

Service Committee

Cc:

Watchtower Bible & Tract Society of Australia

2-4 Zouch Road

Denham Court NSW 2565

DATED: 20/12/2005

This letter is to request that my baptism be annulled. This way I will no longer be considered as one of the congregation and avoided as one of the world. I would like to make it clear that I am in no way disassociating myself from any congregation, office or organization associated with Jehovahs Witnesses.

Several months ago I requested for ... and to arrange an annulment of my baptism, a request they refused to consider. I had hoped that my total absence from meetings for a number of months, and non association with Jehovahs Witness friends was indication enough that I am not as a follower of the Watchtower Society. However disciplinary visitations by elders in the congregation show that this matter needs to be formalized. I am now requesting an annulment in writing as I no longer wish to experience the ongoing harassment that I have endured over the past twelve months from and various other brothers. Neither do I wish to be judged by unchristian principles that are based around the creed of men rather than the regulations of God.

This request for annulment is in order to remove myself from being considered part of any congregation of Jehovahs Witnesses and particularly the Parramatta Congregation of Jehovahs Witnesses, its individual elders or its legal corporation, the Governing Body of Jehovahs Witnesses or its legal corporations, The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, Inc., The International Bible Students Association, The Watchtower Bible & Tract Society of Australia, or any other agency not here named, including all or any agents or assignees. I further request all agents and assignees cease and desist from harassment, stalking, slandering, and/or infringing on my rights.

My annulment is not due to a lack of faith in God; it is solely due to it coming to my attention that my baptism unknowingly included a commitment to an organization that is in effect no more than a legal entity run by men.

Annulment is an option as I am aware of several cases where this has been successfully applied for, including my auntie who was subsequently re-baptized and another person who was not re-baptized.

There is significant cause for annulment. When I was baptized at the age of 16 I was not of legal age to make life's most important decisions, including marriage, consumption of alcohol, voting and joining an army. Jesus himself was not baptized until the age of 30. Therefore I believe the Watchtower Society uses coercion of impressionable minors to build its ranks. I was misled into forming a contract with the Watchtower Society which binds me to the regulations of the Jehovah's Witnesses Governing Body, under false pretences of it being God's spirit directed organization. Until this year I believed the Watchtower publications to be truthful. The research I have done at the request of ... has resulted in me finding otherwise.

My baptism and hence contract with the Watchtower Society and my entire life since was based in part on three lies the Watchtower Society uses to misrepresent itself as God's organization;

- the apparent fact that these are the last days based on a dramatic increase in earthquakes
- that the Watchtower Society foretold 1914 as the start of the last days
- that Holy Spirit directs Watchtower Society doctrine and the appointment and disfellowshipping of brothers

The following quotes support that the statements made above were prevalent at the time of my baptism and they continue to be so.

I no longer have access to the *Aid to Bible Understanding* that I studied constantly as a youth. However, the passage on earthquakes that greatly affected my life is contained now in *Insight Into the Scriptures*, Volume 1 p.669:

"Jesus foretold earthquakes in significant number and intensity as a feature of the sign of his presence. (Mt 24:3, 7, 8; Lu 21:11) Since 1914 C.E., there has been an increase in the number of earthquakes, resulting in much distress. With data obtained from the National Geophysical Data Center in Boulder, Colorado, supplemented by a number of standard reference works, a tabulation was made in 1984 that included only earthquakes that measured 7.5 or more on the Richter scale, or that resulted in destruction of five million dollars (U.S.) or more in property, or that caused 100 or more deaths. It was calculated that there had been 856 of such earthquakes during the 2,000 years before 1914. The same tabulation showed that in just 69 years following 1914 there were 605 of such quakes. These statistics are a means of indicating the extent of suffering from earthquakes during this period of history."

This is a gross misrepresentation of facts. With research anyone can find that there have

been a fairly constant number of earthquakes for thousands of years. There has been no increase in the number of earthquakes since 1914 or in the power of earthquakes. The 1900s has not even had the most deaths from all earthquakes combined, the largest or the most destructive earthquakes.

The other concept that I found very important in committing my life to the Watchtower Society was the remarkable insight Russell had under Gods direction to understand bible prophecy in regards to 1914. This regularly is used as proof that Jehovahs holy spirit was guiding his earthly organization through Russell and so a clear indicator of this being the only true religion. As stated in the *Awake!* 1973 January 22 p.8

"Of all men used by God to prophesy, Jesus is outstanding. Based on what he said, along with the words of Daniel and John, Jehovah's witnesses **pointed to the year 1914, decades in advance, as marking the start** of "the conclusion of the system of things.""

When the Watchtower refers to the history of the doctrine of 1914 it generally does so by the used of misinformation, however I am sure you would be aware that the above quote is a very direct lie. In fact, nothing Russell pointed to about 1914 has come to pass. Russell believed that the last days started in 1799, Jesus rulership began in 1874 and 1914 was to conclude matters, it was never said to be the start, it was always said to be the end. It was not until the 1930s that Rutherford overturned a large number of Russells teachings and date prophecies and put in place what now resembles the modern day Jehovah's Witnesses. This did not happen in 1919 which Watchtower publications now point to as the date when Jesus cleansed his temple.

The third point critical to my decision to be baptized is that the Watchtower publications imply that Holy Spirit directs the organization Jehovahs Witnesses identify as represented by the Watchtower Society. This is in the area of doctrine, appointments and disfellowshipping. The only reason I was baptized as one of Jehovahs Witnesses was that I relied on the statements that holy spirit does indeed direct the organization, if it does not why would anyone follow it? Statements such as the following are made;

W87 8/1 p.19 "Recommendations and appointments are made after prayer and under the guidance of the holy spirit. To such nonanointed elders Pauls counsel applies with equal force: Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers. Acts 20:28."

pe chap. 23 p.195 "No, being governed theocratically, they follow the example of the

early governing body in Jerusalem, whose decisions were based on Gods Word and were made **under the direction of holy spirit.**"

W58 5/1 p.285 "Since that spirit of God operates in conjunction with the organization, to the extent that the local overseers, ministerial assistants and individual ministers respond to the counsel provided them through the theocratic organization, to that extent the way is open by **this means for the free flow of Gods holy spirit.**"

In regards to doctrine the organization has a history of introducing wrong teachings, such as the dates mentioned previously, the meaning of pyramids, the requirement to worship Jesus up until the 1950s and so on. They have also changed back to the original stance on a number of life and death issues such as the meaning of superior authorities and the use or organ transplants. None of these can be simply dismissed as new light, they were wrong doctrine introduced by the Watchtower Society and then discarded.

In regards to appointments the above quotes were similarly misleading. As you may personally be aware, I was in Bradbury congregation when Dom was appointed as an elder, despite the fact that he was having at that very time, and had been having for seven years, an adulterous affair whilst in Bethel. Where was the Holy Spirit in that appointment? I know of numerous such cases, such as Shalom who was a practicing homosexual when he accepted his appointment as a Ministerial Servant in Parramatta congregation. I also know of numerous cases of people that continue to be brothers and sisters despite ongoing wrongdoing over many years. Why does the Holy Spirit not uncover such wrongdoing if it truly guides this organization alone?

Jesus said we are to be baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. As a 16 year old I did not understand the implication that my baptism vow also adds as one of Jehovah's Witnesses in association with God's spirit-directed organization? (W85 6/1 p. 30) I did not know that this meant I would become bound for life by a legal earthly organization that has built up a wealth of man made rules. How as a 16 year old could I make an informed decision that I was committing myself for life to an earthly organization when the very organization I trusted had no qualms about lying in areas that mattered most to me?

If I knew the above Watchtower statements to not be true, to not be from God, but rather carefully fabricated lies I would never have considered Jehovah's Witnesses to be accurately worshipping God and not have been baptized in association with this particular organization. Now that I am aware of these things I wish for my baptism to be annulled as what I was led to believe I was agreeing with was a misrepresentation of truth. I now wish

to be given peace from further harassment in order to recover from the manipulation that I have suffered my entire life from trusting in the Watchtower Society and the mental anguish that it is now causing me and my extended family.

Baptism is a spiritual issue and I would like this situation resolved as such. Based on my understanding that being a Jehovahs Witness identifies me as a representative of an unusual earthly organization rather than a worshiper of God I would like that identification to be completely erased, rather than to be considered disfellowshipped or disassociated and hence considered an ex Jehovahs Witness forever more. I have sought legal advice in case my baptism is not annulled based on the spiritual reasons so far provided and will consider starting judicial proceedings if necessary.

A secondary reason I am requesting an annulment rather than the easier alternative of disassociation is due to the defamation to my reputation that will result from being labeled as disassociated and the ongoing negative effect this will have for the remainder of my life. People that read the bible without preconceived notions understand that the Watchtower shunning policy is extended well beyond scriptural guidelines and is in fact closely aligned with methods used by cults and high control groups. The unchristian way in which the Watchtower Society uses shunning in manipulating its members is adversely affecting the lives hundreds of thousands of people and I do not wish for me or my family to be subjected to similar hardship. Neither do I wish untrue defamatory comments that appear in the Watchtower publications regarding those that no longer believe it is Gods organization to be applied to me. This includes statements that I am a person who is;

- rebelling against Jehovah w93 10/1 p.19
- presumptuous w80 8/1 p.20
- loathsome, odious, filthy, to be hated and detested, w52 10/1 p.599
- spreading lies and misinformation, siding with Satan w00 5/1 p.9
- a self-seeking heretics not to even be greeted w83 4/1 p.24
- a spiritual drunkards wallowing in doctrinal vomit w90 1/15 p.28

In the United States of America the Watchtower Society has traditionally used freedom of religion under the First Amendment Clause as its primary legal argument against being sued. Whilst this argument makes suing a religion difficult the courts do not look favorably on a religion that uses misinformation or coercive persuasion to indoctrinate or manipulate its members. A primary case for this is *Molko v. Holy Spirit Association or the Unification of World Christianity (Unification)*.

Above shows just a small fraction of the misinformation that appears in the Watchtower. The practices of the Watchtower Society are equally based on common methods of coercive persuasion. Dr. Margaret Singer specialises in coercive persuasion. I am not

attempting to address whether the Watchtower Society is a cult but rather make the interesting comparison of Watchtower practice with a summary she has done on Robert J Lifton's research into the coercive techniques used by cults. Lifton's research was a result of a study he undertook of American prisoners of Communist China. Dr Singer summarises his eight indicators of a cult as follows;

1. ENVIRONMENT CONTROL. Limitation of many/all forms of communication with those outside the group. Books, magazines, letters and visits with friends and family are taboo. "Come out and be separate!"
2. MYSTICAL MANIPULATION. The potential convert to the group becomes convinced of the higher purpose and special calling of the group through a profound encounter / experience, for example, through an alleged miracle or prophetic word of those in the group.
3. DEMAND FOR PURITY. An explicit goal of the group is to bring about some kind of change, whether it be on a global, social, or personal level. "Perfection is possible if one stays with the group and is committed."
4. CULT OF CONFESSION. The unhealthy practice of self disclosure to members in the group. Often in the context of a public gathering in the group, admitting past sins and imperfections, even doubts about the group and critical thoughts about the integrity of the leaders.
5. SACRED SCIENCE. The group's perspective is absolutely true and completely adequate to explain EVERYTHING. The doctrine is not subject to amendments or question. ABSOLUTE conformity to the doctrine is required.
6. LOADED LANGUAGE. A new vocabulary emerges within the context of the group. Group members "think" within the very abstract and narrow parameters of the group's doctrine. The terminology sufficiently stops members from thinking critically by reinforcing a "black and white" mentality. Loaded terms and clichés prejudice thinking.

7. DOCTRINE OVER PERSON. Pre-group experience and group experience are narrowly and decisively interpreted through the absolute doctrine, even when experience contradicts the doctrine.

8. DISPENSING OF EXISTENCE. Salvation is possible only in the group. Those who leave the group are doomed.

All eight points are readily applicable to the Watchtower Society.

My baptism vow was entered into as a minor after being subjected to a lifetime of coercive persuasion and misinformation. Many precious years of my life have been wasted in pointless pursuits strongly promoted in conjunction with misinformation about the time of the end by the Watchtower Society, including three and a half years as a volunteer worker at the headquarters of the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society of Australia. Actions taken by and associated Jehovahs Witness brothers over the last twelve months, including unannounced visitations at night, amount to harassment and have caused significant emotional distress and resulted in medical appointments, current use of prescription medicine and a referral to a psychiatrist for religious induced stress. Any public announcement that I am no longer one of Jehovahs Witnesses will most certainly exacerbate such conditions, particularly in regard to the shunning I am to receive from my extended family for the remainder of my life. Furthermore my businesses will suffer financially. Though courts do not inquire about the truthfulness of a belief, they do not look favorably upon religious induced cause and effect as described above, particularly when coercive persuasion and misinformation is used to aggrieve citizens.

I do not wish to commence judicial proceedings. Nor do I wish to cause any undue trouble for any of Jehovahs Witnesses. I do not wish to undermine the faith of people that are content to follow their religious beliefs. If a person actively seeks me out to enquire about my beliefs consistent application of freedom of religion will allow me to discuss these matters. All that I request is to be considered as one of the world and left to establish a new life free from the manipulation of a highly legalistic organization. The only way for this to be possible is to either be left alone with a written guarantee of no further action from this day forward from any elders acting on behalf of the Watchtower Society in regards to any spiritual matter, or a letter that outlines the annulment of my baptism.

I will not tolerate any announcement in regards to myself to be made in public about my standing as a Jehovah's Witness and will sue each individual person involved in such an

announcement. I understand and accept the elders of Parramatta congregation may feel the need to present a talk outlining the dangers of associating with non believers and those that have left the faith. I am also willing to accept the elders of Parramatta congregation talking to members of the congregation and naming me personally as one to be avoided as a person of the world, or even one whose baptism has been annulled.

Kind Regards

Paul Grundy