

A Study of the Persuasion Techniques Used by Jehovah's Witnesses and the Watchtower.

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Abstract:

Critics of the Jehovah's Witnesses have often accused them of being a mind-control cult and using questionable strategies in recruiting and maintaining their membership. This paper compares aspects of the Jehovah's Witness religion with criteria from two mind control cult criteria, propaganda criteria, cognitive dissonance theory, and hypnotic processes, to explore whether there may be basis for their critics charges.

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Summary of Study

The Watchtower Society was examined to determine whether its forms of influence utilises similar strategies to more dangerous mind-control cults. According to Robert Lifton (1961), a psychologist who examined American soldiers subjected to mind control techniques by the Communist Chinese, there are eight criteria that are used evaluate if the environment that people have been subject to has been a mind control totalist environment. The Watchtower was found to utilise each of his criteria to varying degrees in their indoctrination process. The cult identifying criteria set out by exit-counsellor Steven Hassan (1990) also indicated that the Watchtower (now abbreviated to 'WT') exerted significant degrees of behaviour, information, thought and emotional control to assist in maintaining their membership.

The study then proceeded to identify the persuasive techniques of the propagandists in selecting their messages to have maximum effect on their audiences. Various pieces of WT literature were selected and analysed and found to utilise similar techniques to those used by the propagandist. Leon Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) was then examined to help explain the psychological reasons why both people become Jehovah's Witnessess (now abbreviated to 'JW's') and why people remain JW's even though there might appear more desirable alternatives known to them.

Clinical hypnotic processes were also examined and compared with cultic applications. Through their literature and social structures, Jehovah's Witnesses appeared to employ these, particularly in their recruitment processes.

The conclusion affirmed that the WT applies a variety of powerful psycho-social techniques to recruit and maintain membership.

Introduction

The Watchtower is a religious body with a membership of over five and a half million Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide. Jehovah's Witnesses are made up of people from diverse social, intellectual, religious and cultural backgrounds who voluntarily submit their spirituality, their minds, their wills and their lives to the directions and teachings of the organisation. The leadership and writings influence their people's theological beliefs, moral values, Bible interpretation, communication, reasoning, learning, language, thoughts, decisions and lifestyles. Its members display such loyalty to its teachings that they would (and some do) sacrifice their own lives, even the lives of their children, in obedience with the Watchtower's instructions concerning abstinence from blood transfusions.

Not only does it maintain an obedient and devoted membership but is also one of the fastest growing religious groups in the world. The Watchtower reports that in 1996 its members spent a total 1,140,621,714 hours preaching its doctrines (1996 Report of the Jehovah's Witnesses Worldwide, 1997). The number of people being baptised per year has risen from 300,000 in 1992 to 366,579 in 1996 - a rise of 22% in just four years (ibid; Stevens, 1996:5). Although Jehovah's Witness proselytising is extensive and persistent, this alone does not adequately explain **why** people become attracted and convert to the Watchtower's unique beliefs and strict lifestyle. This study examines particular psychological and social factors explaining why people become and remain Jehovah's Witnesses. It does this by contrasting and comparing information relating to the Watchtower with evaluative criteria taken from a range of relevant disciplines.

Criteria for Cult Manipulation

The majority of people would know Jehovah's Witnesses as nicely groomed people who come cold-calling at their doors on unpredictable occasions promoting their literature or introducing their beliefs through carefully prepared conversations on issues that may be of concern to the householder. Some view them as interesting to talk to, while others avoid or attack them. Many view them as a curious and innocent group, while others class them in the more dangerous category as cult. More and more testimonies and articles are being written accusing the WT of being a mind control cult while the Watchtower (now WT) and its members vehemently deny this charge (The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom¹ [WT] 15/2/1994:3-7). Two of the more standard criterias used in determining group mind control will be examined in relation to the JW's.

Lifton's Criteria for Thought Reform

Robert Lifton's book Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism (1961) is still a standard text in identifying the marks of cult mind control (Hassan & Das, n.d.). The book comes as a result of his studies of the techniques of 'brainwashing' or 'thought reform' used by the Red Chinese during the

¹ The Watchtower magazine, or its abbreviated WT, indicate either Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence (1879 - 1909), The Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence (1909 - 1931), The Watchtower and Herald of Christ's Presence (1931 - January, 1939), The Watchtower and Herald of Christ's Kingdom (January, 1939 - March, 1939), and The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom (1939 -) (Reed, 1995:138).

Korean war on American prisoners and now more and more researchers and psychologists have noted similar patterns within cultic groups (Gordon, n.d.). In chapter eight, Lifton lists eight criteria to judge whether mind control is being used.

These criteria consist of eight psychological themes which are predominant within the social field of the thought reform milieu. Each has a totalistic quality; each depends upon an equally absolute philosophical assumption; each mobilises certain individual emotional tendencies, mostly of a polarising nature. Psychological theme, philosophical rationale, and polarised individual tendencies are interdependent; they require, rather than directly cause, each other. In combination they create an atmosphere which may temporarily energise or exhilarate, but which at the same time poses the gravest of human threats. (Lifton, 1961:420 quoted by Groenveld, n.d.)

Below is a synthesis of Lifton's ideas with general cultic application. Each description is followed with an evaluation of the JW's in relation to the statement. Although the following information stresses environmental factors, manipulation of the environment is a technique used not only to implement and facilitate mind control techniques, but is a form of mind control technique in its own right. By manipulating the environment the cult group manipulates those within it to greater and lesser degrees. It would be almost impossible to identify the exact individual components of mind control within any given environment so for the purposes of this study those already identified mind control environments will be examined as a whole. Mind control is not achieved as a result of one stand alone element but a series of elements working together. Environmental manipulation is a technique used by those who attempt to exert mind control on their members.

Milieu Control

The organisation seeks to control the environment and human communication within the environment (Characteristics of a Destructive Cult, n.d.). The control of communication includes inter-personal control, informational control, and intra-personal thought control (Hassan & Das, n.d.). Reading critical literature or thinking critical thoughts is banned. The thought reform environment aims is to control "what the individual sees, hears, reads, writes, experiences and expresses" (Groenveld, n.d.). Truth is the sole possession of the organisation and reality is defined by its definitions, standards, and interpretations (ibid). Independent judgement must be thwarted to maintain obedience to and dependence on the organisation.

The Watchtower claims that it alone teaches truth² and any other source should be viewed with suspicion³. JW's cannot determine truth from the Bible; truth must be interpreted by the Governing Body⁴. Members are not allowed to write apologetic material themselves and pass it around among the congregation. Contemporary Watchtower publications are the most reliable truth, while older publications are truth only when in agreement to current WT teaching.

² "Channel to understanding the Bible.. All who want to understand the Bible should appreciate that the 'greatly diversified wisdom of God' can become known only through Jehovah's channel of communication, the faithful and discreet slave." (WT Oct 1 1994 8)

³ "Why not read other's literature? .. Witnesses do not go to people's doors searching for truth or enlightenment. Rather, they already have devoted countless hours learning the truth .. people who believe that 'there is good in all religions' might consider it narrow-minded to think otherwise.. Jehovah's Witnesses are not ignorant of others' beliefs. They have gained considerable basic knowledge of the doctrinal beliefs of religions [from] 'What Has Religion Done for Mankind?' as well as numerous articles in The Watchtower and Awake! God's Word warns Christians that 'Satan himself keeps transforming himself into an angel of light. It is therefore nothing great if his ministers also keep transforming themselves into ministers of righteousness. But their end shall be according to their works.' (2 Corinthians 11:14, 15) Satan so successfully appeared as 'an angel of light' that he was able to deceive even a perfect human, Eve. (1 Timothy 2:14) So it would be foolhardy, as well as a waste of valuable time, for Jehovah's Witnesses to accept and expose themselves to false religious literature that is designed to deceive." (WT May 1 1984 31)

⁴ "We all need help to understand the Bible, and we cannot find the Scriptural guidance we need outside the 'faithful and discreet slave' organization." (WT 15/2/1981)

Kingdom Halls must follow exactly the order of service outline provided by the Brooklyn Headquarters. Congregations do not use musicians to play the assigned hymns, rather for conformity sake, accompanying music is provided on tape / CD from Brooklyn. Jehovah's Witnesses are not allowed to hold any unauthorised (by Brooklyn Headquarters) congregational meetings.

Members have been encouraged to spend time away from secular (worldly) activities, such as higher education and unnecessary extra employment, so as to spend more time pursuing 'kingdom' activities (Groenveld, n.d.)⁵. The JW's are encouraged to fellowship with other JW's and to abstain as much as possible from 'worldly' relationships⁶ (Sherrill, n.d.; Pay Attention to Yourselves and the Flock [PAYF], 1991:22). Interaction with the world is only through business and witnessing. In proselytising they are often verbally abused and further alienated from outside contacts.

The Watchtower extends its control to the thoughts within the minds of their people. People are not allowed to think thoughts that are independent of Watchtower doctrine or policy. The Society writes:

"To this day, it [independent thinking] has been Satan's subtle design to infect God's people with this type of thinking.—2 Timothy 3:1, 13. 21 How is such independent thinking manifested? A common way is by questioning the counsel that is provided by God's visible organization." (WT 15.1.1983:22)

Jehovah's Witnesses fill their lives and minds with Watchtower information, WT activities and Witness friends and family. The WT, in effect, has managed to isolate their members from society intellectually and relationally, without physically removing them.

Mystical Manipulation

People are manipulated towards specific patterns of behaviour and emotions in such a way that appears to have originated mystically (Characteristics of a Destructive Cult (CDC), n.d.). The totalist leaders claim to be sole agents of God (or another supernatural source), disclosing God's requirements and truth, so the person must rely solely on them for divine guidance and salvation (CDC, n.d.). Stories of God's providence over group members are relayed affirming that they are in the truth, while at the same time anything negative that happens to those who have left the group is attributed to "God's punishment" (Watters, n.d.[c]). Any criticisms encountered are 'persecution' and are a sign that Satan is reacting against 'the truth'.

The WT claim that they are the only God-chosen organisation. At times, prominent officials or its own magazine has placed God as its manager and editor of its publications (Fred W. Franz-For Defts.-Direct, NY King's County Clerk's court record, 1940, Vol.II:795; WT 1/11/1956:666 quoted in Reed, 1995:93). People are told to respond to the Watchtower publications as they would the voice of God, and disobedience to WT directions is equated with disobedience to God (WT 15/6/1957:370; WT

⁵ "In view of the short time left, a decision to pursue a career in this system of things is not only unwise but extremely dangerous .. Many young brothers and sisters were offered scholarship or employment that promised fine pay. However, they turned them down and put spiritual interests first." {KMIN Jun 1969 3}

⁶ "7 One area might be our manner of dealing with others. Proverbs 13:20 cautions: "He that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly." Failing to apply this inspired counsel, some allow themselves to become overly familiar with worldly individuals at work and at school." (WT 15/7/1988:17)
"For example, the apostle Paul told fellow Christians: "Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits." (1 Corinthians 15:33) Do you agree with that? As Paul indicated, it is easy to be misled in the matter of association. A person may appear friendly and agreeable. But if he does not share your concern for Jehovah's service or even believe in the Bible's promises, he is a bad associate. Why? Because his life is based on different principles, and things that are very important to a Christian may be of little consequence to him." (WT 15/7/1991:23)

15/2/1976:124). In their Yearbooks are published vivid accounts of how angels guarded Witnesses in dangerous situations and stories of how people remain loyal to 'Jehovah's organisation' even under persecution for being God's chosen people.

Jehovah's Witnesses may warn their prospective convert that once they begin regular Bible studies with the Witnesses demons may attack them. When any negative event follows, such as a family member warning them to beware of the JW's, this is interpreted as demonic attack and confirmation of the validity of the JW's message (Francis, 1985:64)⁷.

Positive feelings towards the group are manipulated in such a way that it appears to have divine origin. By the use of questions designed for preconceived answers, recruits give logical answers on topics only to discover that the answers they give align completely with the Jehovah's Witnesses understanding, thus verifying the 'Truth'⁸ (Burrows, n.d.[d]). For people who visit the Kingdom Hall, members are encouraged to make them feel valued, inviting them to dinner or calling in on friendly visits. Planned spontaneity is arranged by bringing somebody new each visit, so that when the person finally visits the Kingdom Hall, he/she will already be familiarised with many members of the congregation (Groenveld, n.d.). The purpose of all this attention is to let "them see that genuine love exists among Jehovah's people" (PAYF, 1991:22) and to help fill the "void created when they cut off former associations and worldly entertainment" (ibid). The positive feelings orchestrated by the individual and group serve to reinforce that they really are God's people.

The JW's repeatedly emphasise the spirit and biblical world and judge physical reality from their metaphysical mind-set. They believe that God has truly chosen their organisation and that Satan is doing everything possible to disrupt God's work through them. They are in the middle of a 'spiritual battle' with ever present dangers therefore they need to stay close to their mother organisation. New converts learn to view their everyday experiences and emotions as resulting from spiritual struggles with the Devil or spiritual blessings from Jehovah.

Loading the Language

Through controlling language organisations can control thinking (Hassan & Das, n.d.). By using 'conversation-stopping' clichés and words such as 'chauvinist' or 'upright citizen', whole complicated ideas or movements can be compressed into a positive or negative connotative statement (ibid). Words are given new meanings according to the organisation's ideology either to separate the 'in-group' from the 'outsiders', or to make their message more acceptable to those they are trying to convert (CDC, n.d.). In the Moonies, all human relationships were described in two phrases. A 'Cain-Abel' relationship signified a superior/inferior relationship while 'Chapter 2 problems' related to sexuality, and any attraction felt between members (Hassan, 1990:176). Hassan comments that such simplification of complicated life issues into "a single set of principles that have an inner coherence" enables people to "claim the experience of truth and feel it." (ibid.)

⁷ "8 While it is true that Jehovah's Witnesses are hated and opposed in all the nations of the earth, this is in fulfillment of what was foretold to be an identifying mark of genuine worshipers of the one living and true God. (John 15:20, 21; 2 Timothy 3:12) So instead of being discouraged and disheartened by this, proclaimers of the good news are reassured that they have divine approval and belong to the approved organization of the Universal Sovereign, Jehovah." (WT 1/1/1990:10-15)

⁸ For example, if a Jehovah's Witness wants to have a recruit answer that war is wrong, and that true Christians do not fight in war he/she might ask "When Jesus said 'You shall love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you' (Matthew 5:44) did he really mean that his loyal followers should mercilessly slaughter their enemies in war?" The natural answer would be 'no'. A following question might be "Do you think that people who belong to the Protestant or Catholic denominations, which has in the past and even in recent times, been involved with terrible slaughter, truly reflect Christ's peaceful desires?" Again the most likely answer would be 'no'.

The WT literature is surprisingly appealing and psychologically powerful. It utilises simple, cliché-ridden language to attract and impress the imaginative and simple minded people (Gordon, n.d.). The WT uses totalistic value-laden words to separate its doctrines and people from outsiders. To illustrate this further, information from 'apostates' (ie. any of all former members of the WT - no exceptions) is 'spiritual pornography' from the 'evil slave' which dines at 'the table of demons' whereas official WT knowledge is from the 'faithful and discreet slave' (the WT Governing Body) who eat 'true spiritual food' (ie spiritual knowledge) at 'Jehovah's table' (WT, 1/7/1994:11; Let Your Name Be Sanctified, 1961:302; WT 1/8/1980:20). To cope with the dissonance caused by past WT 'truth' becoming outdated with new contradictory 'truth' metaphors are employed to subtly redefine the definition of truth. The light of truth becomes progressively brighter, revealing new truths clearer than ever before and supposedly adding to, but not contradicting old truths (Zion's Watch Tower, 2/1881:3). However the evidence at many points indicates doctrinal contradiction, so more recently the WT added another metaphor for 'truth':

At times explanations given by Jehovah's organization have shown adjustments, seemingly to previous points of view. But this has not actually been the case. This is compared to what is known in navigational circles as "tacking." By manoeuvring the sails the sailors can cause a ship to go from right to left, back and forth, but all the time making progress toward their destination in spite of contrary winds. (WT, 1/12/1981:27)

The WT has subtly changed meanings of both contemporary terminology and biblical terminology. The Watchtower does not deny its alteration in language but rather proclaims that it uses 'pure language' taught by Jehovah (WT 15/8/1981:28-29). In Genesis 1:2 in their New World Translation, they translate 'ruach' 'active force' instead of 'spirit' to justify their doctrine that the Holy Spirit is a force. WT literature has many examples of redefined terminology from biblical, Christian theology and modern day examples⁹. By loading the language the WT are able to exert control over how their members think and manipulate the logic of unsuspecting householders, both Christian and non-Christian alike, to more readily arrive at WT conclusions. [Also see section titled [The Substitution of Names](#)].

Doctrine over Person

The belief of the group's ideology is all-important, whether it aligns with reality and experience or not (Hassan & Das, n.d.). Anyone who questions the organisation's beliefs is made to feel wrong for having done so, often having their questions used to judge their motives, character or integrity (CDC, n.d.). The person's value to the group is dependent on their conformity to the group's ideals (Watters, n.d.[c]). The organisation's ultimate directive is to clone the members of the group, rather than encourage individual expressiveness, identity formation or independent thinking (ibid). The person's thoughts or past and present experiences that do not align with doctrine must be reshaped, rewritten or denied (ibid).

In the WT doctrine takes precedence over people. For over thirty years JW's were forbidden, on the threat of expulsion from the organisation and rejection of God, to receive vaccinations on the basis that it was "a direct violation of the everlasting covenant God made with Noah after the flood" (The Golden Age Magazine 4/2/1931:293). Furthermore, until 1980 Jehovah's Witnesses considered organ transplants as cannibalistic (WT 15/11/1967:702 cf. WT 15/3/1980:31). After changing its policy on both these issues, without apology or compensation to those whose lives are damaged as a result of loved ones dying, the WT still demands its followers to abstain unconditionally from blood transfusions. To this day the medical needs of thousands of their own members have been neglected

⁹ A modern day example is the alteration in meaning of the word 'publisher'. To the Jehovah's Witness, the word 'publisher' indicates somebody who is an active Jehovah's Witness door-knocker. The popular meaning of 'publisher' however, is a person or company who publishes "periodicals, books, music etc.," (Sinclair, 1992:1254).

causing preventable, untimely deaths by doctrines that may be (or have been) changed at the whim of the leaders.

The following quote is a striking example of not only how the WT is able to maintain a cloning effect within its membership (members literally being 'one in mind'), but how the WT blames people's independent evaluations on less than desirable motive and implied rebellious character:

"From time to time, there have arisen from among the ranks of Jehovah's people those who, like the original Satan, have adopted an independent, faultfinding attitude....they present a "stubborn shoulder" to Jehovah's words...They try to sow doubts and to separate unsuspecting ones from the bounteous "table" of spiritual food spread at the Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's Witnesses, where truly there is 'nothing lacking.' (Ps.23.1-6) They say that it is sufficient to read the Bible exclusively, either alone or in small groups at home. But strangely, through such 'Bible reading,' they have reverted right back to the apostate doctrines that commentaries by Christendom's clergy were teaching 100 years ago..." (WT 15/8/1981:28-29)¹⁰

The Sacred Science

Here the organisation or group proclaims it alone has absolute truth, scientifically, psychologically and morally; and there are no valid alternatives (Hassan & Das, n.d.; Watters, n.d.[c]; CDC, n.d.). An aura of sacredness is maintained around its fundamental ideologies, originators of the doctrines and its present leaders. Criticising or questioning any of these is prohibited (CDC, n.d.).

The WT proclaims boldly that it is the only organisation today proclaiming the 'Truth', whether it be theological, psychological, medical and moral. The Watchtower asserts: "If we are to walk in the light of truth we must recognize not only Jehovah God as our Father but his organization as our mother." (1/5/1957:274). It is taught that God is the head of the corporation, the divine One who directs the organisation (WT 1/6/1985:19). Charles Russell, the sect's founder boldly proclaimed "the truths I present as God's mouthpiece" (WT 15/7/1906:3821 as quoted in Reed, 1995:77) continued similarly by the WT claiming that it as an organisation is the sole channel of communication God is using today¹¹. No questioning or criticism of God's visible organisation is allowed¹². To step out on their own by independently thinking, Jehovah's Witnesses are reminded, is to be engaged in a battle against Satanic forces who will surely win without the support of the 'worldwide association of brothers' (WT 15/1/1983).

Psychologically, those who are Jehovah's Witnesses are promised happiness and joy by obeying the organisation¹³ while those who forsake the teaching of the organisation will forfeit joy and moral

¹⁰ "Apostates often appeal to the ego, claiming that we have been deprived of our freedoms, including the freedom to interpret the Bible for ourselves. (Compare Genesis 3:15.) In reality, these would-be defilers offer nothing more than a return to the nauseating teachings of "Babylon the Great." (Revelation 17:5; 2 Peter 2:19-22) Others appeal to the flesh, urging former associates to "take it easy" because the humble work of witnessing from house to house is "unnecessary" or "unscriptural" (Compare Matthew 16:22,23.) True, such smooth talkers may look outwardly clean in a physical and moral way. But inside they are spiritually unclean, having given in to prideful, independent thinking. They have forgotten all that they learned about Jehovah...." (WT 1/11/1987:19-20 quoted in Watters, Mindcont.htm) and: "Yet there are some who point out that the organization has had to make adjustments before, and so they argue: "This shows that we have to make up our own mind on what to believe." This is independent thinking. Why is it so dangerous? Such thinking is an evidence of pride." (WT 15/1/1983)

¹¹ "Jehovah caused the Bible to be written in such a way that you need his human channel to understand it." (WT 15/2/1981:17 quoted in Reed, 1995:71 [emphasis added])

¹² "Do not criticize the organization. If Jehovah permits it, who are we to insist it should be different?" (WT 1/5/1957:284 as quoted in Reed, 1995:75)

¹³ cf. "Busy and happy servants of Jehovah 'allow no place for the Devil' or for apostate ideas" (WT 15/3/1986:19)

purity¹⁴. The psychological results reported at one time by the WT regarding those who disobey WT policy by receiving a blood transfusion are: "Moral insanity, sexual perversions, repression, inferiority complexes, petty crimes - these often follow in the wake of blood transfusion." (WT 1/9/1961:564)¹⁵.

In their brochure, *How can blood save your life* the WT builds a case for blood transfusions from a medical perspective, reiterating its conclusion whether it be scientifically or medically accurate or not. Further pressure is exerted on its members in that by failing to fulfil the demands of the WT is an offence before the eyes of God (WT 15/2/1976:402), hence obedience is ensured.

As an aside, it is interesting to note that the Watchtower denies inspiration¹⁶ yet it:

- demands its people follow its directions as if spoken by God (WT 15/6/1957:370)
- claims that it is God's channel of communication (WT 15/1/1969:51) · claims to be an organisation that Jehovah is directing and making His will known (WT 1/11/1956:666)
- claims that Jehovah is providing guidance through the columns of the WatchTower (WT 1/5/1964:277-278)
- identifies itself as prophets whom God is dispensing progressive revelations through and in its Bible dictionary claims that both Old Testament prophets and Christian prophets were inspired by God (WT 15/6/1964:365-366 cf Aid to Bible Understanding [WT CDROM, 1995: IT-2:694])
- claims to make decisions under the influence of the Holy Spirit (WT CDROM, 1995, pe 193 23)¹⁷.

The Watchtower, in its publications, gives more than an impression that it is inspired, and demands total obedience and support from its members, as if it were speaking the very words of God (thus infallible). Yet at the same time it admits it is not inspired. This is a contradiction that Jehovah's Witnesses are able to maintain in their thinking. The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that their beliefs and organisation are not man-made but originated with God therefore all information deriving from the WT must be 'truth'.

The Cult of Confession

The organisation requires confession that goes beyond legal and therapeutic boundaries (Gordon, n.d.). Members are encouraged to confess nonconforming thoughts, feelings, and actions to the

¹⁴ "As to the effects of a course of apostasy, one immediate result is a loss of joy. The apostate becomes hardened in his rebellious ways. Another is he fails to take in the spiritual food provided by "the faithful and discreet slave"-this leading to spiritual weakness and breakdown of spirit. Contrasting the happiness of his loyal servants with the sad condition of apostates...

After having yielded to such works of the flesh as "enmities, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, contentions, divisions, sects," apostates often fall victim to other fleshly works such as "drunken bouts," "loose conduct" and "fornication." (Gal. 5:19-21)" (WT 1/8/1980:20)

¹⁵ "Thinking people would rather have smallpox than vaccination, because the latter sows seeds of syphilis, cancers, eczema, erysipelas, scrofula, consumption, even leprosy and many other loathsome affections. Hence the practice of vaccinations is a crime, an outrage, and a delusion". (Golden Age, 5/1/1929:502)

¹⁶ "The men in Jehovah's organization who prepare spiritual instruction for the Lord's "sheep" diligently study the Scriptures to learn what God has put there for the instruction and guidance of his people. They make no claim of inspiration-only that they are Bible students. Since their comments on the Scriptures are not inspired, they can at times make mistakes." (WT 15/12/1962:762)

¹⁷ "Follow the direction of his spirit-inspired Word, the Bible. Cooperate fully with God's spirit-led earthly organization." (WT 15/9/1992:18). Note spirit-inspired and spirit-led terminology.

group as an act of self-surrender and a display of loyalty to the group's ideals (Hassan & Das, n.d.). The confessions are accompanied with criticism and self-criticism to lead to change (CDC, n.d.).

As JW's, individuals are expected to confess certain sins to the elders even though through such confession they may be entitled to receive one of a number of punishments (Groenveld, n.d.). If they do not, others who are aware of the person's injunction, whether friends or family, are expected to report them to the elders or live with the guilt (ibid.). It is the responsibility for the elders to judge what steps should be taken. If an individual is called up to the elders but "does not admit the wrong nature or see the need to repent, they may have to present convincing evidence concerning his sin and concerning his righteousness" (WT 1/9/1981:23). If it is a gross sin (ie. a sin that could bring the congregation into ill-repute, or a serious private sin), a judicial committee will be gathered (PAYAF, 1991:95).

Another way of confessing is that of putting in field reports. All publishers (those who go door-to-door offering WT publications) are required to hand in field reports of all 'kingdom activities' for the month. (Groenveld, n.d.). The report includes the hours spent door-knocking, the amount of literature sold and the number of people doctrine was discussed with (ibid.).

The Demand for Purity

The absolute goal is purification according to the group's criteria. The world is sharply polarised between that which is 'pure' and that which is 'impure' (CDC, n.d.). Only those thoughts and actions consistent with the group's dogma and expectations are 'good' and morally right; everything else is stereotyped as 'evil'. The individual conscience is unreliable and thus the individual must put absolute trust in the 'true' teachings of the group (Watters, n.d.[c]). The in-group propaganda, in comparing 'outside' ways to its own 'perfect' teachings of purity, often vehemently oppose all of the other impure 'systems' of immorality and injustice thus creating guilt and shame on members when they fail to achieve the group's perfectionist ideals (ibid). People who fail to live up to the group's expectations are punished or taught to punish themselves. Natural urges and emotional sensitivity towards guilt and shame are used as levers for control (Gordon, n.d.).

The WT has divided the world into two groups: those who are part of God's kingdom and those who are part of Satan's. Every worldly thing emanates from Satan and is thus inherently evil and to be rejected (eg celebrating birthdays) (Groenveld, n.d.). Those who are part of God's kingdom (i.e. the NWS [New World Society]) must devote absolute loyalty and obedience to it and its requirements¹⁸. The individual's conscience is not a reliable guide - only with the aid of WT materials can one distinguish between what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false, what is godly and what is worldly (ibid.). Members are encouraged to feel repulsed at any worldly thought or action. Those who do not obey the Society's demands are made to feel guilty, or if found out and are not repentant are shunned, marked or disfellowshipped by the congregation (including immediate family, and close friends)¹⁹.

¹⁸ "From the year 1945 especially, truths concerning blood began to be revealed and since then have served as a guide for all who have respect for God's law on the sanctity of blood. Obedience to these and many more such progressively revealed truths has enabled God's servants to worship him properly and meet his requirements for life." (WT 15/6/1954:368).

"Carried over into the Christian system of things likewise is the principle embodied in the fifth commandment, "honor your father and your mother." Of course, Christian children have natural fathers and mothers to obey. (Eph. 6:1-4) Besides that, all Christians have Jehovah God as "our Father," and his heavenly organization, Jerusalem, as "our mother." These, above all else, they are to honor and obey." (WT 1/5/1961:282)

¹⁹ Punishments vary from a private rebuke to full shunning. Marking is a quasi-shunning where guilty members are implicitly pointed out in a speech to the congregation. The congregation is told to limit social contact with the guilty party. Shunning is issued to a person who has been disfellowshipped for committing a serious sin (eg questioning a doctrine) or disassociated for leaving the sect. When shunning, Witnesses are told not associate with the shunned person if they want to remain loyal

The Dispensing of Existence

Within the group ideology, its members are part of the elect who are walking in the truth, while all others are in the dark and therefore are not worthy to exist (Gordon, n.d.; CDC, n.d.). In totalitarian states this may warrant executions (Hassan & Das, n.d.). The group decides the criteria for who will have eternal life and who will not (CDC, n.d.). By joining the group and submitting to its requirements one is given the right of eternal existence whereas one leaving the group forfeits this right (Dr. Robert J. Lifton's Criteria for Thought Reform, n.d.).

The WT has sharply polarised its distinctiveness from all other people and organisations today. In the JW publication Revelation: It's Grand Climax at Hand! (referred to as now as Grand Climax) people are categorised as either Jehovah's seed and belonging to his "wifelike celestial organization" (1988:11) or "Satan's human seed" (ibid., 12) belonging to his "invisible organisation on earth." (ibid., 11)²⁰. Those identifying themselves with the WT will be resurrected after death, to either live forever on earth or in heaven, depending on what class according to WT doctrine they belong (WT 15/2/1983:12; 15/11/1981:21; Grand Climax, 1988:12). "There is nowhere else to go for divine favor and life eternal." (WT 15/11/1992:21). Those who are outsiders have a destiny of annihilation (cf. The New World, 1942:249). By becoming a member and following its prescribed beliefs and behaviours, outsiders may be included in the in-group and have life eternal granted. By voluntarily or involuntarily leaving the organisation one automatically forfeits the right to eternal existence.

Hassan's Criteria for Mind Control

Steven Hassan is a leading American Exit Counsellor who authored Combatting Cult Mind Control (1990); now a standard text for understanding the tactics and influences of the cults (Hassan & Das, n.d.). He believes that cults try to suppress people's distinct individual freedom by suppressing their free will, talents, creativity and ability to think for themselves. The ultimate goal of indoctrination and gradual disassociation is to make unique individuals into 'clones' that fit the cult's mould or, theologically speaking, to re-mould people bearing God's image to people reflecting the image of the cult leader/s (ibid.).

Hassan lists four main categories of mind control:

Behaviour Control

Behaviour control is about directing the individual's behaviour and movements within his/her physical reality (Groenveld, n.d.). The cult may exert control over a person's accommodation, interpersonal association, physical appearance, time of sleep, partner selection, speech, education, career, finance, leisure, sexual activities and children (Hassan, 1990:60; Groenveld, n.d.; Four Aspects of Mind Control (FAMC), n.d.). Each cult has its own specific schedules and behaviours that the members are expected to conform to. Often there are rigid rules and guidelines that members are expected to enact in accordance with displaying loyalty to the group's philosophy. Absolute obedience and dependence to both the group and its leadership is demanded (Hassan & Das, n.d.). Cults often

to Jehovah (Pay Attention, 1991:103). The extent to which people are allowed to associate with shunned members or family tends to change through the years. In 1981 JW's were told to say not even a simple hello to shunned members (WT 15/9/1981). If Jehovah's Witnesses do not fulfill the shunning requirements but socialise with shunned members they too can be punished.

²⁰ "On Satan's side will be all the rest of mankind, more than 99.9 percent, even as we read: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (WT 15/10/1958:614-615)

demand large time commitments for group related activities and indoctrination (ibid). Behavioural modification techniques, including the use of positive and negative reinforcements, and punishment, are actively used to encourage and maintain 'correct' behaviour (FAMC, n.d.). People are encouraged to report feelings, thoughts and activities to superiors for continual monitoring (Hassan & Das, n.d.). The leaders know that they cannot directly control the thoughts of people but if they can control people's behaviour, then their minds and hearts will follow (Hassan, 1990:59; FAMC, n.d.; Groenveld, n.d.).

The WT exerts behavioural control over their members. Richard Francis, an ex-JW after thirty years of membership, comments:

"Already there are millions of people who have given unqualified allegiance, at least in word, to this organization. They follow its advice in matters as important as sex, birth control, euthanasia, medical treatments, employment, education, career, business, marriage, divorce, child-training, interpersonal activities, social relationships, etc." (Francis, 1985:32).

Members have been told how not to dress and groom, who they may or may not associate with, to study WT literature rather than pursue higher education, to spend their time in Kingdom activities (proselytising, attending multiple congregational meetings each week, attending Bible study groups) rather than in unnecessary extra employment or leisure, and what they should say in answer to objections raised in door-to-door ministry (Groenveld, n.d.). Active witnesses are to report activities according to rank - publisher field service reports, congregation report cards, special pioneer reports, missionary home reports and circuit and district overseers' reports monthly field service report, missionary home reports (Branch Procedures, n.d.:16). Required behaviour is linked with Scripture (and WT magazine articles) to ensure obedience.

Conformity is often misjudged by outsiders as either participants showing strength of character or displaying loving unity (FAMC, n.d.). The opposite is often true. Unless Witnesses behave according to WT 'recommendations' they may be punished by having privileges withdrawn, be rebuked by elders or a judicial meeting, be publicly shamed by having their name read out to the congregation for committing an offence, be marked (quasi-shunned), shunned or disfellowshipped (Burrows, n.d.[b]).

Information Control

By controlling information cults prevent people making informed judgements and critical evaluation to guide their thinking and decisions independently (Groenveld, n.d.). Cults often utilise deceptive techniques, such as distorting information, withholding information or outright lying, to recruit and maintain followers (Hassan & Das, n.d.; FAMC, n.d.). Accessing sources of information from outside of the cult is discouraged (ie TV, radio, magazines, books), and any media critical of the cult from any source but particularly if written by former members is forbidden and to be rejected outright (Hassan & Das, n.d.; Hassan, 1990:65).

In contrast to its censorship of outside information, the cult will generate its own information about its doctrines, practices, history and commentaries on contemporary and historical issues and organisations. These may take the form of journals, sacred writings (e.g. The Book of Mormon), newsletters, videos or any other useful media (Hassan & Das, n.d.). Misquotations and statements from non-cult sources are often used to justify the cult's views (ibid.). The people are encouraged to live on a learning diet consisting of a sole intake of cultic propaganda to align their thinking with the cult's views.

Even the cult's own information is not always accessible (Hassan & Das, n.d.). Often there is a hierarchical structure with levels of information for people according to their rank . Those in the recruit stage often receive glamorous tokens of information but only as they become more entrenched in the

group are they exposed to the more important and unpalatable doctrines (FAMC, n.d.). Who needs to know what is decided among the leadership (Hassan & Das, n.d.).

The WT is a classic organisation to study regarding its use of information control. Outside information, whether it contains religious or non-religious content, is censored to rank-and-file members²¹. The need to avoid information from ex-members is particularly emphasised. The WT often uses graphic similes such as likening 'apostate' material to pornography or gangrene - resulting in spiritual death (WT 15/3/1986:14-15)²².

The Watchtower generates enormous amounts of literature to be distributed all around the world, informing its people about its history, its beliefs and practices, and giving advice on personal issues of all varieties. The WT, in many ways stands as judge. It decides which history books are correct, which medical practices are moral, how to interpret the Bible, what beliefs and practices are God-honouring, when Christ has spiritually returned and when the world will end.

The average Witness intellectual diet consists of studying WT literature and discussing WT doctrine. Jehovah's Witnesses are expected to read each fortnightly edition of the Watchtower magazine from cover to cover (approximately 30 pages) as well as to come prepared to discuss the articles at the meetings held each week (Theocratic Ministry School Guidebook, 1971:36). They are also expected to be well versed in all of the other contemporary WT literature. David Reed, an ex-JW comments that "the books, magazines, lessons, and so on, added up to over three thousand pages each year, compared with less than two hundred pages of Bible reading assigned" (1986:121). The articles and the discussions centre around a few pertinent WT doctrinal themes. The repetitiousness of the material and the intensity with which it is studied has a total indoctrination effect over the members.

Jehovah's Witnesses believe and teach that the Bible is God's Word and therefore has the most important place in their devotion and beliefs. This is true in theory. In practice it appears the WT organization and literature that has the most influence. The Bible has not changed, yet the Jehovah's Witnesses have changed and updated their beliefs as the Society has introduced 'new light'. Although its contents are often based on biblical analysis, the literature has instructed members that if they had a choice between reading the Bible or the WT, they should choose the WT²³. The WT writers report that they are not inspired, yet claims that "God uses The Watchtower to communicate to his people; it does not consist of men's opinions." (WT 1/1/1942). Its people respond to it as if it were infallible. Jehovah's Witnesses claim they put the Bible first (WT 4/15/1971:35) yet history has shown their beliefs and behaviour change whenever WT reasoning and Bible interpretation changes.

²¹ "it would be foolhardy, as well as a waste of valuable time, for Jehovah's Witnesses to accept and expose themselves to false religious literature that is designed to deceive... Hence, it is out of wisdom and respect for God's counsel that Jehovah's Witnesses do not make a practice of exchanging valuable Bible study aids containing Scriptural truth for religious literature that disseminates error or apostate views" (WT 1/5/1984:31 - Questions from Readers quoted by Reed, 1996:58). JW's are not to "circulate among the brothers private material on matters such as medical or counseling services." (OKM 9/1987:4 cited in Reed, 1996:59)

²² "How could one become guilty of partaking of the table of demons in our day? By serving the interests of anything opposed to Jehovah. The table of demons includes all demonic propaganda, which is designed to mislead and turn and to turn us away from Jehovah. Who would want to feed his heart and mind on such poison?" (WT; 1/7/1994: 9)

²³ "Furthermore, not only do we find that people cannot see the Divine Plan in studying the Bible by itself, but we see, also, that if anyone lays the Scripture Studies aside, even after he has used them, after he has become familiar with them, after he has read them for ten years - if he lays them aside and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness. On the other hand, if he had merely read the Scripture Studies with their references, and had not read a page of the Bible, as such, he would be in the light at the end of the two years, because he would have the light of the Scriptures." (WT 15/9/1910:298) and more recently stated: "They say that it is sufficient to read the Bible exclusively, either alone or in small groups at home. But, strangely, through such 'Bible reading,' they have reverted right back to the apostate doctrines that commentaries by Christendom's clergy were teaching 100 years ago,..." (WT 15/8/1981:29)

Information is limited according to who is requiring it. For the 'enemies of God', the JW is allowed to lie²⁴. Accessibility of information is limited. The higher the place one has in the organisation the more material will be available for accessing. Those who write the WT articles often quote from a wide variety of books including works written by Christians, spiritists, and secular authors. These books are not allowed to be read by the average JW. Books, such as Pay Attention to Yourselves and the Flock (1991) are not to be viewed by anybody of lesser position than elder. The higher up the WT hierarchy a person is the more information from the WT and other sources will be available to him/her.

[See sections titled Selection and Card-Stacking and Deception and Lying for related analysis]

Thought Control

Cults employ thought controlling and thought-stopping techniques to maintain control of their people. Thought control is effected by conditioning members to internalise the cult's ideology and world-view as 'Truth' (Hassan & Das, n.d.). This acts as a filter for all incoming information and regulates how information is processed (Groenveld, n.d.). The group adopts its own unique language made up of words from every-day use and Scripture having the meanings either subtly modified or grossly distorted. Changing the vocabulary has a twofold purpose. Its reductionist language serves to reduce the complexities of life and knowledge into simplistic, dualistic frameworks thus reducing and limiting the understanding of cult members and verifying the group's rationale that it alone has the answer to life (Hassan & Das, n.d.). The second purpose of 'loading' the language is to create barriers between the insiders and outsiders (Hassan, 1990:62). In evangelism it serves to confuse the outsiders about their own religious beliefs contrasted with a more reasonable argument postulated by the recruiter. Apologetically, it may prevent discernment of the group's more undesirable and unacceptable doctrines to the antagonistic outsider or interested persons. For the ingroup it serves to help members think only in terms of the 'official' thought patterns (Stevens, 1996:33).

Members are not only indoctrinated by the group but are also encouraged to indoctrinate themselves through thought-stopping techniques (Hassan, 1990:62). Since the members are taught not to critically evaluate the leaders or doctrines, they must stop discordant reasoning and encourage only 'good' and 'proper' thoughts (Hassan & Das, n.d.). By employing techniques such as denial, rationalising, justifying, wishful thinking, chanting, meditating, repetition of Bible-verses, singing, and speaking in tongues the people can drown out any destabilising cogitations (ibid, FAMC, n.d.).

The Jehovah's Witnesses have their own unique language. Their language is simple, reductionist and many of their terms are borrowed from Scripture. The subtle changes in, or limitations of meanings of words help the WT doctrines become logically consistent while making any alternative interpretation untenable and dubious. For example, the WT has limited the biblical understanding of the term 'soul' to exclude the possibility of it meaning an 'immaterial part of man that lives beyond the grave' to suggest it can **only** be understood as another term for a 'person' (Reed, 1996:215). This makes their doctrine of annihilation after death more tenable. Hence, a fundamental task a JW must employ in discussing doctrine with a Christian is to either explicitly redefine Scriptural words, or implicitly redetermine their meanings within the arguments presented, according to WT definitions. It also helps them disguise their doctrine. An example of this is when Jehovah's Witnesses tell people they are preaching the 'good news', they do not mean the news about Jesus imminent return as most people

²⁴ "As a soldier of Christ he is in theocratic warfare and he must exercise caution when dealing with God's foes. Thus the Scriptures show that for the purpose of protecting the interests of God's cause, it is proper to hide the truth from God's enemies." (The Watchtower; 1/6/1960; pp. 352); "Lying to God's enemies is not really lying but war strategy." (WT 1/6/1960:351); "While malicious lying is definitely condemned in the Bible, this does not mean that a person is under obligation to divulge truthful information to people who are not entitled to it." (Insight on the Scriptures, Vol 2, 1988:245 quoted in Reed, 1995:87)

familiar with biblical terminology would understand it to mean, but the news that Jesus has returned (WT 1/10/1980:28-29; Reed, 1996:122).

The WT often allows words no alternative shades of meaning (unless it supports WT doctrine). This further limits JW thought to colourless literalism and distorts the message of the original biblical languages with which the words often have numerous and varying meanings.

The Witness will also repeatedly discuss phrases and topics that he or she wants the recruit to become familiar with (eg emphasising the need to honour God's name - Jehovah; emphasising the need to maintain correct knowledge and to shun anything with pagan origins). By redefining and controlling vocabulary and language both Jehovah's Witnesses and their recruits are taught how to think.

The Jehovah's Witnesses continually fill their minds with the language and thinking of the WT and are taught to think and argue only according to WT training. They are not allowed to think independently. If they do start thinking independently they must quickly stabilise themselves by reading WT literature, speaking to their elders or spending more time in WT activities, lest they be found out, accused and punished.

[For further details see sections titled [Loading the Language](#) and [The Substitution of Names](#)]

Emotional Control

Cultic groups seek to manipulate members' feelings to ensure control. Although they do encourage positive feelings (ie. people should be ever joyful because they live in the 'Truth'), their most destructive power lies in their ability to initiate and manipulate people's own negative feelings, such as fear and guilt, for the cult's own ends (Groenveld, n.d.; Hassan, 1990:63).

The group places all blame (other than the blame projected onto other 'enemy' groups) for problems on their people. Their people learn to do likewise, blaming themselves for anything that goes wrong rather than examining the group, its teaching or its leadership (Hassan & Das, n.d.; FAMC, n.d.).

Manipulation of negative emotions comes in several forms. Guilt is used in many ways. People are made to feel guilty for thinking discordant thoughts, their past, family, affiliations and for failing to live up to the group's expectations (Hassan & Das, n.d.). Fear is also a powerful motivator to maintain obedience. People are taught to fear the outside world and enemies, independent thinking, group punishment (humiliation, shunning, excommunication), and losing salvation (ibid). By systematically programming in irrational fears, the cult can indoctrinate phobias into their members. Examples of these are: there is no happiness outside of the group, the world together with all of the Satanic forces are out to persecute them, those who leave will have something disastrous happen to them (perhaps being punished by God or attacked by demons), and there is no justifiable way out of the group (to leave the group is evidence of a negative personal attribute ie., rebellious) (ibid).

To understand WT obedience it is essential to examine its use of emotional manipulation. The WT manipulates both positive and negative emotions to maintain control. Its most effective control however, comes in its ability to condition and manipulate fear into its peoples minds. The Jehovah's Witnesses are taught to fear. The examples mentioned in the previous paragraph equally appear in Jehovah Witness psychology. Jehovah's Witnesses are taught to fear God, Armageddon, the Devil and his demons, apostates, the world, and WT and divine retributions (most notably for being disfellowshipped or leaving the Organisation; also for breaking any WT 'suggestions'). (Watters, n.d.[f]). The WT creates phobias in the people's minds by exaggerating small harmless activities or

behaviours into major crimes. Those who celebrate Christmas and birthdays or salute a national flag are participating in an act of evil worship²⁵ (Watters, n.d.[e]).

Guilt is also used as a lever for manipulation. An example of this is shown in the May 15 edition of the 1990 WatchTower:

Some who were at one time progressing toward dedication later may seem to be holding back. If they do not have enough love for God in their heart to make an unreserved dedication to him, they ought to ask themselves whether they still have the wonderful privilege of prayer. Apparently not, because those approaching God must be earnestly seeking him and also righteousness and meekness. (Zephaniah 2:3) Everyone who really fears Jehovah is a believer who makes a dedication to God and symbolizes it by getting baptized. (Acts 8:13; 18:8) And only baptized believers have an unrestricted privilege of approaching the King Eternal in prayer." (12 quoted in Watters, n.d.[f])²⁶.

Any problems that arise caused by the Organisation are promptly redirected to the members. A classic example of this happened in the wake of the failed 1975 prophecy of Armageddon. Although the WT in many implicit and explicit articles had pointed the people to the expectation of 1975 heralding Armageddon, the WT published an article putting the brunt of responsibility for the people's disappointment back on themselves:

"15 But it is not advisable for us to set our sights on a certain date, neglecting everyday things we would ordinarily care for as Christians, such as things that we and our families really need²⁷. We may be forgetting that, when the "day" comes, it will not change the principle that Christians must at all times take care of all their responsibilities. If anyone has been disappointed through not following this line of thought, he should now concentrate on adjusting his viewpoint, seeing that it was not the word of God that failed or deceived him and brought disappointment, *but that his own understanding was based on wrong premises.*" (WT 15/7/1976:441 - emphasis added)²⁸.

²⁵ Birthdays are said to be worshipping the individual (and because on two occasions while celebrating a birthday in the Bible a man was executed), Christmas is evil because thousands of years ago on that date people worshipped the sun and saluting of flags is necessarily worshipping your country and a sign that you belong to Satan's kingdom.

²⁶ Guilt for past - "However, the committee would prepare a summary of the alleged offense(s) and the evidence of such. This would be kept along with information regarding the disassociation. If the person later requests reinstatement, these matters would need to be considered with him at that time." (Pay Attention, 1991:86).

²⁷ Many members had neglected to do normal important things such as going to the doctor. The in-house publication wrote "Reports are heard of brothers selling their homes and property and planning to finish out the rest of their days in this old system in the pioneer service. Certainly this is a fine way to spend the short time remaining before the wicked world's end." (Kingdom Ministry 5/1974:3 as quoted in Reed, 1996:107). It must be remembered that JW's are not allowed to think ahead of the organisation. They would not act unless the WT had implied or suggested it first. The WT does not have to explicitly tell people to do things. They are taught to read between the lines and obey the implied suggestions in the WT articles. This is of benefit to the WT as when mistakes are made, their tracks are covered and it can turn around and say "We have never said this!" (Brainwashing, Thought Control and the Cults, n.d.).

²⁸ This article caused a stir world-wide throughout the membership and was promptly followed by another article to placate the members, but at the same time, not take full responsibility for the mistake.

"5 In modern times such eagerness, commendable in itself, has led to attempts at setting dates for the desired liberation from the suffering and troubles that are the lot of persons throughout the earth. With the appearance of the book *Life Everlasting*—in *Freedom of the Sons of God*, and its comments as to how appropriate it would be for the millennial reign of Christ to parallel the seventh millennium of man's existence, considerable expectation was aroused regarding the year 1975. There were statements made then, and thereafter, stressing that this was only a possibility. Unfortunately, however, along with such cautionary information, there were other statements published that implied that such realization of hopes by that year was more of a probability than a mere possibility. It is to be regretted that these latter statements apparently overshadowed the cautionary ones and contributed to a buildup of the expectation already initiated. 6

In its issue of July 15, 1976, *The Watchtower*, commenting on the inadvisability of setting expectations on a certain date, stated: "If anyone has been disappointed through not following this line of thought, he should now concentrate on adjusting his viewpoint, seeing that it was not the word of God that failed or deceived him and brought disappointment,

Conclusion

Is the Watchtower a mind control cult according to the criteria set forth by Robert Lifton and Steven Hassan? The evidence points in this direction. In all areas the Jehovah's Witnesses have shown some degree of mind control.

Propaganda

It would not be too presumptuous to presume that the bulk of what the average JW knows about religion, about their organisation and its work; the interpretation of world events, history and biblical passages, and their knowledge of 'true' doctrines is primarily through their literature. What the Watchtower teaches, although it is admitted that the material is not inspired or infallible, is received unquestionably as 'truth'. Thus the Watchtower is a primary source of influencing the minds and behaviour of its people. Does it, in places, use propagandists' techniques to influence those who read it?

Propaganda has been in existence ever since people have been seeking to influence others towards their ideas and goals. The word originates from the Latin word *propagare* which means the reproducing of new plants by planting freshly cut shoots from an established plant (Brown, 1963:10). The first recorded use of the word 'propaganda' was in 1633, where a renewed thrust in mission by the Catholic Church was named the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*. Here the central task was to convert the minds of foreign people to accept the Christian doctrines of Catholicism (Brown, 1963:10-11). In both World Wars, propaganda was extensively used with great effect by both sides to increase hatred for the enemy and motivate nationalistic loyalty (Brown, 1963:11). It has been used by the politicians, by advertisers, by health workers, and by religious groups. At its grass roots level of definition, propaganda is "...an organised dissemination of information and ideas...", using any media that can convey ideas, "...to persuade the recipients of the truth of their propositions and beliefs" (Dean, 1995:695).

The propagandist differs from the educator in that the propagandist encourages people to reach his/her preconceived conclusions by offering no desirable alternative, and criticising any others that may exist; whereas the teacher helps the student make an informed decision based on an adequate understanding of the alternatives. The teacher shows people how to think, the propagandist tells people what to think (Brown, 1963:21). In practice no teaching is ever propaganda free however profitable teaching encourages thinking whereas teaching with heavy propaganda discourages thinking and independent value judgements.

The history of propaganda has shown that it has been abused by the propagandists. Some of the more unethical tactics commonly attributed to the propagandist are misleading people through the use of half-truths or lies presented as 'truth'. Half-truths and lies have been used very effectively, particularly in the World Wars. Due to the many different uses and connotations of the word propaganda, the definition covers a broad spectrum of everyday experience. This report is not so concerned with whether the WT literature is propaganda or not, but whether the WT literature uses

but that his own understanding was based on wrong premises." In saying "anyone," The Watchtower included all disappointed ones of Jehovah's Witnesses, hence including persons having to do with the publication of the information that contributed to the buildup of hopes centered on that date". (WT 15/3/1980:17-18 - emphasis added).

some of the more explicit and persuasive propagandists' techniques in recruiting and/or maintaining membership.

Propaganda Techniques

The Use of Stereotypes

Propaganda utilises stereotyping to create fixed impressions about particular 'types' of people. These people are judged as a whole group rather than on an individual basis, and their actions are interpreted according to the expectations of the stereotyped image portrayed about them (Myers, 1996:510; Brown, 1963:26). Propaganda encourages stereotyping (either with positive or negative connotations) to establish loyalty to its message and hostility to other ideas. Examples of groups of people that have been stereotyped are the Jews, the Japanese, the Protestants, and the Communists.

The Watchtower's most powerful psychological weapon for increasing prejudice is that of stereotyping itself and its rivals. Jehovah's Witnesses present the clergy, the Christian Church, and the secular governments in extraordinarily negative language and imagery, according to their own selective biblical interpretation, historical interpretation and reasoning. In creating stereotypes to downgrade Christianity, they highlight selective negative aspects of certain Christian groups throughout history (such as the conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland, or the Crusades) and generalise their conclusions to the whole of the Christian Church - present and past. By stereotyping Christianity with selected negative images it is not surprising that the JW will minimise any good that individual Christians and Christian groups may be doing. To the JW, each church or denomination is just as bad as the next and it is their job to present the 'truth' to those few Christians within 'Babylon the Great' (a name selected for the Christian Church of Revelation 18:2 cited in Proclaimers, 1993:188-189 on WT CD-ROM, 1996) who love God. On the flip-side the WT has stereotyped the NWS and its members as people who sincerely want to do the will of God and are succeeding in this. The teaching and literature of the WT is true 'spiritual food' and all other sources of information are 'philosophies of man' and are to be treated accordingly. By stereotyping, the WT can implant powerful world-views on their people which then become filters to assess 'truth'. The stereotypes formed are based largely on biased WT prepared information to justify their assumptions and conclusions, and give the impression that the 'evidence' points to the Jehovah's Witnesses alone as the 'bearers of the truth'.

The Substitution of Names

The substitution of names is a common practice of the propagandist. To get the message across, the propagandist will substitute words that give one impression for other words that either arouse or diminish emotions and enhance people's acceptance of the message. For the pro-abortionist 'baby' becomes 'foetus', for the Westerner 'Communist' becomes 'Red' and 'Capitalism' becomes 'Free Enterprise' (Brown, 1963:27). The WT likewise litters its literature with value-laden substituted names to increase its popularity among members and recruits. The whole of the Christian Church is known as Christendom²⁹, while 'the faithful and discreet Slave' is a biblical phrase borrowed from Matthew 24:45 representing "the entire body of spirit-anointed Christians [an elite class of Jehovah Witness] on earth" (WT 1/2/1995:13). Any non-Witness is classed as a "worldling"³⁰ and those who leave the Organisation wear the negative emotionally-charged label "apostate"³¹. These terms are defined with

²⁹ "Supporting the truth, they reject the pagan philosophies taught by Christendom, and they champion "the unadulterated milk belonging to the word"—God's Word, the Bible." (WT 1/1/1995:10-11)

³⁰ "How can association, even with seemingly nice worldlings, pose a danger for a Christian?" (WT 15/4/1993:19)

³¹ "11 Thus the one who doubts to the point of becoming an apostate sets himself up as a judge. He thinks he knows better than his fellow Christians, better also than the "faithful and discreet slave," through whom he has learned the best part, if not

descriptive language to create in-built emotional judgements every time the word or phrase is expressed. Thus the ideology becomes more easily accepted.

Selection and Card-Stacking

The propagandist carefully selects information that points to the conclusions that the readers are expected to reach. Information is carefully omitted that is not helpful in influencing the final conclusion (Brown, 1963:27). The reader is expected to make a judgement based on the narrow and biased data given. The reader is often unaware that any other data exists that might contradict the conclusion he/she is expected to make. Careful selection of evidence limits the reader from questioning the propagandist's assertions and conclusions, and is deliberately designed to decrease the person's independent thought and evaluation (Brown, 1963:28). Similar to this is the technique of card-stacking. Card-stacking is an argument where all the evidence (whether it be true or false) is stacked in order so that the only conclusion possible is the conclusion the propagandist wants to be accepted. This is often done through comparing the propagandist's ideas with opposing ideas, but done in such a way that the propagandist's point seems to be the correct idea. (Lee & Lee, 1971: as adapted in Robertson, 1987:551).

Jehovah's Witness literature is highly selective in the material it presents its readers. Following is an excerpt from the WT CD ROM and also their article [Transfusions_how_safe.htm](#) downloaded from The WatchTower web site. Notice how information is carefully prepared using both selection and card-stacking to help the reader conclude that blood transfusions are not safe:

"Before submitting to any serious medical procedure, a thinking person will learn the possible benefits and the risks. What about blood transfusions? They are now a prime tool in medicine. Many physicians who are genuinely interested in their patients may have little hesitation about giving blood. It has been called the gift of life. ... "Blood has always enjoyed a 'magical' quality," notes Dr. Louise J. Keating. "For its first 46 years, the blood supply was perceived as being safer than it actually was by both physicians and the public." (Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine, May 1989) What was the situation then, and what is it now? Even 30 years ago, pathologists and blood-bank personnel were advised: "Blood is dynamite! It can do a great deal of good or a great deal of harm. The mortality from blood transfusion equals that from either anesthesia or appendectomy. There is said to be approximately one death in 1,000 to 3,000 or possibly 5,000 transfusions. In the London area there has been reported one death for every 13,000 bottles of blood transfused."—New York State Journal of Medicine, January 15, 1960. Have the dangers since been eliminated so that transfusions are now safe? Frankly, each year hundreds of thousands have adverse reactions to blood, and many die." (HB pages 7-8 from WT CD ROM, 1996)

Disease Free Or Fraught With Danger? Blood-borne disease worries conscientious physicians and many patients. Which disease? Frankly, you cannot limit it just to one; there are indeed many. After discussing the more well-known diseases, *Techniques of Blood Transfusion* (1982) addresses "other transfusion-associated infectious diseases," such as syphilis, cytomegalovirus infection, and malaria. It then says: "Several other diseases have also been reported to be transmitted by blood transfusion, including herpes virus infections, infectious mononucleosis (Epstein-Barr virus), toxoplasmosis, trypanosomiasis [African sleeping sickness and Chagas' disease], leishmaniasis, brucellosis [undulant fever], typhus, filariasis, measles, salmonellosis, and Colorado tick fever." The pope survived being shot. After leaving the hospital, he was taken back for two months, "suffering a great deal." Why? A

all that he knows about Jehovah God and his purposes. He develops a spirit of independence, and becomes "proud in heart . . . something detestable to Jehovah." (Prov. 16:5) Some apostates even think they know better than God, as regards his ordering of events in the outworking of his purposes. Two other causes of apostasy are therefore ingratitude and presumption.—2 Pet. 2:10b-13a." (WT 1/8/1980:19-20)

potentially fatal cytomegalovirus infection from the blood he received. Actually, the list of such diseases is growing.

The uninformed person will most likely agree with the JW conclusion based on the evidence presented. However, as with other propaganda, there is another side that is either absent, misrepresented or presented in such a way that the WT conclusions seem the only viable solution³². It appears that the WT will use only the information (even if quoted out of context) that will point towards their conclusions and ignore or misuse any information that might lead to somewhat different conclusions³³.

Deception and Lying

Brown (1963:27) asserts that falsehood is a common method of the propagandist. Fabricating, twisting, stretching or omitting the evidence have all been utilised in propaganda with effective results. False atrocity stories were used in the Crusades and both World Wars to evoke public response, and this it did with great efficacy.

The WT has a history of misquoting, misleading and deception. Its articles often quote Scripture and other writings out of context to back up its doctrines. Misrepresentation, outright lying and subtle twisting of information using their loaded vocabulary are all techniques to maintain their credibility despite facts to the contrary. Listed are some examples found within their literature of WT deception.

"Pastor Russell held closely to the Scriptures. He believed that Christ had been present since 1874. He also admitted in private to being that "Faithful and Wise Servant" (WT 1/12/1916 as quoted in Reed, 1995:77)

"the Lord's faithful and wise steward, Pastor Russell" (Studies in the Scriptures, Vol 7, The Finished Mystery 1917:418 as quoted in Reed, 1995:77)

³² "The fact remains, as documented in thousands of cases from all over the world, that blood transfusions have proved effective in saving lives. If it didn't, blood would not have been used to the extent it has by medical professionals whose main concern is to save lives and heal disease." (Propaganda, n.d.).

"We do not need to downplay any of the real dangers of blood transfusions. Like any complicated medical operation, blood transfusions can be dangerous. But just as the WTS has written endless articles on the dangers of blood, anyone could write such articles on the dangers of antibiotics, open heart surgery, psychiatric drugs and even tonsillectomies, complete with quotations from credible and not-so-credible sources. No person in his right mind would suggest that these medical practices be abandoned, even though the details and frequency of using the various methods are subject to serious debate among professionals." (Propaganda, n.d.)

"If we compare this to other medical risks, the figures take on more meaning. For instance, if you have general anesthesia, your chances of having a reaction and dying are between 1 in 15,000 and 1 in 30,000. If you accept penicillin, your chances of a fatal reaction are about 1 in 30,000. Clearly, there is a far greater chance of dying as a result of general anesthesia or antibiotic treatment than there is of contracting AIDS through a blood transfusion." (Propaganda, n.d.)

Monica Revelle in her article Progress in Blood Supply Safety in her article, not written before 1993, comments: "Nonetheless, blood and blood products are not entirely risk-free. There is a remote risk of infection with serious blood-borne viruses such as hepatitis and HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. But for patients who need blood transfusions, the risk of transfusion-associated disease is far less than the risk of dying or becoming more seriously ill without a transfusion." (n.d. [emphasis added])

³³ An example of the WT's misuse of information is highlighted in its WT magazine on 15 October, 1993. It quotes a favourable doctor who believes that the costs and possible side effects make transfusions a dubious option (32). It also quotes that same doctor saying that to forego transfusions increases the mortality rate for a standard operating procedure from 0.5% to 1.5% (ibid.). This translates to an average of one person in every hundred dies needlessly in routine surgery from failing to receive blood. The WT article concludes saying "Any medical risk of refusing blood is probably less than the risks involved in accepting blood transfusions" (15/10/1993:32). However in an academic paper by Dr. Charles Baron it is reported that there is on average only "one death for every 13,000 bottles of blood transfused." (1993:15 quoted in Awake, 22/11/1992:27). Comparing these statistics, of one death in every 100 patients who fail to receive blood (for standard surgical procedures) with one death in every 13,000 units of transfused blood reveals, a very different conclusion to that drawn by the WT is evident. (Watchtower Falsifies Blood Death Numbers, n.d.)

"Russell never claimed to be the faithful and wise servant." (God's Kingdom of a Thousand Years has Approached, 1973:346 as quoted in Reed, 1995:79).

And...

"...the common thought of Trinitarians, that the Son is the Father" (WT 1/2/1899 quoted in Reed, 1995:123).

"The doctrine, in brief, is that there are three gods in one..." (Let God Be True, 1952:100 quoted in Reed, 1995:123).

"Three Gods in one person, or as some have put it, one God in three persons." (WT 7/1882:369 quoted in Reed, 1995:123)³⁴.

Here is an example of a misquote from their Trinity brochure:

Tertullian, who died about 230 C.E., taught the supremacy of God. He observed: "The Father is different from the Son (another), as he is greater; as he who begets is different from him who is begotten; he who sends, different from him who is sent." He also said: "There was a time when the Son was not. . . . Before all things, God was alone." (http://www.watchtower.org/library/ti/bible_teaching.htm; emphasis mine.)

Now here are the two sections that the quote was extracted from.

"For we do not say, as the heretics suppose, that some part of the substance of God was converted into the Son, or *that the Son was procreated by the Father out of things non-existent*,[3] i.e., beyond His own substance, so that there once was a time when He did not exist; ... *How, then, can it be asserted that there once was a time when He was not the Son?* For that is nothing else than to say that there was once a time when He was not the Truth, nor the Wisdom, nor the Life, although in all these *He is judged to be the perfect essence of God the Father*; for these things cannot be severed from Him, or even be separated from His essence. *And although these qualities are said to be many in understanding*,[2] *yet in their nature and essence they are one, and in them is the fulness of divinity.*" Tertullian 4:376-7 (emphasis mine)

...There are some who allege that even Genesis opens thus in Hebrew: "In the beginning God made for Himself a Son."[8] *As there is no ground for this*, I am led to other arguments derived from God's own dispensation,[9] in which He existed before the creation of the world, up to the generation of the Son. For before all things God was alone--being in Himself and for Himself universe, and space, and all things. *Moreover, He was alone, because there was nothing external to Him but Himself. Yet even not then was He alone; for He had with Him that which He possessed in Himself, that is to say, His own Reason. For God is rational, and Reason was first in Him; and so all things were from Himself. This Reason is His own Thought (or Consciousness)*[10] *which the Greeks call logos, by which term we also designate Word or Discourse*[11] *and therefore it is now usual with our people, owing to the mere simple interpretation of the term, to say that the Word*[12] *was in the beginning with God*; Tertullian 3.600 (emphasis mine)

These are only three examples from many where the Watchtower has deceived or misled.

³⁴ A brief definition of the Trinity that is foundational to Christianity is that there is one God who is revealed in three distinct Persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Repetition

The propagandist uses repetition to etch his/her message into the minds of the audience. If the word or phrase is used enough it will soon be accepted whether it has meaning or not (Brown, 1963:27). The WT literature repeats many phrases, words and ideas repeatedly throughout its writings. Twenty-four times 'the faithful and discreet slave' was mentioned in the WT in 1995 (not to mention its further repetition in the WT discussions held in Kingdom Halls and book studies). Through repetition JW's and converts become conditioned to associate 'the faithful and discreet slave' with only positive and righteous connotations. On the flip-side, the words Christendom, trinity and religionist are repeated over and over and are associated with evil and ungodliness. When the JW hears these words mentioned, he/she will likely experience an automatic negative emotional response. The JW's are not only indoctrinated with repeated use of WT words and doctrine, but are indoctrinated through the repeated stigma applied to each.

Glittering Generalities and Name-Calling

Glittering generalities is the technique for surrounding a product or political personality with favourable words or phrases (such as 'freedom', 'a better future') to increase the likelihood that the audience will receive their message (Lee, & Lee, 1971 adapted by Robertson, 1987:551). The JW's use glittering generalities to explain their organisation, people and doctrine. Below is one of many examples of their use of glittering generalities:

"A Blessed Brotherhood 13 Being a part of the *only God-approved* international brotherhood is also a *source of great joy*. *Happily*, we have the *most desirable* associates on earth. Jehovah God himself pointed to our day and said: "I will rock all the nations, and the desirable things of all the nations must come in; and I will fill this house with glory." (Haggai 2:7) True, all Christians are imperfect. However, Jehovah has *drawn such individuals to himself* through Jesus Christ. (John 14:6) Since Jehovah has drawn to himself people *he considers desirable*, our *joy will abound* if we show them *brotherly love, esteem them highly, cooperate with them in godly pursuits, uphold them* in their trials, and *pray* in their behalf." (WT 15/1/1995:13) [italics added]

Name-calling is the opposite to the glittering generality technique. Here the propagandist attempts to associate unfavourable words and phrases to whatever / whoever the propagandist opposes. The anti-abortionists would use the word 'murderer' to describe a mother who has aborted her foetus (Lee & Lee, 1971 adapted by Brown, 1987:551). When referring to groups of people or particular beliefs that JW's must recognise as being dangerous or ungodly, the WT often gives special terms (or may even use their common name), which are either naturally associated with unfavourable connotations, or are defined and expounded in such a way creates inimical associations. Below is an example of several typical words the WT uses to create unfavourable impressions in recruits and members minds.

"Another lie made and told by Satan for the purpose of reproaching God's name and turning men away from God is that of the *'trinity'*. That doctrine is taught by the *religionists* of *'Christendom'* and is in substance this: 'that there are three gods in one...' (Riches, 1936:185 quoted in Reed, 1995:124 [italics mine]).

Pinpointing the Enemy

The propagandist will always have an enemy. The message "is not only for something but also against some real or imagined enemy who is supposedly frustrating the will of his audience" (Brown, 1963:28). Two effects are noticed: 1. Aggression is directed away from the propagandist's cause and 2. It helps consolidate the loyalty of the 'in-group'. The propagandist portrays stereotyped diabolical images of the perceived enemy. The stronger the perceived enemy, the stronger the unification to the cause - a unification that is based on fear and hatred.

The Watchtower has been successful in creating fearful images of 'evil' enemies to instill fear and suspicion into the members. Images of God protecting them through maintaining obedient WT membership are the only way of assuring a safe future in the after-life, but part of that loyalty includes being persecuted for the Kingdom's sake with both the world, the Devil, earthly governments and religions against them in so-called violent opposition³⁵. Outside antagonism or criticism towards the WT and doctrines are exaggerated as persecution while its own criticisms directed at other groups are viewed as 'exposing the evil'. Other groups, especially the Christian church³⁶, are represented as being the epitome of evil in comparison to a holy and stainless NWS. Here are some quotes to demonstrate the WT pinpointing the enemy (in this case, the Christian Church is pinpointed as the enemy).

"Haters of God and His people are to be hated, but this does not mean that we will take any opportunity of bringing physical hurt to them in the spirit of malice or spite, for both malice and spite belong to the devil, whereas pure hatred does not.

"We must hate in the truest sense which is to regard with extreme and active aversion, to consider as loathsome, odious, filthy, to detest. Surely any haters of God are not fit to live on His beautiful earth....

"Jehovah's enemies are recognized by their intense dislike for His people and the work these are doing. For they would break it down and have all of Jehovah's Witnesses sentenced to jail or concentration camps if they could. Not because they have anything against the Witnesses personally but on account of their work. They publish blasphemous lies and reproach the holy name of Jehovah. Do we not hate those who hate God? We cannot love those hateful enemies for they are fit only for destruction....

"We pray with intensity and cry out this prayer for Jehovah to delay no longer and plead that His anger be made manifest, oh Jehovah of hosts... be not merciful to any wicked transgressors... Consume them in wrath, consume them so that they shall be no more (Psalm 59:4-6, 11-13)....

"When this happens what a tremendous change will take place, the tables will be turned! Brought down will be the lofty from dwelling on high as great, high influential ones of this world to the lowest possible place imaginable, so low and degraded they can only be compared to being trampled under foot by the poor like straw in a manure heap. Christendom's lofty looks, boastful words, bragging tongue and superior attitude toward the holy Word of God, her trust in idols, men and riches such as belong to this world will not provide her with security or any safety from Jehovah's storm and blast..." (WT 1/12/1951:734 cited in Martin, 1985:31-32)³⁷.

The Appeal to Authority and Testimonial

The propagandists will appeal to authority to authenticate their message. The authority may be religious, scientific, a famous personality or any source that will in some way legitimate the conclusion

³⁵ In fact, according to WT doctrine, God's people only make up .1% of the world and all the rest are on Satan's side (WT 1958 10/15:614-615). No wonder loyalty is so strong.

³⁶ An interesting comment made by the Society "Had Christendom chosen to do so she could easily have prevented World Wars 1 and 2". (WT 1/12/1951:731 quoted in Martin, 1985:34)

³⁷ A more recent article expressing a similar vein: "Exposure of the clergy by the Jeremiah class has been powerful. For example, at the 1958 Divine Will International Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses in New York City, the vice president of the Watch Tower Society presented a statement that said in part: "Without any double talk or hesitation we declare this root cause of all the crime, delinquency, hatred, strife, prejudice, . . . and mad confusion to be wrong religion, false religion; behind which is man's unseen enemy, Satan the Devil. The men most responsible for the world condition are the religious instructors and leaders; and the most reprehensible of these are the religious clergy of Christendom. . . . After all these years since World War I, Christendom stands in a relationship toward God like that of Israel in Jeremiah's day. Yes, Christendom faces a destruction more frightful and devastating than that which Jeremiah saw happen to Jerusalem." (WT 1/3/94:11)

of the propagandist (Brown, 1963:28). Another related technique is the testimonial, whereby the propagandist uses the testimony of people, usually well-known celebrities, to 'sell' their product or criticise the opposition. (Lee & Lee, 1971 as adapted in Robertson, 1987:551). The WT will use anybody's authority who appears to give credence to their argument. Their apologetic works are filled with references from Scripture, from scholars and pseudo-scholars, from mainstream to fringe, from religious to medical, to help credit their arguments. Publishers carry a book entitled Reasoning which gives them ready quotes from various sources which they can assert when the need arises to validate their conclusion. A scattering of quotes from a wide variety of sources give people the general impression that the sources agree with the JW conclusions, whether this is the case or not³⁸.

Transfer

Transfer is used to gain a favourable impression by associating its message with something that the audience views favourably. Advertisers use this technique to sell their product by associating it with attractive models even though there may not be any link whatsoever between the two (Lee & Lee, 1971 as adapted in Robertson, 1987:551). WatchTower literature aims to create positive transference regarding its religion. The articles continually refer to how JW's are obedient to God, are happily building his kingdom and are collectively the most loving and virtuous people on earth. The picture the WT is trying to create is that the evidence points towards the JW's being the sole group in the world to be truly called God's people.

"24 Let us enumerate some of the many fine works of the faithful slave class. First, the slave class has been appointed over all the Master's belongings—his Kingdom interests on earth—and these belongings keep on increasing. Second, that class is feeding not only the anointed domestics but an ever-expanding great crowd of other sheep with spiritual food. Third, the slave class is taking the lead in spreading the Kingdom light. Fourth, its greatest expansion of activities is in the gathering of the great crowd of other sheep, bringing them to Jehovah's spiritual temple. Fifth, the slave class, with the wholehearted support of sheeplike ones, is providing enlarged facilities for branch organizations around the globe, as well as at the headquarters in the United States. Such loving labors have made the slave class the happiest people on earth today, and they have made millions of other people happy too. All of these give thanks to Jehovah God and to Jesus Christ, who have directed the expanded activities of the discreet slave! 25 The slave class is now working harder than ever at its God-assigned duties. The time left before the outbreak of the "great tribulation" is almost gone! (Matthew 24:21) How vital it is that these who are God's sheep stay on the right side of favor of his Shepherd-King! So, then, let all continue zealously to support the faithful and discreet slave. It is only by doing this that someday very soon all sheeplike ones will be able to hear those happy words: "Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world." (WT 1/5/1993:20-21)

The pictures add to the appeal of the message. Righteous biblical characters are given characteristics that portray sincerity, happiness and a trust in God, and likewise the pictures of Jehovah's Witnesses are comparably given similar qualities. The JW's are portrayed in multi-racial, family, work, friendship, or evangelism environments. Jehovah's Witnesses are always drawn as modestly and neatly dressed and well-groomed. The pictures emphasise unity, sincerity, diligent Bible

³⁸ But quite to the contrary, most quotes only agree in part with the specific point the literature is asserting, not the conclusion derived from the accumulation and arrangement of the scattered quotes. For example, the WT quotes Ignatius citing Proverbs 8:22 "The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old." in reference to Jesus, and consequently concludes that he believed Jesus had a beginning. Or they may assume that because Ignatius did not explicitly state in any of his writings that the Holy Spirit is God, he therefore did not believe the Holy Spirit is God (cf WT 1/2/1992:21). To justify its rendering of John 5:58 'I have been' instead of 'I am' the WT quotes a significant list of obscure translations, most with only one translator, without citing the major translations and then concluding that the evidence points towards its translation being feasible. When reading WT literature the reader needs to ask themselves who are they quoting and are they recognised authorities in the area of comment, is the quote in context, and would the author use the information to arrive at similar conclusions as the WT?

study and happiness. The literature is specially designed to attract the audiences favourable attention.

Plain Folks

Here the propagandist associates his/her ideas with the average person on the street. The politician might be photographed with children in a nursery in an attempt to create an image of being one with the people (Lee & Lee, 1971 as adapted in Robertson, 1987:551). The pictures in the WT literature also feature pictures of average normal-looking folk being in familiar looking surroundings or doing familiar activities. The message is: They are normal people like us!

Bandwagon

This technique encourages people to believe that 'everybody's doing it' therefore to remain in the 'in-group' the recipient must do likewise (Brown, 1963:28). This method tries to create the impression in people's mind that 'everybody's doing it'. People are often influenced most by the reactions of others. Those who have not made a firm decision will tend to change their minds according to what is popular. (Lee & Lee, 1971 as adapted in Robertson, 1987:551). The WT utilises this by explicitly and implicitly stressing that all of God's people are members of the NWS, are actively proselytising and are making it a habit to study WT literature. This leaves the impression that everybody in God's Organisation 'is doing it', therefore it is likely that people reading the literature will also be more inclined to join in the activities.

Millions of Bible readers worldwide use the New World Translation because it is a modern-language translation that renders Bible terms with accuracy..... it will help many more to get a better understanding of "the word of life." (Philippians 2:16) Because it has already helped millions to do so, it is truly worthy of recommendation. (WT 1/3/1991:30)

Cognitive Dissonance

Cognitive dissonance theory was first proposed by Leon Festinger in his book entitled [A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance](#) (1957). His basic hypothesis is that people who experience psychological contradiction resulting from conflict between information, group opinion, beliefs, feelings, or behaviour, will be caused discomfiture and consequently become motivated to correct it by creating consonance (1957:3; Groenveld, n.d.). The higher the magnitude of dissonance, the more pressure the person experiences to reduce or eliminate it (Festinger, 1957:18).

Dissonance and Information.

When people are exposed to information that causes dissonance they are placed into a position of either making a decision to accept the new information (thereby altering their perceptual reality and behaviour) or reject it. Information that is easily verified scientifically or experientially causes smaller dissonance than information with lesser verifiability (ibid., 179). There are several responses a person may make after receiving dissonance-increasing information. She/he may accept it or avoid it, misperceive it, deny its validity, forget it, disbelieve it or seek out consonant information (ibid., 138-176). Following the decision the person will then seek out information to justify his/her conclusions - strengthening consonance (ibid., 83). Once a decision has been made the person will be less likely to change to another opinion.

When JW's present their information to the householder who maintains differing views, cognitive dissonance is the result. The JW's will put forward facts, arguments and questions that will challenge or disprove the unprepared householder's own views. The householder may try arguing, only to find themselves coming up against opponents with superior sounding arguments and counter-arguments, or they may use evasive techniques such as misperceiving what the JW has said. These reactions have probably been caused by the discomfort caused by the cognitive dissonance. If the potential convert is not able to find convincing counter-arguments, and the Jehovah's Witnesses sustain their presentation of information, to reduce dissidence, he/she may alter her/his thinking to align with the Witnesses.

Cognitive dissonance theory also explains why when presented with arguments that are convincing and contradicting WT teaching, the JW will maintain his WT convictions. There are several evasive techniques the Witness will use when presented with cognitive dissonance creating information. They will most likely try to seek out consonant information by searching their literature or asking their elders for answers. They may ignore it or play down its significance, and they will probably go back to their social support network (JW friends and families) for confirmation of the 'truth'. Festinger also notes that if one has made a decision, which has a cost involved, about what to believe, they will fight all the more to maintain their decision. The Jehovah Witness who has given up all of his/her former social networks, who has divorced his/her unbelieving partner, who has sacrificed wages to do field ministry - who has paid a significant price for his/her beliefs, is not going to want to admit they are wrong due to the cognitive dissonance aroused between new beliefs and past behaviours (Gleitman, 1983).

Dissonance and Behaviour.

It is difficult to persuade people on information alone but social psychologists agree that if you can change a person's behaviour, often their thoughts will follow (Myers, 1996:484). Festinger's theory proposes that behaviour, thoughts and emotions are all interlinked components within the individual's identity (Groenfeld, n.d.). If one component is changed and sustained in a position of conflict between the other components, the others will tend to follow to effect consonance (ibid). If behaviour changes, then thoughts and feelings will most likely follow. A priest, who for theological reasons disagrees with baptising infants, yet baptises a baby for a friend will experience dissonance and may likely alter his/her views and feelings about infant baptism to conform with his/her behaviour.

Cognitive dissonance often begins in the initial meetings with the Jehovah's Witnesses when the person purchases their publications and following soon after, becomes engaged in a book study. The person may have serious doubts at the back of their minds, or may have friends or family warning them about the becoming involved, yet reasons that it seems harmless enough to engage in a personally presented book study. The person will go through the book and will give the 'correct' implied answers (even if the person may not totally agree), to which the Witness will be continually praising the person's 'wise judgements' and 'desire to discover the truth'. The inconsistencies between the person's behaviour (buying the literature, engaging in a book study, giving the WT answers) and his/her beliefs about the JW's will cause discomfort and the person will find themselves needing to make a decision whether to continue in the socially rewarding book study and align beliefs with the Witness, or to stop the study (or begin to argue about one's own convictions) and face the discomfort that will likely cause. The course of action usually pursued is "the one that offers the least resistance" (Boyden, 1987).

One of the WT policies is to encourage all of the congregation to prepare and present speeches to the congregation about current WT articles. Even if the article produces doubts in the presenting person's mind, the very fact that he/she is supporting it by presenting it to the congregation would likely increase the chance of the speaker altering or suppressing their thoughts to minimise

dissonance (cf Festinger, 1957:231). By encouraging people to enter into WT prescribed behaviour that aligns with WT beliefs increases the chances of the people accepting WT doctrine.

Dissonance and Groups

Cognitive dissonance theory explains that when people are involved with a group holding unanimous ideas, they will often experience cognitive dissonance if their ideas do not align with the group's. The larger the group, the more pressure to conform. To reduce dissonance in a group the people can align their thinking with those of the group, influence others to change their views, or differentiate themselves from the group (Festinger, 1957:182).

For the JW's, group pressure to conform to their beliefs and behaviour with WT ideology and standards is great. Most will not argue with the group, but rather avoid cognitive dissonance by just agreeing with the 'party line'. For the recruit, less dissonance results if they just believe whatever the group teaches. The WT endeavours to make its group seem large and authoritative and seeks to show the appearance of like-mindedness within all members. The perceived size of the group, made apparent by fellowshipping only with JW's, reading only JW literature and attending major conventions with thousands of Witnesses in attendance, makes it more likely that group opinion will over-ride dissonance creating thoughts.

Hypnotic Processes

Myers defines hypnosis as "a state of apparent heightened suggestibility that enables a hypnotist's coaxings and directions to trigger specific behaviors and perceptions" (1996:175). Miller (1986) comments that there are links between hypnosis and cult conversion. Hypnosis has often been understood to occur within the confines of clinical practice or research, and in the hypnotic stage shows. Miller postulates that the definition of hypnosis must be broadened so that hypnosis can be understood to occur in everyday life (1986:244). She proceeds to comment on the techniques of hypnotism utilised by Milton Erickson in his clinical research and then compares these with the techniques used to recruit cult members.

Erickson believed hypnotism involved intercourse "between two people in which 1) the hypnotist must gain the subject's cooperation, 2) deal with the subject's resistant behavior, and 3) receive some acknowledgment that something is happening" (Haley, 1967 cited in Miller, 1986:244). Through the use of specialised techniques, Erickson often did not induce trances to produce hypnotic behavior. It is these techniques that Miller comments on regarding cult hypnosis (Miller, 1986:244).

The below discussion does not suggest that these techniques used in hypnosis necessarily hypnotises those involved when discussing similarities with WT methods. Clinical hypnosis does seek to influence people towards positive change, so logically its techniques are influential. The subject does not have to enter a trance to be influenced.

Expectation

Expectation has a lot to do with the results of hypnotism. If a person volunteers to be hypnotised on stage, she/he will already have some idea of the behaviour that is expected, and therefore is more likely to obey the suggestions. Cults use people's own expectations by tapping into universally held

virtues of the recipient (such as love, happiness, security). By promoting the person's own goals accompanied by the answers of how to accomplish these, the recruit is more receptive to the desired response. The results are not seen instantaneously but often through a slow and carefully paced process. (Miller, 1986:245)

The Jehovah's Witnesses have utilised this concept effectively. In their Theocratic Ministry School Guidebook (TMSG) they are encouraged to "Appeal to the person's love of righteousness, to his reason and to his desire for better things" (1971:70). Concepts that are continually focused on are people's desire for happiness, for everlasting life, to please Jehovah, to know God's truth and to live accordingly. These goals weave themselves continually throughout JW literature and are answered using carefully constructed arguments that are backed up with Scripture references, and religious and secular quotations, in order to guide the person towards JW thinking and behaviour.

Pacing and Leading

In trance induction, the hypnotherapist reflects verifiable reality back to the patient in much the same manner as a biofeedback machine does. The hypnotherapist continues this to align him/herself with the patient's reality. As the gap between the therapist's reality and the patient's reality become blurred, the therapist gradually can subtly direct the reality of the patient. Miller comments that cult recruiters are taught to find common ground with the beliefs and attitudes of the beginner (1986:245). In finding common ground the cult recruiter is able to move into sync with the recruit's beliefs and values. By carefully pacing him/herself with the recruit, the recruiter will lead the person to a deeper level of suggestibility. The recruiter will thus use the recruit's own reality to gradually deviate him/her towards the desired outcome.

In proselytising, the JW's are taught to align themselves with the householder's reality so as to be able to speak into the situation. They are taught to understand the person's circumstances, beliefs, actions and thinking in order to tactfully channel these towards the Watchtower beliefs (TMSG, 1971:70-71).

17 Common ground maintained. What you say as well as how you say it is vital in establishing a common ground at the outset of your talk. But this common ground must not be lost as the talk progresses or else you will lose your audience as well. You must continue to express your points in such a way that they will appeal to the mind of those in your audience. This requires that you keep in mind their viewpoint on the subject being discussed and use this knowledge to help them to see the reasonableness of your arguments. (TMSG, 1995:156-157)

4 As you go from door to door during the month of January, look for a common ground to establish discussions. We are faced with the same problems as the householders. These include concern for the safety of our children and for their future, the lack of real peace, increasing crime, and drug abuse. God's Kingdom is the answer, so our Topic for Conversation highlights some of the blessings of the Kingdom. (OKM = Our Kingdom Ministry, 1989:1)

Correct pacing is stressed for effective witnessing. The Witnesses are warned not to cover too much material in a visit (OKM 2/94:2), but must convey enough information to keep the potential householders interest. The information is carefully selected according to what the householder expresses interest in.

The Positive Transference

The work of the hypnotherapist attempts to create positive transference by creating an environment where positive attitudes and emotions will be directed towards the group. In the context of cult involvement, the members may 'shower' the person with love and attention, show pseudo-

unconditional acceptance or compliment the person on their desire for truth, thus appealing to their ego. Positive experiences and feelings are thus associated with the group. This continues carefully paced, with the group gradually using more "verbal and nonverbal indirect suggestion... to further mold the recruit's attitudes so that they conform to the group's norm" (Miller, 1986:246)

Positive transference is important to the JW's proselytising and member maintenance. Their physical attractiveness encourages positive transference as well as the attractiveness of their literature and other media that show pictures of smiling or sincere looking JW's with happy friends or family. In their evangelistic presentations, they focus solely on the good in their organisation and people, often contrasting themselves with other religious and secular organisations. The Watchtower comments that newcomers "need to be welcomed warmly into our homes and hearts, thus making new friends and new family relationships" (OKM 9/75:7). On return visits to householders, they bring someone new each time so that when the person finally comes to the Kingdom Hall there is already a familiarity present (Groenveld, n.d.). Contained in their writings they attempt to show their group as possessing universal virtues and superior knowledge more than any other group possesses. The end result is that everything that the recruit or member considers regarding the organisation is positive. This is one of the reasons why the JW is so convinced his religion is right. They are not trained to see the flaws but to see the affirmations that this is truly God's representative organisation here on earth.

Indirect Suggestion

Erickson (1954 cited in Miller, 1986:246) used indirect suggestions which were more effective in manipulating people's behaviour than were direct suggestions. The suggested reason for this is that when people sense greater personal control regarding their new behavioural choices they freely comply, whereas a direct suggestion is more likely to result in increased resistance due to a sense of coercion placed on the person's free will. Miller notes that most recruits choose the cult's desired behaviours without ever being explicitly told to do so (1986:246). One tactic of indirect non-verbal suggestion is by utilising the phenomenon of group conformity to lead the recruit towards acceptable behaviour. Another tactic using verbal indirect suggestions is by advising that by believing or engaging in desired behaviors, people get closer to their original desirable goals (eg. after-life, love). By utilising the foot-in-the-door phenomenon the recruits are gradually paced to accept larger indirect suggestions until the cult gains more and more control over their minds and behaviour and the recruit knows only obedience to the leader. Miller comments that indirect suggestions are not only used for potential recruits but for maintenance of those already existing members (1986:247).

The JW's are particularly successful in gaining obedience using indirect suggestion. Their meetings are specially designed to show that conformity to the party line will be positively reinforced. Their literature is filled with indirect suggestions. The language is simple and non-threatening, and is designed to have the recruit come to WT conclusions. Here is an example of indirect suggestion taken from their literature emphasising the need to attend JW meetings:

"8 Meetings serve another vital purpose. Paul wrote: "Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together." (Hebrews 10:24, 25) The Greek word translated "to incite" can also mean "to sharpen." A Bible proverb states: "By iron, iron itself is sharpened. So one man sharpens the face of another." (Proverbs 27:17) All of us need continual 'sharpening.' Daily pressures from the world can dull our faith. When we attend Christian meetings, there is an interchange of encouragement. (Romans 1:11, 12) Members of the congregation follow the apostle Paul's admonition to "keep comforting one another and building one another up," and such things sharpen our faith. (1 Thessalonians 5:11) Regular presence at Christian meetings also indicates that we love God and affords us opportunities to praise him.—Psalm 35:18." (Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life, 1995:163)

The 'Yes Set' Technique, the confusion technique, and the use of Interspersal

An effective technique Erickson used to induce a trance was to pose a series of statements and questions which will find agreement in the mind of the patient. After a number of these 'yes' answered questions are posed, the patient's critical faculties will be lessened and the hypnotist (or recruiter) will be able to lead the patient to agreeing with statements or questions that she / he would not have agreed to previously (Miller, 1986:248).

Once people are confused, they are more suggestible to beliefs that make sense. Confusion is caused either by creating doubts in people's minds about their own inadequate beliefs (that is, beliefs that appear to be based on illogical premises), or is a result of studying lengthy nonrational arguments (such as the upcoming Watchtower paragraphs) (Miller, 1986:248). The effectiveness of this technique, Erickson believed (1964 as cited in Miller, 1986:248), is that people have a need to understand the world in a way that makes sense.

Other ways indirect suggestion can be achieved is by interspersing messages between messages (Miller, 1986:249). This is the technique that helps people accept a true statement mixed with a half-truth. Cults are very good at introducing half-truths in this way. The use of metaphors can produce indirect suggestions that will be more likely accepted than if they were said forthright.

The JW's use these techniques with great efficiency. They aim to guide the potential convert through a series of logical statements and questions, mixed with interspersal messages, to eventually bring them to their own conclusion, which is the conclusion the JW's were leading them to. The particular section of text quoted here has been designed not so much to present the Watchtower conclusions, but to get the reader to reach those conclusions themselves in agreement with the Watchtower logic. Comments in the brackets are mine. This text directly follows on from a discussion leading the person to conclude that eternal happiness on earth is God's desire for people.

"8 What the Bible says about the future of the earth and mankind might be summed up in one word—Paradise! {yes} Jesus Christ spoke of it when he told a dying man: "You will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43) [Here there is a link between mankind's future on earth with Paradise. This could create confusion in a Christian's mind] The mention of Paradise no doubt brought to that man's mind the happy state of our first parents, Adam and Eve. When God created them, they were perfect and lived in a gardenlike park that the Creator had designed and planted {yes}. It was fittingly called the garden of Eden, which name denotes pleasure {yes}. 9 How delightful that garden was! It was a real paradise {yes}. Among its beautiful trees were those bearing delicious fruit {yes}. As Adam and Eve explored their domain, drank from its sweet waters, and gathered fruit from its trees, they had no reason to be anxious or fearful {yes}. Even animals posed no threat, for God had placed the man and his wife in loving dominion over all of them {yes}. In addition, the first human pair had vibrant health {yes}. As long as they remained obedient to God, an eternal, happy future lay before them {yes}. They were given the satisfying work of caring for their wonderful Paradise home {yes}. Further, God gave Adam and Eve the mandate to "fill the earth and subdue it." {yes} They and their offspring were to extend the borders of Paradise until our entire planet became a place of beauty and delight.—Genesis 1:28 {yes}. 10 When Jesus mentioned Paradise, however, he was not asking a dying man to think about the distant past {yes}. No, Jesus was speaking about the future! {yes} He knew that our entire earthly home would become a paradise [Notice the shift.]. God would thus fulfill his original purpose for mankind and our earth [Dispersal]. (Isaiah 55:10, 11) Yes, Paradise will be restored! And what will it be like? Let God's Word, the Holy Bible, answer." (Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life, 1995:8-9)

"8. What does the Bible say about the future of mankind? 9. What was it like to live in the original Paradise? 10. When Jesus spoke of Paradise, what did he have in mind?" (Ibid., 9)

Each paragraph is numbered and has questions that are asked after the person has read the paragraph. It is more than likely that the person will answer with the material she / he has just read. The reason for this is that their mind's focus of attention is narrowed to the text being read and has not had a chance to think through a thoroughly formed response.

The use of metaphors in guiding the thoughts of members is common in Watchtower persuasion. One classic example of this is displayed through the Watchtower's attempt to justify itself in the light of its doctrinal errors and prophetic failures. Observe how the metaphors of light and tacking are used in the following quotes to justify itself that it was not wrong but had not quite arrived at the 'full' truth:

The Path of the Righteous Does Keep Getting Brighter

When one ruling over mankind is righteous, . . . then it is as the light of morning, when the sun shines forth."—2 Sam. 23:3, 4. THE light on the pathway of Jehovah's servants from earliest times to the present has kept on increasing. This has been even more so since that notable year 1914 when, as developments here on earth showed, "the kingdom of the world did become the kingdom of our Lord [Jehovah] and of his Christ." (Rev. 11:15) Light from God's Word has flashed forth, like the sunshine on "a morning without clouds" to illuminate ever more clearly the pathway that Jehovah's servants must tread.—2 Sam. 23:3, 4. 2 However, it may have seemed to some as though that path has not always gone straight forward. At times explanations given by Jehovah's visible organization have shown adjustments, seemingly to previous points of view. But this has not actually been the case. This might be compared to what is known in navigational circles as "tacking." By manoeuvring the sails the sailors can cause a ship to go from right to left, back and forth, but all the time making progress toward their destination in spite of contrary winds. And that goal in view for Jehovah's servants is the "new heavens and a new earth" of God's promise.—2 Pet. 3:13. (WT 1/12/1981:26)

Below is a lengthy example that creates confusion.

Since the word "organization" does not occur in the Bible, even in its original languages, what right do we have to say that God has an organization or to speak of God's organization?

A modern Hebrew word for "organization" is the noun *ir-gun'*. It is drawn from the Hebrew verb *e-rag'*, which means "to arrange in line," as well as "to follow." Correspondingly, an organization is an arrangement of things. (For an example of this, one can refer to "*Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie*," chapter 17, paragraph 28, in the Hebrew edition.)

The Hebrew language has another word equivalent for "organization," namely, *histadruth'*. This word is based upon a word that is found in the original Hebrew Scriptures. The basic or key letters in the word *histadruth'* are *s* and *d* and *r*. With these three consonants is built up the Hebrew verb *sadar'*, which means, basically, "to arrange in order," thus producing an arrangement. The reflexive form of the verb *sadar'* serves as the basis for the noun *histadruth'*, which means "organization."

Although we do not find this word in the inspired Hebrew Scriptures, we do find the related Hebrew noun *seder* in Job 10:22. There this noun is used in the plural number, being spelled *s`darim'*. The *English Revised Version* renders Job 10:22 as follows: "A land of thick darkness, as darkness itself; A land of the shadow of death, without any order [*s`darim'*], And where the light is as darkness." (Also, *Authorized Version*; *Young's Literal Translation*.) The *New World Translation* here reads: "To the land of obscurity like gloom, of deep shadow and disorder [*lo s`darim'*], where it beams no more than gloom does." (Also, Rotherham's *The Emphasised Bible*.) Disorder, without any order, here would mean a lack of arrangement, a disorganized state.

To this day the Jews use the word *seder*. A *seder* is part of the Jewish Mishnah. Under the word "Mishna," M'Clintock and Strong's *Cyclopædia* says: "The Mishnah is divided into six parts (. . . , *Sedarim*, arrangements), which contain 62 treatises . . . and 514 chapters . . . The latter, again, are divided into numbered sections."

So in the original Hebrew Bible the word for "order" or "arrangement" is to be found. Emphasizing the needs for order and arrangement in the Christian congregation, the apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth: "For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace; as in all the churches of the saints. But let all things be done decently and in order [Hebrew translations: *s`darim' n`khonim*]." (1 Cor. 14:33, 40, *English Revised Version; Authorized Version*) This apostolic counsel of the first century applies with equal force today to all congregations of the Christian witnesses of Jehovah. The apostle Paul wrote in the common Greek of the day, and the Greek word for "organization" is *or-gan'o-sis*. The root for this word is *er'gon*, a word meaning "work" that is found repeatedly in the Christian Greek Scriptures. All things considered in the light of the Scriptures, it is straining the point to argue that God has no organization in view of the fact that the original words meaning "organization" in ancient languages do not occur in the inspired Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. In everything God demonstrates that he has the ability to organize. What would happen if he did not organize his obedient creatures? As a structure an organization is a body of intelligent persons who are brought together and arranged so as to work peacefully and harmoniously together in carrying out a common purpose, the purpose of the organizer. In line with this fact, God is repeatedly called "Jehovah of armies." An army is an organized body of troops. So, in support of the truth that God has an organization, we read the following exhortation addressed to his organization: "Bless Jehovah, O you angels of his, mighty in power, carrying out his word, by listening to the voice of his word. Bless Jehovah, all you armies of his, you ministers of his, doing his will. Bless Jehovah, all you his works, in all places of his domination." (Ps. 103:20-22) Jehovah had an organization of heavenly spirit creatures before ever he created our earth and put man upon it.

Against various backgrounds God uses figures of speech to refer to his organization. The first case of this is in Genesis 3:15, where God speaks of his celestial spiritual organization as "the woman," in opposition to "the serpent," a figure of speech denoting Satan the Devil. (Compare Genesis 3:14; Revelation 12:9.) This rebel against God has imitated him and built up an organization against God's organization, God's figurative "woman." (w81 5/1 30-1 Questions from Readers, 1993)

As can be noticed, these pieces of writing are very persuasive, utilising methods similar to those specified hypnotic techniques to increase the suggestibility of the person it is used on. The JW's literature, Bible-studies and meetings are designed to have the person agree with Watchtower conclusions whether they want to or not. Their Bible-studies do not encourage people to reach their own conclusions regarding doctrine but rather they are gently coerced towards JW doctrine from cleverly prepared 'Guided Tour of the Bible' packages designed to bypass the person's own critical evaluation. Techniques similar to those practiced in hypnosis are readily used by Jehovah's Witnesses in an effort to convert the loyalties of the unsuspecting householder.

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated in this study, as well as in other papers, that the WT utilises a variety of powerful psychological and sociological techniques to maintain influence over its members, and to draw new members in. Whether it be through their publications or via their specially trained members, unsuspecting people will mostly respond positively to the mind control tactics that are used, and themselves will become perpetrators and train others to do likewise. Many Jehovah's Witnesses enjoy their association, fellowship, sense of security, feeling of uniqueness and superiority to outsiders, unity, and learning. They are willing to pay the costs of independent thinking, limited association with outsiders, financial, medical, and time commitments. Others feel trapped within the organisation. They might be too scared to leave - particularly the emotional, relational, and spiritual

impact they believe it might have on them. Or they may feel self-doubt, guilt, or sadness for coming to believe ideas differing from those officially sanctioned. Those with doubts feel the pressure to conform the most. Others do leave and find themselves rebuilding new lives outside the organisation, and seeking healing for the wounds they carry. Some may leave feeling bitter. Others may leave and want to rescue others. Some will lose the fellowship of their families and most, if not all, will lose the only friends they have known since their membership with the WT. There are numerous support fellowships specifically designed and facilitated by ex-JWs to provide support, comfort, and advice for those leaving or left. It appears that the WT organisation is easy to become involved with, costly and secure to remain in, and devastating to leave.

The purpose of this study has not been to judge the WT ethically but to expose the reader to the methods and intensity to which its methods are applied to influence recruits and members of the WT. Society, churches and family all use varying degrees of influence to, rightly or wrongly, guide people's behaviour. Psychologist Philip Zimbardo wrote: "Cult methods of recruiting, indoctrinating and influencing their members are not exotic forms of mind control, but only more intensely applied mundane tactics of social influence practiced daily by all compliance professionals and societal agents of influence" (1997:1). The ethical questions that inevitably arise have to do with the extent to which people's free will and critical thinking have been suppressed or bypassed by the manipulative techniques (ibid).

Feedback and personal comments

Since publishing this paper on the Internet I have had mixed feedback. I have attempted to respond to everybody who has contacted me. Below I list some of the more familiar points raised in email. Although these are listed, I still welcome any feedback.

The most common points raised are:

This paper is attacking the JWs. Jehovah's Witnesses are only trying to be true to their beliefs. I don't believe I am attacking them. I believe I am researching about them from a particular angle. I asked myself a question - what are the influence methods of the WT? and sought to answer it.

This paper is biased. Yes it is. I tried to minimise the bias but to get rid of it altogether is humanly impossible.

Mind control theory is not accepted by some scholars. This is true. Not all scholars accept the theory. And it is only a theory. Whether it explains reality accurately will be disputed. My research leads me to that it is a relevant concept. I would encourage you to explore both sides of the arguments and come to your own conclusions. Likewise, compare your own religious group (non-JWs included) with other groups who have been charged as being mind control groups. This may be a revealing exercise.

I think there is a continuum of persuasion and influence. We are all persuaded and all are influenced to various degrees in various environments. Much of it is at an unconscious level. Church, schools, the military, hospitals and other organisations influence people's behaviour and thinking. The media such as TV and radio have made it an art form. The patterns applied by totalist groups or governments are particularly powerful by applying strong psychosocial techniques the persuade people and lower their defences. Like the infatuated teenager whose hormones cloud judgement and provide a compulsion towards their desire mind control operates in a similar way. The only difference for the love-struck teenager and a person under mind control is that with the cultist there are unfavourable consequences for retreating.

The point of mind control is on a continuum put their by certain people according to their classification. This paper's uses their classifications to conclude their definition of mind control. Individuals are free to disagree.

This paper only presents one sided and unbalanced information. I admit that the paper is focussed. It is a study of the WT with a specific goal in mind. The goal was to examine some of the persuasive techniques the WT uses to recruit and maintain its membership. It does not explicitly seek to ascribe motives or judge the morality of such methods, although some of what is presented might provoke internal uncomfortable reactions in the reader. I encourage the reader to examine these reactions to see where they are coming from, and to seek out further information. Neither was it intended to be the complete truth about the religious group it discusses. For instance it does not examine the validity of its doctrines, or discuss the ways it has benefited its members.

This study is crap. We are entitled to our opinions.

This paper uses the same methods it criticises. Some have written telling me that I have used selection such as presented in the section on Propaganda. I did select material because I came to the WT writing with the criteria and determined whether or not it met the criteria. The object was to determine some of the ways it influenced its members. If, however, I was trying to prove a conclusion, for instance, that the WT only uses propaganda to influence, and only presented negatives but not elements of proper scholarship, that would indeed be selection in its true propaganda sense, since it

is ignoring evidence that would influence the conclusion. I think all would agree that the WT has used techniques of propaganda to influence people. I am aware of no other information that would dispute this, so I do not believe I have been guilty of selection in the sense of propaganda.

This paper is filled with inaccuracies. This is the most common from the negative feedback I receive. When I do get this comment I ask the writer for specifics. Most often I don't get any reply.

This paper is wrong in thispoint. Most of these comments have been more about perspective than errors that can be proved beyond shadow of doubt. One JW told me that JWs are taught to believe the Bible first, over their WT literature. While I appreciate that perspective, I have encountered significant evidence from JWs, ex-JWs and their own literature that leads me to a different conclusion. My paper will not agree with every JW's experiences or thinking and this is the problem with generalising. However I have attempted to be accurate as far as the official teaching and practices go and where the majority of experiences might agree with. Related to this is the words or perspectives I look at information from. Looking at disfellowshipping from a psycho-emotional viewpoint rather than a perspective informed by the Bible will naturally be distinctive because both are coming from different angles. This does not make one or both views wrong. I have, however, been influenced by some of these perspectives and hence made changes to this document. However, I will say that if anybody can show me where I am wrong which is beyond doubt (for instance, if I said Russell died in 1980), then please let me know. These are errors, not just different perspectives, and I will correct these.

The author of this paper must hate JWs. Actually I do not hate JWs. I disagree with many of their doctrines and dislike some of their methods of persuasion. I grew up as friends with several JW families and I believe there are many sincere JWs who are trying their best to please God in the ways they know how. I also want to protect my fellow believers from being caught up in their persuasive tactics without being drawn into them. If this paper helps protect believers, and helps anyone leave the WT and place faith in Jesus alone, I will be pleased.

I am not brainwashed. I did not say that JWs are brainwashed. While Lifton's research on brainwashing has found similarities with cult groups, it does not necessarily mean that cults use brainwashing. There is one very distinct difference. Brainwashing occurs against the individual's will; that is the individual tends to attempt to resist. It uses force and generally does not maintain its strength once the person is out of the brainwashing environment. The concept of mind control says that people generally respond favourably to it and are unaware of what the appliers are trying to do. Most people under mind control do not know they are, and are unaware of its strength. Only when they start attempting to or thinking about deviation do they begin to feel its power.

JW's are bad and wrong. Some people have written to me and told me this. Whether they concluded this from this paper or from their prior experience I cannot know. I personally believe that all people are fallen and in need of Christ, and all who put their faith in Christ are made righteous by faith. All people are deceived to various degrees and have beliefs that are true also. It is part of being human. I also believe JWs are fundamentally wrong in their departure from mainstream Christian (biblical) beliefs.

Your conclusions are based on too little information. I am unaware of any parts where this is true. It has not been pointed out specifically where, apart from once. The person pointed out that when I had given a couple of examples of lying and deception in the Propaganda section that was not enough evidence to warrant that conclusion. The difficulty for me as writer was on what to include and what not to. That conclusion was not based on a couple of quotes. The quotes were included to provide verification but were not all of the information that I had come across regarding this. I could have provided more examples for my conclusions but I wanted a more succinct paper rather than

verbose. (For the original mini-thesis I did have a 14,000 word limit. I think I went over by 2,000 words as it was.)

It also must be pointed out that the WT does not always lie. This paper is just highlighting that this has been used by the WT in the past as part of arguments to bring their readers to the WT way of seeing things.

Coming from misinformed assumptions. I did take certain assumptions into my paper. My orthodox Christian beliefs probably came through my writing (which JWs would take as misinformed). Apart from doctrinal differences, nobody has mentioned any other assumptions that could be shown to have been wrong.

Some of the more positive comments I have received are:

This paper has helped make sense of my experience as a JW, or ex-JW, or friend/relative of a JW. I'm glad it was helpful. That is one of the prime reasons for putting it on the internet.

Very informative. I'm glad it was useful. I also must say that it is not the whole picture about the JWs. It is one specific area of study.

This information has helped me to leave the WT. I'm glad it was helpful. That is another of the prime reasons for putting it on the internet. I personally believe that the WT control constricts human dignity, individual accountability to God, and freedom in contrast to the freedom Christ proclaimed.

Please help me. This is difficult for me. I am not a JW, nor have I ever been, neither have I experienced the moments and feelings of a JW, ex-JW, or relative. I feel compassion for these people but I refer them onto other internet sites that have information and people who are able to better help. Occasionally I might offer advice and hope that it has some value.

I totally agree with what you wrote. These are reassuring particularly when coming from people with experience of the WT or JWs. I have had some who have identified themselves as JWs confirm its accuracy too.

Sharing of personal testimony. These testimonies that people offer me I find fascinating and I feel a real honour for someone to let me into their story. Without the first hand experience I learn so much. I also feel a sense of pain in some of the stories as they share their struggles.

Thank you. I am glad that these people get something out of it. It also makes me feel like it was worth the many months sacrifice of full-time researching and writing.

This paper has discussed a most sensitive area - that of human volition and of religion. Its readers might have experienced a gamut of emotions including relief, disgust, sadness, fear, anger, joy, disturbance and more. I felt extremely uncomfortable at times when I saw similarities between my own life, family, church and work and some of the methods used. I felt uncomfortable to realise that I had had more external influence on my choices than I was previously aware of.

In my updates I have edited some of the language that was overgeneralised or loaded. I have tried to make some sections more accurate and present them in ways that will lessen misinterpretation. It will also reflect my changes in knowledge and perspectives. I have included additional material and quotes. I do not apologise for my personal beliefs and values that might have been apparent in this paper. These changes have only been minor.

Ray Fanz (former JW and governing body member) books [Crisis of Conscience](#) and [In Search of Christian Freedom](#) have helped to influence my attitude towards the WT. I would recommend them to

all. His insight and knowledge have provided more balance to my perspective towards the group. I tried to maintain objectivity throughout my writing but I know that goal was not achieved. All I can do is accept my limitations and correct when I see the need.

Testimony

I have never been a JW, although I have been friends with a couple of JW families on a close basis, and although I do not have contact with them now I feel friendly towards them. I have been a dedicated Christian since fifteen and grown up in a Christian family. I have no loyalty to denominations but commit myself to a local congregation which teaches from the Bible. I do believe in the central tenets of orthodox Christianity as stated in the Nicene creed and I believe passionately in being able to explain my faith with reasonable logic and defend it from criticism. I took an interest in the JWs when I was in my first year of Bible College. A man doing community service was talking to me and he told me that the doctrine of the Trinity was pagan. It surprised me as I had never heard this before, and it also disgusted me that he could challenge the truth of my beliefs. I read up about JWs and got a few proof texts together to tell him but I never saw him again. A year later two JWs came to my door. I let them in and I hoped I could show them the error of their beliefs (I felt cocky that I could win the arguments). They criticised my beliefs, called them pagan, read verses differently to how I read them and asked difficult questions. This confused me, made me angry, and made me determined to prove them wrong. It also had the effect of making me question my own faith and I wanted work out if my beliefs were true. They really stumped me on their logic and arguments and this both impressed and scared me. Maybe these cultists were right?, I thought. I felt threatened although I didn't realise it as this at the time. I had a huge amount of energy created within me as a result of the cognitive dissonance created and to minimise this I decided to study all I could about the JWs and my own faith. What angered me the most was how they attacked my faith, something I held dear to and staked my life and existence on. The more I studied the more holes I could see in the JW arguments and logic and use of Scripture. However when it came to sharing my knowledge with the two JWs they would not budge from their views at all and would come back with still more arguments. When I confronted them on their prophetic failures and such they seemed to worm out of it in a slippery way. This was terribly frustrating. The bottom line was they were prepared and better arguers than I was. It seemed they had had lots of practice and training at this. I also realised that I think better in writing than in speech. I am a slow thinker and could not keep up and would get confused. My pride hurt me that I could not seem to win an argument. Finally the JWs gave up on me. But I had all this knowledge about the group that I had tried to eloquently express but just couldn't quite get it out, so I started writing it down. I finally posted it on the web. I wanted to equip Christians to defend their faith and be able to answer JWs who would seek to shake my fellow Christian's faith and win them over to what I consider wrong teachings. I wanted to help protect them from what I saw as a highly calculated attack on their faith (eg see Reasoning book). The JWs were prepared. Christians need to be too I believe.

In the third year of my degree I needed to come up with a proposal for a mini-thesis. I proposed a couple of ideas but these were rejected. As a last resort I chose the JWs. In one of the books I had read the author had said in passing the JWs were a mind control cult. I aimed to see if this were true, to learn about mind control and to analyse the JWs own material and ways. (The very concept of mind control was very intriguing to me). My research led me to agree with this assumption. After completing it I wanted to share that information as I saw that it might help some people to break free. Some feedback I have received indicates to me that it has been helpful to some people who were considering leaving or have left, particularly in putting the finger on something they experienced but had not really been able to understand or explain.

A couple of years after writing it I still have an interest in defending my faith against the criticisms of the JW's. The way the WT has criticised Christians and the Church generally, (Catholics in particular) has personally (and I believe naturally) disturbed me. I still have a passion to see JW's won over to what I believe the Bible teaches. As I have continued studying I believe my ideas are becoming more tolerant and more mellow, and I am growing more respect and admiration for the JW's, though in all conscience I would not become one. I found Ray Franz' book Crisis of Conscience challenging of some of my attitudes, assumptions, and ideas about the WT and JW's. I believe I am less critical and more open to seeing the insufficiency and inaccuracies in my own knowledge. I see that there a lot of sincere JW people who are generally trying to please God and win people over to him. They have also helped many people live more aligned to Scripturally prescribed morality. And I admire their desire to learn about God and his ways and to defend and answer their faith. I would, in some ways, personally desire having simple answers for complicated issues, and someone telling me what to believe and being able to trust that they are right because it would save me the complication of sorting through issues myself - life would be a lot simpler (although I also love intellectual freedom and freedom to explore issues and the challenge of that even though it often feels uncomfortable in the process). And the behaviour that I think is less than desirable (such as not allowing questioning or independent ideas) I see it coming more out of the belief system (eg trying to keep members spiritually safe) rather than trying to stifle spiritual growth. I do still have problems with the authority base and its beliefs about its importance and place, and some of its questionable methods of maintaining and converting members but I think it is more a sign of fallen humanity (for which I am an equal). I don't spend nearly as much time now learning and writing about JW's as I am kept very busy with family and job, and the passion has been invested in other areas. I do have to watch that I don't get aggressive, arrogant, and self-grandiose (thinking I have superiority with knowledge) in critiquing or putting forward my point, although I do not always live up to these ideals.

I currently worship at an Anglican church. I have a wife and two young children. I work as a counsellor at a seventy bed (always full) Salvation Army Rehabilitation Centre and in the job I have the joy of seeing, at a rough guess, 75% of the clients begin a journey of faith in Jesus Christ as personal saviour. I find it a joy to see people who have been destroyed by addiction and sin walking around with "What Would Jesus Do" bands on their wrists to remind them, and singing to their hearts content that Jesus loves them. I find it a great privilege to share in part of their journey of faith and to witness God's work in their lives. I strongly believe that it is by faith alone in Christ that we are given eternal life (John 6:47; Ephesians 2:8).

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Appendix

Dissonance and prophetic failure. The fact that Jehovah's Witnesses remain loyal to their Organisation even though time and again history has proved their prophecies undeniably false, has baffled many an outsider. Studying similar millenarian groups, Leon Festinger attempted to answer the question of why people remain loyal to their religious group's and beliefs even when they experience massive cognitive dissonance due to prophetic failure. He notes that people with firm convictions are extremely difficult to convert: "Show him facts of figures and he questions your sources. Appeal to logic and he fails to see your point." (Festinger, Riecken and Schachter, *When Prophecies Fail*, 1956 quoted by Watters, n.d. [a]) People often go to extreme measures to protect their beliefs. There have often been large sacrifices (ie financial commitment, time commitment, philosophical commitment etc.) that have reinforced the validity of the people's beliefs; thus to abandon the beliefs would cause further cognitive dissonance between the people's past beliefs and their present scepticism (Gleitman, 1983 quoted in *Cognitive Dissonance*, n.d.). The people become trapped with a life and mind-set shaped around their 'unshakeable' beliefs and contradictory evidence. Festinger notes that to reduce dissonance the members do two things: [1] they turn to each other for support, [2] they increase proselytising (by converting others to their beliefs they add consonance) (Festinger, 1957:200, 247). Prophetic groups often do not deny the prophetic mistake but rationalise or reinterpret it (ibid). Festinger's reasons help explain why the vast majority of Witnesses remained loyal to the WT even though their predicted 1975 date for Armageddon failed to eventuate (Bowman, 1995:12).