

HOW THE GOVERNING BODY VIEWS ITSELF IN MODERN TIMES:

*** WT 1981 12/1 p. 27 par. 4 The Path of the Righteous Does Keep Getting Brighter ***

But Jehovah God has also provided his visible organization, his “faithful and discreet slave,” made up of spirit-anointed ones, to help Christians in all nations to understand and apply properly the Bible in their lives. **Unless we are in touch with this channel of communication that God is using, we will not progress along the road to life, no matter how much Bible reading we do.**—Compare Acts 8:30-40.

*** WT 1983 1/15 p. 27 par. 20 Armed for the Fight Against Wicked Spirits ***

Really, **can we get along without the direction of God’s organization?** No, we cannot!

*** WT 2010 9/15 p. 13 par. 8 Unity Identifies True Worship ***

A Governing Body composed of spirit-anointed Christians contributes to the unity of the worldwide congregation. The Governing Body publishes spiritually encouraging literature in many languages. This spiritual food is based on God’s Word. Thus, **what is taught is not from men but from Jehovah.**—Isa. 54:13.

*** WT 1959 5/1 p. 269 par. 7 Attain Completeness in the New World Society ***

To hold to the headship of Christ, it is therefore necessary to **obey the organization** that he is personally directing. **Doing what the organization says is to do what he says. Resisting the organization is to resist him.**

*** WT 1981 11/15 p. 21 par. 18 ‘Stay Awake and Keep Your Senses’ ***

And while now the witness yet includes the invitation to **come to Jehovah’s organization for salvation**, the time no doubt will come when the message takes on a harder tone, like a “great war cry.”

*** WT 1956 6/1 p. 346 par. 11 Keep Pace by Conforming to Theocratic Requirements ***

Since the “faithful and discreet slave” has been entrusted with all the Master’s goods, then let us view with proper mental perception that **whatever the ‘faithful slave’ does is for our good.** The slave is thereby fulfilling its own obligation before Jehovah in getting His work done. Therefore **the slave’s will is Jehovah’s will.** Rebellion against the slave is rebellion against God. A proper mental attitude toward the slave’s direction is a part of keeping pace with the New World society.

***** WT 1981 2/15 p. 19 Do We Need Help to Understand the Bible? *****

OUR VIEW OF THE “SLAVE”

We can benefit from this consideration. If we have once established what instrument God is using as his “slave” to dispense spiritual food to his people, surely **Jehovah is not pleased if we receive that food as though it might contain something harmful. We should have confidence in the channel God is using.** At the Brooklyn headquarters from which the Bible publications of Jehovah’s Witnesses emanate there are more mature Christian elders, both of the “remnant” and of the “other sheep,” than anywhere else upon earth.

***** WT 1950 6/1 p. 176 ***** The ark of salvation that we enter is not a literal ark but is God’s organization

***** km 11/1990 p. 1 par. 1 Directing Bible Students to Jehovah’s Organization *****

Bible students need to get acquainted with the organization of the “one flock” Jesus spoke about at John 10:16. They must appreciate that identifying themselves with **Jehovah’s organization is essential to their salvation.** (Rev. 7:9, 10, 15) Therefore, we should start directing our Bible students to the organization as soon as a Bible study is established.

***** WT 1952 10/1 p. 603 par. 22 A Strong Refuge Today *****

Those desiring salvation must make for God’s organization, and find entrance into it and remain there permanently

***** WT 1998 3/15 p. 19 par. 4 Living Up to Christian Dedication in Freedom *****

In order to avoid misunderstandings, Jehovah’s Witnesses try to be careful about how they express themselves. Instead of saying, “the Society teaches,” many Witnesses prefer to use such expressions as, “the Bible says” or, “I understand the Bible to teach.” In this way they emphasize the personal decision that each Witness has made in accepting Bible teachings and also **avoid giving the false impression that Witnesses are somehow bound to the dictates of some religious sect.**

***** km 9/2002 p. 8 par. 5 Avoid the Pursuit of “Valueless Things” *****

God’s Appointed Channel: Bear in mind that our heavenly Father has an appointed channel of communication, “the faithful and discreet slave.” **That “slave” has the responsibility to determine what information is made available to the household of faith, as well as “the proper time” for it to be dispensed. This spiritual food is available only through the theocratic organization.**

***** WT 1960 7/15 p. 439 par. 2 Staying Awake with the “Faithful and Discreet Slave” *****

The “slave” class has served as God’s sole collective channel for the flow of Biblical truth to men on earth. Just as the early Christian congregation collectively served as the channel of communication from heaven to earth, so in our time. (Eph. 3:10) Abundant spiritual food and amazing details as to the doing of God’s will have been flowing through this unique channel actually as a miraculous evidence of the operation of holy spirit.

***** WT 1988 3/15 p. 18 Serving as Jehovah’s Trusting Fellow Workers *****

Peter knew that there was **nowhere else to go** because Jesus had “sayings of everlasting life.” Are you as determined to remain loyal to Jehovah’s organization?

***** WT 1992 11/15 p. 21 Serve Jehovah Loyalloy *****

Nowhere Else to Go

¹² *We will be impelled to serve Jehovah loyalloy with his organization if we remember that **there is nowhere else to go for life eternal**.* When Jesus’ statements caused ‘many disciples to go off to the things behind,’ he asked his apostles: “You do not want to go also, do you?” Peter replied: “**Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life;** and we have believed and come to know that you are the Holy One of God.”—John 6:66-69.

***** WT 2000 1/1 p. 30 We Need Jehovah’s Organization *****

We Need Jehovah’s Organization: What does the Bible say? Does God want Christians to be associated with an organization?

***** WT 1977 12/15 p. 751 par. 15 Fighters Against God Losing the Battle *****

Their faithfulness and spiritual wisdom in the Master’s service determines their worthiness to be put in charge of all the earthly belongings of their Master. Also, since our times correspond with the days of Jehovah’s prophet Jeremiah, it is logical that there should be a class like Jeremiah today, coming in Jehovah’s name. There is such! It is composed of the approved remnant of the “slave” class.

***** WT 1952 2/1 p. 80 par. 11 Jehovah’s Theocratic Organization Today *****

We should meekly go along with the Lord’s theocratic organization

*** WT 98 3/15 p. 21 pars. 11-14 Living Up to Christian Dedication in Freedom ***

The Witnesses gladly look to the mature brothers of the Governing Body for Bible-based direction and guidance in matters of worship. Though members of the Governing Body are slaves of Jehovah and of Christ, as are their fellow Christians, the Bible instructs us: “Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you.”—Hebrews 13:17.

¹² Does the position of oversight that the Scriptures assign the Governing Body mean that each of Jehovah’s Witnesses must render to it an account of his works? Not according to Paul’s words to Christians in Rome: “Why do you judge your brother? Or why do you also look down on your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God . . . Each of us will render an account for himself to God.” ...**The Governing Body is a loving provision and an example of faith worthy of imitation.**

When a person is baptized they are asked two yes-or-no questions. It is interesting to note that if a person was baptized prior to 1985, the second question of the Society’s baptismal vows had them promise and answer ‘Yes’ to this question:

“Have you dedicated yourself to God to do his will henceforth as he reveals it to you through Jesus Christ and through the Bible under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit?” (Baptismal question #2)

This is an entirely appropriate question to ask of the baptismal candidate. But in 1985 the Governing Body removed the references to “Jesus Christ,” “the Holy Spirit”, “God,” and “the Bible” from this second question. This well-written quotation nicely articulates it:

We do not dedicate ourselves to a religion, nor to a man, nor to an organization. No, we dedicate ourselves to the Supreme Sovereign of the Universe, our Creator, Jehovah God himself. (WT 1966 10/1 pp. 603-604 par. 15)

Unfortunately this Biblical sentiment was replaced with a vow of allegiance to the Watchtower Society in 1985. Newly baptized persons are now asked:

“Do you understand that your dedication and baptism identify you as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses in association with God’s spirit-directed organization?” (Baptismal question #2, revised)

This tells us what the Governing Body has believed for many years- that a **baptized Witness belongs to them. They are your spiritual head.** But it was not always this way- consider these quotes from past Watchtower publications found below.

Beware of 'organization.' It is wholly un-necessary. The Bible will be the only rules you need. Do not seek to bind other consciences, and do not permit others to bind yours. Believe and obey so far as you can understand God's word today, and so continue to growing in grace and knowledge day by day. (Zion's Watch Tower, Sept. 15, 1895, p. 216.)

The claim of any individual or religious organization to be the interpreter of Gods sacred Word is false and misleading. No creature or organization on earth can truly presume to sit as the supreme tribunal of interpretation of the holy bible...Jehovah God is therefore the only Supreme Court of Interpretation of His inspired Word. (Watchtower, July 1, 1943, p. 202)

Q. Could not an earnest, aggressive organization (or sect), built upon Scriptural lines, be the best means of spreading and publish the real good tidings?

A. We believe that a visible organization and the adopting of some particular name would tend to increase the numbers and make us appear more respectable in the estimation of the world. The natural man can see that **a visibly organized body, with a definite purpose, is a thing of more or less power.** But the natural man cannot understand how a company of people, with no organization which they can see, is ever going to accomplish anything. (Zion's Watch Tower, 1883, page 6.)

It is plain that **the forming of a visible organization of such gathered out ones would be out of harmony with the spirit of the divine plan;** and, it done, would seem to indicate on the part of the Church a desire to conform to the now popular idea of organization or confederacy. (Zion's Watch Tower, 1894, p. 384)

We are now left in the place where 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 does not fully apply- The man of God is NOT completely equipped for every good work without a panel of men dictating and shaping a kind of “enforced unity of thought” among Jehovah’s people. The headship principle states that “the head of every man is the Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:3) but that is not really so among most of Jehovah’s Witnesses today. They are required and for the most part willingly look to their head, a “governing body”, composed of a small group of imperfect men. This term does not even appear in the New World Translation of the Bible! The notion of a small apostle-like group of men exists nowhere in the Acts of the Apostles or any other book of the Greek Scriptures.

As a final reference and definitive comment upon this topic, about half of a page from the Watchtower of 1946 11/1 p330 is quoted below. This was written by Fred Franz, past president of the Society. This unfortunately, is no longer the position of the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses. (See In Search of Christian Freedom, page 36)

The written Word of God, therefore, does not need the addition of traditions which are the private interpretations of men and of religious organizations...Had the oral traditions of religious men been necessary to complement the canon of the Bible, Paul would not have said that the inspired Holy Scriptures were profitable to the point of making the men of God perfect in faith and devotion to God. It would have been inadequate and would have left the plan of God unperfected. But with Timothy's full maturity as a Christian in view, Paul instructed him to take pains to deal with the Bible and handle it aright, saying: "Carefully study to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2: 15, Douay)

Now a final argument is shot at us by those who uphold an ecclesiastical or hierarchical organization. They say: 'Even doing away with religious traditions, the Bible cannot be left for each reader to interpret for himself; we still need the visible organization of the faithful to act as a "living magisterium" or teaching power in order to interpret the Bible and make plain the will of God from it. Look at how the Bible, left to each one's individual interpretation, has resulted in the religiously divided condition of Protestantism.' To this we say, Protestantism's multitude of sects and cults is no proof that the Bible is a divisive force to those who take it, and it alone, as adequate. The Bible is not a divisive Book, for it is harmonious from cover to cover and agrees with itself, in all its canonical books. The divisive force among the Catholic and Protestant religionists of Christendom is the religious traditions which they follow. The truth of the Bible is a unifying power. After Christ Jesus prayed: "Sanctify them through thy word: thy word is truth," he immediately prayed that all his believers, those then following him and those yet due to believe, should be united in one, just as he and his heavenly Father are one. (John 17:17-23)

How is this? How is disunity over each one's individual interpretation of the Holy Scriptures now overcome or avoided? Is it because they are united around a visible human organization or around a visible human leader? The answer is No. It is because they recognize Jehovah God and Christ Jesus as The Higher Powers to whom every Christian soul must be subject for conscience' sake. It is, too, because they recognize Jehovah God as the living, ever-present Teacher of His church on earth, and that he teaches the "church of God" through her Head, Christ Jesus.--Isa. 54: 13; John 6: 45.

Hence Jehovah's Witnesses do not claim the church to be what the religious Hierarchy claim their religious organization to be, namely, the one holding the magisterium or teaching office and hence "the divinely appointed Custodian and Interpreter of the Bible" and whose "office of infallible Guide were superfluous if each individual could interpret the Bible for himself". (Cardinal Gibbons, in The Faith of Our Fathers, chapter VIII) Rather than take this religious tradition of the Hierarchy, those who recognize the higher authority of Jehovah God and Christ Jesus will take the inspired and infallible statement of the apostle to Timothy regarding the church. This reads: "Thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."--1 Tim. 3: 15, Douay. (Watchtower of 1946 11/1 p330)