

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH WATCHTOWER FOLLOWERS

--A. Ralph Johnson

WATCH TOWER HISTORY

Charles Taze Russell born February 16, 1852 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania was the founder of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, the controlling organization behind the “Jehovah’s Witnesses.” His father owned a men’s clothing store that financed his beginning. He had no formal training as a minister. Around 1870 he became involved with the Second Adventists. This was a splinter group that resulted from the movement started by William Miller, a Baptist minister, also with no formal training, who thought he had discovered scriptural evidence that Christ would return March, 1843. When that failed, the date was changed to March, 1844. When that also failed, Mr. Miller confessed that he was mistaken and left the movement. He died in 1849.

Russell himself indicated he was indebted to Miller. He said that the “Miller movement” was the beginning of the *right* understanding of Daniel’s visions¹ and that the Lord was in it.

After Miller’s failures, many of those who followed him continued to set other dates. The largest group of these became the Seventh-Day Adventists. They attempted to solve the problem of “The Great Disappointment” as a “mistake,” not in the date but in the place to which Christ was to come. Instead of earth, they decided he went to cleanse his sanctuary in heaven. Ellen G. White, who ultimately gained control, did not set a date but did claim Christ would come within a few months, and later that it would be in the lifetime of some of them.

The Second Adventists ultimately set 1874 as the date for Christ’s return. When He did not appear, Nelson H. Barbour, in his paper, *The Herald of the Morning*, proposed the solution that Jesus had come invisibly.² Russell accepted that solution and they did some publishing together for a while, but they soon had a falling out. Russell continued to develop his own system, which over several years he published in six volumes called “*Studies In The Scriptures*” or “*Millennial Dawn*.”

Russell taught that Christ came invisibly in 1874³ and from then to 1914 He was gathering his people. According to this scheme, 1914 was to be the end of the “Times of the Gentiles,” with the last member being glorified.⁴ By then, all nations and Christendom were to be destroyed.⁵ When it did not happen,⁶ he reset the date to 1915.⁷ Again, his prediction failed. He died in 1916 on Halloween on a train.

¹ *Studies In The Scriptures*, Vol. 3, (*Thy Kingdom Come* -1910), p.86

² *Pastor Russell’s Autobiography*, p.14-16, printed in Vol. 1 of *Studies In The Scriptures*, from 1923 to 1927, found also in “*What Pastor Russell said*, 1985, vol. 7, p.3, 4.

³ *Studies In The Scriptures*, Vol. 3, (*Thy Kingdom Come*, 1908), p.306

⁴ *Studies In The Scriptures*, Vol. 3, (*Thy Kingdom Come*, 1908), p.306

⁵ *Studies In The Scriptures*, Vol. 2, (*The Time is at Hand*, 1910), p.77; p.101 (changed to 1915 after 1912 edition).

⁶ *Light*, book 1, 1930, p.194

⁷ *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 2 (*The Time is at Hand*, editions after 1912) p. 101

After Russell died, there was a power struggle and “Judge” Rutherford, the legal counsel for the organization, succeeded in taking control. This resulted in a split. One group became known as International Bible Students. Rutherford’s group eventually took the name “Jehovah’s Witnesses” in 1931.

After Russell’s death a seventh volume, called “*The Finished Mystery*,” was compiled from Russell’s writings. The date for God to “destroy the churches wholesale and the church members by the millions” was reset to 1918.⁸ This also failed.

In 1920 Rutherford wrote a booklet, “The World Has Ended, Millions Now Living Will Never Die,” in which he set 1925 as the date for the resurrection of the faithful men of old mentioned in Hebrews, chapter 11.⁹ It failed¹⁰ and in 1929 he built a mansion called, Beth-Sarim (House of the Princes”), in San Diego, California,¹¹ “...to provide tangible proof that there are those on earth today who fully believe...that the faithful men of old will soon be resurrected by the Lord, be back on earth, and take charge of the visible affairs of earth. The title to Beth-Sarim is vested in the WATCH TOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY in trust, to be used by the president of the Society and his assistants for the present, and thereafter to be for ever at the disposal of the aforementioned princes on the earth.” In spite of this, it was eventually sold.

From then on they shied away from setting specific dates. However, they continued to say that the end would only be within a “few months.”¹² and therefore people should not marry have children.

One final specific date set was 1975, over which they whipped up excitement that the Millennium was about to begin.¹³ When that failed, many became disillusioned with reliability of their claims. Although they were directly responsible for pumping up the expectations of their followers, they blamed the brothers as jumping to unwarranted conclusions. However, the problem they never answered was how the millennium could begin without Armageddon and their long promised paradise of a thousand years.

They also had the problem of their oft-repeated claims that the New World must begin within the lives of the generation of 1914. So, they have come full circle. Just as they were forced to change the date of Christ’s coming to 1914 because the generation limitations had passed, now for the same reason they have had to revise their interpretation concerning the meaning of “this generation” to allow more time.

⁸ *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 7 (*The Finished Mystery*, 1917) p. 485

⁹ *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, 1920, (booklet) pp.88, 89, 90.

¹⁰ *Yearbook* 1980, p62

¹¹ *Salvation*, 1939, pp. 311, 312). See also, *Watch Tower*, Sept. 1, 1922, p.263. Also, *Vindication* Vol. I, 1931, p.146.

¹² *Children*, 1941, pp.312, 313. Also, *The Watchtower*, 1938, Vol. LIX, #21, p.323.

¹³ *The Approaching Peace of a Thousand Years*, 1969, pp. 26-27

WATCHTOWER TEACHINGS

1. No one can understand the Bible except through their organization.¹⁴
2. Their organizational nucleus of “spirit-begotten, anointed ones,” like Ezekiel, is a modern-day “prophet” “under angelic direction and support,”¹⁵ guided in the “minutest details, even to the choosing of the year text.”¹⁶
3. Christ became invisibly present (“parousia”) in 1914¹⁷ (changed from, 1874¹⁸). In 1918 began to reign (changed from, 1878¹⁹).
4. At the Battle of Armageddon, to take place during the generation in which Jesus became present, God will destroy all of the nations, churches and organizations other than theirs and set up a perfect world order. (Originally by 1914,²⁰ later changed to 1915,²¹ later changed to 1918,²² and still later changed to 1925²³).
5. Jehovah God’s people are divided into two classes, the “heavenly class” of 144,000 spirit anointed ones (also known as the “little flock.”), and the “earthly class” (also known as “the great crowd” of “other sheep”). Only the 144,000 go to heaven to live in “spirit bodies.” All others will live on earth to be ruled over by the “heavenly class” (them).
6. After Jesus became present, in 1918, members of the 144,000 “Heavenly Class” who had died were raised, and those who die after 1918 (previously 1878) are instantly raised in “spiritual bodies.”
7. Jesus is only mediator to the “heavenly class,” not those who will live on earth.²⁴ Only the heavenly class is in God’s new covenant. However, by association with the “heavenly class” the “earthly class” may come under some of the benefits.
8. No “independent thinking” is permitted.²⁵ Only what the Watchtower publishes is allowed taught.
9. Anything published by former Witnesses is “apostate” and is prohibited from being read or listened to.
10. Man does not have a soul that continues to exist after the body dies. Death is total absence of being. Jesus did not go to paradise for three days. He ceased to exist while in the grave.

¹⁴ *Watch Tower*, Sept. 15, 1910, p.298-299; Oct 1, 1967, p.587; Dec. 1, 1990, p. 19

¹⁵ *Watch Tower*, April 1, 1972, p. 197-200 “*They Shall know that a Prophet was among them*”

¹⁶ 1941 *Yearbook*, Daily Texts and Comments, Sept. 19.

¹⁷ *This Means Everlasting Life*, 1950, p.221

¹⁸ *Studies In The Scriptures*, Vol. 3, 1908, “*Thy Kingdom Come*” p.306 –Pastor Russell

¹⁹ *Studies In The Scriptures*, Vol. 3, 1908, “*Thy Kingdom Come*” p.306 –Pastor Russell

²⁰ *Studies In The Scriptures*, Vol. 2, 1910, “*The Time is at Hand*”, p.77, 101

See also, *LIGHT*, Book 1, p.194; Compare the book, *Vindication*, 1931, p.146

²¹ *Studies In The Scriptures*, Vol. 2, 1913, “*The Time is at Hand*”, p.101

²² *Studies In The Scriptures*, Vol. 7, 1917, “*The Finished Mystery*”, p.485. Compare the book, *Vindication*, 1931, p.146

²³ *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, 1920, p.88-90;

The Watch Tower, September 1, 1922, p.262;

Compare 1980 *Yearbook*, p.62 and the book, *Vindication*, 1931, p.146

²⁴ *Watchtower*, 4/1/1979, p. 31, “Questions from Readers.”

²⁵ *Watchtower*, 1/15/1983, pp.22, 27

11. “Resurrection” means to be created again by God from His memory of a person’s “life pattern.” Jesus was re-created from God’s memory.
12. The body of Jesus was not raised. It was dissolved into gasses. He received a non-material “spiritual body” when raised. When he appeared to his disciples, he created bodies to convince them he had been raised. (They used to teach that the body of Jesus may have been preserved to be exhibited during the Millennium)²⁶
13. The willfully wicked will not be raised.
14. Hell is “a place of rest in hope.”²⁷ The story Jesus told about the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) is a mythical story, intended as figurative representation of something different.
15. There is no place of eternal torment. References to such only intend to teach that the wicked are instantly consumed into everlasting non-existence.
16. Christ died to give us another chance for a thousand years to show we can become perfect humans on earth.
17. The earth will not be burned up in fire.²⁸ It will be cleansed of all evil and become a paradise in which to live forever.
18. The “Trinity” is a myth borrowed from paganism.
19. The Holy Spirit is the “active force” of God, not a person.
20. Christ is not God almighty but only the archangel, Michael, created in the beginning, through whom Jehovah God created all (other) things.
21. Whole blood transfusions are prohibited, even if failure to do so results in death. Not even a person’s own blood can be saved and returned to the body once it has been set aside. However, some blood parts are permissible.
22. Saluting the flag is idolatry.
23. Serving in the military is prohibited, except for “alternative service.”
24. Children in school must not participate in organized sports, clubs or other organizations.
25. Celebrating birthdays is prohibited, but celebrating one’s marriage anniversary is OK.
26. Celebrating all holidays is prohibited.
27. People who take issue with Watchtower teachings are disfellowshipped in a private, back-room, three-man “Judicial Committee” meeting. Anyone the Committee decides to disfellowship is totally shunned until the Elders are satisfied that they have demonstrated they have shown sufficient submission. This may take a year or more.

UNDERSTANDING WATCHTOWER THINKING

Reduced to its simplest expression, the Watchtower system can be summed up in the word, “dependent.” Everything is focused on making their followers totally dependent on the central organization.

They prohibit “independent thinking.”²⁹ From the very beginning the student is taught to rely totally on their books and publications. They have “book studies” rather than Bible studies.

²⁶ *Harp of God*, 1927, p.169-170. Compare *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 2, p.129 and, *Things In Which It is Impossible to Lie*, p.354.

²⁷ *Let God Be True* (Green book), p.88, (Title of chapter VIII)

²⁸ *This Means Everlasting Life*, 1950, p.260-263.

They are told they cannot understand the Bible except through Watchtower organization.³⁰ The student is very early taught that all others are deceived by Satan. They are taught that the “Remnant of 144,000” as represented by the Watchtower governing body, is God’s “prophet class”³¹ guided by angels “in the minutest detail.”³² They are taught that they are “slaves.” They are not permitted to have friends outside the Watchtower (“worldly associations”), even of close regular associations with family members. If they persistently disagree with the Watchtower they are cut off from all of their family and friends. This slavish dependence explains why they seem unshaken, no matter what they are showed in the Bible.

Thus, to get someone out of the Watchtower system, **it is absolutely necessary to break this dependency on the organization.** They somehow must come to realize that the Watchtower is not reliable.

Various things may accomplish this.

1. Bad experiences with Watchtower authoritarianism.

I have a telephone-answering message listed under “Jehovah’s Christian Witness” which appears just before “Jehovah’s Witnesses” in the yellow pages. When people call me I talk frankly about the hurt they cause to families and their “three-men-in-a-back-room-justice.” It is very effective.

2. They may be shaken loose by some key scripture that conflicts with what they have been taught.

They are not all just clones of teaching of their leadership. The scriptures are still able to cast down every high thing that exalts itself against God (2Cor. 10:5).

3. Show that they have repeatedly given false prophecy about the time of the coming of Jesus and the coming of Armageddon.

This is one of the most effective methods of revealing the Governing Body is unreliable, and not guided by God. Showing photocopies of things they have written is powerful. It takes away their claim that the material is “apostate.”

4. Show the absurdity that God would spend 1400 years preparing the Bible to guide his people into “all truth” (John 16:13) but make it so it could not be understood without “spirit anointed” leaders to explain it.

Worse yet, according to them, no “anointed class” leaders were provided for 2000 years until the Watchtower came along. Since then, their failed predictions required repeated changes of dates and interpretations. –Not very reliable “prophets.”

5. Show their many changes in teachings over the years.

²⁹ *Watchtower*, 1/15/1983, pp.22, 27

³⁰ *Watchtower*, 10/1/1967, p.587; 12/19/1990, p.19

³¹ *Watchtower* 4/1/1972, p.197; p.200

³² 1941 *Yearbook*, Daily Texts and Comments reading for September 19, quoted from *Watchtower*, 1/1/41

They have changed back and forth several times concerning whether Sodom will be resurrected.³³

They have changed back and forth several times as to whether the “powers” in Romans 13 refer to earthly governments.³⁴

They used to prohibit vaccinations or receiving transplanted body parts.

There have been many other such changes.

6. Show them the nonsense of intrusive and petty prohibitions and regulations that are not in the Bible. Keeping birthdays, participating in organized sports, participating in school clubs, having one’s own blood returned to save a life, beards etc. have no scriptural basis whatsoever.
7. The continual “wear and tear” of being required to go door-to-door, fill out reports, reading literature, participating in endless meetings etc. takes its toll and many begin questioning the scriptural basis.
8. Often they are turned off by the petty picking at people, the jostling for position in leadership, and the arrogance that some leaders display. There is often a lot of scrutiny and criticism with very little compassion and understanding.
9. The lack of anything for the children and constant picking at them that drives them away causes disillusionment. They provide little special activities and have no separate classes for children at their services.
10. Some become disillusioned by the isolation from family and friends by the rules and issues that separate people.
11. Some leave when faced with demands that they give up their life, the life of a loved one, or the life of a child for Watchtower teachings against blood transfusions.

Whatever begins to raise questions as to the reliability of those in leadership may become a crack in Watchtower wall.

The problem is that Witnesses often begin making these breaks out of human necessity, but fail to understand that there is a scriptural basis for leaving. They get out of the Watchtower but fail to get the Watchtower out of them.

³³ *Scripture Studies*, 1886, Vol. 1, p.110 by Pastor Russell: Sodom will be resurrected.
From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained, 1958, p.236. Sodom will not be resurrected.
Watchtower, 3/1/1965, p.139. Sodom will be resurrected.

Watchtower, 6/1/1988, p.30. Sodom will not be resurrected
 (“He loves them, He loves them not, He loves them...”)
³⁴ *Scripture Studies*, Vol. 1, 1886, p.250, 266. The “powers” were governments.
Riches, p.219 The “Higher powers do not refer to the governments of earth (see also: *Make Sure*, 1953, p.369)
 “*Babylon The Great Has Fallen*,” 1963, p.458. The political authorities of this world continue to be the
 “higher powers”

Without knowing that the problems come from violations of Scripture, they are torn by fear and guilt and after leaving they will not go to churches where they can get help. I have seen them come into a church building and suddenly burst into tears and run out. People outside cannot understand what they are struggling with and have difficulty communicating. They may seem to have it all behind them but when they marry and have children they get a desperate urge to get back in so that they will not be destroyed at Armageddon. To be truly free, the Witness needs to go through the process of removing the tangle of unscriptural guilt and fear from his thinking.

TIPS FOR STUDYING WITH WITNESSES THAT BREAK THEIR CONTROL SYSTEM

The following are some general guidelines for studying with Witnesses. They are not intended as absolutes. Different situations may require adjustments. However, they contain a number of simple but effective tools to break down their support system.

1. If you want to really teach the Watchtower witnesses, do not have a shoot-out with them at the door.

To be effective, you need time and preparation. Show interest. Ask questions. Don't argue and don't act too eager to get a study going. Be willing to take their literature but decline to give them a "contribution." Tell them that you have your own faith but would be willing to listen to what they believe at another time. Ask how you can get more information. If they offer to come back, set up an appointment.

2. Do not drop whatever you are doing and talk to them whenever they come around.

Arrange a time to get together, but if they come at other times, decline to take time out to visit. If you let them draw you into a study whenever they come to the door, just when you are making a point, others will come for them, or they will excuse themselves and say that they have to go to another appointment.

3. Get their phone number and address.

Getting their phone number begins giving you control over the timing of the studies and changes of plans. Better yet, it makes it possible for you to contact them and talk individually without another Witness playing watchdog. You can call and ask questions, even if they give some excuse for not coming back. Likewise, their address permits you to send information directly without the knowledge of others --even after the study ends.

4. Plan for, and insist on, discussion of a subject upon which you are prepared.

Witnesses like to control the topic, usually starting with the Trinity. That is because few people have a good understanding on this subject. God says, "to what will you liken me?" It is pretty hard to draw a picture of God. Like a fungus that grows in darkness, Witnesses can only make progress where there is ignorance. They are trained to be like a smart coon being chased by a dog. He will often swim out into deep water and if the dog

follows he gets him in over his head and drowns him. You need to be prepared to deal with the subject of the Trinity but it is not necessarily the best subject to start discussing.

DISCUSSING THE TRINITY

If they insist on discussing the Trinity, ask them what a “trinity” is? They will say it is three gods in one. That is a “triad,” not a “trinity.” A trinity is three persons in one godhead (Col. 2:9).

Take them to Matt. 28:19. Ask how many “**names**” are mentioned. Note that it says, “**name**” (singular). Then ask how many persons are listed in that one name. They will say three because they deny that the Holy Spirit is a person. If you wish, you may go on to show that the Holy Spirit is a person. That subject is excellent because there are many good scriptures and on this Witnesses are usually poorly prepared. (Matt. 28:19; John 16:7-14; 14:26; 15:26-27; Acts 13:2; 5:3; Rom. 8:26-27; 1Cor. 12:11; Gal. 5:17, 18; Eph. 4:30; 1Tim. 4:1; 1Pet. 1:11; Heb. 10:15)

To respond to their claim that Jesus is not a part of the trinity, begin as stated above, showing that there are three in one. Then go to Genesis 1:26. “God” (Hebrew: “Elohim”) is plural. It says, “let US make man in OUR image.” We are in the image of a plural Godhead (Col. 2:9). Compare this with 1Thes 5:23. We have a triune nature – the image of God, --body, soul and spirit. We sense this as we struggle between our flesh, mind and spirit. Paul spoke of this struggle in Romans 7: 15-25.

Then bring out the Biblical teaching that we should “worship” Jesus (Hebrews 1:6), and the statement in John 1:1 where He is called “God.” When they try to claim it means, “a god” ask to read it in their Greek interlinear. The interlinear Greek has no “a” and furthermore, the word, “the” is omitted in the Greek before God in verses 6, 12, 13, 18 of the same chapter.

THE RESURRECTION

The resurrection of Christ is another good subject. Tell them that you understand that the Watchtower denies the resurrection. They will deny this (They are taught that “resurrection” means to be created from the memory of God). Go to John 2:19, 21 and show that Jesus raised his body that was destroyed. Follow this with scriptures where Jesus showed them his resurrected body (Luke 24:39; John 20:20-29). They will try to argue that Jesus would not “take back his ransom.” Go to Mark 10:45 to show that his life (Greek: psuche–“soul”) is the ransom and that John 10:17 shows he took it again. As Abraham told the rich man, “If they will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they hear someone who goes to them from the dead.”

To aid in finding scriptures, make chain references in the margins of your Bible. Post-it notes may be used with scriptures and comments. This is no different than the references in the columns of their Bible.

5. Insist on studying the Bible instead of “books of uninspired men.”

Beware of their “bait and switch” tactics in which they tell you that they will have a “Bible study” with you but in fact they switch you to studying their books. Remember, they would not study your book, so why should you study theirs?

Their books take passages out of context and put them into a different setting with clever words that twist what is being said. This supports them and gives them considerable advantage. Their books are written with the classic brainwashing tactic of reading a paragraph and then answering a question. This goes on endlessly until the ideas become so implanted that the prospect begins to think that what they say is true. They do not believe you can understand the Bible without their books.³⁵ Pastor Russell even called his writings, “The Bible in an arranged Form”³⁶

Tell them that you would be willing to read their publications on your own but you consider the Bible to be the primary book to be studied.

If they push studying from a book, suggest that one week the study should be from a book they choose, and the next from one of your choice. Then come with just your Bible and one for each of them to read!

If they offer you a book, accept it but do not contribute anything. They tell the tax people their literature is free. So be it. Don’t support what you do not believe in.

One way to respond is to offer some reading material in trade. If they will read yours, you will read theirs. To keep them from throwing the material away without reading it, make it a loan on the basis that when the two of you get together next you can exchange questions about what you read.

6. In the discussions, use your own Bible and keep comparing it with theirs.

Another of their bait-and-switch tactics is to agree to a Bible study but substitute their perversion as a version.

Their “Bible” has been greatly corrupted. For example, wherever the Bible says that Jesus is to be “worshipped,” (Heb. 1:6) they have arbitrarily changed the word to “do obeisance.” When the Bible says that Jesus “was God” they translate it, “was a god” (John 1:1)

7. Record the sessions (with their knowledge).

This helps to recall and review what was said, perhaps with someone else. It also makes them a little nervous about making unfounded statements. Your inability to remember for later study is ample reason.

³⁵ *Watchtower*, 10/1/1967, p.587; 12/1/1990, p.19

³⁶ *Watchtower*, 9/15/1910, [4685] (298-299)

8. Be well backed-up.

Do not play “Lone Ranger” against the Watchtower. They are experts at trapping dumb sheep isolated from the shepherds. Be sure you have knowledgeable resources for information and materials. It is good to have help from someone who is experienced and to have access to someone with a good library of Watchtower materials. They do so and it is fair for you to do the same.

9. Even the odds.

Their “buddy system” is to give them an advantage, both psychologically and in knowledge resources. It makes it easy for them to switch and bring in someone with more experience. It allows one person to be looking things up while the other is keeping you occupied. Two on one is Watchtower fun.

Sometimes you may be able to get a study with one person rather than two. This really puts a crimp in their support system. It allows you to communicate with the Witness without them being watch-dogged by a second Witness. One of the most powerful controls upon their people is that the second Witness is required to report any sign of weakness to their leaders.

Generally the best you can get is to have someone who is experienced present with you. Tell them that you will bring a friend. That is fair since they have someone with them. What is fair for one side is fair for both.

Be cautious about any circumstances where one man and one woman study alone. Be sure the circumstances are such that no question can be raised.

10. Discourage switching those participating in the study.

When facing difficult questions, they will often bring someone with more experience. Of course, they would not permit themselves to be switched off from you to study with someone more capable on your side. Insist on playing by the same rules. Once the study is started, refuse to study with anyone else.

For situations where a relative or friend, is at stake, it is important not to be shunted onto a sidetrack. For example, if a husband starts asking questions, the Witnesses will often have the wife pressure him to study with others without her present. Decline to do so. Tell the person urging the study that you want to know what they think, not what somebody else thinks. They can talk to the Witness leaders and bring the information to you.

If they insist, respond with a bargain that one other Witness may be involved and the person wanting you to study must be present. Any time the friend or relative is not there, call it off until they are there.

When possible, another alternative is for the non-witness to study with a Witness on condition that the person wanting them to study must study with a non-witness. Fair is fair.

11. Firmly keep them on the subject and point of discussion.

Whenever the going gets tough, the Witness usually gets going --away from the difficulty. They jump from passage to passage, leading you out through the brush on a game of "Catch-Me-If-You-Can." This diverts the issue and prevents them from having to confront facts.

Do not permit them to jump around or push you into something. Press that you need your questions answered before going on to something else.

One thing that can help in this is to use a note pad to organize your thoughts and control discussion. Whenever they want to jump, write their question down and tell them you will get to that after your questions about the immediate passage. If you do temporarily divert to something else, make a note of the question under discussion to which you will return. Do not permit them to continue to lead you farther and farther away from familiar territory. If they bring up something that you are not prepared to answer, write it down and tell them you will check on it for the next study.

12. Do not try to answer everything in one study.

Don't leave the impression you have all of the answers or that you are tense or in a hurry. They back away from discussions with people who are well informed. Listen a lot. Be a researcher. Check on things and return with well-documented information concerning questions raised previously and with more questions to make them have to dig. Photocopies of their own literature are excellent.

13. It is usually best to approach things from the standpoint of a student.

Take the position of the Bereans (Acts 17:10-11). Because there are many false teachers in the world you must "search the Scriptures to see if these things are so." The Bereans were commended because they wouldn't just take someone's word. They even challenged Paul, a teacher with great authority.

Ask questions to bring out facts rather than making assertions. Provide evidence and firmly press for sound answers, not just Watchtower explanations. Do not be argumentative. Avoid flat contradictions. Instead, say, "I heard" or "I read" or "Isn't this so?"

Instead of flatly contradicting them, when they take a position that is obviously weak, such as their denial that the body of Jesus was raised (John 2:19), show by your expression that it doesn't make sense and restate their answer in your words, expressing the difficulty.

For example, questions about John 2:19 might go something like this: "Are you saying that Jesus did not raise his body that was destroyed? "Why would it say he would if he

did not?” “Do you mean that when Jesus showed them his hands and feet and said, ‘Behold my hands and my feet, that **it is I** myself’ (Luke 24:39), that what he showed them was not the real one?” “Are you saying that when Jesus showed them the holes in his hands and side that he misled them? “Honestly, doesn’t it sound like he raised what they destroyed?”

Follow questions up at the next study with photocopies of evidence. Say, “I have a problem with this,” or “I do not understand how this can be true.” If you represent it as a problem which for you must be solved, they will want to help you solve it. In doing so, they will have to think for themselves to find the answers. Say, “This doesn’t sound reasonable.” Ask if they are really sure. Question how they can know it is true. Say, “Let me think that over and get back to you.” Instead of rolling out the heavy artillery, just keep poking holes in their claims.

Remember that you really have the advantage. The Watchtower must keep their people from being exposed to truth. It is not necessary to get them to agree. Don’t try to force them. Just keep filling them up with facts. They have the problem of keeping their people convinced that they cannot trust what Bible says. They are taught to cover up their difficulties by jumping to other scriptures where they hope you will not be prepared, or just get away from the problem with the hope that in time the answer will come. You must get the Word to them and let the Holy Spirit convict them. Pray. Pray. Pray. God is greater than the Watchtower.

14. However, in situations where a third party is involved, it may be best to take a strong affirmative position.

Show that you know what you are talking about. Produce your evidence up front with all of the power you can muster, and blow them away.

15. Make a distinction between the Watchtower and the person you are trying to persuade.

Remember that the Witness is only a victim. Avoid saying, “YOU teach this” unless you are addressing one of them before someone you are trying to reach. Refer to the Watchtower in the third person. Say, “The WATCHTOWER teaches.” Make a direct attack only to protect a third person.

16. Ask them to read the scripture with the context.

Reading the Word faces them squarely with what God is saying rather than the twisted interpretations given by Watchtower writers. Get them to know the scriptural context rather than the Watchtower artificial settings. It confuses their plan, slows them down, and gives you opportunity to ask questions that open up the true context. Compare what your Bible says with theirs. Raise questions about the basis of the changes they have made.

17. When studying in someone else's home, be there early and remain until they have gone.

This provides opportunity to get prepared and develop a relationship with the host. It also makes it difficult for the Witnesses to remain and exert influence without being answered.

18. Do your homework in advance. Be prepared.

Study up on what they believe. Know the scriptures they will use and what their books say—especially their Bible and Greek interlinear. Listen carefully. Know where they are going and get there before they do in order to control the subject and the direction it is to take.

EXAMPLE OF AN EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION

1. Got there early, ready and well prepared before they arrived.
2. This is a good time to pray with the people hosting the discussion.
3. Two older Witnesses entered, prepared to continue a study on the trinity started with the family the previous week. They commonly try to steer the study to that subject.
4. Everyone was introduced.
5. As they took their seats, and began settling down, I casually asked how long they had been Witnesses. The first man warmly replied that he has been a Witness for some 40 or so years. The second, expansively said he has been “in the truth” for some 30 years.
6. I asked if they could tell me about the history of the Witnesses. They eagerly began to speak of “Pastor” Russell’s work in very general terms.
7. I asked them if it was true that Pastor Russell had taught that Jesus came invisibly in 1874. They seemed a bit reluctant about that but told us they had since received “new light.”
8. I asked if Pastor Russell also set the date of the end of the world as 1914. They appeared uncomfortable but again tried to explain that did not matter.
9. I asked if Pastor Russell originally was involved with the Advent movement that set dates for the coming of Christ in 1843 and 1844. That movement had been begun by William Miller.
10. This was followed with a question as to how they arrived at the 1874 and 1914 dates. I suggested that I understood that the scripture used was Daniel, chapter 4.
11. I opened to Daniel 4 and asked that they read and explain it. The more they read the more they struggled.

The passage tells of a dream of Nebuchadnezzar of a great tree is cut down and bound with a band until “seven times” pass over. The passage is clearly divided into three parts.

- a. The dream (Daniel 4:1-18)
- b. Daniel’s inspired interpretation (Daniel 4:19-28)
- c. The fulfillment. (Daniel 4:29-37)

It says nothing about 1874 or 1918. Their claim is based on their explanation that “seven times” means seven years. Each day of those years is supposed to represent a year. Seven times 360 days would represent 2,520 years.

It says nothing about the point from which the count was to begin. They arbitrarily decided it must be from the destruction of Jerusalem.

They set the beginning as 606 BC, falsely believing this to be the date of the last king of Judah and the destruction of the city. Subtracting 606 from 2,520 gives the date, 1914. Actually, the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the kingdom was about 586 BC. One of the best resources of information concerning the historical dating is “The Gentile Times Reconsidered” (Commentary Press, 1998) Third Edition, by Carl Olof Jonsson, a former Jehovah’s Witness elder, who after researching the historical background, left the organization.

Having them read the chapter while you keep probing for their basis for the dates is very disconcerting. Daniel is very clear as to the meaning and the fulfillment.

Most importantly, this opens up to examination the reliability of the Watchtower, which is the key issue. It exposes to question Watchtower claims that they are God’s “prophet,” directed “in the minutest detail.”³⁷

They never did get to their “trinity” issue. The next week I brought photocopies from their own books about their “prophet” claims. They had no answer for the evidence. One of the men started to deny it but the other stopped him, telling him that what I presented was true. They left with a possible return next week. They never did.

WHERE TO GET INFORMATION

1. A couple of the best books against them were written by Raymond Franze, who was a member of the top leadership and nephew of president Fred Franze, who is now deceased. His first book was “Crisis of Conscience.” Later he wrote a larger book called, “In Search Of Christian Freedom.”
2. Witness Inc., started by Duane Magnani, P.O. Box 597, Clayton CA 94517 publishes excellent materials. Two of the best are,
 - a. Refutation of Preparing for Child Custody Cases
 - b. The Watchtower Files

³⁷ 1941 *Yearbook*, Daily Texts and Comments reading for September 19, quoted from *Watchtower*, 1/1/41

3. The Free Minds Journal by Randy Watters P.O. Box 3818, Mahattan Beach, CA 90266 is an excellent publication that lists hundreds of support groups and provides much information.

The above three men were all Jehovah's Witnesses.

There are many other excellent books available. I would especially recommend Apostles of Denial, by Edmond Gruss, which gives an excellent general survey of the subject.

We have a large library of Watchtower materials which consist of most of their books and many works exposing their errors. We can also put people into contact with many other sources. I have worked in Jehovah's Witness ministry for many years. I have appeared on television and radio programs and presented materials on public access channels. I have made presentations to churches and have spoken on ex-JW programs around the Northwest and in Canada. For many years I was involved in picketing their annual gatherings at the Tacoma Dome in Washington.

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