



ARE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES AGAINST HIGHER EDUCATION?

What does the Watchtower organization (the entity which governs Jehovah's Witnesses) say about higher education?

From their *Awake* magazine, 5/22/1969, pg 15 (note this is from 1969!!)

*If you are a young person, you also need to face **the fact** that you will never grow old in this present system of things... all evidence in fulfillment of Bible prophecy indicates that this corrupt system is due to end **in a few years**... as a young person you will never fulfill any career that this system offers.*

If you are in high school and thinking about a college education, it means at least four, perhaps even six or eight more years to graduate into a specialized career. But where will this system of things be by that time? It will be well on the way toward its finish, if not actually gone.

Now, let's say you were an 18-year-old Jehovah's Witness when this information was published in 1969. That means that today you would be approximately 59 years old. Had you followed the advice of your leaders, you may have never developed any real marketable skills. Perhaps you are now a janitor, flipping burgers at a fast food restaurant or trying to survive on the welfare system (like my brother).

Has the Watchtower ever retracted their stance and apologized to those they misled? Never. In fact, as you will soon see, they have come full circle right back to where they started.

I remember when my mother joined the Jehovah's Witnesses. Higher education was discouraged back in 1972 by the Watchtower Society and my brother promptly dropped out of college to become a janitor working at Montgomery Wards. I'm sure at the time, with the price of college (even then), my mother and father saw this as a relief, but today they are paying for it. Here is how I describe my impressions in my book, **Out of the Cocoon**.

My struggles to rectify poverty through education intensified the disrespect I felt towards my brother. When I was nine years old, my brother was taking classes in college but abandoned them when mother coerced the family into joining the Jehovah's Witnesses. Why would he turn his back on such a valuable opportunity? The reason is simple: Witnesses believe that higher education is ultimately a waste of time. Instead, followers are encouraged to spend as much of their free time in the door-to-door service as they possibly can. They eagerly await the "New Order"—Armageddon—which they anticipate any day now. (They've anticipated it "any day now" for over a century!) Since Jehovah will be providing for all necessities of life in this New Order, who needs to know anything about computers, space travel or running a corporation?

While I concede that choosing to forgo an education and enrich his life is my brother's choice—not a wise choice, in my opinion, but his choice nonetheless—it is more than this that fuels my less-than-forgiving attitude. What really provokes me is that my brother is malingering to provide the basics of food, clothing and shelter for his family. On the other hand, he is incredibly zealous in performing the ministry. He will devote countless hours trying to save us heathens, but he can't even save himself. Today, he lives in poverty with his wife in an old mobile home somewhere in rural Tennessee. My dad, who has worked incredibly hard performing manual labor all of his life, has become his financial wishing well. All my brother has to say is, "I wish I had some money to pay for..." and my father obliges. Instead of finding gainful employment, my brother has prostituted himself for the Jehovah's



Witnesses. He can't see that, in selling himself to gain some advantage in the New Order, he has sacrificed the rudiments of this life.

You may think, "Sure, that's what the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York taught their members back in 1969, but surely that's not what they are teaching them today!" If that is your mindset, you are only partially correct. Read on. (NOTE: Any college administrator or teacher reading this article should read my other article entitled "Are Colleges Doing Enough to Protect Students from Cults" and learn more about how cults rob young adults of higher educational opportunities.)

My general take on the article below is that higher education that involves increasing one's skill base should be pursued ONLY if it is *not* possible to support your family and still be involved in a pioneering ministry (100+ hours of door-to-door recruitment per month). From what I recall while I was a Jehovah's Witness in the 1970's, trade schools were marginally acceptable but four-year institutions were not and the article cited below from 1992 seems to support this. The following article makes it clear that the pioneer ministry should be your primary goal as a young person and that a "balanced" view of education means putting spiritual pursuits first.

With the millions that the Watchtower rakes in every year from its members, they could easily afford to support each of their full-time young-adult "ministers" by offering them a salary, but they do not. See "Watchtower: Cash Cow" for more about their financial status in the BLOG section of my website. Of course, we've often heard *why buy the cow when the milk is free?* (Why pay religious recruiters when you can get them to volunteer for absolutely nothing? Can you imagine if corporate America operated that way? We'd all be living in tents and standing in bread lines to survive!)

Here's a segment of their Nov. 1, 1992 *Watchtower* magazine article (p. 17-21) entitled "Education with a Purpose," which I referred to earlier:

A Balanced View of Education

12 A balanced view of education can help. For many young people of the world, education is a status symbol, something to help them climb the social ladder, the key to a prosperous, materialistic life-style. For others, schooling is a chore to be dispensed with as quickly as possible. Neither of these views is appropriate for true Christians. What, then, might be termed "a balanced view"? **Christians should regard education as a means to an end. In these last days, their purpose is to serve Jehovah as much and as effectively as possible.** If, in the country where they live, minimal or even high school education will only allow them to find jobs providing insufficient income **to support themselves as pioneers**, then **supplementary education or training might be considered. This would be with the specific goal of full-time service.**

Counting the Cost

17 If Christian parents responsibly decide to provide their children with further education after high school, that is their prerogative. The period of these studies would vary according to the type of trade or occupation selected. For financial reasons and **in order to enable their children to get into the full-time service as quickly as possible**, many Christian parents have chosen for them short-term study programs in **vocational or technical schools**. In some cases youths have needed to be apprenticed to some trade but **always with a full life of service to Jehovah as the goal.**



18 If additional courses are taken, certainly the motive should not be to shine scholastically or to carve out a prestigious worldly career. **Courses should be chosen with care. This magazine has placed emphasis on the dangers of higher learning, and justifiably so, for much higher education opposes the "healthful teaching" of the Bible.** (Titus 2:1; 1 Timothy 6:20, 21) Further, since the 1960's, many schools of advanced learning have become **hotbeds of lawlessness and immorality...**

19 Should supplementary education be decided upon, a young Witness would do well, if at all possible, to take this while living at home, thus being able to maintain normal Christian study habits, meeting attendance, and preaching activity.... **While placing spiritual interests first, young Witnesses in a number of countries have taken courses to equip themselves for part-time work as accountants, tradesmen, teachers, translators, interpreters, or other occupations that supported them adequately in their primary career of pioneering...** A number of these youths have later become traveling overseers or Bethel volunteers.

However, the Watchtower appears to have gotten a little tougher since 1992 on their stance *against* education, now equating it to the Devil's crafty act. Here's the description from a 2009 PUBLIC talk. You can find the actual audio of this talk--and another talk from 2007 entitled *The Superiority of Being Taught by Jehovah--* under this article on my website.

Description of
WATCHTOWER PUBLIC 2009 ANTI-EDUCATION TALK:
Stand Firm Against the Devil's Crafty Acts
Delivered to Jehovah's Witnesses

"Stand Firm Against the Devil's Crafty Acts," was a symposium of lectures delivered Saturday, April 11, 2009 as part of a Circuit Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses. It was recorded at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center in Duluth, Minnesota.

The symposium was broken into several parts:

Have You Identified Satan's Crafty Acts? (From Beginning until 11:09)

1. In the Field of Technology (starting at 11:09)
2. In the Field of Entertainment and Recreation (starting at 28:05)
3. In the Field of Education (starting at 41:34).

The program is directed by the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses and sponsored by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York. It very strongly discourages the pursuit of higher education by young Jehovah's Witnesses. Young Jehovah's Witnesses are encouraged to "pioneer," devoting their time to full-time door-to-door preaching instead of going to college or university. Other "Satanic crafty acts" involve technology, entertainment and recreation, which might draw one away from spiritual pursuits.

From www.outofthecocoon.net