

Dear Restoration Fellowship,

Both my wife and I were both 1st generation Jehovah's Witnesses. My wife had a classmate who was a JW, eventually got baptized and was pioneering for 13 years. She had a deep conviction that the Jehovah's Witnesses were the best people in the world and they had the Truth.

I was "found" at my doorstep by two nice JW ladies, who were knocking on doors. And I had many questions. I got baptized in 1997, at the age of 22. I was a pioneer (full-time minister) for 7 years, an elder for 7 years, delivered talks at District Conventions, was a part-time translator for the Croatian JW Branch Office (Bethel). I translated confidential documents as well as the JW Broadcasting programmes. (At the Bethel Course for Translators I unwittingly realized how inconsistent the New World Translation really was!)

Very much like the couple interviewed some time ago by the Restoration Fellowship, the Warrens, Antwan and Virginia, we also had the feeling that something was missing and were burdened by a heavy load of general guilt. Even though we did all we could, and even more, it was never enough. We were completely burnt out after series of stressful congregation problems and our health started to deteriorate. We were empty and our faith withered. However, we slowly started looking for answers.

With much internal turmoil (JW's are not allowed to read "apostate" material), we came across several dissenting JW's web sites, and read books by the former JW Governing Body member, Raymond Franz. Gradually, we came to comprehend that Jehovah's Witnesses are not God's "Organisation". The same way Catholic Church misinterprets one single Bible verse to gain control over its flock (Matthew 16:18), so the Jehovah's Witnesses do the same by misapplying the text of Matthew 24:45, where a simple parable got completely wrong interpretation.

After the initial shock we experienced as we kept discovering many "twisted" doctrines of the Watchtower Society, we were increasingly interested in finding out what was the real truth.

Our first encounter with Restoration Fellowship was through a video, showing Anthony talking to a couple of JW's in his house. A little bit later, I bumped into a short video explaining Jesus' true identity. It was an eye-opener! I came to understand that, unlike JW teachings, Jesus did not have "a perfect human body", was not "archangel Michael", that he was resurrected in his body, and not as a spirit...Jesus did not trick his disciples when he let them touch his wounds! I looked up the Wikipedia entries on Gnosticism, Arianism and the Hindu teaching of the Avatars, and recognized that the JW doctrines are frightfully similar. Scriptures like Isaiah 53:3 and Hebrews 2:10, 14-18 finally became clear.

If only an angel could be obedient to God, why bother trying at all! And of course, we would then gladly accept "the visible Organisation", very much like the Corinthians did (2 Corinthians 11:4), because Jesus will never again visibly come back!

On the other hand, only a human Messiah can understand other humans and be a High Priest. So, we don't need human intermediaries! It became clear why Satan promotes such a lie!

For some time now, we've been watching and enjoying Restoration Fellowship videos, as well as those of Dan Gill, Sean Finnegan, Victor Gluckin and the others. They have really been spiritually uplifting. The Watchtower Society boldly claims that they are the only ones that provide healthy spiritual food. What a misconception!

Eventually we found out that there was a former JW (A dreaded "apostate"!) in our area who wrote a number of books on the same topics, coming to the very same conclusions about Jesus and the Kingdom as most Biblical Unitarians did! We got in contact with that humble man, and were so excited to find out that we share the same

beliefs! We just couldn't believe that he didn't speak a word of English and never listened to Sir Anthony Buzzard or the others! Yet, as if we've been simultaneously reading the same material!

For a while, we were still active in the Congregation. Since I was an elder, I started tactfully introducing some of my newfound beliefs at the Congregation Watchtower Study and other meetings, including larger gatherings. Once I asked the audience the following question: "How can we answer those in our ministry who say that our understanding of Jesus' birth is a form of reincarnation?" There was, of course, no real answer, because JW's, in fact, teach that very thing! Or: "How can we simply calculate the pivotal year of 1919, when God chose JW's as his Organisation?" There was no answer, because, there isn't any! (Later, the elders threatened me not to ask questions that nobody can answer. They said that I was embarrassing the elders. I just smiled.)

Just two months before we stopped attending the meetings, I was even assigned a 1-hour-long teaching part at the School for Congregation Elders! It seems that most, even the Circuit Overseer, never realized that I had been "corrupting" the JW material with the teachings of Jesus, probably because of George Orwell's 1984 "doublethink" most JW's have, allowing for the co-existence of lies and truth. (If you want to understand the quirky JW logic, please read "1984", by George Orwell)

Finally, the pressure to conform became too strong, and our conscience couldn't take it anymore. I stepped down from my "privileges" and gave back the Bethel computer. We stopped going to the meetings altogether.

Many of our fellow Witnesses were curious about our sudden change of behaviour, so we were able to explain our beliefs to some of them. A married couple from our congregation also realized we were telling the truth. Some others also lent us a hearing ear. Their support has really been precious!

However, one "friend" accused us of apostasy and we received a phone call from an elder. The next day, on 20th November 2018 we decided to write a short message to many of our friends, saying: "As we studied the Bible, we realized that many doctrines Jehovah's Witnesses teach are, in fact, "twisted teachings", created to draw Christians away from the Christ, and make them into followers of men (Acts 20:30). Hence, we inform you that we do not want to be recognized as Jehovah's Witnesses anymore."

Now we are being shunned by most of our (former) friends and family members. But the feelings of Christian freedom and peace have also been overwhelming (2 Corinthians 1:5). We have felt divine intervention in our lives and pray that lord Jesus would help many more to "repent and believe in the good news of the Kingdom"! (Mark 1:15)

Interview: <https://youtu.be/S0IHkAuIbuk>