missed the point of the Bible's warnings concerning the end of this system of things, thinking that Bible chronology reveals the specific date ... If anyone has been disappointed .... he should now concentrate on adjusting his viewpoint, seeing that it was not the Word of God that failed or deceived him and brought disappointment, but his own understanding was based on wrong premises." -page 441 (underlining in letter)

I find it interesting that the Society here equates the disappointment with deception. That they say that it was we who missed the point of the Bible's warnings, thinking that the Bible revealed a certain date, that it was our understanding that was based on wrong premises (which latter part is basically correct). How the men who publish the magazines justify such blatant deception as this article displayed is beyond me. How they can state that they have never made any significant mistakes, but have really been simply "tacking into the wind" (12/1/81 Watchtower), that they now have perfect human life imputed to them, that the light has really been getting lighter and lighter, brings home to me the true nature of these men. Of the Truth we read: "I Write you, not because you do not know the truth, but, because you know it, and because no lie originates with the truth." 1 John 2:21 NWT.

Of the 144,000 of whom the Society claims to be members, we read: "And they are singing as if a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one was able to master that song but the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been bought from the earth. These are the ones that did not defile themselves with women; in fact, they are virgins. These are the ones that keep following the Lamb no matter where he goes. These were bought from among mankind as a first fruits to God and to the Lamb, and no falsehood was found in their mouths: they are without blemish." -Revelation 14:3-5 NWT. (compare: Jer.23:21; Lu.21:8; Duet.18:21,22; Matt.15:6-9; Gal.1:8,9)

Is the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society inspired? No, they say, but they are spirit-led! What does that mean? It means that while they should be excused for making mistakes they should still be recognized as speaking for Jehovah. So they aren't inspired, just practically. Ambiguity like this is unfair. Either you are or you aren't! Jesus said: "Let your yes mean yes, and your no, no." (Matt.5:37) Yet millions of Witnesses today believe that they will be classed among those who questioned Moses, like Korah, if they wonder, even inwardly. 'Am I a murmurer'? I've often wondered myself. And yet, why have I questioned? Is it, like Korah, because I have a hidden desire for prominence or some other selfish motive? ... Rather, I am pursuing that which prompted certain ones to say that I had insight when I questioned Christendom. I had insight then, searching for truth, but I am a man like Korah now! That is a flagrant double standard . . . No wonder why the Society has adopted the same position that the Catholic Church had during the time of the crusades, namely, the Bible reading alone is dangerous, can actually lead one astray! "

"From time to time, there have arisen from among the ranks of Jehovah's people those, who, like the original Satan,

have adopted an independent, faultfinding attitude ... They say that it is sufficient to read the Bible exclusively, either alone or in small groups at home ... Jesus and his apostles warned against such lawless ones." *The Watchtower*, 8/15/81, p. 28 (underlining in letter)

But Jesus said: "For where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst." - Matthew 18:20 *NWT*.

(Editor's note: the next several pages deal with the role of Jesus Christ as mediator between God and *all* men-not just a select 144,000.)

Jesus IS our mediator: 'to be an intermediary between persons or sides.' says *Webster's New World Dictionary*. It is through him we must go to reach Jehovah. But the Society teaches that he is the mediator of the anointed only .. They teach that we must go, not through Jesus, but them. to reach Jehovah. But it was Jesus who died for us, and it is through him alone that we can gain life, his washing away our sins as well. Of Jesus Acts 4: 12 says: 'Furthermore, there is no salvation in ANYONE else, for there is not another name under heaven (not even 'Faithful & Discreet Slave') that has been given among men by which we must get saved.'

'For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for ALL.' ~ Timothy 2:5 'But I want you to know that the head of EVERY MAN is the Christ; in turn the head of a woman is the man; in turn the head of the Christ is God.' ~ 1 Corinthians 11:3. 'My little children, I am writing you these things that you may not commit a sin. And yet, if anyone does commit a sin, we have a helper with the Father, Jesus Christ, a righteous one. And he is a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, and yet not for ours (WHOSE?) only but ~also for the whole world's.'~1 John 2:1,2

I am not opposed to Christians meeting together (Hebrews 10:25), but the degree to which organization is carried. I don't believe that God ever had in mind that people would not be able to understand the Word of God without it first going through a 'channel' ~the hands of men. Mark describes a man who was seen to be expelling demons using Jesus' name. John says that they tried to stop him 'because he was not accompanying us.' But Jesus said: 'Do not try to prevent him, for there is no one that will do a powerful work on the basis of my name that will quickly be able to revile me; for he that is not against us is for us.'

... And why would Paul mean that we MUST belong to an earthly organization when he also stated in 2 Thessalonians 2: 1-12 that a great apostasy was coming?: "And so now you know the thing that acts as a restraint, with a view to his being revealed in his own due time. True, the mystery of this lawlessness is ALREADY at work; but only till he (holy spirit) who is right now acting as a restraint gets to be out of the way. Then, indeed, the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will do away with by the spirit of his mouth and bring to nothing by the manifestation of his presence."~2 Thessalonians 1 :6-6 *NWT*.

Paul says here that the apostasy, which was 'already at work,' would soon thereafter flood through the congregation, and REMAIN there until it is done away with and brought to nothing by the manifestation of Jesus Christ on 'the day of Jehovah' ... Nowhere does this account say that BEFORE 'the day of Jehovah' (Armageddon) that an organization would suddenly arise out of the apostasy.

(Editor's Note: After quoting Jesus' illustration about the "Wheat" and the "Weeds" (Matthew 13: 24-50) the letter continued:)

How clear can the scriptures be ? They say that their will NOT be an organization in the last days. Let us also look at Matthew 25:31,32: "When the Son of man arrives IN HIS GLORY, AND AU THE ANGELS with him, THEN he will sit down on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will put the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left."~Matthew 25:31,32

... I do not believe that ANY religion which has publicly displayed its fallibility should out of the same mouth (Matt.7: 15-20; James 3: 10-12) proclaim that they are the TRUTH. I can't believe that any religion which has fluctuated on

existing doctrine (like Rom. 13 : 1-7), created new ones only to withdraw them (like the dates 1799, 1874, 1881), admitted of necessity that they are not inspired, should simultaneously demand 100% conformity, on pain of disfel-  
lowshipping. Nor can they say that the early Christian congregation also demonstrated fallibility because Peter made  
the mistake about circumcision and eating only with the Jews. This was, not only a position NOT held by the other  
apostles nor decreed by them, but he was publicly reprovved for acting in this manner.

(Editor's note: Many additional arguments, examples and scriptures were discussed in this well written, well docu-  
mented letter but space has not allowed to include it all. The following moving conclusion brought this obviously diffi-  
cult document to an appropriate close:)

Ultimately, we must all accept the responsibility for our own actions. We are all 'like an island unto ourselves' in the  
most literal sense. We all stand alone. We, all of us, are different. Not just indiscriminate cogs in the wheel, bricks in  
the vast organizational wall ... As far back as I can remember, I found my greatest happiness away from people,  
sorry to say. In nature, I still feel like Jehovah is a happy God, that I am still loved by him. Away from the frowns  
and sighs, wringing hands and prying eyes of man I feel my spirits lift. I don't feel judged anymore ... As Luther said  
465 years ago when he stood on trial before the Catholic Council in Germany for apostasy:

'Unless I am convinced by the testimonies of the Scriptures or by evident reason (for I believe neither pope nor  
councils alone, since it is manifest they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures  
I have quoted, and my conscience is held captive by the Word of God; and as it is neither safe nor right to act  
against conscience, I cannot and will not retract anything. Here I stand; I cannot otherwise; God help me. Amen.'

Sincerely,

(Editor's Note: The names of this couple have been withheld due to family considerations.) □