

The Jehovah's Witnesses

Contributed by Fred Grigg
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The Roots of the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society and its Leaders...

CHARLES TAZE RUSSELL: The founder of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, was born in 1852 and died in 1916. His parents were Presbyterians of Scotch-Irish descent. At age 15 he joined the Congregational Church. In 1870 he attended meetings conducted by JONAS WENDELL, a Second-Adventist, in

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It was at these meetings that Russell learnt some of the views and teachings still adhered to in part by the Seventh-day Adventists. He attended this group until 1875, and in 1876, he met N.H. BARBOUR of

Rochester, N.Y. In this group the leader was teaching that the second coming of Christ was to be spiritual, and not visible as the Adventists taught.

Along with Barbour, C.T. RUSSELL, adopting this belief, eventually left the Adventists. In 1877, BARBOUR and RUSSELL published a book entitled "Three Worlds and Plan of Redemption". This book set forth their belief that Christ's second presence began invisibly in the fall (Autumn) of 1874 and thereby condemned a 40-year harvest period. Then remarkably, they set forth the year 1914 as the end of the Gentile Times ...' (QUALIFIED TO BE MINISTERS, p300) which just happened to coincide with the commencement of World War I!

As early as 1877, Russell said Christ had returned in 1874. Barbour and Russell eventually went their different ways and in 1879 Russell began the publication of "

Zion's Watchtower & Herald of Christ's Presence", now known as "Watchtower". December 13th, 1884, was the official beginning of the Jehovah's Witness movement. Much doubt exists about Russell's early activities, e.g., he claimed to have preached to vast crowds in many cities. However, no evidence exists to prove this. In a press release to the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, February 19, 1912, it was claimed Russell spoke at meetings in Honolulu, yet the Daily Eagle received comment from Honolulu that no such meetings had been held there!

At one time, Russell once advertised MIRACLE WHEAT for one dollar a pound, claiming that it would grow five times as fast as any other! A court case found "the wheat NOT to be five times as good, but inferior wheat". Russell lost the case.

In 1879, Russell married Maria Frances Ackley and she became associate editor of the "Watchtower" magazine. They had no children, and eventually separated in 1897, Maria filing for divorce in 1913 on the grounds of "his conceit, egotism, domination and improper conduct in relation to other women". Divorce was granted to her.

Russell maintained in the "Watchtower", 15.9.1910, p298 that his writings, namely his series of books titled, "Studies in the Scriptures", were more important than the Bible to keep one spiritually 'alive'. He said that if one just read the Bible he would go off into darkness within six months!

In June, 1912, a Baptist minister produced a tract about Russell entitled "Some Facts about the Self-Styled 'Pastor', Charles T. Russell". Russell sued for libel. In 1913, during the trial, Russell was proved to be a perjurer (a 'purjurer' is one who gives false evidence while under oath - in other words, he lied!). Read Rev. 21:8. On October 31st, 1916, Russell died.

JOSEPH FRANKLIN RUTHERFORD:The Watchtower Society's legal counsellor became the next president. Born of Baptist parents on November 8th, 1869, he joined the Watchtower Society in 1906. After bitter infighting he assumed power and published his book, "The Finished Mystery". The Society came under much criticism because in it he encouraged the people to refuse military service. In June 1918, the society was banned in

Canada and the

U.S., the leaders charged, convicted and sentenced to 20 years' jail. They were released on May 14th, 1919 after the

end of the First World War, as they no longer posed a threat to national security.

RUTHERFORD placed much emphasis on selling magazines and books to the public. He also strove to gain total control of the entire membership of the organisation. In 1931, at a convention at

Cedar Point, Ohio,

Rutherford adopted the name "Jehovah's Witnesses". His reasons being, he said, was to distinguish themselves from all of the many groups splintered from the Watchtower Society since it had begun; e.g. the Russellites, the Millennial Dawn people, the International Bible Students Association, and the People's Pulpit Association. He also drew scriptural basis for the name change from Isaiah 43:10. He died on January 8th, 1942.

NATHAN HOMER KNORR: He was elevated to be President on January 13th, 1942. He was born in 1905 in

Pennsylvania, and joined the Jehovah's Witnesses at age 16 after resigning from the Reformed Church. In 1932 he became General Manager of the publishing office, and in 1934 was made a director of the corporation.

It was under Knorr's leadership that the Society, in 1961, published their own translation of the Bible. It has become known by Bible scholars world-wide as "the world's most dangerous book", its reputation for error needing no explanation here. (Details are available on request).

It was during his time that the infamous edict was published forbidding Jehovah's Witnesses the right to blood transfusion, or today includes blood product. Consequently, thousands have lost their lives and the lives of many loved ones over the years because of this harsh and unscriptural law which they have strictly adhered to. KNORR died in the late 1970's.

FREDERICK W. FRANZ: Became the president. Franz had been responsible over the years for most of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society's doctrine. It has been said by former high-ranking Witnesses that Franz was responsible for the Society taking on board the ban on blood transfusions. He definitely was the chief member responsible for the Witnesses own translation of the Bible, even though he was (from his own admission in a court in

Ireland) not proficient in Biblical Hebrew. He has been the guiding light (or as some said, 'the power behind the throne!') of most of the doctrine since Knorr came to office. When Knorr died, he gained absolute control of the organisation, with influence world-wide over the lives of over 6 million people. Franz died in 1992.

MILTON G. HENSCHEL: He was upgraded from vice president to President when Franz died in 1992. Henschel has been a Witness all his life, having travelled with his JW father in a sound truck broadcasting the JW 'gospel' across the nation (

USA) as a boy.

Henschel made some interesting comments, back in July 1968, to Hiley H. Ward (

Detroit Free Press Religion Writer) regarding blood transfusions and JW beliefs. Henschel, then 48, was a member of the Watchtower Society's seven-man Board of Directors. Henschel said in the interview that there has been some development in the teaching of the Witnesses, but bans against transfusions - transplanting, which is done with transfusion - still exist. He said, "Transplanting organs is really cannibalism. In transplants, you are taking something from another body to sustain life...We are confident of the resurrection, and don't fear death. If a person gains another five years, because of a transplant, what has he gained, if he loses the future?"

Henschel believed (as did every JW, until November 8th, 1995!), that, "...the 'last generation' is dated from the first global war, 1914, and time is getting near to the end of that generation. World War, confusion, famine, are all signs of the final times - 1975 is the year to watch", he said!

Henschel went on to say that, "Even

Sodom and

Gomorra have won a reprieve, as a people, if not among their leaders". The reason he said, "Is new attention on Jesus' references to

Sodom and

Gomorra, that some will be worse off than those destroyed in those cities"! (?)
Some General Comments...

We make no attempt at this time, to delve too deeply into Jehovah's Witness teachings (doctrine), as there are many other good works available on the Internet, or perhaps from your local Christian bookstore, which will give you a more detailed insight into their specific doctrines. As you study their doctrines, one will notice the great similarity with some of the teachings of Seventh-Day Adventism. This is because of the aforementioned influence that the Second Adventists had on the first president of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Charles Taze Russell.

A most important thing and sad thing to remember about Jehovah's Witnesses is that they represent a false prophet organisation. They have many times predicted and given certain dates for the return of Christ, the most recent failed date being 14-15 October, 1975.

For many years prior to that date, Jehovah's Witnesses were encouraged to forsake all in order to pedal the Society's books from door to door in an attempt to increase membership of the organisation. The writer has to hand many testimonies of people who endured much hardship after this failed date, because they had been encouraged to leave their jobs, and many sold houses and businesses in order to put themselves full-time into the so-called "field ministry" before the end came! When the end didn't come in October, these people were left "high and dry" with yet another false date!

The Society now says that it was not their fault that the date didn't come to pass, but rather it was a date looked forward to by overzealous members! In every instance, you will find that where a date failed, the Society blames someone else. They say things like, "It was thought by some that this would be the date of Christ's return"; "It was thought by more zealous people at that time ..."; "God chose not to come at that time" (so it's really God's fault!), and so on. They always shift the blame for their failed prophecies to somebody other than the organisation itself. A list of their false prophecies from their own publications is outlined later on this page.

An Important Short Bible Study:

You should undertake for yourself, which will prove beyond any doubt that the Lord Jesus Christ is God (whose real name is Yahweh - not 'jehovah' as the JW's wrongly claim) manifest in the flesh, a claim denied by Jehovah's Witnesses. One needs to understand that the average Jehovah's Witness is prevented from looking into the history of the organisation by the being told things were not so clear in the early days; "we have new light", i.e., scriptural revelation to show us what is truth at this time; and, "the light grows brighter and brighter ...", they are told.

Old books are disposed of by the JW's so that early doctrines and practices, which have in time been changed by new leaders, are no longer freely available to members today. (Information that is contained in the book, "We left Jehovah's Witnesses", by Edmund C. Gruss, is especially beneficial when witnessing to Jehovah's Witnesses. It contains testimonies of people who were high-ranking and full-time workers for the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society). The Watchtower Society has conducted smear campaigns against people whose testimonies appear in the book. Inferences have been made that these people are child molesters, or sexual deviants, or are dishonest and liars. But we know that these people are now active members in Christian churches and are well respected in the communities in which they live and function.

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society will not admit it, but it is very embarrassed by people who leave their organisation because of the truth they reveal to others, and I point out once again the consistent practice of the Society in conducting smear campaigns against the character of all who leave their organisation. One must bear in mind that the Jehovah's Witnesses, like the Seventh-Day Adventists, believe that they are the only true religion, and therefore, every

other Christian body is an abomination in the sight of God.

Also, like the Seventh-Day Adventists, they have reduced the value of Jesus' sacrifice and atoning work to almost insignificance for their people. There is no teaching as to how one's personal sins can be forgiven.

The most important thing to remember about JW's is that they have the 'wrong jesus!' Their 'christ' is a 'false christ'. They have interfered with the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. The JW's, like the SDA's, believe and teach that Jesus Christ is the Archangel Michael. This of course is not true. Jesus said Himself, in John 8:24, "...you will die in your sins unless you believe that I AM (he)". Note that the word 'he' is in brackets and is therefore not in the original Greek. To qualify that Jesus is the Great I Am (the same I AM that Moses spoke to in the burning bush!), note Verse 58, where again from Jesus own mouth, we hear again proof of who He really is, "Truly, truly, I say to you, Before Abraham was, I AM!" (Emphasis mine).

The second most important thing to remember - and we stress it once again - is that JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ARE FOLLOWING A GENUINE FALSE PROPHET (see Matt. 7:15, Luke 21:8). One must understand when discussing Christianity with a Jehovah's Witness, that their doctrines are that of a false prophet, and therefore, irrelevant and meaningless.

Distinctive Beliefs of the Jehovah's Witnesses:

They alone proclaim God's truth and the only hope for the world is for everyone to join their movement.

God is one person, Jehovah, who once existed all alone in space.

God created Jesus, who in heaven was the Archangel Michael. On earth he was a man and not divine. When God raised him from the dead, he returned to heaven as a spirit.

Jesus' death was not on a cross - it was a singular 'torture stake' - and does not guarantee anyone eternal life. It was only a ransom made for past sins. Obeying God as revealed through the Watchtower is the only way of salvation.

The Holy Spirit is the 'invisible active force' that moves God's servants to do his will, and is neither personal or God.

All other churches and governments are controlled by the devil.

The present world system, as we know it, will end at Armageddon - which is presently coming soon! The survivors of Armageddon, only JW's will reign with Christ for 1,000 years!

During this time, there will be no disease or death or any unhappiness. Flowers and fruit will grow abundantly; wild animals will become tame.

After the 1,000 years, all the dead will be raised. Only 144,000 who reach the required standard will live in heaven; the remainder will live on earth.

It was believed until just recently, that God's kingdom on earth was established in 1914! That was when Christ returned to his temple and began to cleanse it. The devil was cast out of heaven and Jesus fully established the heavenly part of his kingdom. The earthly part, they taught for decades, will be set up in the lifetime of those who were alive in 1914. Matthew 24 is their favourite theme.

SIX STEPS TO BECOMING A JEHOVAH'S WITNESS...

Step 1. The initial visit by the JW's and the 'placing' of literature (magazines, book, booklet, tract, etc.) in your hands.

Step 2. The JW's then can make a return-visit, once known as the 'back-call', with the excuse of 'seeing what you thought of the literature', and to primarily arrange for a regular 'Home Bible Study' each week, more if you're willing - which in fact is really only a study in a JW publication, using the erroneous JW translation of the Bible!

Step 3. The JW's will encourage you to attend a weekly home study group - where you will have your first contact with the 'Witness family'.

Step 4. This is a simple step from the home group to attending regularly the meetings held at a local Kingdom Hall - where you will be drawn more fully into the larger 'Witness family' - the more people you see doing the same thing, the more you will be impressed! At the Kingdom Hall, one of the three weekly meetings you will attend is called the Service Meeting (this is where you will learn the finer arts of door-to-door salesmanship!).

Step 5. Having completed the first four steps you will then be made guilty about not participating in the 'Field Service' (which means going from door-to-door and pedaling Watchtower materials, rain, hail, or shine!)

Step 6. By this step you will know that it is necessary for you to become a 'Kingdom Publisher'. This is achieved by submitting to the rite of 'water baptism' by full immersion. This however is not an indication that one has repented of one's sins - which is the Bible reason for the rite. For the intending JW it only earns them the right to use the title 'Kingdom Publisher' - or, officially become a JW!

What the candidate is not told, and does not know, is that it is after this step that the 'elders' in the local congregation then believe they have the right to tell you how to live and conduct your entire life! Until this step is taken, you are NOT formerly a Jehovah's Witness - only an 'associated person'! So, if you are not 'baptised' you can walk away any time you like as they have no 'hold' over you at all. If you come to this stage, then you will be wise to walk away now!
Embarrassing Statements Made by 'God's Organisation'

"'The Watchtower' is no Inspired Prophet" ("Watchtower", 1.4.72, Foreword)

1972 - IDENTIFYING THE "PROPHET" ("Watchtower" 1.4.72) - "So, does Jehovah have a prophet to help them, to warn them of dangers and to declare things to come? These questions can be answered in the affirmative. Who is this prophet? ... This 'prophet' was not one man, but was a body of men and women. It was the small group of footstep followers of Jesus Christ, known at that time as International Bible Students. Today they are known as Jehovah's Christian Witnesses ... Of course, it is easy to say that this group acts as a 'prophet' of God. It is another thing to prove it" (See Deut. 18:21).

1889 - "The 'battle of the great day of God Almighty' (Rev. 16:14) which will end in AD 1914 with the complete overthrow of earth's present rulership is already commenced". ("The Time is at Hand", p101, 1908 edition).

1914 - "The present great war in

Europe is the beginning of the Armageddon of the Scriptures". ("Pastor Russell's Sermons", p676).

1916 - "The Bible chronology herein presented shows that the six great 1,000 year days beginning with Adam are ended, and that the great 7th Day, the 1,000 years of Christ's Reign, began in 1873" ("The Time is at Hand", p2, Foreword).

1918 - "Therefore we may confidently expect that 1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the faithful prophets of old, particularly those named by the Apostle in Hebrews 11, to the condition of human perfection". ("Millions Now Living will Never Die", p89).

1922 - "The date 1925 is even more distinctly indicated by the Scriptures than 1914". ("Watchtower", 1.9.22, p262).

1923 - "Our thought is, that 1925 is definitely settled by the Scriptures. As to Noah, the Christian now has much more upon which to base his faith than Noah had upon which to base his faith in a coming deluge". ("Watchtower", 1.4.23, p106).

1925 - "The year 1925 is here. With great expectation Christians have looked forward to this year. Many have confidently expected that all members of the body of Christ will be changed to heavenly glory during this year. This may be accomplished. It may not be. In his own due time, God will accomplish his purposes concerning his people. Christians should not be so deeply concerned about what may transpire this year". ("Watchtower", 1.1.25, p3). Sept. 1925 - "It is to be expected that satan will try to inject into the minds of the consecrated, the thought that 1925 should see an end to the work". ("Watchtower", p262).

1926 - "Some anticipated that the work would end in 1925, but the Lord did not state so. The difficulty was that the friends inflated their imaginations beyond reason; and that when their imaginations burst asunder, they were inclined to throw away everything". ("Watchtower", p232).

1931 - "There was a measure of disappointment on the part of Jehovah's faithful ones on earth concerning the years 1914, 1918 and 1925, which disappointment lasted for a time ... and they also learned to quit fixing dates". ("Vindication", p338).

1941 - "Receiving the gift, the marching children clasped it to them, not a toy or plaything for idle pleasure, but the Lord's provided instrument for most effective work in the remaining months before Armageddon". ("Watchtower", 15.9.41, p288).

1968 - "True, there have been those in times past who predicted an 'end' to the world, even announcing a specific date. Yet nothing happened. The 'end' did not come. They were guilty of false prophesying. Why? What was missing? Missing from such people were God's truths and the evidence that He was using and guiding them". ("Awake", 8.10.68) (see Luke 21:8).

1968 - "WHY ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO 1975?" ("Watchtower", 15.8.68, p494).