



“When a Loved One Leaves Jehovah”

9/1/06 Watchtower article

The thing that really made me take pause with this article was the title. I know of plenty of people who left the Watchtower organization who are still worshipping Jehovah (i.e., God), so for the Watchtower writers to substitute the word “Jehovah” for “the Watchtower” here is a presumption and fallacy. And since they appear to be using the words interchangeably:

Watchtower = Jehovah

Jehovah=Watchtower

then in my opinion, Jehovah’s Witnesses commit idolatry every day they pledge their allegiance to the organization. Quotes from this article appear in bold below, followed by my comments in **Brown**.

"Jehovah continues to leave the way open for them to return to him."

Is that so? How many have tried to “repent” so that they could be readmitted as Jehovah’s Witnesses and still been refused a ticket back into the organization? Is it Jehovah leaving the door open or the Watchtower closing it? And if one does repent after having been shunned, made to feel guilty and manipulated through fear (which is hardly what Jesus demonstrated in his own life), has that person really returned to satisfy Jehovah, or the Watchtower leaders? A bully can smack you around on the playground, take your lunch away and force you to give it to him everyday thereafter, but it doesn’t mean it’s something you would choose for yourself. Now, if you willingly offer that bully some food each day, that’s different.

“He (Jehovah) implanted in humans the capacity for having...loyal attachments and the bond between family members can be especially strong. So it is not surprising that humans would grieve over the spiritual loss of a beloved relative.”

“can be especially strong.” What? The bond between family members IS (typically) strong and for the Watchtower to minimize this fact, seems to pave the way for their dysfunctional shunning practice. In doing so, aren’t they involved in family genocide?

“Unbelieving or unfaithful family members cause a rift by rejecting, abandoning, or even opposing the way of Christianity.”

My father once accused me of breaking up our family when I left the Watchtower at age 18. To the contrary, it was Jehovah’s Witnesses who broke up our family when they knocked on our door that fateful summer day in 1971. We were a nuclear, functioning, happy, healthy family before they indoctrinated our family into a cult and perverted our family dynamics. Where does the Watchtower take accountability in this statement for their requirement that family members shun other family members who have left?

Isn’t that a little like a murderer blaming the victim (“well...he fell onto my knife”). Should we ignore the fact that the murderer decided to pull the knife and wave it around in the first place?! When my mother called me up in 1981 and told me she, my brother and my sister (and their families) could never speak to me again, when the Watchtower organization compelled her to pull the knife to sever our relationship, never once did I interject: “OOOOH, wait! Let me shun you!”

Under the heading, **“How to Cope”** the article advises, **“Be absorbed in spiritual activities.”**

This is one of Dr. Robert J. Lifton’s 8 points of mind control: Doctrine Over Person. Your experiences with that person don’t count. What’s important is that you continue to follow the doctrine and immerse yourself in it. In a cult, keep busy, busy, busy so you don’t have time to think about what is really going on or how you feel about it...how you feel about cutting off your loved ones.



The insert the subtitle said, “**Have you Left Jehovah?**” and then warned, “**The storm clouds of Armageddon are swiftly approaching.**”

For the billionth time, here comes another fear-inducing tactic to manipulate people ...same rhetoric, different day.

It seems obvious to me that the writers of this article are completely discounting the emotional struggles that former Jehovah’s Witnesses face every day when their family shuns them. Additionally, there is nothing in this article that recognizes normal adolescent behavior—where every child learns to become independent by challenging their parents’ beliefs. Our human DNA is imprinted such that children in all cultures, religions and races go through this transition from childhood to adulthood and for the Watchtower to try to suppress this occurrence is to attempt to pervert who we are as human beings. When I was a Jehovah’s Witness I was taught that emerging teenage independence was a sign of “spiritual weakness” when nothing could be further from the truth. It was NORMAL.

Can you imagine a world populated by only Jehovah’s Witnesses? Imagine:

nonstop weekly meetings and family “Bible” studies
living without your children, spouse or parent(s) (the ones who didn’t make it)
dealing with Kingdom Hall politics forever (men jockeying for power)
children bored to tears, nothing to do for “fun” except attend all those meetings, hoping to glean 10 minutes of “play time” (in a suit and tie or dress nonetheless) with someone their own age

Imagine all the museums, water parks, movie theaters, restaurants, sporting goods stores, etc, wiped out. No libraries (only Watchtower literature).

What “good news” will they have to preach then? “Brother Jones and Brown picked apples today while singing spiritual songs. Sister Smith fulfilled her wifely duties by making a pie while tending to their 12 children (no pharmaceutical companies; no birth control). Let’s meet at sunset tomorrow and enjoy a slice of Sister Smith’s pie and give praise to Jehovah!”

How will people get around with the planes and trains, all the things of this world, smashed to junkyard metal? How will assemblies be held? Imagine, after living in this modern age, a life where your closest adventure involves a loooooong horseback ride and modern-day plumbing is history (hello, outhouse/scratchy leaves!).

Imagine being confined to a very small section of the world with only your local congregation members to amuse you—FOREVER. Imagine waking up every morning and knowing that your sole mission on this planet is to study, study, study Watchtower literature. Imagine this as “paradise.”

Ewww, makes me shudder!

©Brenda Lee, 2006, author “Out of the Cocoon: A Young Woman’s Courageous Flight from the Grip of a Religious Cult,” www.outofthecocoon.net