



The Results of the First
Annual Global Survey
of
Jehovah's Witnesses

2011

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A message to the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses

Dear Brothers

I go by the name 'Cedars' - a pseudonym to conceal my real identity. I derive no pleasure from going about my work anonymously, as I am in no way ashamed of the cause that I have recently adopted. However, there are obviously judicial repercussions for any who would speak out against your authority. Because I wish to maintain contact with my family, it is therefore advantageous for me to conceal my identity and remain listed as a publisher with my local congregation rather than risk being unmasked and disfellowshipped for what you would consider as "apostasy".

If you would like to know my background, I am a former elder and bible school graduate. In the early summer of 2011 it became obvious to me that there are many areas in which Witness teachings do not harmonize with the scriptures. At this point, I stopped actively participating in meetings and field service. Over the past six months I have contributed articles to JW websites and forums that discuss my particular areas of concern with your policies and teachings. I was also heavily involved in the recent media interest over your "mentally diseased" Watchtower article (w11 7/15 p. 16).

As you may already be aware, on September 21st 2011 I began taking a survey of all current and former Jehovah's Witnesses around the world. The Survey canvassed the opinions of all who share a connection with Jehovah's Witnesses, irrespective of whether they are active, inactive, disfellowshipped, disassociated or even non-baptized family members. The purpose of the Survey was to find out what people really thought of your leadership on certain issues, particularly since you go to such vigorous measures to prevent people from freely voicing any dissenting opinions.

It has not gone unnoticed that you recently advised the brothers to even stop writing to you or your representatives with any questions that are not covered within your publications (w11 10/15 p. 32). It is against this backdrop of increasing apathy on your part towards the personal views or questions of those in your flock that this new global Survey has been founded, and the results are enclosed herein.

The total number of those participating in this initial 2011 Survey is a relatively modest 1,118. However, the survey has only been available since late September (ending on December 31st), so it is envisioned that future surveys will gather a greater and more indicative number of responses over a longer period – particularly as awareness of the Survey website's existence gathers momentum among the worldwide brotherhood. I

currently plan to publish the results of the 2012 Survey for your attention at a similar time next year.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, you are likely wondering, “why should we be interested in what disfellowshipped or disassociated ones think of our leadership?” Well, the Apostle Paul demonstrated what sort of attitude should be shown towards such ones in 2 Cor 2:5-11, where he exhorted the Corinthian brothers to “confirm” their love for a man who had been cast out of their congregation. This scripture therefore shows that we should continue to demonstrate love and concern for those who are removed from among our midst.

Many who have been the subject of disfellowshipping or disassociation over a period of many decades have become “overly sad”, particularly wherever their judicial treatment has been based merely on the fact that they disagreed with your directives – which you yourselves are allowed to disagree with, albeit retrospectively. In reference to Paul’s words in the above-quoted scripture, they feel that you brothers have been “too harsh” in applying the scriptural principle of disfellowshipping – namely by broadening its scope to encompass the family circle, and not restricting its enforcement to the congregation, as was envisioned by Paul’s original counsel on this issue. – 1 Cor 5:11; 2 Cor 2:5; 1 Tim 5:8

You brothers may not be aware of this, but of all the issues that provoke outrage among so-called “apostates”, the harsh and unscriptural application of the shunning principle is one of the most contentious and hurtful. Many who you would class as “apostates” would have little or no interest in trying to persuade their family members and former colleagues that their beliefs are flawed were it not for that fact that you make their lives intolerable by tearing them apart from any meaningful interaction with their loved ones. Many disfellowshipped and disassociated ones carry deep mental and emotional scars as a result, and yet you expect them to remain silent. It is my firmly-held belief that anti-Witness forums and websites would either close down or drastically reduce in their visitor numbers if you were to extend just a little more mercy on this issue alone. – Matt 9:13

It is the shunning issue more than anything, particularly against the backdrop of a seeming indifference and apathy on your part, which has resulted in this Survey being launched. You are kindly urged to read and consider the results, and decide for yourselves whether you can find room to extend further mercy or reasonableness in certain aspects of your decision-making.

Please do not take this Survey as a personal attack on you brothers. Some who have commented have expressed their feelings towards you in ways that are less than flattering, or even abusive. Some of the more abusive or profane comments have been removed entirely from my report, as they serve no constructive purpose – despite being born from an intense frustration towards your indifference over certain issues.

When reading this survey report, you must also consider the fact that you brothers, in accepting your respective appointments to serve on the Governing Body, have assumed a weighty responsibility for yourselves. (Luke 12:48) The decisions that you make at your

weekly meetings have a very real impact on the lives of millions around the world. You have also assumed a degree of responsibility for the legacy of your predecessors who served on the Governing Body before you, many of whom introduced unscriptural and unmerciful directives that you now so vigorously defend against all reason.

I do not feel it is fair to question each of your personal motives, or bring your characters under scrutiny in any way. Frankly, it would not surprise me if there *are* some among you who are more interested in proliferating the legacy of the organization and making your own positions more secure than in actually propounding bible truth and shepherding the flock in a loving, merciful and Christ-like way. However, I cannot be assertive in this conclusion. Without knowing each of you personally, I must give you the 'benefit of the doubt' and assume that some of your more harmful decisions have arisen through simple naivety or ignorance rather than any malevolent or self-serving intent.

I therefore submit these survey results to you in the hopes that they will be considered with the seriousness that befits them. They do not constitute a rebuke, but rather heartfelt admonition for you to retract some of your more harmful and unscriptural teachings. As I mentioned earlier, it is my intention that regular surveys will be conducted on an annual basis with a copy of the results subsequently published for your attention. Be assured that these surveys will continue indefinitely until you take decisive action in response to the needs of Christ's flock for greater mercy to be shown.

Each one of us is personally responsible for our relationship with Christ. As much as you would like to think that all of Jehovah's Witnesses serve with absolute uniformity of thought, there is an increasing number within your own ranks who do so whilst burdened by their own personal 'crisis of conscience'. They privately disagree with what they are taught, but they have been conditioned to think that "waiting on Jehovah" means ignoring their own consciences and going against what they know to be true. It is suchlike ones, and those departed brothers who are "overly sad" at your seeming indifference, whom you must reach out to with greater humility and reconciliation. I am of the firm conviction that, if you were to do so, your efforts would be favorably received.

If, having considered these survey results, you brothers decide that you would like to meet with myself and those with whom I work to discuss these issues in an amicable spirit of mildness and reconciliation - then we would be happy to arrange this, provided that certain assurances are given to respect our anonymity and immunity from any judicial action. Alternatively, you may wish to write me with your response to my email address, which is cedars@jwsurvey.org.

You should know that these survey results will also be available to any journalists who take an interest in Witness affairs, and I see no reason not to cooperate fully with any media enquiries.

The 2012 survey has already been launched and votes are in the process of being cast. I feel it would be in your interests to ensure that this and other future surveys are rendered unnecessary by taking the decisive and truly humble step of climbing down on some of

your more damaging policies, including the shunning of family members. If you are not willing to consider doing this, then our surveys will continue to run year after year – growing in notoriety and popularity among the worldwide brotherhood and media groups. Since you refuse to give a voice to the brothers whom you claim to care for, whilst depriving them of the basic freedoms to which they are entitled, then we see no reason why we should not do this instead for as long as is required.

I trust you will consider these results carefully and prayerfully.

Yours sincerely,

Cedars

An introductory explanation of the Survey's development

I feel it would be prudent to begin by relating how the Survey was started. I will briefly explain the thinking and reasoning that led to its inception, and the events that shaped its development into its current form on jwsurvey.org.

I first had the idea to conduct an Annual Global Survey of Jehovah's Witnesses (which I will refer to from now on as the "Survey") in mid-September, 2011. I am a regular poster on www.jehovahs-witness.net, and it was on this forum that I decided to post a thread discussing my survey idea for the purpose of evaluating its viability. This initial discussion may still be found at the following link:

<http://www.jehovahs-witness.net/watchtower/scandals/215951/1/Census-online-survey-idea-thoughts-please>

The survey idea arose through my involvement in the media exposure of the Society's hateful use of the term "mentally diseased"¹ to describe so-called apostates (or dissenters against the Governing Body) in the July 15th Study Edition of the Watchtower magazine.² These efforts at securing media exposure culminated in a newspaper article being published in the 27th September edition of *The Independent* newspaper. A copy of this article is shown on the page opposite.

The article provoked considerable reaction, with the story quickly going viral and spreading to various news journals and websites around the world. A link to the text of the original article by Jerome Taylor may be found at the following link:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/war-of-words-breaks-out-among-jehovahs-witnesses-2361448.html>

¹ It has been noted that the article uses the term "mentally diseased" in quotation marks, because it refers to the scripture in 1 Tim 6:4 concerning false teachers. However, the New World Translation, which is used by Jehovah's Witnesses, is the only bible translation that uses such strong terminology to translate this verse from the original Greek. Furthermore, the Society wrongly apply Paul's counsel against "false teachers" to encompass anyone who disagrees with the Governing Body.

² It is noteworthy that 90% of those voting on issues surrounding the teachings and practices of the Governing Body in the 2011 Survey objected to the way the 7/15 article used the term "mentally diseased" to describe apostates.

While it was gratifying to see this issue gather considerable media exposure, the episode also served to underline the fact that journalists often take little interest in stories involving Jehovah's Witnesses unless there is hard evidence or developments that would otherwise guarantee "public interest". In the case of this story, the newspaper correspondent, Jerome Taylor, became interested because the police were investigating³ the offensive article due to the fact that it potentially breached UK laws on hate crime.

War of words breaks out among Jehovah's Witnesses

Attack on 'mentally diseased' worshippers who leave church provokes outcry

By Jerome Taylor
Religious Affairs Correspondent

THE OFFICIAL magazine for Jehovah's Witnesses has described those who leave the church as "mentally diseased", prompting an outcry from former members and insiders concerned about the shunning of those who question official doctrine.

An article published in July's edition of *The Watchtower* warns followers to stay clear of "false teachers" who are condemned as being "mentally diseased" apostates who should be avoided at all costs. "Suppose that a doctor told you to avoid contact with someone who is infected with a contagious, deadly disease," the article reads. "You would know what the doctor means, and you would strictly heed his warning. Well, apostates are 'mentally diseased', and they seek to infect others with their disloyal teachings."

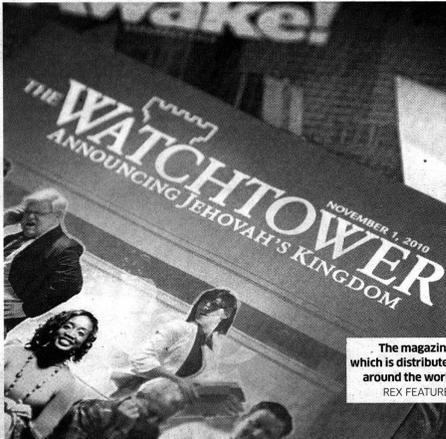
A copy of the magazine, distributed

by Jehovah's Witnesses around the world, was given to *The Independent* by a current member of the church who has become unhappy with official teaching but is afraid to leave for fear of losing his family.

"Many like me remain associated with the Witnesses out of fear of being uncovered as an 'apostate' and ousted, not just from the organisation, but from their own friends and families," said the man, who would only give the name John. "I find I am now branded as 'mentally diseased' - giving any who discover my true beliefs free licence to treat me with disdain."

As a faith with a centralised leadership, many forms of discipline are used to counter criticism of doctrine, with

punishments ranging from restriction of official duties to excommunication. Those who have been thrown out of the church often find themselves ostracised by fellow believers.



A growing number of former and current Witnesses have begun to argue that the church's use of the word "mentally diseased" to describe defectors could be in breach of Britain's religious hatred laws. A group of former Witnesses in Portsmouth have now made an official complaint to Hampshire Police about the article and police are currently investigating.

Angus Robertson, a former Witness "elder" from Hampshire, who was present at the meeting with police officers, said: "The way scripture is being used to bully people must be chal-

lenged. If a religion was preaching that blacks or gays were mentally diseased there would understandable outrage."

Critics are also considering whether to complain to the Charity Commission. The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Britain, which prints church doctrine in the UK, is a registered charity. Rick Fenton, a spokesperson for the Watchtower Society, insisted last night that ostracisation was "a personal matter for each individual to decide for himself". "Any one of Jehovah's Witnesses is free to express their feelings and to ask questions," he said. "If a person changes their mind about Bible-based teachings they once held dear, we recognise their right to leave."

THE OFFENDING ARTICLE

■ Taken from 'Will you heed Jehovah's warnings?' *The Watchtower*, 15 July 2011

"Jehovah, the Great Physician, tells us to avoid contact with them. We know what he means, but are we determined to heed his warning in all respects? What is involved in avoiding false teachers? We do not receive them into our homes or greet them. We also refuse to read their literature, watch television programmes that feature them, examine their websites, or add our comments to their blogs. Why do we take such a firm stand?"

"Because of love. We love 'the God of truth', so we are not interested in twisted teachings that contradict his Word of truth."

Jerome Taylor's article as it appeared in the Independent newspaper

The idea of conducting a global online Survey was therefore appealing. Whichever way one looked at it, there would seem to be only a positive outcome. Either media organizations would take an increased interest in the obvious unrest among Jehovah's Witnesses due to the statistics yielded by the Survey (thereby exerting external pressure on the Governing Body to bring about reform), or the Governing Body would react promptly to the Survey results, and improve its policies in certain areas accordingly.⁴

A tumultuous beginning on SurveyMonkey

I posted my forum thread discussing the Survey idea on 17th September, and it garnered a positive reception from certain individuals on the forum. One poster suggested hosting

³ The investigation followed a police interview with Angus Robertson, a disfellowshipped former elder, and an inactive sister who boldly approached her local constabulary with information about the article. Given the amount of time that has passed since, it seems unlikely that the investigation culminated in any criminal prosecution against the Society. Angus was advised at the time that it was unlikely that any prosecution would be forthcoming unless one of Jehovah's Witnesses was found to have committed an offence against a former believer having been provoked to do so by the wording of the article.

⁴ As unlikely as this latter outcome seems to be, I still entertain the hope that it could potentially be a possibility. In any case, the Governing Body should be offered the opportunity to respond to the wishes of those it claims to represent.

the survey on *SurveyMonkey.com*, a website that offers free surveys. This seemed like the quickest and most effective way to get my Survey online. I therefore forged ahead and published a relatively brief survey encompassing most of the main issues as I saw them, and posted a link on *jehovahs-witness.net*. A remarkable 279 responses flooded in within the first 24 hours. It was quickly becoming apparent that the Survey idea would prove very popular.

However, a problem very quickly presented itself – and this concerned the delicate issue of funding. In my enthusiasm to get a survey launched, I had thoughtlessly neglected to check *SurveyMonkey's* pricing policy. Surveys hosted on this website are only free up to a maximum of 1,000 responses, and from the initial reception, it was obvious to me that this limit would be too restrictive. The only alternative was to stump up money for a paid service, which worked out at 300 Euros, payable in installments of 25 Euros per month. I was reluctant to part with this money, because my financial circumstances at the time meant that I could ill afford such a commitment. However, I *really* wanted the Survey to succeed, and at least get more than the 1,000 responses. I therefore paid the first month's installment of 25 Euros in the hopes that the money for the remaining 11 months might be found somewhere, somehow.

Having slept on the matter, I decided to offer forum members (who had thus far been supportive of my idea) the opportunity to contribute towards the Survey. I reasoned that a year's subscription to *SurveyMonkey* of 300 Euros, or roughly 400 dollars, could be gathered relatively quickly if enough people contributed. Another forum member kindly gave me access to his PayPal account as a means of gathering the required funds, and I posted my request for donations along with his PayPal address on another forum thread. In doing so, I was completely naïve as to the ramifications of this course of action, namely that I was now in breach of forum posting guidelines that forbade advertising, or the soliciting of funds.

There was a considerable backlash, and one or two forum posters perhaps went a little too far with their comments. One insinuated that I was trying to run a scam, while another suggested that I might be a secret Watch Tower Society operative trying to obtain people's IP addresses via the Survey as an attempt to reveal their identities. This was all rather distressing, especially considering the initial support for the Survey, and how quickly things were turning sour.

Despite these setbacks, I received two donations towards the *SurveyMonkey* subscription into the PayPal account. I decided that the best thing to do would be to refund both of these donations immediately, since they had been obtained through breaching forum rules. I also decided I would need to find another way of making the Survey viable, and if nothing else, by refunding the donations promptly I would demonstrate that I was not running a scam. At this stage, I considered the possibility of just running the Survey for a month and then closing it down due to lack of financial support.

Transition to jwsurvey.org

I was then approached by John Hoyle, a forum member and web developer. He very kindly offered to set up the Survey for me as a *WordPress* website, under its own domain name, using special software that could replicate and receive answers to my Survey questions. There would be a downside to this, namely that *SurveyMonkey* allows you to filter individual results, whereas the survey software on the *WordPress* platform merges all results together irretrievably. However, the benefit to the new version of the Survey would be increased visibility of results, with voters seeing the results for each question immediately after voting. This would obviously make the voting process more meaningful and informative for voters.

I was (and still am) very grateful to John for his overwhelming offer to help realize the project, which I gladly accepted. He then worked very hard to replicate the already-existing 2011 Survey on the new platform, and migrated the results across question-by-question, so that the Survey could pick up where it left off. We allowed the *SurveyMonkey* survey to run for its full month's subscription before closing the account down and revealing the new Survey URL (www.jwsurvey.org) for voters to use instead. Prior to closing, the *SurveyMonkey* survey managed to garner an impressive 793 votes - more than 70% of the final 2011 votes total in only the first month of the Survey's existence. I have been able to retain the voting records for the *SurveyMonkey* Survey with its individual voter responses, and I will refer to these later on in this document by way of results analysis.

The Survey continued to run until 31st December, gathering a further 325 votes before its closure. On 28th January 2012, the annual Survey was re-launched with a new and improved format, designed to offer greater personalization of questions by means of voter categories. It is hoped that the 2012 Survey will far surpass the total number of votes gathered by its predecessor, given the fact that it will run for 11 full months rather than the much shorter period over which the 2011 Survey was online.

Shortcomings of the Survey

It has been pointed out by some that the Survey cannot be truly reflective of the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses, because it is only accessible online and not via the usual organizational channels employed by the Watch Tower Society. Jehovah's Witnesses are warned through their literature to avoid the Internet, and in particular, any websites dealing with Jehovah's Witnesses that are not authorized by the Watch Tower Society. Therefore, the only active Jehovah's Witnesses voting on such a survey would be those who have already demonstrated a flagrant disregard for the Society's instructions. In other words, most if not all voters *by their very presence* on jwsurvey.org would already have well-formed opinions that conflict with the organization's leadership, rendering a negative response against the Society almost inevitable.

I agree with this observation, although I don't believe that it renders the information yielded by the Survey inconsequential, nor do I believe it to be sufficient reason to close the Survey. I offer the following reasons:

1. By being hosted online, the Survey is made available to all of Jehovah's Witnesses, irrespective of whether they agree or disagree with the organization's teachings. The Survey questions are worded in such a way as to allow those who agree with the teachings of the Society to express their loyalty, without being influenced by the opinions of myself, or others.

Some devout Witnesses have already logged on and participated in the Survey, and these ones are welcome. No loyalists or "apologists" are dissuaded from expressing their opinions, because it is intended that the results should give as fair a reflection as possible of the overall opinions surrounding the religion. My approach has always been "the more the merrier".

I genuinely believe that the information yielded by the Survey should be welcomed whatever consensus it reveals, because no harm can arise from knowing the *real truth* on any matter of this magnitude, irrespective of how uncomfortable that disclosure may be.

2. In spite of the encouragement to avoid or limit any use of the Internet, all of Jehovah's Witnesses are personally responsible before God for their beliefs - especially concerning matters of conscience that are not directly legislated for in the scriptures. It has been noticed that increasing numbers of active Jehovah's Witnesses are coming to the realization that the partial prohibition of the Internet has more to do with shielding the Society against negative publicity than any genuine desire to protect worshippers from 'Satanic propaganda'. The opinions of such conscientious visitors are just as valid as those who choose to have their conscience dictated to them by the Governing Body when it comes to the use of the Internet.
3. Just because the Society dissuades people from visiting unauthorized Witness-related websites (and, by extension, jwsurvey.org) this does not necessarily mean that we should automatically abandon any attempted online survey of believers. It would be unfair to deny those who have researched Jehovah's Witnesses online the opportunity to express their opinions simply because the organization that they no longer agree with has restricted use of the internet among its members in order to shield itself from criticism. To do so would be to succumb to bullying, and this does not sit well with me at all.
4. It is hoped that, as the Survey grows in popularity, more and more devout Witnesses will become curious and seek to participate and express their views. At present, the Survey is only a recent development, and its existence is not widely known among Witness circles. However, the longer it remains online, with sufficient publicity and 'word of mouth' stirring up interest, the greater the

likelihood that it will come to the attention of increasing numbers of ordinary Witnesses - *including* those who limit their use of the internet. It is hoped that such ones will eventually take part through curiosity, even if they choose not to broadcast the fact that they have done so. I envisage broadened participation as being an increasingly inevitable outcome the longer the Survey is online, so hopefully any perceived disparities in the voting pool will gradually even themselves out over time.

Another shortcoming is that neither myself, nor the website developer John Hoyle, have any formal qualifications in the area of conducting surveys. Also, neither of us can be described as impartial, because both John and I share the opinion that many of the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses are deeply flawed, and that the organization does not represent God's chosen people on Earth. Normally when a survey is undertaken on such matters, the work is outsourced to an external organization that can offer impartiality in the way the survey is run and the way the data is gathered. That way, there can be no accusations that the figures have been tampered with, and one has a degree of assurance that everything has been done in a statistically sound way and in accordance with "best practice" when it comes to conducting surveys.

Obviously, it is inconceivable that the Governing Body would consent to our conducting a survey of all Jehovah's Witnesses with unequivocal support. This is clear from the way it has historically wielded power over the organization, and ruthlessly quelled any hint of uprising against the way things are done. In short, there is no room for dissent among Jehovah's Witnesses, and it is highly improbable that the Governing Body would ever entertain any perceived weakening of their autocracy. After all, they consider their organization to be run *theocratically*, and not *democratically*.

So, should the fact that we do not have the Governing Body's backing prevent us from undertaking this global Survey to find out what Jehovah's Witnesses really think? I don't believe it should, although you are entitled to disagree. Nor do I believe that the Survey idea should be dropped because we cannot afford to hire an outside specialist agency to conduct the poll. We are working with the resources at our disposal as men "unlettered and ordinary", and hopefully the end outcome will be just as authoritative and insightful as if we had pursued the more costly alternative.

As far as our motives are concerned, I can only give you the utmost assurance that neither John nor myself have any interest whatsoever in deceiving anyone when it comes to this Survey, or its results. Voter information can now be displayed in real-time, immediately after votes have been cast – making it extremely difficult for us to tamper with the figures before they are viewed, even if we wanted to. We are just as interested in seeing a fair and impartial survey conducted as anyone, regardless of the outcome.

When it comes to our credentials (or lack of) it is worth noting that the Governing Body are equally "self-certified" when it comes to wielding authority within the organization. Nobody asks them for proof that God has anointed them individually, or that God has authorized them to act as representatives of the "Faithful and Discreet Slave". They simply

expect us to believe it and get on with it – stomaching their profound influence over even the most sensitive aspects of everyday life in the process.

By comparison, I do not believe myself to be a spokesman for God, nor any form of prophet - and neither does John for that matter. We seek your trust, not in wielding any authority over you, but simply in our assurance that we will not distort figures or attempt to mislead anyone through this Survey. If people decide that they cannot trust us for whatever reason, then they are entitled to their opinion, and we cannot insist on being afforded the 'benefit of the doubt'. However, hopefully I have sufficiently explained how the same questions of trust, motives and credentials that could be leveled against us might also be directed towards the Governing Body, and how in conducting this Survey and gathering votes, we are asking for far less from ordinary Witnesses than they are.

When it comes to the management of statistics, I have attempted (to the extent that my high school education will permit) to be as meticulous and thorough as possible in the way figures are calculated and shown. In compiling the following results, I have copied the final results directly from the website. However, wherever "filtering" or drilling down into particular figures has been required, I have referred to the more detailed *SurveyMonkey* data on which the original 2011 Survey was based (as explained above).

Correcting Mistakes

If there are any particular areas of concern in how figures or statistics have been arrived at, you are more than welcome to contact me directly by email at cedars@jwsurvey.org and I will attempt to explain any anomalies and/or correct any figures that are found to be in error. As mentioned above, I derive no personal benefit from publishing untruths or exaggerations, and it is not in my interests to devote so much time and energy to something with the sole purpose of misleading people. I am therefore appreciative of any efforts to correct genuine errors or oversights on my part.

It is hoped that the following information will prove useful and informative to any who may read it, and I would like to thank all those who voted for sharing their opinions in our Survey.

Voter demographics and years baptized

1,118 people participated in the Global Survey of Jehovah's Witnesses for 2011. The Survey went live on September 21st, and ended on 31st December 2011.

Countries represented

48 countries were represented in the survey, as follows (in descending order according to the number of voters from each country):

United States (683); Britain (136); Canada (92); Australia (61); Brazil (14); South Africa and Germany (11 each); Italy (9); New Zealand and Sweden (7 each); Netherlands, Finland, Denmark and Ireland (6 each); France, Austria and Portugal (5 each); Romania and India (4 each); Nigeria, Spain and Norway (3 each); Poland, Indonesia, Switzerland, Puerto Rico and Belgium (2 each); Albania, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Greece, Haiti, Iceland, Japan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Mozambique, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Tunisia (1 each).

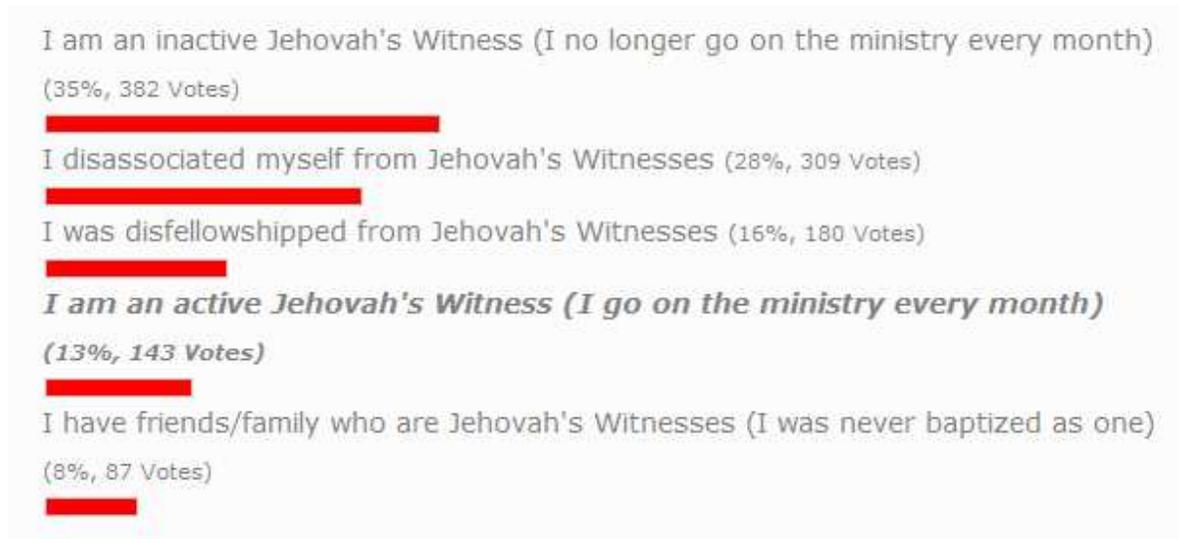
Number of years baptized

The average number of years as a baptized publisher for voters was **19.57 years**.

The voter with the highest number of years as a baptized publisher came from the United States, and claimed to have been baptized for **68 years** - although this cannot be verified.

Professed spiritual status of voters

Question: What is your current relationship to Jehovah's Witnesses?



Total voters: **1,101**

It is noteworthy that whilst 44% of voters were former Witnesses (either disfellowshipped or disassociated), a slightly larger percentage of voters (48%) were either active or inactive Jehovah's Witnesses, with the remaining votes (8%) coming from unbaptized friends or family members.

Question: If you are currently one of Jehovah's Witnesses, do you consider yourself to be either of the following?



Total voters: **720**

Apprehension or Doubt Concerning “Two-Tier” Christianity

An overwhelming majority of voters refused to identify themselves as belonging to either the “Great Crowd” or the “Little Flock”. At first glance it appears that many of these must be either former Witnesses or unbaptized ones, since the number who selected this option corresponds almost perfectly with the total number of disfellowshipped and disassociated ones participating in the Survey.

However, on closer inspection of the voting records supplied by *SurveyMonkey* (which was used to gather more than 70% of the votes), it appears that 21 of those clicking “neither of the above” claimed to be *active* publishers. This means that 15% of the active Jehovah’s Witnesses participating in the survey either dispute the “two-tier” version of Christianity that is taught in the publications, or they do not consider themselves to personally qualify for either class of Christian for whatever reason.

The Anointed

23 voters claimed to be of the anointed (those with a heavenly hope), although many of these appear to be former Witnesses.⁵ However, at least 7 persons who selected this option professed to be active publishers, with a further 8 voters claiming they were inactive.

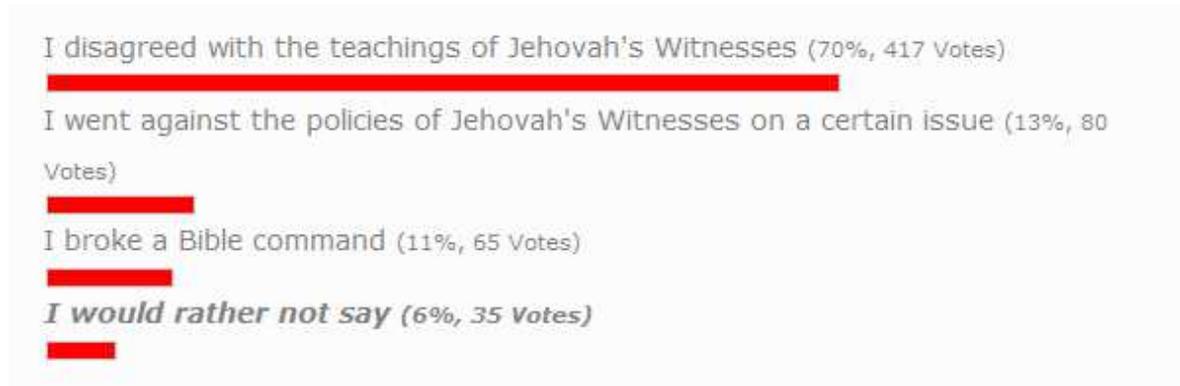
It is gratifying to see that the Survey has attracted a small number of those who are supposedly of the “Slave Class”, even though the publications recently claimed that the Governing Body has no interest in knowing who the anointed are, or keeping any record of them.⁶ It is ironic that this Survey is taking a more active role in garnering the views of the Slave Class than the Governing Body itself, despite the latter claiming to serve as a representative of this group of individuals.

Comments from both active and inactive Witnesses who claim to be of the anointed may be found on pages 33 and 34.

⁵ Next year’s 2012 survey will feature categories that will make it more difficult for those who are no longer Jehovah’s Witnesses to list themselves as being of the anointed Slave Class. Those entering information under the “anointed” category will be invited to do so only if they have partaken at the most recent memorial, and are active publishers.

⁶ w09 6/15 pp. 23-24; w11 8/15 p22.

Question: If you are disfellowshipped or disassociated from Jehovah's Witnesses, what was the reason?

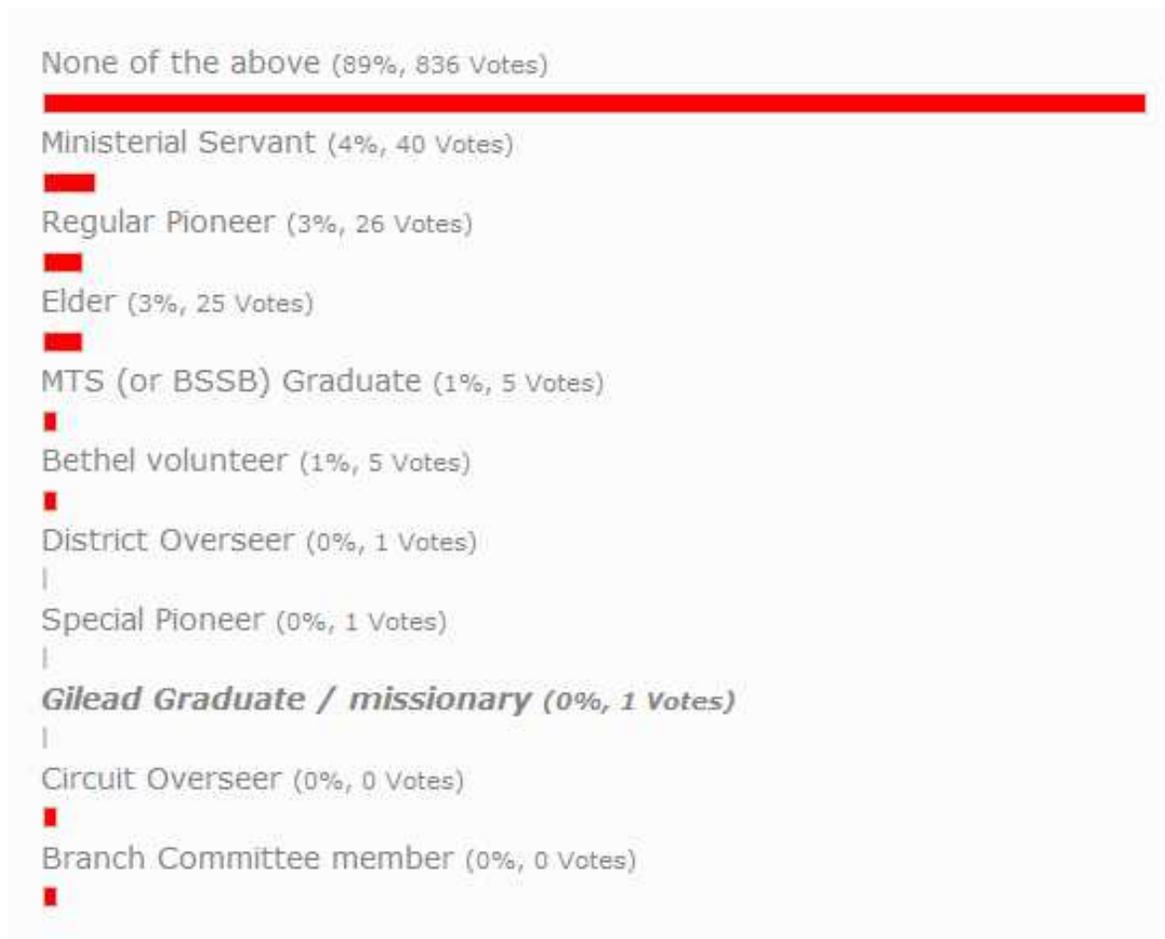


Total voters: **597**

It is noteworthy that of the 597 who responded to the above question, only 11% felt they had been disfellowshipped or disassociated for *actually breaking a bible command*. By far the majority of former Witnesses polled (70%) felt that their estrangement from the organization had arisen simply due to disagreement with the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses. What makes this especially sad is that in many cases this separation from the organization will have led to shunning by family members. It is hoped that the 2012 survey will more comprehensively assess the extent to which shunning affects such ones. In the meantime, you can read some of the comments received on the subject of shunning on page 26.

Positions held by voters

Question: Do you currently hold any of the following positions?



Total voters: **940**

As may be expected, by far the majority of voters were holding no particular role within the organization at the time of taking the Survey. This would include the majority of women within the organization, those men who do not yet qualify to serve in any special capacity, and those who have left.

There was a degree of confusion surrounding this question, which we have attempted to rectify in the 2012 Survey. It appears that many were ticking options such as “Elder” or “Ministerial Servant” retrospectively, even though they were actually disfellowshipped or otherwise no longer active publishers within the organization.

Elders

Before the Survey was shut down on *SurveyMonkey* in favor of being hosted on *jwsurvey.org*, it was taken by a total of 23 professed elders. By the end of the Survey, only 2 more professed elders participated, bringing the total up to 25. By referring to the individual *SurveyMonkey* results, it became clear that only **11** of the initial 23 “elders” were professing to currently serve in their positions *as active Witnesses*. This figure of 11, therefore, is a far more accurate statistic than the figure shown on the website results, because it indicates the number of serving elders, and does not those who served in the past. A summary of the comments made by these 11 “serving” professed elders may be found on page 21.

Ministerial Servants

By using a similar “data cleansing” method to that described in the previous paragraph (i.e. referring to the *SurveyMonkey* data), it became clear that no more than **22** of the 40 professed Ministerial Servants taking the Survey were “authentic” (i.e., in that they also claimed to be active publishers). A summary of the comments of some of these ones may be found on page 21.

Bethel Volunteers

All 5 voters claiming to be current “bethel volunteers” voted via the *SurveyMonkey* Survey, making it easier to clarify whether their bethel service was in the past or present. It appears that only **1** of the professed bethel volunteers is an *active witness*, and this voter is also a Ministerial Servant. His comment may be found along with other comments from Ministerial Servants on page 21.

Bible School Graduates

5 voters completed the survey claiming to be graduates of the Ministerial Training School, which is now known as the Bible School for Single Brothers, or “BSSB”. 4 of these voters voted via *SurveyMonkey*, and of these only 1 is still an active Witness. This brother also claims to currently serve as an elder, and his comment may be found along with the other elder remarks on page 21.

One voter claimed to be a missionary (or Gilead graduate) – although this voter participated once the Survey was no longer being hosted on *SurveyMonkey*, making it harder to learn more about whether he or she is currently active.

District Overseer

One professed District Overseer voted very early on in the Survey via *SurveyMonkey*. This brother also ticked the box to say that he is a Special Pioneer. He was apparently in full consent with the teachings of the Society, because he ticked to say that he agreed with all beliefs and practices. Whilst his vote was welcome, it's difficult to comprehend why a brother with such a prominent role in the organization felt comfortable frequenting a so-called "apostate" forum (where the Survey link was being advertised at the time) contrary to the strong admonition in the July 15th 2011 Watchtower.

Voter views of Society beliefs and practices

Question: Which of the following beliefs/practices of Jehovah's Witnesses do you DISAGREE with (if any)?

Young people are not to pursue higher education (95%, 1,035 Votes)



Witnesses who leave are to be shunned by family members if they are old enough to leave home (93%, 1,015 Votes)



Paedophilia: treated as a judicial matter rather than a crime (91%, 990 Votes)



The Governing Body is God's sole channel of communication (90%, 982 Votes)



Apostates are "mentally diseased" (w11 7/15 p16) (90%, 976 Votes)



Young people should not be involved in extra-curricular sports (89%, 972 Votes)



Paedophiles: two witnesses required to convince elders of molestation (88%, 960 Votes)



Beards are frowned upon, brothers with beards not used to give district convention items (88%, 959 Votes)



Past mistakes and future refinements are due to "increasing light" from God's holy spirit (88%, 959 Votes)



Celebrating birthdays is wrong (87%, 948 Votes)



Blood transfusions are to be refused, even if life is at stake (86%, 936 Votes)



Paedophiles: names kept confidential from the congregation (85%, 931 Votes)



Paedophiles: not prohibited from becoming an elder or ministerial servant in the future (82%, 898 Votes)



Understanding of bible prophecy (i.e. most prophecies for the 'last days' fulfilled in early 20th Century) (82%, 893 Votes)



The insistence on 607 BCE for the fall of Jerusalem, contrary to commonly-accepted historical evidence (82%, 890 Votes)



Jesus Christ is only a mediator for the 144,000, and not for the Great Crowd (78%, 846 Votes)



Masturbation is wrong (77%, 837 Votes)



The treatment of women in the organization (74%, 806 Votes)



The Governing Body does not need to have any contact with the anointed remnant (74%, 806 Votes)



Only the anointed should partake of memorial emblems (62%, 674 Votes)



Refusal to accept aspects of evolutionary theory (60%, 654 Votes)



Others that are not mentioned above (please specify in comments below) (30%, 323 Votes)



None, I agree with all teachings and practices (2%, 22 Votes)



Total voters: **1,089**

This question is arguably the most significant of the entire Survey, because it helps us to see precisely which doctrinal issues prove to be the most contentious among Witnesses and former Witnesses alike.

Higher education

The issue with the highest rate of dissent has proved to be the Society's stance on **higher education**. For many decades, the Society has discouraged young Witnesses from pursuing college or university – instead urging such ones to turn their attentions to pioneering, or Bethel service. The perceived wisdom of this approach seems to surround the fact that we are living in the “last days”, and the time left is reduced. Therefore, the Society argues that there is little to be gained from furthering one's secular career, and all efforts must therefore be focused on the pursuit of “kingdom interests”.

To illustrate how backwards and incomprehensible the Society's reasoning on this issue is, we need only look at the article in the September 1st, 2008 Watchtower, which implies that pursuing higher education is tantamount to drinking, smoking, or taking drugs. In a box on page 10, the question is asked, “What will be the ‘end afterward’?” It then goes on to say (underlining mine):

Young people are often exposed to temptations and pressures to experiment with things that seem popular. Here are some likely scenarios.

- **Someone dares you to smoke a cigarette.**
- **A well-intentioned teacher urges you to pursue higher education at a university.**
- **You are invited to a party where alcohol and possibly drugs will be freely available.**
- **“Why don't you post your profile on the Internet?” someone suggests.**
- **A friend invites you to watch a movie that features violence or immorality.**

If you are ever confronted with any of such situations, what will you do? Will you simply give in, or will you carefully consider what the “end afterward” could be? You would be wise to ask yourself: “Can a man rake together fire into his bosom and yet his very garments not be burned? Or can a man walk upon the coals and his feet themselves not be scorched?”—Proverbs 6:27, 28.

A “well intentioned teacher” urging a student to consider university can in no reasonable way be compared with any of the other scenarios mentioned. Attaining a university or college education can give any young man or woman an invaluable opportunity to provide for their families, realize their potential, and make a positive contribution towards the betterment of mankind.

By demeaning the importance of education without any sound scriptural basis, the Society is potentially handicapping the careers of countless young people, and jeopardizing their ability to provide for themselves and their families in the future. It is therefore unsurprising that voters on the Survey have met the Society’s stance in this regard with such utter disapproval.

Shunning

Not far behind with a 93% disapproval rating was the issue of shunning. Few outside the Witness faith are aware of how heartbreaking and emotionally damaging this issue is. Many outsiders likely consider the stance on blood transfusions to be of greatest concern among former Witnesses, but the issue with the greatest day-to-day impact on such ones is that of shunning.

Proponents of shunning point to scriptures such as 1 Cor 5:11,12 where the Apostle Paul counsels the Corinthian congregation as follows:

*“But now I am writing you to quit mixing in company **with anyone called a brother** that is a fornicator or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man... remove the wicked man from among yourselves.”*

Clearly the Apostle Paul was delivering this admonition for the purpose of keeping the congregation clean. But to what extent should these words be applied? By saying, “not even eating with such a man,” Paul indicated that his words weren’t directed against family members (who would regularly eat with one another), but against other brothers in the congregation with whom one might consider sharing a meal socially.

There is no reason to believe that the word “anyone” should be applied arbitrarily to “everyone,” irrespective of age or family relationship. Even the Watch Tower Society acknowledges that there should be some measure of balance applied to implementing this scriptural admonition. For example, a disfellowshipped husband is not to be shunned by his wife or children, and parents are not banned from speaking to their disfellowshipped children if they are not yet old enough to leave home. But why should the extending of mercy stop there?

Many share my opinion that there is scope to extend *even more mercy* in applying this scripture than is currently encouraged by the teachings of the Governing Body. Jesus rebuked the unrighteous Pharisees in this way: “Go, then, and learn what this means. ‘I want mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came to call, not righteous people, but sinners.” (Matthew 9:13)

Yes, Jesus identified mercy as playing a crucial role in the extent to which laws and principles should be enforced. Many do not think it is merciful that older teenagers, many who were baptized at an extremely young age, are forced out of their homes by their parents and then ignored – often for the rest of their lives – through a mistaken and unmerciful application of the disfellowshipping doctrine.

The scriptures clearly prescribe “shunning” purely as a measure for maintaining the spiritual cleanliness of the congregation, and not as a tool for breaking up families. To go one step further and insist that shunning should also apply to families is both destructive and deeply unmerciful. It also goes against the principle expressed by Paul at 1 Timothy 5:8 where he said “Certainly if anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith.” It is therefore unsurprising that the practice of shunning prompted such widespread condemnation among those who were polled on our Survey.

Child abuse

When the Survey was first being drafted, I turned to the expertise of Barbara Anderson in the wording of the questions. Barbara is a prominent campaigner against the Society’s reckless, damaging and outdated stance on pedophilia, and I feel that her knowledge of this sensitive issue was an important reference point when it came to polling opinions on the subject.

The issue was dealt with via four carefully worded questions, which are shown below for easy reference in order of their disapproval ratings:

- *Paedophilia: treated as a judicial matter rather than a crime (91%)*
- *Paedophiles: two witnesses required to convince elders of molestation (88%)*
- *Paedophiles: names kept confidential from the congregation (85%)*
- *Paedophiles: not prohibited from becoming an elder or ministerial servant in the future (82%)*

I found it interesting that there were varying degrees of disapproval for each of the above questions, even though the disapproval ratings for all four are overwhelmingly high. I think the variation in responses serves as fine testimony that voters were considering the questions carefully, and voting according to the issues that most disturbed them personally.

At first glance it would seem that the Society is making gradual progress in the area of its approach to child abuse. However, when one explores the guidance provided to elders by the Governing Body, one realizes that any improvements are negligible, and in practicality little has changed at all.

For example, as regards the question on pedophiles not being prohibited from serving as elders, it has been noted that recent instructions to elders block any man from serving if he answers “yes” to having molested children at any point in the past. At first glance, this may seem to be a satisfactory safeguard. However, for some bizarre reason, only those who have *never served as elders previously* are to be questioned in such a way prior to their appointment. Those who have previously served as elders, but have since been deleted, are not to be asked about the issue on their reappointment.

Indeed, nowhere in any documents that I have read does the Society unequivocally and categorically deny former elders who have been judicially found to abuse children the opportunity to serve in this responsible capacity again. In considering such men for appointment, elders are to consider factors such as the “progress” that the individual has made since his deletion. Why there is a need to protect former elders who are child molesters in such a way from the consequences of their debauchery, I have no idea. It belies all logic and reason.

The issues raised by the four questions above are sensitive ones, and in many ways the questions are inter-related. For example, consider the scenario mentioned above where a man who has never served before is approached and asked if he feels capable of serving as an elder. If he has abused children in the past, it is down to *him* whether he answers the question regarding child abuse honestly, and it is conceivable that many in that situation would deny any wrongdoing if they felt able to get away with it.

Now consider our Survey’s question of two witnesses being required to convince elders of an act of pedophilia. It is perfectly conceivable that a “rookie” elder could be appointed *despite* his having abused children in the past, simply because the deed was not witnessed by two people, leaving the elders powerless to take any action. As has been well documented by many who have taken an interest in this subject, acts of child abuse are almost *never* committed in the presence of two witnesses. It is therefore perfectly likely that a child molester could be appointed as an elder (for example, if he has relatives or friends on the body of elders) simply by virtue of the fact that he denied any wrongdoing at the time. Hopefully, this demonstrates how the Survey questions on pedophilia relate directly to one another.

The stubborn insistence that the “two witness rule” should apply to all acts of child abuse is arguably the most damaging element of the Society’s stance on this issue. The Society is evidently prepared to go to incredible lengths to enforce this ludicrous misapplication of scripture, at the expense of the safety of vulnerable children. For example, if a brother moves from one congregation to another, the latest guidance to elders prescribes that his

former body of elders are NOT ~~under any circumstances~~⁷ to mention to his new congregation that he has been implicated in a matter involving child abuse IF two witnesses did not verify the incident. This demonstrates just how detached the Governing Body is on such a delicate matter where the safety of children is at stake.

It is this damaging misapplication of scripture more than anything that influenced the wording of the question “Pedophilia: treated as a judicial matter rather than a crime”. In the latest guidance to elders, a statement is made to the effect that pedophilia IS to be considered a crime by elders. However, the hopeless ineptitude of the specific guidance found within the very same information renders this premise entirely superficial. For example, elders are told NOT to encourage victims to approach the police, and NOT to dissuade them from doing so. If child abuse is truly to be considered a crime, surely such advice is entirely irresponsible and neglectful of the “duty of care” incumbent on the elders involved?

Furthermore, the Society’s vigorous application of the “two witness rule” towards this issue also contradicts the criminality of child abuse. Basically, if a criminal act has truly been performed, it is down to professionals and state-appointed criminal investigators to establish this – and NOT the local body of elders under an outdated and inept judicial process that is handicapped by the two-witness rule. When one explores the full scope of the negligence and ineptitude of Society policy surrounding pedophilia, one truly appreciates that any token statement from the Governing Body that child abuse should be considered as a “crime” is only lip service on their part, and does not reflect their true stance on the issue.

The response of voters on our Survey demonstrates unequivocally that the Society still urgently needs to change its approach on this crucial issue. However, as Barbara Anderson will tell you, this is easier said than done. Barbara has been campaigning for years to bring about reform in this area, yet the Governing Body stubbornly refuses to flinch in its outlook, perhaps out of a misogynistic fear of being seen to yield to the petitions of a woman. Whatever their reasons, they are endangering young children all over the world as a result of their approach. It is unsurprising that, as I write this, the Society is facing unprecedented prosecution from authorities in Victoria, Australia, for failures to conform with child protection laws. If the Governing Body ends up being successfully prosecuted, they cannot claim “persecution” as being the reason for their woes, as they have only themselves to blame.

Other areas of disagreement

It doesn’t seem necessary on this occasion to go into a detailed analysis of each and every other area of disagreement as expressed on our Survey, not least because the figures published above very much speak for themselves.

⁷ Since issuing these results, it has come to my attention that bodies of elders may only share information related to an alleged abuse with the congregation to which a person accused of child abuse is moving if directed to do so by the branch office, who are to decide what information “if any” is to be shared.

The only issues with disapproval ratings of less than two thirds of voters were (1) the issue of the anointed being the only ones to partake of the memorial emblems (62%), and (2) the refusal to accept certain aspects of evolutionary theory (60%).

The relative indecisiveness over the evolution issue is perhaps to be expected, because it is a contentious and emotive topic that certainly sparks fierce debate even beyond the Witness community.

The reduced disapproval rating regarding the teaching that the anointed should be the only ones partaking of the emblems at the memorial of Christ's death could be the result of any number of factors, including disinterest from former Jehovah's Witnesses who are now atheist and no longer view this as an area of particular concern for them personally. We hope to run a separate "mini-survey" to gauge the feelings of Witnesses towards the memorial and the use of the emblems around the time of the 2012 observance.

Lack of support for the Governing Body

As the figures show quite emphatically, only 2% of voters ticked the box to express their *complete backing* of the Society. Of the 22 who did, the *SurveyMonkey* results reveal that at least 9 voters ticked the box in error, because these 9 individuals also ticked nearly every other box under the beliefs/practices section. This brings the number of those giving their complete support to the Society down to 13 at the most, or little over 1% of voters. This is a shockingly low number, considering that 1,118 took part in the Survey, with an average of 19.57 years as baptized publishers under the leadership and guidance of the Governing Body. It will be interesting to see whether the 2012 Survey delivers a similar dearth of support with a longer period in which to potentially gather more votes.

A summary of comments from those who *agree* with all teachings of the Governing Body may be found on page 35.

The UN/NGO Scandal

Question: Were you previously aware that the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York was affiliated with the United Nations as an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) from 1992 to 2001?



Total voters: **1,062**

This question was included in the Survey, partly out of a genuine interest in the degree of awareness of the UN/NGO scandal among Witnesses, and partly as a means of raising awareness among those previously oblivious to this carefully concealed and unsavory episode in the Society's recent history.

As you can see, 29% clicked "no" (that they didn't know) – although it soon became clear through discussions on *jehovahs-witness.net* that many were clicking this option "retrospectively". In other words, they were clicking "no" because they didn't know *while they were still an active Witness*, even though they had become aware of the scandal since. For this reason, the statistics generated by this question may be treated with a degree of skepticism, because many clearly misunderstood the question. However, it is hoped that the inclusion of this question did play some role in increasing awareness of the scandal among active Witnesses.

Indeed, one comment was received from a then active Ministerial Servant. In his remarks, this brother implied that his participation on the Survey was the first time he had heard of the scandal. His comments appear below:

"After being in this organization my entire life, I finally took the advice of the Society, and I read my Bible. I am currently a Ministerial Servant, and my conscience is killing me. I watch brothers and sisters coming in and out of the Kingdom Hall, and they are so thirsty for real comfort, real spirituality. They won't get it here. If only I could go back 15 years ago and find myself, push myself into a corner, and talk to him. Really talk some sense into him, then so many things might be different for me now. I have learned so much in the last year and a half, but prior to this survey I didn't know about the NGO affiliation. I do now. Funny, though, it doesn't surprise me. No more regrets. I'm done with the organization. I am an active JW now.

In two days time I will submit my letter of dissociation. As of right now, I am free! Free mentally, spiritually, and emotionally.”

It is gratifying to think that this Survey played such a profound role in educating this individual about the deceit and duplicity shown by the Society in this scandal, which perhaps prompted him to disassociate himself from the organization. I can only hope that he has not suffered too much from the Society’s policy of “shunning” as a result of his brave decision, which evidently has freed him from the inner turmoil that he was experiencing.

Following the success of this question, John and I have discussed the possibility of including similar questions regarding Watchtower scandals on the 2012 Survey. However, we have come to the conclusion that these “scandal” topics would be better served as “mini-surveys” – leaving the main annual survey targeted more specifically at gauging the mood among Witnesses towards various doctrines and practices.

If you would like more information on the UN/NGO scandal, a detailed summary can be found at the following link:

<http://www.jwfacts.com/watchtower/united-nations-association.php>

Voter Comments

Before the Survey was transferred from *SurveyMonkey* onto its own website, we invited comments from all voters. The following invitation was extended to all participating in the Survey:

“If you feel able, please write a few words to express your true feelings towards the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. Be as open and honest as possible. Nothing that you say will be used against you.”

As you may expect, we received a number of varied comments in response to the above. Some comments didn't seem to be directly targeted at the Governing Body, whereas others definitely were. This section will list some of the most interesting comments according to the type of comment, or the background of the person giving the comment.

In reproducing these comments, I reserve the right to correct any obvious errors in spelling, grammar or punctuation where it is straightforward to do so. Any text added by way of clarification will be in brackets. Otherwise, these comments are quoted entirely as they were submitted via our Survey.

I would point out that the views reproduced below do not necessarily reflect my own personal views, and I do not accept liability for anything alleged or insinuated by them. I have chosen to show as many comments as possible for the purposes of transparency.

Comments from active professed members of the 'anointed remnant'

“I was an elder for 8 years and a ministerial servant for 6 years. I "stepped down" from [those privileges] over disagreeing with the CO's reading of a letter from the Governing Body about losing privileges of service if you send your kids to college. Since then I've done a lot of research and I'm convinced the Witnesses religion needs to reform and become more Christian and less adoring of a religious publishing company. I'm disappointed in the constant double-talk and untruths coming from representatives of the WTB&TS. My wife is still very much mentally "in", and the Organization can do no wrong in her eyes. It's come to the point where she loves the Organization more than her husband. I continue to go to meetings and service and do what I can to help others open their eyes to the truth about the Witnesses' religion.”

“Holding judicial hearings behind closed doors is not scriptural.”

“I feel GB is sincere but totally misguided. Probably pride interferes with their ability to see the truth.”

“Our Governing Body need to walk in our shoes for a while!”

“We as Jehovah's Witnesses are not given Christian freedom as Jesus said in John 8:32. No one is even allowed to question something that is clearly a conscience matter, such as growing a beard. Instead they are considered 'weak and rebellious' if they do so. If someone cannot see how the chronology of 1914 is Bible-based, then they are cut off and called 'despicable fool' in opposition of Jesus' words at Matthew 5:22. The GB force all to conform to a theological template that is legalistic and works-based. It is out of harmony with Romans 14 and other scriptures that show us we are saved ONLY through the shed blood of our master Christ. I love

the local brothers and sisters- but they are 'captive to a concept'⁸ as our Brother Ray Franz said, and it saddens me to no end."

Comments from inactive professed members of the 'anointed remnant'

"Self-assumed authority. Not a biblical institution."

"I was an elder and a very active publisher. I still love my brothers and sisters, but the Governing Body is exercising too much control over the lives of the witnesses. If it wasn't because of the control, pressures, and the fact that you can't express or hold a personal opinion contrary to that of the GB, I would have stayed. A Christian denomination does not have to be perfect, but it should be a place where one can grow spiritually. The Jehovah's Witness organization does not allow such growth."

"I always felt these brothers were beyond reproach, but sadly the level of hypocrisy is mind blowing and permeates all things. There is no real Christian mercy or forgiveness or even understanding by these men that sit in judgment of all."

"They know how to make strong Kool-aid"

"They are the true apostates of Christianity"

"Teaching that love and brotherhood are conditional is hateful."

Comments from serving Elders

"They were sincere men just trying to do their best. But as Jehovah had to discipline ancient Israel - and her kings - for 'going beyond the things written', so today he will discipline the Governing Body. I am very sad to see how these once sincere men have become so filled with their own importance that they "strain out the gnat but gulp down the camel". (Matt 23:24)"

"People have made life decisions based on their writings - then things change. No apologies or acknowledgement. The tone of the magazines is very harsh and unloving."

"I wish and pray that the Governing Body will stop putting themselves in the place of Jesus. I am trapped. I want to leave the organization but cannot for fear of being disfellowshipped and losing my family. Thank you for this survey and I hope it reaches the ears of the media."

"I think they are sincere believing men, not able to see the mistakes of their precursors." (*the brother commenting was also an MTS graduate*)

"The GB has created an organization that represses individual expression and free thinking. Members are stifled and must conform to the many written and unwritten rules or be labeled weak or unspiritual."

"I believe that they are imperfect humans just like the rest of us and therefore susceptible to mistakes and misinterpretation of the scriptures. They should express opinions and suggestions, not rules like the Pharisees of old. When a belief is labeled as wrong, an apology should be issued as well. We need to go back to the original purpose of meetings, which was to express our opinions as well without being labeled apostates."

"GB are self-appointed dip-sticks"

"I appreciate them"

Comments from active Ministerial Servants

"I am an active JW and Ministerial Servant. I am also atheist. I keep up the act of pretending to be a JW because I don't want my family to shun me. Is this really what the GB wants? Secret non-believers in the congregation? They leave no other choice other than social suicide."

"After being in this organization my entire life, I finally took the advice of the Society, and I read my Bible. I am currently a Ministerial Servant, and my conscience is killing me. I watch brothers and sisters coming in and out of the Kingdom Hall, and they are so thirsty for real comfort, real spirituality. They won't get it here. If only I could go back 15 years ago and find myself, push myself into a corner, and talk to him. Really talk some sense into him, then so many things might be different for me now. I have learned so much in the last year and a half, but prior to this survey I didn't know about the NGO affiliation. I do now. Funny, though, it doesn't surprise me. No more regrets. I'm done with the organization. I am an active JW now. In two days time I will submit my letter of dissociation. As of right now, I am free! Free mentally, spiritually, and emotionally." [also shown on page 31]

"I'm trapped. I can't freely go away."

"I think that they are a self-righteous and controlling group that has not shown true Christ like qualities."

"I hate them - they do not represent what I believe about God. However, due to family reasons - I am still in and have to swallow their b%#/?!\$t week in, week out."

⁸ I believe the voter is actually referring to the book 'Captives of a Concept' by Don Cameron.

"Intentions may be good and honest, and [they] admit they are imperfect men which is good, but they expect too much of other imperfect men who are held to account rather than those overseeing t who should also be held to account. Also, young and middle aged single sisters are totally neglected, especially if they are not pioneers, and even if they are too."

"I have MANY issues. They want to be treated as prophets and have every word obeyed unquestioned. Well then they better have it all correct the first time! No Bible patriarch/prophet ever gave wrong info and told others to "wait on Jah". Power hungry liars. I could write an essay, but the point of this survey will tell it all..." (also a betheh volunteer)

"I feel sad to think that the GB has power to punish people who disagree with its teachings. I agree that it is necessary to have unity in creeds, but everyone should be free to have [his or her] own interpretation of the scriptures where this is possible."

"Nothing worse than being lied to by people you're supposed to trust with your "life"."

"They are apostates!"

"How can you sleep knowing that [you] mislead and deceive many people, disunited families? Go & you yourselves!"

"They are using a shroud of "holiness" to excuse their abuse of power over the members of the organization. They sacrifice real truth and integrity for the sake of organizational unity."

"Cult leaders, growing rich off the backs of the brainwashed masses. & the lot of 'em."

"Good thing gone bad."

"They are charlatans and have set themselves up as idols. They are the true apostates!"

Comments from those in agreement with the Governing Body

"I appreciate them" (the same comment as listed in the Elders section)

"Honest men trying to do their best to worship God."

"I agree with all teaching until I search the internet about the organization. I am a sister, but my husband is a brother with privileges."

"I love Jehovah, but I hold a private relationship with him where I actually follow what I am supposed to..."

"I was born into the truth. I have been baptized for 5 years. It's not true that we are not allowed to go to college or participate in extra curricular activities. I

plan on going to college for 4 year. Right now I am on my schools soccer team and some clubs. My father is disfellowshipped my sister and I still talk to him. The borthers and sister are all fully aware of all these things. Yet you claim that we dont approve of them? Looks like you have some faulty information."

Comments suggesting subjects for inclusion on future surveys

"You should also include: Condemning homosexuality in every way... because that is the #1 doctrine I am against."

"Where do i start? To be brief, my baptism dedication in 1984 always bothered me, namely in recognition of a spirit directed organization, not in the name of the Holy Spirit which came back to haunt me years later. Christ not being my mediator, unloving policies and legalistic procedures which were not in the spirit of Christ. Kangaroo judicial judgments using distorted bible references to punish, not to lovingly restore, often using payback to discredit individuals with slander and name calling and family shunning. Taking human imperfection of us all into account, JW's past and present are victims of a leadership which is both uncaring of it's members while demanding absolute loyalty, a self serving and self greasing axle controlling it's followers with fear and mindset. They will self implode one day as fear can only last while their followers remain in the dark as this is the only way they can keep their members from questioning. They will eventually hang themselves with their own literature."

"What I don't like the most is the hypocritical kind. To point the finger on other groups and call them bad names while doing exact the same thing (but it is for Jehovah, that's of course a big difference) it's really disgusting. I'm not sure if the governing body holds really the power within this organization and I think they sincerely believe it - my impression is the really despicable individuals in the organization are the persons who have power and KNOW that it is not the truth (lawyers, members). The manmade organization is their GOD, Jehovah himself."

"What got me to disassociate myself was originally the flood teaching. By modern science and archeology, it can't have happened."

"There are so many things I disagree with. The way JW's raise children is horrible. And the widely held JW belief that babies who do not breathe "the breath of life" do not get a resurrection. I hate the way they make up things and attribute them to God. They ruin lives. They take lives."

"There are many beliefs which I think are not right. Probably the worst is that they only lead to salvation and leaving them means leaving God."

"The doctrinal changes that are 180 degrees from previous "teachings" redefinition of the generation. Misquoting sources to make the author appear to support a position that they do not support."

"That the Governing Body and its representatives (including DO, CO, and elders) should be obeyed without question even if their commands/instructions violate one's conscience and even though they have changed their policies in the past (without apologizing)."

"Teaching that you DO NOT need to be born again to enter/see the Kingdom of God. John 3"

"Teaching that love and brotherhood are conditional is hateful."

"Taking over Jesus' role..... Their idea of being baptized into the Spirit directed org. Shameful and not discreet."

"Something not mentioned above that I disagree with is the rule not to look to any outside sources to prove or disprove Watchtower theories. IF it was "the truth" then no amount of searching or researching could disprove it. Untruth seeks the darkness which is exactly what they do."

"Some other disagreeable teachings of the Watchtower not mentioned: - Jesus Christ is not God, but merely a created angel made into a man. - The 144,000 serve as a second "Christ" class. - The Bible can only be rightly interpreted by "God's organization" and cannot be understood on its own."

"[The teaching that] God works through an organization, and "the faithful and discreet slave" is a group and not each individual Christian."

"Pushing physically abused wives to stay with/married to their abusers--dangerous and wrong; limiting "worldly" education, even encouraging young people to quit school to preach--wrong; disfellowshipping folks for disagreeing with ANY persons of authority in the organization, even if the organization later admits that the person was correct in their opinion--wrong. Disfellowshipping GLBT folks--horrible!; limiting women--awful; Sweeping awful, illegal behavior under the rug so that "Reproach will not be brought on Jehovah's name"--thoroughly reprehensible; pushing young teenagers to be baptized--unkind and manipulative--just gives the powers-that-be a weapon against the littlest of the little sheep. I could go on and on and on."

"Other teachings I do NOT agree with: 1) One's eternal salvation is dependent upon the door to door ministry, handing out Watchtower and Awake! magazines because faith without works is dead. I was told my salvation was in jeopardy if I didn't go door to

door. 2) God is directing the Watchtower. 3) That all worldly people and things are evil. 4) Jesus Christ died for only some people. 5) Homosexuality is wrong. 6) Armageddon is coming soon. 7) One must go through the Governing Body to have a relationship with Christ. 8) Only Jehovah's Witnesses will be saved at Armageddon (see also item 6). 9) The Bible is the literal and accurate Word of God and that all scripture is inspired of God. 10) That obesity, smoking, an untidy home, and disagreeing with the Governing Body or Watchtower doctrines are valid reasons to be disfellowshipped. 11) That women are to live in subjugation of men. 12) Allowing children to be baptized. 13) The Watchtower and Jehovah's Witnesses are God's Chosen. My Mom explained to me as a child that Satan's primary goal is to break up families. When my parents became baptized Jehovah's Witnesses they systematically withdrew from us, their children and grandchildren, because we refused to become JWs. We were treated suspiciously, judgmentally, and with a streak of meanness we had never before experienced from them. My only conclusion, based on my Mom's teachings, was that the Jehovah's Witnesses were being directed by Satan and not God. You instill fear, suspicion, paranoia, haughtiness, and self-righteousness in all your members. You should be ashamed."

"Other teachings I disagree with are: that celebrating holidays is wrong and that military service is going against scripture."

"My main contention with JW is the Society's continual use of examples of genocide, murder, torture etc in the Old Testament as proof of God's love, justice, wisdom and power."

"My issue with them is their lack of transparency and honesty. I have an issue with the "us. vs. them" mentality that JWs are all good, and everyone else is all bad. It is Jehovah who reads hearts, not the GB or any human."

"My greatest difficulty is with the intellectual dishonesty and misuse of secular quotes and citations."

"In addition to what is listed in #7, I disagree with the following: homosexuality is wrong, premarital sex is wrong or that God would care what type of sex people are having, I believe the bible was written by and inspired by Men. I'm sure there are others, but those are the ones I can think of now."

"In addition to the list on #7, I disagree that God exists and that the Bible is divinely inspired."

"I strongly disagree with baptizing anyone under the age of 18. I think all baptism candidates should be adults, just like in the first century."

"I just wanted to comment on the 'which beliefs of JW's do you disagree with' survey. One thing that I disagree [with] and that is not mentioned is how they

view non-believers (aka worldly people) as something to be given a wide berth.”

“I find the whole 'separation' from 'the world' to be cultish and destructive to lives.....to be raised believing that everyone who is not a JW will 'soon' be destroyed is tantamount to abuse and mind-control!! To describe only those who leave the organization as 'apostates' is derogatory and inflammatory, especially considering that many of those who are 'recruited' by the door to door ministry are by that definition 'apostates' to their former churches!!”

“I do not like the fact that women are generally ignored. Women have no voice. They have too much control of the rank and file.”

“I disagree with the concept of Theocratic War Strategy, because it aids and abets prominent ones in the organization in withholding important information from members/followers/studies that might otherwise keep them from staying or joining the JWs.”

“I disagree with teaching children they will never die. Also with segregation from "worldly people." The governing body is perpetuating a damaging religion, but are equally victims of life long indoctrination.”

“I disagree that [it] is ever correct to lie to the rank and file. I am opposed to the quote mining and misrepresentation of scientists. I disagree that the bible is the infallible inspired word of god, if he/she even exists. There is no evidence [that] the Romans only used an upright pole for executions. The very references they refer to disagree with the watchtower.”

“I also had issue with the lack of love shown in the congregation, favoritism, and the emphasis on their literature instead of the Bible. I hated how they judged everyone who was not a JW. They keep people from knowing God, but in their favor, I did learn the books of the Bible and some Biblical teaching from them. My experience was not a total loss, and I pray for those who are blinded in that cult. Peace to you!”

“I also disagree with what I was taught as a JW years and years ago about a miscarried baby not being able to be resurrected. I believe the breath of life is at conception, not a literal breathing into the lungs. I will hold my lost babies again someday, regardless of what the WBTS thinks. I also did not like it when my daughter had a question about something she was taught at a book study, asked the sister about it, and the sister went to the elders. One of those elders pulled my daughter aside and told her to not question the teachings. Also, a light getting brighter doesn't change a lamp into a couch. It simply makes the details of the lamp OR the couch more visible. So, using the excuse of the light getting bright for big mistakes when you claim God's guidance is just wrong. You ought not [to] go spouting stuff you are

not secure in yet. Shunning is approved by the organization by misusing scripture. It is a very unchristian thing to do. There was ONE point where if I had wanted to come back, I was vulnerable enough to maybe listen. And that was the point at which I was shunned the most cruelly, when my beloved husband was desperately ill. I'd never turn my back on someone in the position we were in at that time. And if an old JW friend approached me for help even today, I'd help them. It amazes me that JWs are taught to shun others. [It] goes against Christian principles.”

“I also disagree with the teaching saying that Jesus is the archangel Michael, that the 24 elders are a representation of the anointed, that the resurrection of the anointed class has already begun, that Jesus' presence is invisible and that it already started, that the daughter of Jephthah was serving at the temple instead of actually being sacrificed (dead). That there was a Governing Body in the 1st Century (that of Jerusalem). That the trumpets were conventions (or assemblies) and some other disagreements with their interpretation of Revelation. That in the book of Daniel appears a binary Anglo-American world power. My feelings are that there was no prophet or "God's channel" that committed mistakes when they spoke or wrote in the name of God. The Law of Moses was used, and not changed, for around 1500 years, and the basis of Christianity was not changed either. I think that, if 1914 is not the actual foundation of the Kingdom of the Heavens, then Jesus neither chose the Bible students in order to be His channel, and they are asking from the sheep of Jesus things with no right at all. Furthermore, if that matter of 1914 is not true, they are making many people stumble.”

“I also disagree with the Society's attitude towards so-called "worldly people" and how they dismiss evidence that contradicts their teachings by simply asserting that "the world" is run by Satan and actively trying to deceive them.”

“I also disagree with the fact that the JWs deny certain essential doctrines of the historic Christian faith. These are, but not limited to: the Trinity, the deity of Jesus, salvation by justification, the deity and personhood of the Holy Spirit.”

“Also disagree with treatment of LGBT people.”

Comments about apostates, and apostasy

“Peace and love, apostates rule.”

“One should not be labeled an apostate for voicing a lack of faith in the Governing Body.”

“Not letting us go and keeping our relationships with our families will become extremely embarrassing for

you. I'm an insider that is working with the visible apostates. I was solely responsible for the Lansing Michigan disruption. I sat right there passing out information under your nose and you couldn't catch me. This will not end well for you. I know who you are, I know what you have done, I know how you prepare for apostates and you will lose in the end. You are false prophets that kill children only to brag about it. You are the modern day Jezebel trying to kill anyone who speaks against you. You are not Christ's brothers; you are cult leaders that run a printing business that masquerades as a religion. You know it and I know it! Lansing, Michigan was only stop one. There's plenty more to come, along with press releases. You like to control the group and the information they receive, you will have no say over this. Be prepared all you want, I walked in your house under heavy security and walked right out. I hope you slept well Sunday night Oct 16th, 2011. I can promise you that this has only begun."

General experiences

"When I was still attending meetings, I had severe panic attacks at the Kingdom Hall. I would sit in the back and cry. No one ever asked why or if they could help in anyway. I had symptoms of depression and suicidal tendencies and my husband, who is very emotionally cold, would not let me get professional help. Rather, he called in Elders and asked for a Bible study with them...they refused, saying we already knew enough. I almost never missed a meeting, even when I was mocked at the book study because I could not answer. I felt so much better when I stopped going to the meetings. My panic attacks have almost disappeared and I can once again go in public and even talk to store clerks and waitresses, something I could not do when I was attending meetings. Put in simple terms, I left because of the lack of love in the congregation and in my marriage. After I left I heard about the UN involvement and did the research to prove it was a lie. Sadly, it was true and led to more research. I am still married to a Witness and I do not talk to him about my feelings at all, nor do I try to prevent him from attending meetings or field service. For his part, he has slandered me, said I am demonized, crazy, etc and has managed to have my oldest daughter and her children totally shun me and spread hateful gossip and downright lies about me and my other 2 daughters. Despite this persecution I am in better mental health than I ever was as a Witness. I do not know how long I can take this abuse, but if and when my husband divorces me, I will tell as many as I can about the lies and abuse I have lived with."

"WAS AN ELDER. SAW LOTS OF STUFF. GLAD I'M OUT."

"The paedophile issue is what caused me to become upset. We had three child molesters in my hall at one

time. When I realized that no one was told, especially those with children, it totally blew me away, Then one of the older elders told me that he made sure his children and grandchildren knew but still did not tell any of the other members, I knew something was very wrong. I have been in the truth for 48 years, married an elder at the age of 24, regular pioneered for many years, was at Bethel, served where the need was great. I gave my life to the truth, I tried to walk the walk and talk the talk. I am just extremely hurt at the lack of love in handling this HUGE problem with child molesters."

"The only reason that I stay a Jehovah witness is because I would lose all of my friends and family. Everything. If I ever get disfellowshipped, I am convinced that I would fall into a huge depression and even have serious thoughts about suicide.... I am totally honest when I say that."

"Having been personally involved in judicial matters involving a pedophile (my grandfather) for crimes he committed against me, I find the process and views of pedophiles held by the society repulsive. It led me initially to view the society as certainly not having Jehovah's backing, and eventually to doubt the existence of God himself, views that led to my disfellowshipping. I never even thought of looking at an 'apostate' website before being told I would never be able to speak to my family again, simply because a victim of pedophilia couldn't be part of an organization that condoned pedophilia. Your vice-like grip on your members simply looks like an admission of guilt. Those with nothing to hide encourage open dialogue to clear up confusion. You, on the other hand, ban members from researching their own religion. Hmmm."

"The double standards applied by the elders in my congregation when it comes to discipline towards members of the congregation and their own families sickened me. I was hauled over the coals and the PO's son was doing the same thing, which they knew about, and he got to be a Ministerial Servant. Once I read more about the history of the JW's, esp. how they slate the UN and then join hands behind everyone's back as another double standard, I can't handle the hypocrisy anymore."

"Still struggling with the disparity of what I believed and what I know now, the effects on myself and my family, and unable to find another person to discuss this with. We were taught to trust the WTS and the governing body as the faithful/discreet slave, never ever to question them. So we didn't, with devastating results. They have held our feet to the fire and put us to the question. But they have been less than candid or forthcoming about their own practices and decisions. I haven't seen so much spin since the Watergate hearings. We were not supposed to become part of corporate America, were we? I see more and more of a legalistic, Pharisaic organization, holding us hostage, not to doctrine, but to dogma."

Early Watchtowers stated that Jehovah's Witnesses would never be "dogmatic." What happened?"

"Since I was at Bethel '69-'74, I knew the Governing Body. Their humanness was not a problem to me, but their arrogance, judgmental nature and lack of understanding of the real world and what real life is of no use to them, was not acceptable to me."

"My cousin was forced into the cult at age 10 because his mother married a JW. When he turned 18 he left home to RUN AWAY from the control and he found his first ever girlfriend. His own family (parent and only sister) were forced to shun him when he left. After a little while his girlfriend broke up with him (as many young couples do) and while he was shunned he could not turn to his family and because he was from a Jehovah's Witness family he had been kept AWAY from extended family all his youth: with no one to turn to, in his first heartbreak ever HE HUNG HIMSELF at age 22. The Jehovah's Witness organization is DEADLY dangerous."

"I THINK THEY ALL SHOULD GO TO PRISON FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES. THEY ARE 'MENTALLY DISEASED', I FEEL LIKE I WAS BETRAYED AND LIED TO ALL OF MY LIFE AND I ABSOLUTELY WANT NOTHING ELSE TO DO WITH THEIR 'CULT'. I JUST WISH I HAD LEARNED THE REAL TRUTH ABOUT THE SO-CALLED 'TRUTH' I WAS TAUGHT TO BELIEVE AND I HATE THAT I WAS BRAINWASHED LIKE SO MANY OTHERS HAVE BEEN. I WAS ABUSED SEXUALLY AT A YOUNG AGE AND WHEN I FINALLY GOT THE GUTS TO TELL THE ELDERS, THEY BLAMED ME FOR MY OWN ABUSE AND FORBADE ME FROM TELLING THE AUTHORITIES, AND I WAS PUBLICLY REPROVED AND THE OLDER BROTHER WHO RAPED ME SEVERAL TIMES HAD NO PUNISHMENT AND HE WAS 35 YEARS OLDER THAN ME! I WAS A KID! I WAS ONE THAT WAS BAPTIZED IN 1975 WHEN THE END WAS SUPPOSED TO COME! ANOTHER LIE! I WAS ACCUSED OF BEING AN APOSTATE WHILE I WAS HOSPITALIZED FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME, AND SOMEONE WROTE SOMETHING ABOUT ME ON FACEBOOK AND BECAUSE OF THAT - WHICH I NEVER EVEN SAW OR KNOW WHAT WAS SAID, BUT SOMETHING WAS JUST IMPLICATED, AND I WAS THEN ACCUSED OF BEING AN APOSTATE. WHEN I GOT OUT OF THE HOSPITAL, I STARTED RESEARCHING JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ON MY OWN, AND WAS SHOCKED THAT I HAD BEEN COMPLETELY BLINDED ALL MY LIFE, AND THAT'S WHEN I DID BECOME AN APOSTATE ACCORDING TO THEIR LANGUAGE. BUT I HAVE A STRONG FAITH IN GOD, MORE THAN AS A JW, AND I DO NOT SUFFER FROM THE GUILT I HAD ALWAYS FELT, AND THE MENTAL ILLNESS I HAD IS GONE NOW THAT I AM AWAY FROM THEM. THEY ARE FRIENDS OF THE DEVIL AND I FEEL LIKE THE WTS IS SUBTLY SUGGESTING THAT FAITHFUL (FANATIC) JWS KILL THOSE OF US WHO HAVE LEFT THE WTS AND THEIR TEACHINGS! JUST LOCK THEM UP AND [DO] NOT HONOR THEM AS MARTYRS FOR JEHOVAH BECAUSE THEY ARE JUST LIARS AND THIEVES AS THEY ARE NOW INSTALLING

ATMS AT ASSEMBLY HALLS - OMG - HOW GREEDY IS THAT?? AND THEY CHANGED THEIR VIEWS ON THE BLOOD A YEAR AFTER MY MOM DIED BECAUSE OF SOMETHING THEY LATER CHANGED. I AM STILL SEEING MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TO COPE WITH MY ANGER FOR MY RUINED LIFE. I COULD HAVE BEEN A DOCTOR BUT AT THAT TIME THE WTS FORBADE JWS GOING TO COLLEGE - BS! I AM DIVORCED TWICE FROM JW MEN WHO WERE ABUSIVE AND NOW I AM WITH A CATHOLIC WHO IS BETTER THAN ANY JW MALE OTHER THAN MY DEARLY DEPARTED DAD! I THINK CULTS LIKE THIS SHOULD BE ILLEGAL AND EXPOSED PUBLICLY FOR ALL THE LIES THEY HAVE TOLD THEIR MEMBERS. I THINK THEY BELONG IN GEHENNA!! AMEN!"

"My comments are made from the standpoint of being an outsider, a non-JW who nevertheless knows a lot about the JW doctrines and practices has several ex-JW friends and has helped a close friend out of the Organization. I think that even if all the Watchtower teachings were unquestionably sound and biblical (which they are certainly not), the measure for me of whether it would be a good religion to belong to would be if the Governing Body were honest when they made mistakes. This dishonesty immediately brands them a cult for me. But even if they were scrupulously honest I would then look to see if the organization they ran helped most members to be happy, fulfilled, well balanced, and [whether] it was obvious [that] the members were enjoying life as JWs. However my experience has been that many JWs are severely depressed or unhappy and anxious, many live in fear, most are frustrated and underachieving, their motives for belonging are often selfish, their friendship and support for each other is conditional and often done for show rather than out of genuine love or kindness. Many of them are judgmental and have an attitude of superiority over all worldly people, despite doing less good in the world than many sinners and most of all, the most loyal ones have closed minds. I would blame all this on the Governing Body."

"My children were baby sat by a man in the congregation I belonged to even though he went to jail 20+ years before for raping his daughters no ONE warned me. Don't agree with the separation. As a child I never got to play sports or join in activities or have non-witness friends, also do not agree with not being able to join [the] military. Just because you want to support your country does not mean you don't put god first. Don't understand why holidays are not celebrated because someone years ago asked for someone's head for their birthday???"

"Being an in-law to the JW's [I have] felt their criticism. My beliefs and what I teach my children should never be questioned, or told I am doing it wrong. I've seen the control the men have over the women and it sickens me!!! My son was hospitalized while being an infant and my husband (parents are JW's) told the nurse no blood transfusions. I just lost a

child 10 months prior and the nurse pulled me aside knowing I'm Catholic to get my ok if a transfusion is needed. My daughter was on her death bed and a family member of mine wrapped a rosary around her hand. My father in-law didn't like it and lifted the cross and dropped it down on my daughter's lifeless body. She was baptized minute's later right before she passed. I've seen the destruction this sect has caused not only in my life but other's as well. I honestly think the Jehovah's Witnesses are a publishing company and that's all."

"I'm trapped. I can't freely go away."

"I was very suicidal as a JW and it was the most miserable time of my life. A living nightmare."

"I was surprised to realize that the term Governing Body with capitals is not biblical. That really shocked me. Therefore I think they have established levels in an organization that are not scriptural. The organization has lost its feeling of community, and feels very much like an everyday religion. I didn't feel that growing up as a witness."

"I was shunned, and had a nervous breakdown. I am still dealing with the voice of constant criticism in my head. Certain brainwashing thought processes still exist in my mind that make me judge and criticize others."

"I was raised a JW and served as an elder for almost 10 years and was a Ministerial Servant 5 years prior. I resigned due to the politics I saw and general burnout which lead me to attempt to prove to myself that the teachings were all Bible based. Slowly, one by one I came to realize the major doctrinal flaws. I remain a JW solely to keep my marriage intact and family relations unchanged. I do not believe the GB cares one bit about the average JW, and likely doesn't believe many of the doctrines (i.e. blood or even the 607/1914 teaching) themselves but rather rule in an iron fisted way so as to maintain the status quo. Rather than embracing the tolerance that Jesus spoke about, they enforce their own rules in a similar fashion to the Pharisees of Jesus' day."

"I was never baptized but was raised [as] a JW for the first 16-18 years of my life (it took a while to get fully "out"). I didn't think it had had any effect on my life, but have since realized that much of my paranoia and mental fragility is due to the doctrines [that were] forced upon me. I do not remember much of my childhood. I have often found it strange that my friends can remember so much. I wonder if I am blocking things out. Maybe I just have a poor memory. I have an alcoholic brother, who can lay most of the blame for this at the way he was treated (too much to go into here but trust me on that one) and a brother whom my parents will no longer speak to (they still speak to the alcoholic who has been in prison and is no longer allowed to see his daughter unsupervised following her nervous breakdown aged 8). I am bitter, I know this, but it is not without

reason. JWs are a fully corrupt organization with only those "on the front line" truly believing and trying to be good people."

"I was disfellowshipped twice but came back in both times, the first time because I truly believed, the second time for family. But since coming back the second time, I've been inactive. I haven't gone to a meeting in 8 years. As time goes by, it becomes more and more obvious that the governing body is just a group of old men on a power trip. I'm currently an agnostic, so I don't believe any of the teachings of JW's and very few teachings of the Bible itself."

"I was disfellowshipped 4 years after the last meeting I attended. It had something to do with me trying to get closer to my family and certain elders trying to prevent that, even though I never brought up religion with my family. I was 29 at the time."

"I was born into this religion and it goes back 3 generations in my family. I was a regular publisher and gave talks from the time I was a child. As a very active and eager Ministerial Servant I had many responsibilities and loved helping those I thought were teaching "the Truth". When I came across some information on Beth Sarim I started to research what else the leaders of Jehovah's Witnesses had been hiding. 14 years after I left the religion I am still in shock and struggle with the deceit and fraud that they committed and continue to commit on so many levels."

"I was born and raised a Jehovah's Witness. I'm not going anywhere, I have no choice. Both my spouse and my family are involved with the JW's, my parents with high-up positions. I have to keep quiet to keep the peace, and hide my true beliefs. If it was up to me, and I would not be disfellowshipped for apostasy, I would probably leave the organization and leave my spouse and parents to practice the religion as they please. I no longer believe that one group is so special that they are chosen as God's people, nor that out of seven million people, the governing Body is God's sole channel of communication. I believe that the influence of the "Christian" organization is damaging to families, and the Governing Body, and the Congregation replaces the natural family unit, and they give themselves a catch all phrase so that they can rule, and lord over the flock at large by claiming their prophecies come from "God". I go in the door to door ministry only when forced by my spouse, and I pray that I never convert anyone into this cultic, antiquated religion. Thank you for making this survey."

"I was a third generation JW. Had a nervous breakdown when I decided to leave knowing I would lose my entire family and everyone I had ever known. I am so glad to be free from the deception, the mind control, the idea that the promises of the NT weren't for me, and the fear instilled in me when I was a Witness. I now know the God of love who made me --

the Alpha and the Omega; Jesus Christ my Lord. It was He who set me free and I am so very grateful."

"I stopped because I realized that a) The "Last Days" had lasted for far too long. b) It was morally wrong to advocate a holocaust for non-believers."

"I sacrificed my childhood, my teen years and my early adulthood to hand out magazines and books. All this time I was the victim of a publishing company's scam."

"I have only recently become inactive, this is due mostly to the feeling that the society is starting to make things up to fit existing ideals. I feel there is still a good deal of truth in this organization; however it currently is lacking in humility, and being run more like a business."

"I have been out of the Org. for 10 years now. I left due to a disagreement with the elders and their abuse of power. After research and prayer I was saved and now am a Christian! I am so glad that like Paul my eyes were opened on the roadway!"

"I hate the religion but love many of its members. I am disgusted by its beliefs and doctrinal matters. As a result, I am cynical about all religions and all matters pertaining to spirituality. I consider myself agnostic and apathetic too. I say this without a shadow of doubt, the WTS has taken away many things from my life that I can never get back: higher education, extra-curricular activities, playing sports, playing music, career building, sleeping in on weekends every now and again, freedom to make decisions, ability to develop my own conscience, ability to talk with women on a romantic level... those things are all gone forever or taking years to get back."

"I grew up in this religion and was shunned as a teenager when I became rebellious. I wasn't baptized, so why was I shunned by the congregation? I think everyone should have loved me even more - but they didn't. Also, as a preteen I wanted to be baptized. I was asked several questions by an elder and then told I wasn't ready to be baptized. I praise God for that now, but how wrong is that? Both my children accepted Jesus into their hearts at young ages and were both baptized - praise the Lord! My grandfather died because my mother refused to give him a blood transfusion. Very upsetting."

"I grew up as a JW from the age of 5 up to 16 and quit the religion when I was 18 (I had to wait 2 years while living with my mom because her rule was [that] I go to the meetings until I turn 18). I quit in 1999 and have never looked back. I found a different religious background and because of this my mother didn't come to my wedding day in 2007. I bent over backwards for her to attend our wedding but in the end she was so stubborn on one particular saying that she just didn't attend. I'm still hurt over this but not surprised and she at least calls me and I call her to say

hi and see how she's doing. I have many stories to tell and can't wait to see the forum wall. Thank you for this site!"

"I gave my whole life to this organization and did everything its leaders asked of me. Not god, but the leaders. I regular pioneered, worked at headquarters, a perfect example. Before I was even born, this group split up my family in the name of loyalty to god and the organization. In later years I had such a fear of letting down my believing family and the LOVING ELDERS that after making a mistake, committing a sin, I tried to kill myself. These people will never control me again!"

"I devoted my life to being part of the organization but due to being abused by my husband (a brother), after finally getting my children & leaving the marriage after 15 years of suffering, the rule of more than 2 people present broke my spirit and my reliance on the supposedly secure family I was supposed to rely on I felt very distant and felt I wasn't as safe and loved as I thought I was. So many times I was told to leave it in Jehovah's hands and he will deal with it in his own way! But at the same time I was expected to sit in the same congregation hall with him, so eventually I started looking into making myself a happier life outside of the congregation and also started to spend the time researching the witnesses and how they come to their conclusions for a lot of their rules. Hence reading Crisis Of Conscience opened my eyes to a lot of the underlying problems that are in the organization. I never felt comfortable with the rule of disfellowshipping/cutting off of family members, it was always one of those rules I never had my heart in, and having known of an abuse case locally of a young sister and how it was dealt with disturbed me hugely. I've been away for a couple of years now and disfellowshipped since March 2011 and I have never been happier. But it hasn't been without its problems and relationships suffering from my decision, as I have family members who still remain in the organization, but I live in hope that one day they will see what it truly is."

"I am liberated. I was disfellowshipped, then [I] was reinstated because I missed my family. The night of my reinstatement was the last time I went to the Kingdom Hall. I've decided for the sake of communicating with my family to be discreet about my beliefs. There are many, many of us who see through the lies and deceit."

"I am angry that I wasted 35 years of my life on a lie. The guilt I have suffered (for not feeling like I could measure up) has caused way too much pain in my life. Now I know the truth about the truth, and I am truly set free...."

"I am an active JW and Ministerial Servant. I am also atheist. I keep up the act of pretending to be a JW because I don't want my family to shun me. Is this really what the GB wants? Secret non-believers in the

congregation? They leave no other choice other than social suicide.”

“I am a born-in JW. Once I looked into things, I saw it was all a house of cards. All a big fat load of lies.

“I agreed with all teachings until I searched the internet about the organization. I am a sister, but my husband is a brother with privileges.”

“Growing up as a Jehovah's Witness destroyed my life. I will never know that type of person I would have been had I not been raised this way.”

“Finding out about the affiliation as an NGO began my leaving the witnesses for good and then researching much more after belonging for 60 years.”

“Dear Friends, got in contact with the witnesses in Denmark in 1955, baptized in 1956, after reading Raymond Franz' two books in 2006 I left with my wife and our whole family. Haven't heard from them since. We are free Christians now.”

“Baptized at age 14 after a whirlwind of teenage issues, where I tried to commit suicide at age 12.5 I wanted to leave the "truth" then, but elders asked me to give it a chance for one year. I did, and many issues were resolved. I was emotionally happy and decided to be baptized, while not really being exposed to anything else. Been disfellowshipped almost 8 years, but interestingly, not for usual reasons rather because I disobeyed advice given - that's another story. I respect a lot of what I was taught, and know there are many sincere people, but I will not return to the organization. The other issue I have is the belief that oral sex between married persons is wrong. I have known many who are plagued by this and each time it happened with their spouse [they] would feel guilty, cry, etc. What goes on between a married couple should not be dictated by an organization or local group of elders.”

“Baptized and served in the Caribbean. Now live abroad where, with full internet access and time to surf, I found out the truth about 'The Truth' and was able to become MENTALLY free, not just physically free.”

Neutral Comments

“Although I am not a baptized JW, I have been given Bible studies and it is my goal to eventually get baptized and I do consider myself to have an earthly hope currently; however, I will not get baptized under false pretenses (i.e., stating that I agree with the 1914 doctrine). There are a few clarifications I would also like to make on some of the checkboxes for the beliefs that I disagree with. Concerning evolution, while it is a proven fact that different species can arise from a common ancestor (a new species is defined to be one that cannot procreate with previous other members of a common ancestry... an

experiment was done with flies to confirm that evolution does [take] place to a certain extent wherein a group of flies with a common ancestor were separated and allow[ed] to procreate. Eventually the two groups evolved in such a way that they were no longer able to procreate with one another. Evolution is evidenced also by the fact that, for example, all the variety of dogs we see around us came from those few dogs on Noah's ark. Jehovah has, however, clearly put boundaries and limitations on how far evolution can go. Of all the myriads of generations of bacteria that have evolved since the dawn of scientific exploration, not a single line of bacteria has been able to evolve into something that was itself not distinctly bacterial. I checked the box concerning the GB as the sole channel of communication exclusively because of the word "sole." In other words, JWs and their GB have done a service to humanity for which purpose Jehovah has used them, and I do believe that JWs are God's people. I did not check the box concerning blood transfusions because I agree with this; however, I do not think that Jehovah will be angry with a mother who accepts a transfusion for her child in order to save them. He may not be happy, but he also understands human imperfection and the desire to preserve the life of one's offspring is not ignoble. Concerning bible prophecy, it should be noted that when Jesus talked about the fall of Jerusalem, it was in response to the apostles' questions concerning the time when not a stone will be left upon a stone. The apostles asked when this was to occur, understanding that the event was yet future. It is not feasible that the apostles would have understood Jesus to be talking about the invasion of Jerusalem hundreds of years earlier by Nebuchadnezzar. The apostles' questions were concerning the future, and they would have understood Jesus' words to be prophetic in nature. Especially since Jesus exhorted Christians to flee Jerusalem at that time. Such a warning would not be necessary if the event in question was in the past.”

“I think allegations by ex-JWs of support and protection for pedophiles by the Society is overly sensationalized. As an ex-JW myself, I am interested in legitimate criticism of the organization but not fantastic extremism.”

“I think ex-Witnesses unfairly criticize the Governing Body, but at the same time current Witnesses put too much stock into them.”

“I still think that the mentality of the teachings (promoting not the individual but the whole) is a good guide to make the world a better place...”

“I do not judge anybody.”

“I do believe they are a communication channel that Jehovah's Holy Spirit uses in our days to reach to the masses and organize the worldwide Bible teaching campaign. However, there are several organizational (and perhaps doctrinal) teachings that should either be revised or abolished altogether. In any case, they

must be respected as they have (at least) shown to the best of their abilities to follow what the Bible really teaches, as well as do as Jesus Christ commanded his followers to do in the latter days.”

“I believe JW is the true religion approved by our Heavenly Father Jehovah. Unfortunately it is considered to be a fundamentalist cult by many. We need to change such public impressions by making the religion more transparent and by coming out of isolation.”

“I am just confused...lost. I love Jehovah God, the creator with all my heart and only want to make sure that I have the truth.”

Comments regarding shunning

“The abuse of families with the shunning policy is immoral. It has never worked on normal people except for them to return for their families then fade.”

“Just please drop the shunning. Teach whatever you want, but not the shunning.”

“If they would let me leave without taking away my family, I would go.”

“I find the worst thing your organization does is shuns family members. It makes it seem like a cult to outsiders.”

“I do not regret my years in the WT organization. I do think that their form of shunning is cruel and breaks up families. I am happy for the freedom I now have to worship God the way I believe, and not according to the dictates of an elite group of men.”

“I can't see my family over the ideas and thoughts of men.”

“I believe that nothing in life comes between family and true friends. To indoctrinate religion so callously so as to divide people is inexcusable. I've effectively lost my sister and my nephews due to shunning. Such beliefs are inexcusable and hold the human race back from making it past our differences in belief and the wars that has caused. Shame on you for ruining people's lives.”

“I am shunned by my entire JW family, including my daughter, mother, and sister. The only wrong I did was to disagree with the WTBT teachings.”

“I wish no harm. I only wish you would at least allow disassociated members the right to leave, yet still maintain a reasonable amount of contact with non-family Witnesses. It is not reasonable on your account to say that a disassociated member must repent and go back in order to have some association with a Witness. There is nothing to repent of. Leaving is not wrong. Everyone should have that right, yet still be able to maintain contact with friends. You have the

power to lift that. You can make life-changing decisions. With great power, comes great responsibility.”

“Having discovered the scale of deception perpetrated by the Watch Tower Society over many decades in its attempts to reinforce its authority and glorify and sanitize its history, I am angered and horrified that this organization retains such a firm grip on my family and loved ones. I find the issue of shunning family members unscriptural and unforgivable. Paul's words regarding shunning former members were directed to a congregation - not to a family. It is therefore unmerciful to apply them to family members, particularly since there is no minimum age for baptism, and teenagers are encouraged to consider baptism along with the rest of the congregation. This creates a scenario where a large number of teenagers get baptized before they know who they are themselves, and certainly before they know the full consequences of their decision. If nothing else, I would urge the Governing Body to repeal this cruel pharisaic law. If you did this, half of the so-called apostates that plague your organization would melt away overnight, since you would have finally shown mercy and weakened your iron grip on their loved ones. If you truly believe yourselves to be slaves of Christ, then follow his command at Matthew 9:13: "I want mercy, and not sacrifice."

“I feel no animosity towards them, I just wish they would let people go without repercussions.”

“I wish and pray that the Governing Body will stop putting themselves in the place of Jesus. I am trapped. I want to leave the organization but cannot for fear of being disfellowshipped and losing my family. Thank you for this survey and I hope it reaches the ears of the media.”

“I view the governing body as false prophets and mind controllers. They manipulate their followers to only think their way and not to think outside the box. They have caused me much sorrow in my life since my family, who are very involved in the religion, have left me in the cold. All because i don't share the same distorted views as they do. That is wrong on so many levels.”

Survey feedback

“The questions are loaded.”

“The 4th question should have had check boxes instead of only one choice!”

“Thanks...great site. An IMPORTANT voice :) I also disagree with the JW lack of charity to the general public in a meaningful way. They have a charitable status, and yet have no formal way of providing public charity.”

"Thanks for the opportunity to take this survey. I hope it will open some eyes with the Governing Body. I think when Jesus finally does come to inspect the Governing Body and separate the sheep from the goats, a lot of JW's will be surprised!"

"Thank you for the info. Wish there was a way for more witnesses to listen."

"Thank you for building this website/blog!"

"Survey should be expanded into more areas of belief."

"Like this site! Very interesting indeed!"

"JW facts founders and those that work on the site: Good Work!"

"Jehovah's Witnesses are a cult. I am so glad I am out! I do not like question number one as it assumes that a person can't just stop going; either you are kicked out (disfellowshipped) or you have to tell them you are leaving (disassociate via letter to the congregation). I for one was a JW and I just put one foot in front of the other and left, no disfellowshipping or disassociation. Why give those bastards any power over me? God gives us free will, I exercised it. You need to add another bullet for "just left of my own free will" in question number one. Just sayin'."

"It might be more informative if individuals could prioritize their disagreements, something along the lines of "how important is the stance on voting to you? Very important, somewhat important, etc. Because that would enable the GB to see which issues are "deal breakers" for more people."

"I think you should add the question- I do not believe in the Bible as a book written by spirit-guided men. And add the question: I do not believe there is a God. Just my two cents."

"I started the survey with good spirit but turns out the survey is just an attempt to summarize the usual critics on the Jehovah's Witnesses. This wouldn't be so ridiculous, if you at least were honest, an example: the statement "Young people are not to pursue higher education" is false, higher education is discouraged. If you don't understand the difference, then go deal with other topics."

"I am glad you're doing this survey. I, like most disfellowshipped people, am in a position where I cannot speak out much against the witnesses because of family members left behind. By not speaking out, I get the opportunity to see my niece and nephew once or twice a year. So, things like this survey are therapeutic for people like me."

"Happy to do this survey."

"Great idea, it a shame the sample is less than a 1000 so far given the number of visitors to the site."

"Cedars, thanks for this opportunity!"

"All I can say now, is that this is just great. The surveys will definitely have some negative impact on the WT for the better. Good Job."

"A good survey, covered everything."

"10 years solid but another 20 years to heal from it. The font is extremely difficult to read. Darken the font so that it offsets the screen background. Thank you."

"The structure of the organization prevents its members from growing spiritually. Just wanted to say how much I appreciate this site. I passed it along to a few friends."

"Thanks for giving us a voice!"

Comments regarding blood transfusions

"Refusing blood transfusions must be considered as a CRIME."

"The GB is only interested in productivity from the rank and file. They love no one but themselves. Also, they know their blood transfusion policy is NOT Biblical but they prefer to hold the line since this can open them to a massive lawsuit. They also know that Jesus did not take the throne in 1914 but they would rather keep teaching this than risk losing even more members than they are currently losing."

"The Governing Body members are not true Theologians who have examined the Bible with an open mind from all angles. Rather, they are experts at Watchtower doctrine and it appears they studied the Bible with an aim to prove that their already-held beliefs are correct. If anything, they should present themselves as students who wish to share what they feel is true about the Bible, and present it as what they currently understand about the Bible rather than it being the absolute one and only truth in the world. It is a mistake for them to be enforcers of their doctrine or intervene in an individual's relationship with God and have the power to discipline individuals. So often they have been wrong, and individuals and entire families have had their history altered or erased because of the decisions made based on incorrect teachings that were later changed. To give untrained men at the congregation level the authority to deal with issues that should be left to trained professionals is very dangerous. Every Witness family I know has suffered tremendous casualties as a result of this practice. I personally have lost my father due to the Blood Issue. A few years later they claimed that accepting blood fragments was acceptable. This may have saved his life had it been available or he may have realized that these mere men [who] don't really know what they are doing and have no business advising people in such matters."

Negative comments directed at the Governing Body

Unsurprisingly, the majority of comments were aimed at the Governing Body. More than 450 comments were received that conveyed hurt and indignation towards the Society's leaders. Here are just a few of them.

"Your high horse just called and wants your bony ass to get off of it."

"When you see the abomination of desolation seated in a holy place then flee to the mountains'. The governing body has seated themselves in a holy position. The discerning ones flee to a place of refuge."

"A 19th century religion that has evolved into a death cult believing that 7 Billion people have to die to validate their beliefs."

"A bunch of old farts who feel 'blessed' due to the fact they live off of all donations made to the society. They are among the many cult leaders who mislead their followers just to benefit themselves."

"A bunch of old men being exactly what the bible warns us against. False Prophets!"

"A bunch of self-appointed overseers lording it over and fleecing the flock they say they are there to protect - not transparent enough and not open to scrutiny - too far removed from the local scene to really ascertain the increasingly negative fallout from their pontifications from on high - I could go on... they have sucked the life and companionship/camaraderie out of their followers with their increasing list of manmade rules and regulations that dominate the minutiae of a regular JW's daily life - meetings, meetings and more meetings that discuss nothing but meetings. ETC ETC"

"Abandon self righteousness, judgment, and religious superiority. Be humble. True Christians obey Jesus. Love your neighbors. The God of Jesus is kind to the ungrateful and 'wicked'. Luke 6:32-38."

"According to the book of Acts there was not a GB in Jerusalem for the early Christian to report to. Paul didn't report to one. None of the apostles did. The brothers were not to lord it over the congregation." "Love is supposed to be the identifying mark, not fear. The elders rule by fear. They are not shepherds. The sheep are afraid of them. You cannot speak to them about your doubts or the changes coming down from the GB. You are supposed to swallow everything the GB says, even when it makes no sense. And you not allowed to talk to others about it. It's like living in a police state. They burden the brothers with rules and more rules, and make serving Jehovah

burdensome. Jesus said his yoke would be light and refreshing. The GB have hijack[ed] the faith of Jesus' sheep, and hand[ed] them over [to] his enemy, Satan the Devil by joining the UN."

"Arrogant and self-righteous. How dare they think they have the right to tell people how to live their lives? They have brought so much pain, physically and mentally, to people's lives, members and non members; they should be brought to account for there unjustified, manmade rules and regulations. The[y] sound like a cult, they look like a cult, they sure feel like a cult. They are a cult! They are liars and so far from teaching the 'Truth'."

"At best, self-deluding. At worst, crooks and charlatans."

"Bunch of controlling liars who have absolute contempt for the people they claim to lead."

"Can they really be spirit-directed with all these flip-flops? I sincerely think they have lost touch with reality."

"Careful reading of information in Watchtower literature demonstrates that they know they are wrong (later quotations of comments are altered to make it appear they said something else -- see the 1974 yearbook quotation of Rutherford's 'advertize' speech and newer references to the 'millions' campaign.) Their methods of interpreting the Bible are simply wrong."

"Completely out of touch with members..... and 'real' life."

"Control freaks who have destroyed so many lives. They are greedy. They are not the sole channel to God, and are presumptuous to place themselves in a place Christ should occupy."

"Controlling mind Nazis."

"Controlling, manipulative and arrogant."

"Corrupt, misguided, immoral, unethical, evil."

"Crooks, liars and destroyers of people's lives, families and mental health."

"Cult brainwashing propaganda that ruined my childhood and chance at education."

"Cult leaders, growing rich off the backs of the brainwashed masses. %&*! the lot of 'em."

"Cult. I was raised in it and didn't have any idea how much it contributed to my unhappiness until I left. Waited much too long. Now if only I can get my family out. And boy am I gonna try!"

"Dangerous cult leaders."

"Definitely NOT a Christian religion. Why? Because Christ is only [a] created person to them, and the Holy Spirit only energy like electricity, etc. What they preach resembles the above. Man made garbage."

"Deluded and remote."

"Evil control freaks, no brotherly love."

"Evil Pharisees."

"Evil, profiteering spawn of the Rockefeller Crime Syndicate."

"GB has taken the place of Jesus. This is blasphemy. They fit the description of the 'man of lawlessness'. They are hardly 'faithful' or 'discreet'. They would never be 'appointed' by Jesus & obviously were not since the[y] REFUSED the appointment, teaching that CT Russell was the FDS."

"GB steals lives."

"God will take care of all destructive religious cults."

"God would never pick any men to mediate. EVER. You are all using religion as a tool for control. The misogyny is disgusting. The shunning is evil. You will receive your full reward x3. Darkness only lasts until the first ray of light and all is illuminated. People will be free."

"Governing Body are puppets for Watchtower corporations to make money in the name of religion."

"Honestly? I hate them and I know they are a bunch of mind controlling assholes. There isn't much else to be said about it..."

"Hope to outlive the damage done to me by this perverted religion. JWs think they will live forever. Why would they want to? The idiots don't 'live' the lives they have now!"

"How can they be the principal part of the Faithful and Discreet slave, directed by God's spirit, and be the only channel of truth when they have gotten so many things wrong and have changed so many teachings??"

"Humans are flawed, and thus organizations built by humans are flawed. The organization needs to be more honest with its members. An example would be the determination to stick to 607 as the date for the destruction of Jerusalem - this is clearly inaccurate. Also the shunning of ex members is unchristian, not to mention unscriptural."

"Hypocrites who are diametrically opposed to truth and are completely out of touch with reality."

"I am very thankful that they are no longer 'governing' me! So wonderful to be free! They govern by deception and NOT by 'truth'."

"I am very upset with how the practices of the GB and those who follow their instructions have ruined many lives."

"I became a Witness because I thought that they taught the truth. Now I know that it is not. It is hard to hang on to a belief in God when the 'truth-bearers' are more interested in power and control than truth. I wish you could actually be honest with yourselves."

"I believe absolute power corrupts. Even the sincere members have, through their continuation of certain policy as 'tradition', acted corruptly."

"I believe on one hand they feel they are working for Jehovah, but on the other are completely aware of the 'fleshly' reality that is the organization. The duality they face is as real as that of the everyday rank and file, except they are unable to pass the onus onto anyone else. The GB believe it is their responsibility not to teach about Jehovah, but rather to keep as many people in - this is their mandate, retention, and let the growth happen on its own."

"I believe that the Governing Body along with the rest of the Jehovah's Witnesses have been duped into believing the hype and religious interpretations of their predecessors."

"I believe that the Governing Body is just as disjointed and inefficient as the secular human governments they preach against. Christian love has been replaced with dogmatic fear-mongering."

"I believe that the governing body itself, by the very nature of its title, is something that is non-biblical. A 'governing body' pertains to business. I also believe that the members [of the] governing body a[re] fully aware of their false teachings."

"I believe that the JW organization is a controlling group and is anti-Christian. Their policies resemble the behavior of the Pharisees more than that of Jesus. They speak about love, but are full of nothing but ignorance, hate and fear."

"I believe that the organization of Jehovah's Witnesses is just a business, a publishing company that has duped millions in[to] believing they are the only true religion. There is nothing Christ-like about them, and I believe they are insidious, and even evil."

"I believe that they are victims of the same system of abuse ordinary members are. I do not believe they know that they are abusing others, because part of the Watchtower's spiritual abuse is to create this blindness in people."

"I believe the governing body has blinded a mass amount of people into believing that they cannot think for themselves."

"I believe the Governing Body is corrupt to the core. These men control millions, making decisions on their behalf and potentially ruining their lives. There is no transparency, there is no honesty or openness and most importantly there have been no apologies for their past mistakes."

"I believe they are victims of their own dogma. I fall back to one of Jenny Holzer's truisms, 'abuse of power comes as no surprise.' Because they have appointed themselves as leaders, they will be judged by Heaven, accordingly [to] all of the abuse that has been conducted in the organization under their direction. One of their gravest crimes has been to

steal, separate or scatter sheep away from their true shepherd, Jesus Christ.”

“I believe this organization to be a cult. They ruin families.”

“I cannot believe how I was taken in by their lies. I truly regret bringing my children up in this evil organization.”

“I can't believe that it took me 35 years of being born into the 'truth' and serving your organization before I awoke and saw your 'light' for what it was. You should be ashamed for wasting my life, for not having my parents save for my education, for tricking and deceiving so many of us.”

“I could[n't] care less if it could be used against me. I don't fear false prophets. I've researched them inside and out, and they have to fear me now. I'll expose them every chance I get. If they wanted me to learn the truth, then they've succeeded, because I know the truth about them and their history all the way back to Ellen G. White of the SDA movement in the late 1800'S. Russell was a punk, and so was Rutherford. In fact the whole bunch is rotten to their governing body core. If I'm still listed in their records, let the records be purged. I don't want to be connected with these liars at all.”

“I deeply resent that a group of men as fallible as any of the rest of us should set themselves up as 'God's channel' and keep that position through abject fear that anyone who disputes this 'fact' will never see their family or friends again. The 'new light' you constantly proclaim is not proof of you being God's channel. It is proof that a bunch of increasingly desperate old men are frantically moving the goalposts because they are scared of losing control and are bewildered that their promised, 'imminent' Armageddon has still not materialized. Stop spreading misery, stop trying to control everyone and everything, and start worrying about your own 'salvation'... because if you're wrong about blood, disfellowshipping, use of fertility treatments, no further education, no extra curricular activities and all those other rules you've magic-ed out of somewhere with no sound scriptural basis, you have the blood of MILLIONS on your hands.”

“I do not believe all 7 members are sincere or honest. They come across as cold and without a clue as to how to properly run the organization. The new generation teaching is ridiculous, has no scriptural backing. The GB seem desperate, but also want to make a name for themselves - videos give their names and positions - they seem to want glory for themselves. Past GB members were not like this.”

“I don't believe this Body is God's sole channel of communication.”

“I don't fear them. I believe they are businessmen with a scam that is working. I don't believe they are religious now, it is about money. I think they are being rewarded for the good they did do with the

spreading of the word. The money is their reward. Now I believe they are dividing up the booty and getting out of Dodge. A witness for 62 yrs.”

“I don't hate Jehovah's Witnesses. I hate the Governing Body. I believe they are nothing more than a big business, money-making corporation posing as a religion.”

“I don't know them. They don't know me. How can they be so involved in my life?”

“I don't know. They're either evil, delusional, or both. Having been a JW, I understand how it can affect your thought process. It seems possible that they really do believe all they teach, but [it's] also possible [that] they're doing it all for selfish gain. It looks like it's more the second one, especially lately, but it's hard to tell. Either way, everything they do is harmful, so I wish they would just go away and dissolve the org or something.”

“I feel angry that this small group of men is currently misleading millions. At the same time, I feel sorry for them and sometimes pray there will be a second Ray Franz.”

“I feel as if they are robbing innocent people [of] the opportunity to live fulfilling lives. This is especially true of those born and raised in, and by the time they realize whets really happening, it becomes very difficult for them to begin a normal life... They hold their members captive by always giving [them] a sense of urgency and superiority. It's pathetic.”

“I feel if there is a place called Hell/Hades, the GB of the WTS are condemned to be there because of their steadfast refusal to change many doctrines, especially the amount of lives lost due to the pressure to obey the prohibition.”

“I FEEL JW[s] HAVE BEEN LIED TO BY THEM. [THE] SCRIPTURES DO NOT BACK UP WHAT THEY WANT US TO BELIEVE. IF IT IS IN THE BIBLE I BELIEVE IT, IF IT'S NOT IN THE BIBLE THEN IT IS A JW RULE... NOT GOD'S RULE! I FEEL SAD FOR MY FAMILY STILL INVOLVED... THEY CARE MORE ABOUT WHAT THEIR EARTHLY FATHER THINKS THAN THEIR HEAVENLY FATHER! THE UN AFFILIATION IS DISGUSTING... AND THEY LIED ABOUT THAT TOO! PEDOPHILIA... NOT TURNING THEM OVER TO THE POLICE... DISGUSTING!!! I GREW UP BELIEVING THAT THEY FOLLOWED THE LAWS OF THE LAND... WHAT HAPPENED HERE?!?!?!”

“I feel like they are master manipulators, crooks, and liars. They tear families apart, and keep people in line using fear. I feel like the Jehovah's Witnesses in general are a thinly-veiled cult.”

“I feel more and more doubtful that they really have authority from Jehovah to make rules on how we should live.”

“I feel nothing but disgust for these tin-pot dictators who sit in their ivory tower making up rules and regulations which can have life changing and devastating effects on the vulnerable people who

follow their teachings. I feel very strongly that the WTBS is a cult of the vilest sort. Aiming to pass itself off as a wholesome Christian religion, it is anything but. I feel [that] more should be done by governments across the world to put an end to the suffering they cause. Jim Jones caused the death of hundreds of his followers, and the world was outraged - the WTBS has caused the deaths of thousands of their followers over the years due to their no blood doctrine, and nobody seems to care. But I care, and so should you."

"I feel nothing but pity for these people who will waste their one and only life chasing a fairy tale. Too bad."

"I feel sad to think that the GB has power to punish people who disagree with its teachings. I agree that it is necessary to have unity in creeds, but everyone should be free to have [his or her] own interpretation of the scriptures where this is possible."

"I feel that God is not with the organization. I also feel that the WTS has the blood of many innocent people on their hands, be it the Malawi/Mexican political cards, the new light changing on organ transplants, and the no blood policy. Also they do not do enough to protect their most vulnerable people, the children in the organization by hiding out pedophiles."

"I feel that Jehovah is very upset with his organization because they have defiled themselves for being in bed with the political beast (NGO) and [he] has cut off some of his spirit from the organization. Therefore no "new" light has been shed since."

"I feel that the GB are a group of power trippers who have no compassion or understanding about life. I feel they are completely presumptuous in believing they can speak for god. They, as a group, totally lack the understanding, love and empathy that they profess their god epitomizes. They steal free will and individual conscience from their followers. Their dictates destroy families.....how dare they!"

"I feel that the GB have imprisoned the minds of followers by using lies, fear, guilt and techniques that only a cult would use. I feel ashamed and embarrassed that I ever went along with such thinking. I had doubts all of my life but did not act on them, just kept believing everything that the GB wrote. I was told repeatedly not to listen to the lies of the apostates, when in reality the real liars were the WTBS, trying to stop people from getting the real truth. Thank goodness we now live in an age where information is available to those who are brave enough to go beyond the prison the Watchtower has built in people's minds. I believe this survey will do no good as the people at the top of an organisation always know the truth and in the watchtower's case they will ignore brothers and sisters and always put their corporation above all the lives they are destroying day to day. How ironic that Charles Taze Russell said that organized religion is a racket and a scam, [the] Watchtower is one of the biggest scams

of them all. We are told that if you don't like it you are free to leave, how nice of them, what a shame they keep our families' hostage as punishment. I wish they would release people and let them enjoy their lives and families instead of demanding they waste their lives in misery, waiting for a reward that will never come."

"I feel that the Governing Body has no right to claim authority as the soul means to delineate teachings. They go against their own interpretation of 'The Faithful and Discreet Slave' as neither do they incorporate even the smallest fractions of other anointed members for their opinions, nor does the Scripture provide for 'representatives' which the Governing Body claim they are."

"I feel that they have taken a parable and manipulated it to apply it to themselves (faithful and discreet slave) in order to obtain power for themselves."

"I feel that to JWs the GB is an idol. Whatever they say goes and no one will question it. It is very sad how blinded most witnesses are to the fact that the GB is just a group of men, they are not gods!"

"I feel they are a group of men entirely concerned with power and money. If this isn't a cult (which I believe it is), the religion surely engages in 'cult-like' practices towards the rank and file members."

"I feel they are brainwashing my father and sister, can't even talk to them about this without them becoming overly excited and offended."

"I feel they are hard-hearted cynical hypocrites, who know they are not appointed by Holy Spirit in any way. They simply wish to maintain their position of power and prestige and their comfortable lifestyle. They know that there was no "choosing" in 1919, and therefore they have no sanction from God for anything they do or say. They know too that they elevate themselves above Jesus and go beyond scripture in so many ways."

"I feel they are horribly misguided and abusive towards rank and file Jehovah's Witnesses. I believe the image of a loving, united brotherhood has become more important than a genuine loving brotherhood."

"I feel they are non-transparent and dishonest about their history and dealings. I feel their main agenda is to keep and amass members. I find their view of life in antiquity ridiculous and inaccurate. I also think they use the same tactics as other cults/religions to keep their members in their faith."

"I find fault with a religion that claims to be 'Gods channel' but was lacking in minority members - from the GB all the way down the ranks. Also, it's disturbing that these 'men' are treated as Gods... and these 'Gods' continue to set strict limits on what would be considered normal life - all in order to have and keep CONTROL."

"I find it shameful that a few imperfect men have so much power over the lives of so many - they cause much unnecessary guilt, pain, poverty and hopelessness.... you look back at your past with regret and you look to the future with hopelessness as a result of their archaic and dogmatic views."

"I find its teachings to be manipulative, controlling, and wrong."

"I had written a lot but have deleted it all again. My story is no different from most others who have escaped the clutches of the WT. All I will say is: the sins of this evil, cruel money-grabbing cult have piled up to the heavens, and it is time the world becomes aware of its evil. To save innocent people from stepping into this trap, to help others escape, hopefully to restore family ties broken by the WT, to save human lives (the ban on blood) and to let the innocent children have a life where they are protected from pedophiles, can have a birthday party, get a proper education, do sports and don't have [to] get dragged to a kingdom hall [at] all times of the day and night (I bitterly regret putting my children through this, but thank God they all got a higher education). I hope the TRUE face of the WT will be revealed for all the world to see. It's time for ALL to know. A last thing: I left because I could see the org for what it is: A LIE!"

"I hate the Organization, but care about some of the people in it. I hate the Organization's treatment of women, children (and even men sometimes). I hate their view of rape, molestation, spanking, sex, etc. I am an Atheist, but stay a JW for my family. I live a bit of a double life; I have a secret non-JW boyfriend - a real sweet man who I love. I will leave the Organization very soon. I sure hope I don't get shunned by certain people."

"I hate the watchtower and bible tract society and all its other organizations."

"I hate them - they do not represent what I believe about God. However, due to family reasons - I am still in and have to swallow their bull^&*£ week, in week out."

"I hate them, they willfully destroy lives and let people die and be beaten when turning a blind eye to child molestation."

"I hate them."

"I have always felt that the GB are too controlling and there is no real freedom in Christ. I also believe that we are like Robots, not allowed to speak freely. It has dogged me for years!!!"

"I have MANY issues. They want to be treated as prophets and have every word obeyed unquestioned. Well then, they better have it all correct the first time! No Bible patriarch/prophet ever gave wrong info and told others to 'wait on Jah'. Power-hungry liars. I could write an essay, but the point of this survey will tell it all..."

"I have mixed emotions. One [the] one hand, I pity them because I think they too might be victims of being associated with JWs. Conversely, they are aware of [the] substantial disagreement with their doctrines that are based on strong authority, but they refuse to adjust. They bear the responsibility for such arrogance."

"I have no feelings towards them. Because they are not the real brothers of Christ, but managers, CEO style and so [are] their advisors (legal, commercial, property, IT etc. etc.)."

"I have no idea if these men actually believe in what they are publishing or whether they just enjoy the power. How can you believe anyone who keeps changing things? How are you supposed to believe one thing now when it was the opposite a few years ago? This all smacks of Doublethink in 1984, in fact the whole organization is like Big Brother, with the rank and file believing what they are told."

"I have no problem with the beliefs of the bible, I have many issues with the organization rules. I[t] doesn't matter where you think you'll end up, as long it is with your creator."

"I have no problem with the rank and file. However I do not believe the GB is the FDS. They should just admit 607 / 1914 is wrong, admit Jesus did not select them in 1919, and try to move on sticking strictly with bible teachings only. No prophetic speculations, and drop all of the little rules (like no beards) that are a burden on the brothers. I do turn in time every couple of months from a study with my daughter, but I do not go in the field ministry. I would love to be able to openly talk with someone about some of the things I have problems with, but I am afraid I will be DF'd. So I hang in for the sake of my elderly parents and my wife. It is hard. I have no friends outside of the organization, and I do care about doing the right thing in God's eyes. I just don't think this is it - at least as it currently is."

"I have no words to describe my feelings towards the Governing Body. I only hope they apologize soon for all the pain they are causing because of their unbiblical and inhumane teachings and policies, specially regarding blood transfusions and shunning former Jehovah's Witnesses."

"I think that the governing body have placed themselves in the position of the Heavenly Father."

"It is my hope that soon on[e] day King Jesus Christ [will] return with his holy angels to destroy the Watchtower Organization and its self proclaiming false prophets of the Governing Body and throw them into the lake of fire being tormented day and night for all eternity to come. Amen. Come Lord Jesus Christ."

"Seven men in New York who control the thinking of 7.5 million people around the world..... how the *#@+ do you think I feel about them?"

"There is no need for a Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. As Raymond Franz explain[ed] in 'Crisis of Conscience': Beware of 'organization'. It is wholly unnecessary. The Bible rules will be the only rules you will need. Do not seek to bind others' consciences, and do not permit others to bind yours. Believe and obey so far as you can understand God's Word today, and so continue growing in grace and knowledge and love day by day... by whatsoever names men may call us, it matters not to us; we acknowledge none other name than the only name given under heaven and among men, Jesus Christ. We call ourselves simply CHRISTIANS and we raise no fence to separate from us any who believe in the foundation stone of our building mentioned by Paul: 'That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures'; and those for whom this is not broad enough have no right to the name Christian. He ends with the words: "The question is asked, Where then do I go? What do I become? I feel no need to 'go' anywhere. For I know the One who has the 'sayings of everlasting life.' I appreciate the strengthening companionship of those I have with whom to associate (either personally or by correspondence) and hope that the future will add to my acquaintance with yet other sincere persons whose concern is for truth, not simply in doctrine, in words, but as a way of life. I am simply trying, then, to be a Christian, a disciple of God's Son. I cannot see why anyone would want to be anything else. I cannot understand how anyone could hope to be anything more.' - Raymond so to speak 'took my hand and open[ed] my eyes' so my wife and I and our children and grandchildren could leave this human made organization and live like real Christians. I was so lucky that I was able to stay in close contact with him for over 5 years."

"Their view and treatment of women and children in today's society is barbaric. The treatment of rape and incest victims by the GB in their advice and in their mags is cruelty, another form of rape. They spread hate speech against large groups of people such as [the] 'mentally diseased' and people of transgender/bi/homosexual, etc. They separate families. Discourage true friendships. They don't encourage independent thinking. I could keep going on so I will stop here since it is just a few words."

"Their claim to be God's sole channel of communication is lacking any evidence to back it up. We are supposed to obey them as though they speak with 'the voice of Jehovah', without any reason other than that they say so. I could respect them if they would simply admit that their doctrines/interpretations have been wrong in the past, therefore we don't have to unquestioningly obey them as though they were infallible."

"The WTBTS violates God's message and [the] core of what is the Good News!"

"The whole thing...is a joke. It is utter Mind Control. They need to be stopped. Thank you."

"The Watchtower is a cult that destroys the individuality of its members and families that have the misfortune of being either born in or recruited into the organization. You will be stopped. It has already started...the internet is everywhere."

"The spiritistic and apostate Sanhedrin (GB) and the Pharisees (ruling clergy class and hierarchy) have stolen their followers' faith and salvation. This has been done by teaching religion instead of the 'unabridged gospel'. 'All religion' is indeed 'a snare and a racket' as Rutherford (rascal that he was) often wrote. The false, shortened, reductionist or 'truncated gospel' taught to and embraced by their followers shows them to be apostate (spiritually unfaithful and naked prostitutes). It is not an accident that followers of the WBT\$ are ignorant of the gospel according to Paul, Moses, Isaiah, Psalms and others. More than half the Bible's references to the gospel are by Paul!"

"The organization is its own entity. Those in the GB are drunk with power. In sociology 101 you learn that power=money= prestige. They have all those. I would like to believe that they are just delusional, and really buy into their beliefs. The whole thing would be easier to comprehend that way."

"The Organization is a cult. Thanks to God I saw through their tricks years ago."

"The organization has reached a point where it believes that it is the means to salvation. The bible clearly states that Jesus is the means to salvation (1 Timothy 2:5). They are going against God's spirit. I don't want anything to do with such an organization as they are playing a risky game."

"The only way the modern day governing body could save face would be to topple the JW religion and admit that they are full of s*&t. Any actions less than that would still make them guilty of controlling and ruining people's lives, keeping them in the dark, being uneducated, being bloodguilty, and more. If there were a God I would pray to him for the JW GB to be destroyed."

"The group is just as guilty as other religions (although they think they aren't, AND are probably WORSE) for manipulation, control, hypocrisy, i could go on and on."

"The Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses take far too much upon themselves, assuming they are approved by the god of the bible, and adding further burden to those who approach god with extra rules that cannot be found in the bible but only in their publications."

"The governing body of Jehovah's Witnesses practice as many ungodly techniques on people, as they need in order to gain power. Having breached the trust invested in them; they carry on all out verbal warfare on their targets until every victim is eliminated. This includes family members that they divide, not Christ; and worst children of sexual abuse are dismissed!

Alot of ideas, teachings and book subjects that the GB of JW's call 'spiritual food', are in fact plagiarized from other preachers or writers. These GB members are so prideful that they almost never admit blame over their actions, but put it on God. Conversely, they constantly brag about, even supposed and exaggerated success in their name! The way they have used lawyers shows a complete contempt for the laws of land and victims, while bemoaning their rights as a religious corporation. In the field of Biblical Counseling this WT&BTS stands clearly in a dark place, as they are true 'aggressors' in 'spiritual abuse' scenarios. Their building efforts are designed to enslave [the] donating congregates to sacrifice valuable time from family, and enlist them for many years to weekend work. Psychological insights have been written into, said 'theocratic procedure' in a manner that manipulates the minds of followers into obeying the words of the GB above God, country and family. The GB of the WT, corp. are thus thoroughly corrupt, and any attempt to reform it would only result in placing a second crown on this harlot!"

"The Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses needs to be locked up in jail and required to pay for all the emotional, mental, and physical (stress-related) illness treatments, counseling, therapies, and medications for any and all current and ex members."

"The Governing Body is the 'Man of Lawlessness' talked about in 2 Thess. 2:3-12."

"The Governing Body is out of touch with real people and their feelings. They misapply a few scriptures to keep control of their flock. Their system makes their followers "pharisaical." Their shunning policy is extreme and non-Christian."

"The governing body is nothing else but a man made class who arrogantly acting in behalf of God."

"The governing body is flying blind and want to just take the lead no matter what the cost. Real people don't matter, only their doctrines."

"The Governing Body is controlling and insensitive to the flock it professes to love."

"The Governing Body is an illegitimate, unbiblical ruling authority over the lives of Jehovah's Witnesses. Christians are ruled by Christ alone."

"The governing body is a group of blood guilty power hungry evil men."

"The Governing Body is a Good Ol' Boys club of evil, greedy, power-drunk, old codgers."

"The Governing Body have set themselves up as the final authority when they have no mandate to be such from the Bible. They have gone beyond what is written to an extent that is inexcusable, so that they show themselves like the Pharisees, whom Jesus condemned as white washed graves full of dead men's bones. They have messed with people's lives, destroyed families of sincere people. Caused people to make life-altering or even death-dealing decisions.

I am glad that I was able to leave when my conscience caused me to awaken to the real truth. How can those in power wreak such havoc in lives and live with themselves? Only they know, and I could never be any of them as I value integrity rather more highly than it would seem they do."

"The Governing Body does not deserve to tell anyone how to live, and mankind would be better off without them."

"The Governing Body are truly a heartless bunch of old men that is sitting in an ivory tower lording over their poor followers. They resemble exactly what Jesus described the Pharisees of old: hypocrites, dictatorship and without any conscience."

"The governing body are self centered and elitist."

"The Governing Body are oppressive demagogues who indoctrinate, deceive, and exploit their followers. The Governing [Body] has taken away my childhood and much of my adulthood. I remain an active Witness only because I'm unable to obtain financial independence from my parents. This Governing Body's policies are a barrier to my happiness and my freedom. I feel only contempt for them and hope that someday this religion will go extinct."

"The Governing Body are bunch of corrupt men! They claim to be the inspired channel of God, but have no proof. Instead, the proof is against them, routinely having to update the Watchtower publications to correct past errors. Why would God tell them the wrong things only to change His mind and say new things? HE WOULDN'T! I think they know what they are doing and would not give up the power and prestige the positions hold within the organization for truth; with the exception of Mr. Franz who did the correct thing by stepping forward to expose the organization's internal workings."

"The GB tries to tell its members what sexual practices are allowed/forbidden. This should remain the decision of the couple only, it is no one else's business."

"The GB needs to be made more responsive to the needs of the rank and file JW. Therefore, GB members should be elected by the rank and file for a term of no more than 6 years."

"The GB manipulates rank-and file JW's and brainwashes them through its propaganda."

"The GB is the idol Witnesses unknowingly worship - a bit like the golden calf. It has usurped all prophecies and made fulfillment applicable only to itself. It has even usurped Christ's Redemption."

"The GB has no special knowledge, none of their prophecies have come true and most everything they come up with belongs to others. They are arrogant with a disconnect[ion] to humanity. The corporation exists to survive, not to serve Jesus or his flock."

"The GB has usurped the Bible and its teachings, and perverted them to be used against humanity."

"The GB has created an organization that represses individual expression and free thinking. Members are stifled and must conform to the many written and unwritten rules, or be labeled weak or unspiritual."

"The GB has become so disconnected with the reality of their teaching. The most hurtful was how the brothers were treated in Malawi, and how the GB condoned corruption in Mexico, about the same thing!"

"The GB are NOT who they say they are. They hold all its members (except 10,000 who partake) up to a covenant's standard that they deny them access into entering. Partaking of the Christ by eating and drinking. Remember 1Cor 10:1-4. ALL ate the manna from heaven and ALL drank from the rock-mass, Levites (priestly class) Israel (men women children) and Egyptians that left Egypt with them (proselytes). All allowed in this covenant just might not ALL be priests. Witnesses don't let them come into union with Christ, yet expect the same requirements as those under the new law. John 6th chapter. 'ANYONE'. Unless you eat the flesh and drink the blood, there is no everlasting life, resurrection, forgiveness of sins etc. The witnesses think they have that assured promise without being in union with Christ. The GB are nothing more than the hired man in Matthew who doesn't truly care for the sheep and turns them over to the wolves, and they are scattered. Elders as a whole represent the wolves in sheeps covering (do what they want in the cong) and as a result, just like we see with this survey coming out, the sheep are scattering. They are losing control. They have tried to use fear and control, which was never their place to begin with. [The] Law is supposed to be written on our hearts, not stone tablets. You either want to serve Jah, or you don't. No amount of sanction is going to change your heart. Instead, it makes you fear man who is nothing, when it is Jah and Christ who see all things anyway, and know our true motives. We don't have to approve or like things that people do, but we are always to love them. Leave them to Jah. For us it is a continual mirror, not [a] window to judge others ...and I could go on and on.. Peace and Love to you All!"

"The GB are false prophets, leading people astray with their bizarre teachings and hypocrisy."

"The GB are a part of a great deception, and they themselves may be fooled by it all. They are hurting families and people, and they are just a bunch of men who believe they have the truth when they don't."

"The GB allows itself to have the final say in all matters having to do with theology, morality, dress and grooming, sexual practices, education, personal hygiene, artistic expression, entertainment, conversation, commerce, conscience, in short, authority no human panel should have. They are reprehensible in so doing, and those who accept

them as having the final say in these matters are guilty of idolatry as defined in the Bible."

"The further I have distanced myself from the organization, the more I realize how f**ked up they are."

"The doctrine that the GB is God's only channel of communication is the main doctrine of JW's, and it is the basis for all of their false doctrines."

"The control over people's decisions and the breaking up of families because one of the spouses decides to leave must end."

"The blind leading the blind."

"The 'New light' on the blood policy (Blood fractions) and the overlapping generation teachings are laughable positions to take, and [there is] absolutely NO scriptural backing for either of them. As for child molesters to be in the congregation and not alerting parents or children, or the police [it] is unbelievable. Your organization publishes magazine[s] criticizing other religions for their actions, yet you are doing the same, or even worse things. Your hypocrisy is widely known now, you cannot lie anymore, [and] your members are seeing you for what you really are and leaving. Sell all of your buildings; pocket all the cash, because your fall is imminent."

"Thanks for destroying my family. When you go banging on doors at least be up front with what your real reason is for being there. They captured my mom with bulls%t."

"Sun Myung Moon, Hare Krishna, [the] Governing Body are all leaders of destructive, mind-control cults."

"Such a closed and secretive system as the GB should not make so many decisions that can and do affect so many people, thereby causing them to lose their own Christian freedom."

"Stubborn to old outdated beliefs."

"Stop trying to be everything for everybody, and ending up with basic 12-year-old watered down and simplified teachings. Those of us who have been in the truth for over 15 years (and took 2+ years of study to get baptized) need some real meaty information. Teach people to think, and trust they will love Jehovah anyway. It pains me that thinking outside the organization, reading non-wtbt's books, tertiary education etc is considered dangerous, someone somewhere is scared that if the great crowd knows how to think, reason, research, read, that we will leave Jehovah. We won't! Trust... That's what Jehovah did way back at the beginning. He trusted that there were people who would love him, and there was. If you don't stop trying to micromanage, then you will lose, not only people's respect, but also Jehovah's support."

"Stop hiding behind a curtain of illusion."

"Stop being like the Pharisees that Christ despised! I will never bow to you ever again as Christ is my mediator!"

"Snake-oil salesmen. Nuff said."

"Sincere, however mistaken."

"Since there is no biblical support for the existence of a 'governing body' in the first century, there should be none now. All current members should resign and no replacements should be appointed to take their places."

"Since the governing body VOTE on new policies and doctrines, what happens to those of the governing body who had the minority vote? Will they be disfellowshipped since they voted AGAINST? Or do they immediately change their minds after being voted down? Seriously - A decision made by voting cannot come from God."

"Since I'm aware of their doing[s] (thanks to the Ex Jehovahs Witness Forum) I see them as a malicious bunch of old men abusing their power over other people. I hope soon they will be extinct."

"Shame on you...you know what you are doing, which groups you with the most despicable humans ever to walk this planet. The day will come when this empire built on once loving friends required to hate [will] come crashing down. I will catch some and others like me will help them rebuild their lives as best we can. My outlook is bright, uncontrolled by you, and positive. I am in a preventative mode...making sure unsuspecting people are made aware of the real truth about the so called 'truth'."

"Shame on you!"

"Self-deluded at best, liars at worst."

"Seem to be sincere, but overzealous of their own position. Instead of 'slaves' or 'servants' they overemphasize a leadership or lord role in the organization. It tends to distract from the message of the kingdom. Their anti-gay message is also misguided. It's not based on scripture, though they attempt to."

"Sectarians and manipulatives."

"Scam. They are dishonest, stubborn and cold hearted. Pharisees of our time."

"Satan keeps transferring himself into an angel of light!"

"Sadly, as well intentioned as they may be, they fit the category of 'offspring of vipers and hypocrites'."

"SADLY I FEEL IT'S POWER HAS MIS-GUIDED MILLIONS OF PEOPLE."

"Remember in your day of judgment all the chances Jehovah gave you to hear our cries for help and soften your heart so as to show love toward the little sheep you were entrusted with - chances you foolishly squandered."

"Religion is a snare and a racket."

"Relentless rule making, imposing thoughts and personal viewpoints over other ones' equally mature and bible-based conscience-based decisions. NO humility shown by [the] governing body, despite endless shortsighted rules that have destroyed families and caused continual emotional distress to those who only want to serve god with reasonableness. Have they ever stepped back and considered: 'would Jesus make these burdensome rules?' Because of the fruitage of the GB, this one fact shows that God's spirit cannot be with them. They cannot continue to blame pass the blame to the sheep. 'Fish rots from the head down.'"

"Recently, they seem to be tightening the noose with more and more WT articles about enforcement. They show tremendous stubbornness when it comes to the topic of homosexuality--there is zero support from within on this taboo subject. The recent policy changes in the elders' manual show a toughened stance on education. Their willingness and unavailability to answer valid questions shows a pattern of piling more work onto the local elder bodies. Yet, major issues such as gossip, slander, alcoholism, depression, isolation of faithful gay JWs and gluttony are routinely shelved. The elders are over-worked, under-appreciated, under-educated and over-indoctrinated - very poor qualifications to be pillars in the congregation. Finally, the laughable 'overlap' change to the meaning of the word 'generation' is what nailed it for me. I'm done with this cult."

"Pure nonsense, like any other religion."

"Puppet masters."

"Power-mongers."

"Please tell the real truth, instead of hiding it from your followers."

"Please come down to earth and start to realize that if you continue with the same arrogant position you will lose respect, obedience and will assist in an inexorable collapse of your organization. You are no more trustworthy!"

"People have made life decisions based on their writings - then things change. No apologies or acknowledgement. The tone of the magazines is very harsh and unloving."

"Particularly annoyed at dishonesty in the magazines (e.g. copying pictures from 'worldly' magazines, misquoting scholars, refusing ever to apologize for mistakes). GB - perhaps sincere men but purely lifetime JWs without any knowledge of life outside. Almost all [are] childless, so no experience of family or often even earning a living. Ivory tower situation - nobody ever contradicts them."

"Out of touch, lots of rules, not much love!"

"Old farts without any regard for human feelings or life."

"Nothing worse than being lied to by people you're supposed to trust with you 'life'."

"Nothing but imperfect men. We should not put our trust in imperfect men. Their words, not mine."

"Nothing but a group of self-appointed men who wish to maintain their power, position and authority over others and who would be masters over their faith. Jehovah's Witnesses as an organized religion have no scriptural significance. The Bible does not support the concept that man will live forever on a paradise earth. God's kingdom is a spiritual rather than a physical one."

"Not the way Jesus showed."

"Not interested in Scripture, unwilling to say 'we were wrong', just too much to state here!"

"No group of individuals can have the exact same point of view on everything. Individual freedom of speech and belief should not be frowned upon, and the organization should not be governed by fear."

"No different than any other organized religion."

"My feelings towards the governing body of JW's would be best described as disgust, horror and outrage. Personally, as an atheist, I find the dogmatic issues irrelevant and see them to be the same as any other religion with their 'magical book' or 'holy texts', and manmade command structure. However, what sets them apart from most of the mainstream religions is how complete and vicious the control structure is. By most accepted definitions, they are clearly a cult. I have personally seen so much damage done by how these people twist and squeeze the minds of their members. This ranges from an overall higher percentage occurrence of mental illness in the JW population, to suicides of ex JW's who could not successfully de-program themselves. Oh, and did I mention how they dictated the policy that all but ensures that child molesters will never be punished? I could go on for a long time, but I will sum up by saying that this is a dangerous group. The rank and file members aren't malicious and genuinely think they are doing good, it is the leaders who perpetrate injuries to their people. These injuries are real. They include mental illness, pedophilia, ruined lives, deaths due to refusing medical care, deaths to ruined lives and minds. The damage is real, and I believe these callous, power hungry men are responsible for it."

"Mind control moneymaking cult."

"Men claiming to have the ONLY communication with God. Making doctrines that control other people's lives. No humility when they know they are wrong, but just blame others for believing what they said. Instead of saying they got something wrong, attempt a cover-up by claiming 'new light'."

"Members of the GB are simply self-deluded like all JW's, the only difference is they have risen to the top of the organization (for that's all it is) and get their authority from those (18 million or so) who choose to believe these people are special go-betweens working hard on their behalf to placate their god to grant their wishes and dreams. The whole thing is - like the notion of a caring and controlling God - absolute rubbish, crap. Sad but true. A bunch of self-important, aimless, socially inadequate men who have seized the opportunity to distinguish themselves with extravagant claims of divine authority to 'lord it' over others - sick bastards!"

"Members of GB are aware that the public claims of JW's are wrong."

"Many churches have various social programs for their members, as well as others in the community, such as daycare assistance, employment help, food banks, activities for teens and singles, pot luck dinners for socializing, etc. The Society totally ignores the fact that we, as humans, have interests and needs beyond the meetings and field service. Young people are prohibited from participating in school sports, school clubs, joining groups like girl or boy scouts, going to their high school prom, but there are no provisions made within the organization to make up for such activities beyond field service or the occasional 'get together' or after [the] Sunday meeting [a] game of baseball (at least when I was active 20 years ago). I think the Society would retain more young people, who seem to be leaving in droves, if more was done to address their unique wants and needs. And why are there no programs tailored specifically for the very young (like Sunday school) rather than forcing them to sit quietly for hours, listening to information over their heads and beyond their comprehension. And God forbid that a parent would allow them to bring a book or toy to occupy their attention. We all know this would be frowned upon."

"LYING TWO-FACED HYPOCRITICAL, CONTRADICTIVE, JUDGMENTAL SERPENTS!"

"Love in the Org is wholly CONDITIONAL which goes against all Biblical teachings, e.g. the prodigal son was not shunned. There is too much focus on counting time rather than quality of ministry or individual effort. Teachings do not allow for scientific proof, specifically where homosexuality and trans-gendered individuals are concerned. The Adventist roots of the religion have been covered up."

"Love all the brothers but realize they are imperfect men."

"LOL. Great job guys. To the "GB" - #&^! you and the horses you rode in on. Twelve wrinkled old white men do NOT represent God on earth."

"Like most religious leaders they are self-deluded and their delusions hurt and kill people."

"Liars who surround themselves in a bubble of lies."

“Let go and let God! God will expose what you are and what you have done to his people very soon. He will not allow you to continue to destroy families by means of subliminal messages of guilt communicated in your private WT lessons. Jesus said he came for the lost sheep of Israel. He came to help those who were sick (which includes me/you and the rest of this world). Those who are as well as the Gov[erning] Body have said in their own hearts that they are well and not in need of the mercy that only our Lord can give. You cannot have the father without the son. Please repent, accept Jesus as the only ‘truth’ and the only ‘door entry’ to the father. Remove yourselves as the sole channel, for God shares his glory with NO MAN! Humble your hearts and he is merciful enough to forgive you! More importantly, read God’s word for yourselves without the WT and allow his spirit to teach you all his sayings (that is a script) for the spirit of God is the ‘truth’ and life to all who humble their hearts and accept him. God bless you!”

“JW’s as a whole are truly sincere, honest and loving, however they are being exploited, abused and deceived so that some of the higher-ups can maintain their lifestyle, power and position. The basic tenets are correct because they are based on the bible: no hellfire, no immortal soul, no trinity, etc., and that is why the average JW stays in the org. The every-day JW has a fear of being disfellowshipped if they even dare to speak up. There is no fear of God in the higher ranks. May Jehovah exercise his loving mercy on all who deserve it, and may he exercise his justice on all the rest.”

“JWs are a cult. I did not agree that Jesus came invisibly in 1914, so the[y] disfellowshipped me, taking away all the family & friends I had convinced to become JWs.”

“JW organization is not God’s authorized organization on earth. There is one, but not JW.”

“Just sadly misguided men... delusional... and no other religion in the world has constantly predicted the end of the world to occur in the twentieth century for 140 straight years... and it did not happen.”

“Just another high-control group preying upon the vulnerable ones in our free society.”

“Just a false token group used to rule the organization with an iron fist. I never liked it that they took the place of Jesus.”

“Just a bunch of men who are themselves victims of a mind set that entraps them. They should though be made to accept responsibility for the dictates they pass in the name of God that cause much pain and suffering, and even death.”

“Jesus said the most important command is LOVE, and it would be a mark of his true followers. My own personal experience is that this love is severely lacking and any love evident is conditional at best.”

“Jesus didn’t have a place to lay his head apparently, yet the GB run a global property empire in his name. That’s progress.”

“I’ve never been a part of a more horrible organization. Not only did you destroy my family, but turned me away from God.”

“It’s disturbing how they wedged themselves between God and Man, replacing Jesus with the majority of witnesses not realizing it.”

“It’s all a really bad fairy tale.”

“It’s a cult, I wish the world would take notice of the destructive behavior of man made, moneymaking, disgusting, criminal cult - especially my mum, but they seem to be above the law, always two steps ahead of us apostates... sorry ‘mentally diseased’ human beings.”

“It’s a big ticket real estate business masquerading as a religion... and “Religion is a Snare and a Racket.” It is also totally uncharitable and has learned nothing from the parable of the Good Samaritan. No longer respect it or financially support it... since [the] Dateline story.”

“It ruined any chance I had of having a normal life with normal friends and hobbies.”

“It is simple. What is the penalty for sin? Well now, you have my answer.”

“It is obvious that this is a cult, however only when you research with an open mind, which is difficult to do whilst still a member as you will be strongly advised not to do that.”

“It is nothing more than a bunch of old men who are disconnected from the real world; they are not guided by any holy spirit, and it is at best one step above a business. I do believe that they are sincere, and can’t see themselves as others view them. They have said and done the same things so long they actually believe what they are doing is right.”

“It is clearly a governing body of men who are NOT inspired by God but make decisions based on who is leading the organization. Their edicts change and contradict past rulings, not because of ‘new light’ but because of the views of the current governing body. The false prophecies over the years have caused great harm to so many over the years. I delayed going to college, having children or doing anything to truly plan for a future because the end of the world was imminent... that was in 1969. Thankfully I began to actually examine the JW teachings and realized how contradictory and illogical they are. Shunning, disfellowshipping are just a few of the non-Christian beliefs followed by the JWs. It is disgraceful how petty and judgmental the membership and elders can be. You are known by your fruits, and JWs are bad fruit.”

“It is a shame that these so-called representatives of God are as hypocritical as the religious Pharisees.”

May Jehovah God have pity upon them more so than they have had for those no longer in the "Truth", for whatever reason."

"It is a sham. They shamelessly quote authorities out of context and falsify/sugarcoat their own history because they know that no rank and file witness has the guts to check about the truthfulness about what they write. They take full advantage of those that trust them the most."

"It is a mind damaging cult. IN ONE WORD..... ARROGANT."

"It is a doomsday religious cult that controls its members with apocalyptic fear. They manipulate members' lives by controlling information, their behavior, emotions and thoughts. All for the sole means of massive profit."

"It has changed over the decades. It's now no different from any other worldly management team, inner struggles and all."

"Is sad when someone knows what is TRUE and remains doing the wrong."

"Intentions may be good and honest, and admit they are imperfect men which is good, but they expect too much of other imperfect men who are held to account rather than those overseeing them who should also be held to account. Also, young and middle age[d] single sisters are totally neglected, especially if they are not pioneers, and even if they are too."

"Incredibly misguided."

"I'm not quite sure if my pity for them, as they will no doubt be judged by God, dissolves the bitterness that has festered in me. This bitterness, I assure, is not natural to my usual being but one lit and fueled by the understanding that they and all of their predecessors will eventually rip me away from my family as has happened countless times before; That along with certainty that they straying people away from God."

"If you are above criticism, consider yourself God's spokesman, and fabricate propaganda to explain dissent, then your rulership is on [a] par with North Korea."

"If there is a God, you will answer for your stubbornness."

"If Jesus Christ examined your organization, would he find that compassion was its dominant force, or rules and regulations? Would he find his name put forth as the Lord and Savior, the only source of truth and salvation, or would he find himself put on equal par with an organization? I believe many of you are sincere, but I also wonder if you have the humility to step back and recognize just how serious your position and responsibilities are. To ponder the errors made, admit them openly to your brothers and friends, and consider the Bible with a more open

mind. You are obviously independent in thought yourselves, as your thoughts end up in the literature, whether you admit it or not. There is a lot more good you can do if you are willing. Millions are hanging on your every word; don't they deserve that much from you?"

"If 'old light' was so important back then that people got disfellowshipped and shunned, why is it not important any longer?? Because "old light" turn[ed] out to be false?"

"Idiots. Liars. Manipulators. Greedy."

"I wish them the worst possible..."

"I wish the GB of Jehovah's Witnesses would just give an honest and sincere apology to all of its members, especially those who believe and worship THEM with all their mind, heart, body and soul for all the horrible and wrong things they have done and continue to do and preach. They truly make me sick inside, as now because of them, I am stuck inside because I cannot bear the thought of losing all my family and friends, for all of them are witnesses. You have taken everything from me, and you don't care. You take our money, our independence, our reason, our free will and our life and do whatever you want with it. You don't care about us. All you care about is control. Complete control. And that is just sick. You have become the very thing you once told us to stay away from. You GB may have taken everything from me, but you will never take my mind. Never again will I be a slave to your mind control. You may try to deny it, but we your faithful members are beginning to notice that there is something very wrong with this religion, and it all goes back to you. You may try to block the real truth from shining in but you will fail. I know that I will not be one of Jehovah's Witnesses forever. That you can count on. I know that one day the whole truth will be exposed to everyone and I KNOW that one day I'll be free!"

"I want 40 years of my life back."

"I think those men though sincere, are arrogant and presumptuous."

"I think they've put themselves in Jesus' place. They consider themselves the mediator instead of Jesus."

"I think they need to go back to basics and stop putting themselves in such exalted positions. They need to allow the followers of JWs more freedom to live life as they like, in ways that bring greater happiness and potential. College, careers, recreation, family time, holidays, association. People can't continue feeling like they are on an island before depression and low self worth start taking control. JWs are robbed of anything that can bring them happiness due to the belief that all happiness is in the future, under different circumstances, at the expense of billions of others. Why can't JWs feel love toward their fellow man? I'm not talking the 'love' that is supposedly shown by preaching, but by being part of a community. And STOP ramming 'the end of the

system of things' down the throats of the brothers and sisters!! Have you seen someone die in disappointment after they have sacrificed every possible advantage because the 'end is just around the corner'? I have. And there are thousands more every day who were promised they would never see death. Stop the promises. Admit you haven't a clue. And give up on trying to interpret the term 'generation'. People are growing old, with broken down bodies thanks to decades of janitorial. They have no retirement. They have no savings. If you Governing Body members are aware of this, stop the destruction! Or you will be accountable."

"I think they make a lot of serious erroneous predictions, and each time, instead of admitting it, they publish new teachings to cover it up."

"I think they are trapped in teachings that they don't even believe in and refuse to let go [of] their power and mind control over the JW members."

"I think they are sincere believing men, not able to see the mistakes of their precursors."

"I think they are simply men. Men who probably for the most part have or had good motives initially, but like Bernie Madoff and others like him, without having to answer to anyone and given their amount of power, they have become corrupt and completely disconnected and disinterested [towards] the true needs of the average person in the org."

"I think they are abusive, power-hungry, controlling and cruel."

"I think they are a group of old men who, knowingly or not, have led to the misery and deaths of thousands of people. Whether they realize it or not, they are blood-guilty and should resign and apologize for continuing these malevolent policies."

"I think the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses is not the class of Slave in Mat. 24:45,46. Make it free for all witnesses to preach and submit field reports. Be honest and repent before true God. Don't publish the book of false teaching - non Biblical - any more."

"I think that they in [the] first place are acting to keep [a] business going. Their prime goal is to prevent the organization from collapsing."

"I think that they are a self-righteous and controlling group that has not shown true Christ-like qualities."

"I think that the governing body of the wts are nothing more than liars who whether knowingly or not are misleading people to their deaths."

"I think it's [a] fallacy that their writings/doctrines are god inspired - if so, they wouldn't make mistakes/changes in what they write, drastically affecting so many lives."

"I think it is wrong to take away from people their joy in celebrating. I think this faith is too judgmental, and I would have never been baptized after studying

because complying with such idiotic rules would have never worked for me!"

"I think it is wrong for a small group of men to have such power over the lives of millions of Witnesses. Over the years they have become just like the Pharisees, making up rules and oppressing the innocent masses."

"I think it is a cult. Hope they can remove the blinders. I was disfellowshipped because I didn't see Jesus come INVISIBLY in 1914."

"I personally think that it is all in their hands. They will keep more members if they strive their best not to go beyond what is written."

"I now believe the GB is very cult-like, in that it has gone beyond the Scriptures many times, has adopted it's own 'language of truth', not found in the Bible, and has forced its human understandings on it's followers. Since many of the GB's past understandings have been abandoned as 'old light', it only stands to reason that some current beliefs will be abandoned in the future, but the GB insists that all of its teaching must be believed by everyone, using 'Christian Unity' as the rationale. Being united in the truth is fine, but being united in wrong beliefs just for the sake of being united, is wrong. By that thinking we could say the Catholic Church is right for believing the Trinity since virtually all Catholics are united in believing it. Of course the WTS would never allow such leniency to any religious group other than itself. Regarding the 'Other beliefs not mentioned above', here are a couple that I disagree with. That lying in the name of the Theocratic War Strategy is ok. It isn't ok. It is offensive. It's sinful. Not long before I stopped attending meetings at the KH I heard an elder from the platform say, "the Society's position on blood has never changed." Since the Society's position on blood has changed dozens of times, this remark was an outright lie, probably an extension of the War Strategy. (The War Strategy says it is ok to mislead opposers, those that would do us harm, because they have no right to know the truth. However, a belief like that is ripe for abuse, and will lead to lying to the followers at some point. The Elder who made the above remark about blood was speaking to a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses.) Another point of disagreement is to lie about past history. The Society has often spoken negatively of other groups for their revisionist history, but the WTS probably leads the market in whitewashing its past, which is another strong trait of a cult."

"I love the brothers, but I do not think they should be obeyed as if they were God's sole representatives. I think their policies are arbitrary and they are not open to discussion. I think they should listen with an open mind to what those in the congregation say and consider any questions as real and not immediately brand them as 'apostates' simply for disagreeing with them. I love JWs and if the GB had been more open

minded about the way I see the Bible, I might still be there.”

“I like the idea of a worldwide brotherhood, but hate the position the brothers take. That position is only for Jesus Christ, who is the head of the congregation. If they would accept that and focus more on the brotherhood and love, then certain 'rules' such as written in the elder's book would be unnecessary and left to the witnesses' own consciences.”

“I knew them all in the 80s, and they were in love with themselves and their power.”

I have only been disassociated for four years, and in those years [I] have come to realize that the governing body is at the helm of one of the most insidious and devious organizations on the planet. As I researched the teachings, it dawned on me just how much had changed since Jesus supposedly chose them in 1914 to be his 'special people' and how many lies have been told since to cover up this history. I am glad I left despite the hurtful shunning I've been subjected to. I firmly believe that the governing body should be made to face criminal charges for their teachings, which have protected pedophiles and seen many thousands die refusing blood transfusions. They are a despicable organization.”

“There is so much to say to them, but I don't want to waste any more of my time.”

“These men are either victims of their own doing or just plain evil individuals having a sick thirst of power and control.”

“These men are guilty of the same things that most any multinational corporation could be charged with. Pride, arrogance, protecting their position and corporation at the cost of innocent lives. They do not represent God!”

“These people are not of God. They are cruel, and self serving. I do not believe that God wants us to work for our salvation. My mercy comes from Jesus' blood from the cross. I am so ashamed that I followed this cult and ruined my two sons' young lives. They didn't have a normal childhood filled with wonder and love. Instead everything everyone else was doing they could never do. We, following the GB made them feel like outsiders, like something was wrong with them. I hate what this organization did to me and my family. God will take care of it though. I leave you in the 'true' God's hands.”

“They act as typical humans when they get power. Kings of Israel, Pharisees, priests, Governing Body; all cut from [the] same cloth. Helps prove humans [are] unable to govern others.”

“They are [as] reprehensible as the Scribes & Pharisees. They deserve the same fate.”

“They are a bunch of Good ole boys that enjoy dominating and controlling people. They are truly in it for the sensual pleasure of being the elite; they don't

even want any money so passionate are these men about their power.”

“They are a bunch of liars.”

“They are a business unit.”

“They are a corporation, no more and no less. They are interested in keeping power and maintaining status, not with helping people find spiritual truth or freedom.”

“They are a cult that uses brainwashing and mind control to take advantage of weak and vulnerable people.”

“They are a destructive, manipulative cult.”

“THEY ARE A GROUP OF OLD CONTROLLING MEN.”

“They are a total sham, they have NO contact with any Higher power whatsoever.”

“They are an ego-based group of people who do not follow the New Testament. Jesus did away with the Law and they bring back the Laws of the Old Testament.”

“They are apostates!”

“They are bullies. They use extortion to keep people in bondage. So many would like to leave or question, but the GB has made the stakes so high, many are either silent or lose everything. I hate everything about them.”

“They are Captives of a Concept, the concept being the false one that the organization they lead was selected by Christ based on their teachings during 1918-1919 and that the decisions they make are representative of Christ's decisions as King.”

“They are charlatans and set themselves up as idols. They are the true apostates!”

“They are controlling cult leaders. They show no love and beat the flock.”

“They are deceptive and bloodguilty.”

“They are despicably dangerous, and the epitome of evil, they are an insidious group of men who have as much blood on their hands as the Third Reich.”

“They are despots/power mongers --- not Christ like but evil pharisees.”

“They are false prophets!”

“They are for the furtherance of the organization, not for the doing of Jehovah's will, which is obeying Christ Jesus, the Way, Truth, Life.”

“They are frauds, probably not really 'anointed', and are just as clueless about Bible prophecy and history as most American Protestant Evangelicals.”

“They are greedy liars. They will have their time with God. They have caused death for those who follow the 'no blood' stance. They have caused tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of families to fall apart. When I was a witness we followed

whatever the GB had to say. It was a real privilege to hear them speak. We looked up to them as one looks up to the Pope. There is no difference between the two. They are led by evil. They breed hate. I'm so glad I'm free!"

"They are holding my daughters hostage. They are blackmailing me with their teachings that I am mentally diseased and that my girls should stay away from me because I no longer believe in the crap they teach. I want my girls back. I have written to the United Nations Human Rights Council, the American Civil Liberties Union and to lawyers trying to find a way to get that stinking cult run by those old crows to release my girls to me. What more do I have to do? They are so stupid. If they didn't make their followers shun those who no longer believe, there wouldn't be such hatred toward them! They are [a] stupid, crooked, old man. I hate them."

"They are hypocritical frauds that impose lots of unscriptural rules on well-intentioned people. What they do and have done is fraudulent and should be a crime punishable by secular law."

"They are imposters: false Christs and false prophets. They are the 'hired man' who abandons the sheep to the wolves. They are nothing more than the leaders of the 'scribes and pharisees' who seat THEMSELVES in the 'seat of Moses'... those who 'shut up the kingdom of the heavens before men... while they themselves are not going in.' They 'traverse sea and dry land to make ONE proselyte, and when they do, they make such one even MORE a candidate for Gehenna than themselves."

"They are instrumental in destroying their members' freedom of speech by implementing sanctions on anybody who asks questions. The GB should be arrested for crimes against humanity."

"They are isolated and not in touch with the world that I live in."

"They are just a bunch of mostly sincere but totally misled old men."

"They are just an arrogant bunch who have auto defined themselves as sole channel with God, stealing the role they assigned themselves to the Faithful and Discreet Slave. Shame!"

"They are just like the Pharisees with all the manmade rules and regulations.. Conditional love only. Do as I say, not as I do type of leadership. What they measure out will return to them."

"They are just men, and as far as I'm concerned prove man's inhumanity to man."

"They are just men, like the rest of mankind. Nothing special about them. They claim to be God's Channel, but that can't be true based on the changed teaching and demanding devotion to them. How do we know they are the ONLY way?"

"They are just men, they have no special knowledge or relationship with God."

"They are just old men with no link through holy spirit to God, Jesus, or any heavenly entity."

"They are just the leaders of another manmade cult and religious org. that will go by [the] way of the dinosaurs when humans finally figure out [that] they don't need religion. Unfortunately, this will not happen in our lifetime."

"They are liars and hypocrites. They use brainwashing and mind control to command."

"They are liars."

"They are lying to themselves and everyone else."

"They are making the same mistakes as other religious leaders throughout history by going beyond the things written and lording it over the flock of God, putting heavy burdens upon them. By making rules and traditions on things which should be conscience matters they severely limit the bro/sis from progressing from babes to mature Christians. Instead, the brothers are forever dependant on the governing body to make choices for them. They blur the lines between loyalty to Jehovah and loyalty to them. For most JW's who are of the "other sheep" the governing body in a way takes the place of Christ and becomes mediator. I think their wrong teaching on the New Covenant is the worst thing."

"They are men and men only, who have SELF-APPOINTED themselves as God's representatives."

"They are Men, they are arrogant, [and] they think their word is like Gods Word."

"They are mentally compromised by a deleterious mind virus which inhibits their cognitive abilities. In other words, they are mentally and morally blind and are causing great harm to millions of people."

"They are mere front men and puppets for a darker group behind the scenes that uses human emotions for nefarious purposes, not the least of which is making money. They are directly tied in with the 'New World Order' and that's the reason for the NGO scandal."

"They are mostly deceptive, there may be a few who are not aware of the falsehoods but it's doubtful at that level."

"They are no better than any other religion. Its all about money and power. Mostly, POWER."

"They are not a religion, just a money-making real estate company. The charity status in the UK should be reviewed, as they do no charitable works for anybody. My dad got hooked by these assholes in 1969, and we were all brought up in the truth. I waisted 44 years of my life on a lie. I wan't payback. My JW dad has cut me off and not contacted me or my family in over 12 months because of the rules [that] JW's have to follow. Morons."

"They are not spirit directed. They are not from god."

"They are not spirit guided."

"They are not the 'faithful and discreet slave.' I don't think anyone has that position. They misuse disfellowshipping. They use it as a weapon to keep their members in line. There is freedom of speech in this country and there is a law against hate speech. They are wrong to require two witnesses for child molestation. That is too stupid to contemplate. They act like the Mafia, you cannot just leave, they have to get rid of you if you disagree with anything they say. They do not tell the truth and then blame it on the flock when what they say does not happen, i.e. the end in 1975. They will have a lot to answer for to Jehovah and Jesus for mistreating the flock."

"They are not who they claim to be, and are increasingly supplanting Jesus Christ, therefore in biblical terms they are at least one of the 'many anti-Christ's' John warned of at 1 Jn.2:18."

"They are ONLY MEN. Too much attention & praise is given to the FDS & GB. They are not humble enough to admit their mistakes (eg 1975) which causes more problems than if they meekly accepted their role in fanning the expectations of the brothers & sisters throughout the WT organization's history of failed predictions. They are proud & stiff-necked."

"They are opportunistic, self-serving, greedy, secretive, and destructive. They employ cult tactics of mind-control and display an appalling lack of use of logic, which the masses are required to accept as logical. I realized as a teenager that it was the height of hubris and illogic to rewrite the bible to fit their teachings, rewrite history to fit their teachings, ascribe great importance to trivialities in order to better utilize cult-tactics of groupthink and groupspeak, while trivializing and minimizing other things that are incredibly important (i.e. social issues of JW children in school, the blood on the Society's hands re: blood transfusions and the "changing light," their sheltering of abusers of children and women, etc...)"

"They are Satanic to the core. The spite and misery they cause is beyond belief."

"They are scum of the earth!"

"They are selfish toads, simpletons."

"They are taking advantage of their position!!"

"They are the 'mentally diseased' spoken of in 1 Tim 6:4. They aptly fulfill the words at Matthew chapter 23. I wish there was an eternal hellfire for them and all who served as GB. Past Board of Directors."

"They are the directors of a corporation disguised as a religion, no different from all the other avaricious power-brokers of the world."

"They are the new Pharisees."

"They are the work of Satan."

"They are total and complete frauds. They should be imprisoned immediately for gross negligence of the people who have dedicated their lives to them."

"They are totally delusional in their 'anointed' status, but are also culpable for contributing to dishonesty to maintain control/funds."

"They are unloving, uncharitable, unforgiving and judgmental of everyone including family."

"They are unyielding dictators who are out of touch with the rank and file."

"They are using a shroud of 'holiness' to excuse their abuse of power over the members of the organization. They sacrifice real truth and integrity for the sake of organizational unity."

"They claim the truth is theirs because of the prophecies they have explained. The one that "this generation will not pass away". It is in reference to the generation of 1914. I was inducted into the religion in 1983. During the 80's and early 90's they would change the meaning behind this prophecy. First they said those born that had an understanding of the events would not pass away, so it would mean those around 12 or older. Once it became apparent that generation was dying off they changed it to those born before or during 1914. Now they don't reference 1914 for the generation that will pass away since that generation has already died. False prophecy comes from false prophets."

"They claim they are the mediator between God and humanity. The bible says that Jesus is the mediator (1 Timothy 2:5). They contradict the bible."

"They completely make decisions for you. You are not allowed to have views that go against the society."

"They dangerously control their members."

"They don't live in the real world. They are not Christ-like."

"They have all the characteristics of a cult as defined by psychologists and sociologists."

"They have blood on their hands!"

"They have destroyed so many lives and are responsible for the deaths of untold thousands of their brainwashed followers. If there is a god, I can only hope that someday they will be held accountable. The Governing Body proves that evil exists."

"They have fostered an environment where policy, procedure and position are everything. Unconditional love, concern, mercy are nothing."

"They have just inherited J.F.Rutherford's cloak, they just have to follow the game."

"They have no idea what REAL life is, why should they think they are able to decide about what is right or wrong for normal people?"

"They have usurped Jesus' position as the mediator between God and mankind and claim to speak on God's behalf when they are "false prophets" as defined by the Bible. They continuously disregard Biblical permission for Christians to think independently and critically, which displays arrogance and insecurity, as they seem to be aware that their doctrines are untenable, and are not biblically sanctioned."

"They know the truth, they are just too afraid to admit it."

"They make me sick at heart. Living a good life whilst their members preach from door to door to support their lavish lifestyle."

"They refer to themselves in the study articles way too much, instead of Jesus Christ."

"You have innocent blood on your hands."

"You have lied so many times in the past and have ruined so many lives that nothing you can and will do in the future can change my feelings towards you."

"You men have inserted yourselves into the private lives of families regarding things that are none of your business, i.e. bedroom laws, medical decisions, what is appropriate to wear and watch, even going so far as to tell us how we should feel. You want us to put absolute faith in your every pronouncement, yet you do not have any faith in our conscience. You have become like the Pharisees whom you condemn."

You guys used me, treated me like crap and did your best to destroy my childhood. It worked and I hate you for it, so if another JW comes door knocking onto my property, I will report it to the authorities as trespassing!"

"You can't even be honest with your "brothers" of all the mistakes, false predictions and assertions in the past but instead will blame the holy spirit for increasing the light. You are false prophets..."

"You are not holier than though! All men are created equal; some just feel that they are better than others!"

"You are not directed by a divine force. You are fallible men; victims of victims."

"You are a bunch of lying money grubbing assholes that completely screwed up my family."

"World distributors of bovine excrement."

"Wolves in sheep's clothing!"

"Why can't they ever apologize for their errors? Why do they stand by their decisions when they know they are wrong? Why don't they EVER take ANY responsibility for the consequences of their teachings/rules/mandates?"

"Why are they gods?"

"Who is the other paraclete in John 14 vs 26 chap 15 chap 16 vs 7 9-12? Why do go along with the rest of

Christendom? False dates, 1925, 1975 and more. Honor your parents [then] shun them. This is complete insanity. You've been hiding the scriptures, Russell, Rutherford, you and I have an accounting on the day [of] judgment, and there [are a] whole lot witnesses waking up to the facts about the history of this organization. But the reference bible NWT led me to the original meanings of the bible's original languages and the Koran, thanks be to [the] one and only God with the most beautiful names and attributes."

"Who are they? The Rank and file has no idea. It has just become a huge machine that just keeps moving."

"What you the GB are doing to people's lives and families is evil. Using guilt, fear and emotional blackmail to mind control and manipulate and control good people and even destroy lives just for the sake of a money grabbing business disguised as 'the truth' is pure evil."

"Well, I think nobody on earth can say of himself 'I AM THE ONE, THE LINK BETWEEN YOU AND GOD, since we are all sinners, born in sin. And this is EXACTLY what they say the Popes did and do.. and recently I feel that preaching for them is nothing but a mere book sale..."

"We are to put our trust in God, not man. I put my trust in Jesus Christ. Jesus said to them get away from me, I never knew you. That's you and all of those like you that don't recognize Jesus as OUR LORD AND SAVIOR AMEN. You're blood guilty for all those that have died because of your ignorance. Because of your pride. Because of your deceit. I pray for all the good people under your control that soon their bondage will be broken from you. I pray they may find the true grace of god through his death on the cross that all those who believe may be saved because your works are dead..."

"Wake up."

"Very Misguided, cult leaders."

"Very good in Publishing and Real Estate businesses, very clever in arguing court cases with their lawyers, very poor in their theological arguments, very bad in their ethics."

"Truly disappointed. I wish no harm towards them. But I wish to see an end to their disillusionment as well as their high control tactics stemming from their disillusionment."

"Towards the Governing Body? How about my true feelings about worshipping a Bronze-Age Middle-Eastern male volcano 'god'? If I hadn't been bullied into the religion as a child, I would NEVER have joined of my own free will!!!!!"

"The way you protect pedophiles. My kids were abused. What would Jesus say about your actions?"

"Through their legalist dogmatic attitude they are now a hard business organization without Christian

love. They have sought glory among men and forgotten their heavenly father completely.”

“This religious sect is a front organization for international bankers.”

“This religion is a man-made cult that lies and deceives its members by falsifying its past history, and needs to be exposed. I was a ministerial servant.”

“This organization is a dangerous cult that destroys families.”

“This organization has been for awhile now self-perpetual. We all live in fear of losing association with those who are dear to us, and that is not what an organization should be built upon, fear.”

“This is a religion/cult, something Jesus was speaking against – Pharisees.”

“This CULT is full of abuse and brainwashing. God will judge you all for the way you have treated your members!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

“They've inherited a boatload of problems that the previous GB made. But, they insist on keeping and patching instead of throwing out the bad ideas. They may be sincere, but not always honest.”

“They're nothing more than an unremarkable group of self-affirming old men operating in a cloistered environment and unable to relate to the realities of life in the real world.”

“They're just men, stupid stupid men- like leaders of all religions. Hopefully, religion will die out before it kills mankind, and will be supplanted by reason.”

“They're frauds, the lot of them.”

“They're failing every member of the organization, baptized or not, and they're failing themselves. Lives are seriously at stake, and they're toying with them.”

“They were sincere men just trying to do their best. But as Jehovah had to discipline ancient Israel - and her kings - for 'going beyond the things written', so today he will discipline the Governing Body. I am very sad to see how these once sincere men have become so filled with their own importance that they 'strain out the gnat but gulp down the camel'. (Matt 23:24)”

“They take the approach of 'They can't be God's chosen channel, look how they mislead people, but we can mislead people, we're God's chosen channel.’”

“They should step down over the crime charges and court case in Australia regarding child protection.”

“They should be ashamed of themselves for destroying the lives of so many people.”

“They seemed genuine at first, but over the years I have come to realize that their love is conditional and they are narrow minded about every aspect of life.”

“They say they are an organization that follows Jesus and recognizes his sacrifice, but their actions betray them as stuck in mosaic teachings and practices, and [they] very strongly endorse the methods and thought processes of the Pharisees. They have a heavy Pharisical method of ruling and punishment. In evidence in the scriptures quoted in the publication in regards to the two-person witness rule. These are from the perspective of the Pharisees trying to test and anger Jesus.”

“They ruined the first twenty years of my life!! I'm just glad I never was duped into getting baptized.”

“They ruin lives. They lie. They cover-up scandals. They have replaced JESUS as the mediator between people and God. They do not have the truth.”

“They need to wake up and realize that their style of religion that requires complete trust in the leadership is quickly fading.”

“They need to wake up.”

“They need to show some love to the lost sheep. They need to work on that.”

“They need to show more humility and stop making up unscriptural rules.”

“They need to ask God for his Holy Spirit instead of relying on their own interpretations! And stop their hateful lying to the people who Christ gave his life for. They act as though God's people belong to them; Well they don't! And they will be accountable to Christ for shutting the heavenly door against men and women. Christ said, 'I am the door by which a man will be saved'. *book of John* And I might add: The Jehovah's Organization is NOT the TRUTH: only Christ can claim to be 'the truth'. See John 14:6.”

Conclusion

For reasons already expressed in this report, the results of the 2011 Survey cannot be viewed as being wholly indicative of the levels of unrest among Jehovah's Witnesses. However, what the Survey does plainly show is that unrest *does exist*, even among active members. Furthermore, the 2011 Survey has shown that because of the unscriptural and highly detrimental practice of shunning, untold numbers of Jehovah's Witnesses are remaining inside the religion *purely* through fear of being separated from their loved ones as a result of shunning. This means that, when one of Jehovah's Witnesses knocks on someone's door, they may be calling purely under compulsion and duress rather than any genuine desire to preach God's word.

It is difficult to believe that the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses feels comfortable with potentially thousands of its members worshipping alongside them under a pretense. However, evidently they would rather endure this uncomfortable scenario than surrender any of their judicial power, which shunning in its current form affords them. By insisting that shunning should include family members, they know they wield the ultimate deterrent against any who contemplate leaving and taking the rest of their family with them. This blatant emotional blackmail is wholly despicable, and it is almost inconceivable that it should continue to break up families in this modern age of increasing tolerance among people of differing religious persuasions.

I don't regret for one moment launching this Survey, and I can't imagine I ever will. If the Survey achieves one goal, it will be to raise awareness of the desperate plight of the many Jehovah's Witnesses like me who are prisoners of a cult. I can only hope that media organizations and governmental authorities will learn about this Survey and the lessons gleaned from it, and exert pressure on the Governing Body to reluctantly implement reform. If I could witness such a development in my own lifetime, then I would die a happy man.

The 2012 Survey was launched on 28th January 2012, and will run until the end of the same year. It is hoped that as many as possible will seize the opportunity to register their votes on this new and expanded survey, which is hosted on www.jwsurvey.org. Hopefully together we can send out an even more overwhelming message in this latest survey.

If you are reading this report as a devout member of Jehovah's Witnesses, and perhaps find the general tone of dissent against the Governing Body distasteful, then I can fully sympathize with why you would feel this way. However, I would strongly urge you to visit www.jwfacts.com and take some time to familiarize yourself with the realities behind many of the topics discussed in this report. You will find many of the details shocking, but all information presented on that website can be proven and verified. Besides, surely if the *real* truth is different to how you perceive it to be, it would be better to know anyway rather than continue your life under false assumptions? No matter how uncomfortable reality may prove to be, you are not alone in this struggle, and there are many others in your situation at various stages of progress.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have taken an interest in the Survey, both Jehovah's Witnesses *and* those outside the faith who are concerned for their welfare. It is my firm belief that by combining our efforts, we can make a difference.

