



**WHICH CAME FIRST:**

**THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD OR  
THE WATCHTOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY?  
(Are their teachings that different?)**

Let's compare the two:

<b>Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs)</b>	<b>World Wide Church of God</b>	<b>How WWC Differs from JWs</b>
Started by one man, Charles Taze Russell – an Adventist, in 1876; group was named International Bible Students when it was founded	Started by one man, Herbert Armstrong – an Adventist, in 1933; organization was named Radio Church of God when it was founded	World Wide Church of God had these additional beliefs:
Produced magazines, "Watchtower" and "Awake" (The Watchtower organization now calls its religion "The Truth")	Produced magazines, including "Plain Truth"	Members were expected to donate up to 30% of their income
Predicted Armageddon in 1914, 1915, 1925, 1975 (among many other dates)	Predicted Armageddon in 1936	Women gave birth at home and were expected to home school their kids
Women not allowed to hold positions of authority	Women not allowed to hold positions of authority	White sugar and white flour were forbidden
Produced graphic images in their magazines, using fear to control people	Produced graphic images in their magazines, using fear to control people	Surgery and prescription medication were forbidden
Held three meetings a week	Held one meeting a week, Saturday	Divorce wasn't recognized—couldn't remarry as long as ex-spouse was alive
Referred to leaders as "Elder"	Referred to leaders as "Elder"	Makeup was forbidden
Women couldn't wear slacks to meetings	Women couldn't wear slacks to meetings <i>or in general</i> ; exception: sporting events	Believed Hell meant eternal damnation
"Disfellowshipped" members	"Disfellowshipped" members	Expected members to fast for over 24 hours (no food or water)
No blood transfusions (policy changed over time)	No blood transfusions (policy changed over time)	Consumption of pork was forbidden
Members put off education, dental work, etc. in anticipation of the end	Members put off education, dental work, etc. in anticipation of the end	
Strict rules about dress and facial hair	Strict rules about dress and facial hair	
Believes in resurrection	Believes in resurrection	
Rejects trinity	Rejects trinity	
Voting not allowed	Voting not allowed	
Holidays forbidden	Holidays forbidden	
Children were beaten during services to sit still	Children were beaten during services to sit still	
Many ex-members today feel they were abused	Many ex-members today feel they were abused	

What's interesting about the similarities between these two organizations?

According to Edmond Gruss' book, *The Four Presidents of the Watch Tower Society*, page 239, "It was common knowledge that Fred Franz, Raymond's uncle, subscribed to a large number of religious magazines, and that he had a personal collection of Bible commentaries written by qualified scholars of other denominations. Supporting the suspicion that Fred sometimes plagiarized others, one former member of the headquarters staff told the author that he picked up a copy of *The Plain Truth* magazine, a publication of the World Wide Church of God, in Franz's living quarters. It was an older issue, and the young Witness was startled to find a somewhat subject-by-subject outline of a current *Watchtower* article in it."



So one might wonder, did Fred Franz plagiarize the World Wide Church of God's religious material and then pass it off to unsuspecting Jehovah's Witnesses as God-ordained/Watchtower dogma? Like the chicken and egg, which came first—the Worldwide Church of God or the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society?

©Brenda Lee, 2005, author "Out of the Cocoon: A Young Woman's Courageous Flight from the Grip of a Religious Cult,"  
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