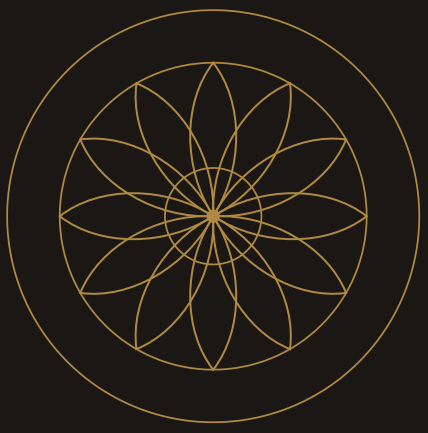


THE SACRED DIVIDE

THE FULL RECORD

Jehovah's Witnesses

Restorationist & Adventist family

HONOR THE FAITH · NAME THE MACHINERY

TEXT CHECKED 2026-10-03

NOBLEFATHERCREATIONS.COM/FAITH

Before you begin

This is the record of Jehovah's Witnesses in *The Sacred Divide*. It has 27 sections, the same 27 used for every tradition, so that any section can be set beside the same section for another. Every fact is sourced.

Before each section, a short note says what the section is built to show, so you know what you are looking at before you read the detail.

After each section, a note headed *Why this matters to you* points at the part of the section most likely to touch an ordinary reader: a member, a donor, a parent, a voter, someone thinking about leaving, or someone outside forming an opinion. It usually ends with a question. The questions are not traps. They are the ones a careful reader would ask anyway.

The hard questions in section 23 are set out one at a time: the question, why it is asked, and an example already documented in this record.

Where a note states a fact, the fact comes from this record's own tables and cited sources or, in a few places, from a well-known research finding named in the text. Corrections are logged, with their dates, in the last section, *What changed on this page*.

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How to read this

Every religion in The Sacred Divide is laid out the same way, in the same 27 sections, so that any section can be compared across religions. This file examines institutions, offices, money and power. It does not judge anyone's faith or the truth of any belief.

EVIDENCE GRADES

Each of the 30 techniques carries a grade for how it is established in this tradition.

- **CODIFIED** Written policy, published rule, contractual requirement, or a procedure the institution has confirmed in its own documents. The strongest grade and the hardest to deny.
- **DOCUMENTED** Established by court judgment, government inquiry, regulatory action, or financial filing. Not the institution's own words, but a body with subpoena power.
- **TAUGHT** Repeated leadership instruction from platform, publication, or curriculum, without a formal rule. Deniable as emphasis rather than policy.
- **CULTURAL** Community enforcement the institution neither mandates nor prevents. Real in effect, unattributable by design — the highest-deniability grade. A volume graded mostly Cultural has not been cleared of anything: it means the page names no document that makes the institution responsible. Cultural does not mean minor, and it is not a finding of absence.

- CONTESTED Occurs in some parts of the tradition and is actively opposed in others. Generalizing this grade across a whole tradition is a misuse of it.
- REFORMED Documented historically and materially changed since — policy withdrawn, practice ended, or independent oversight accepted. Recorded because omitting it would be dishonest.
- UNGRADED Present in the source material without a grade assigned yet. Read as an unverified pattern claim, not as a finding.

RECEIPTS

Bracketed labels such as [OFFICIAL POLICY] name the kind of source a claim rests on.

- **Official policy.** The institution's own written rule: handbook, canon, policy letter, catechism, trust deed, temple recommend question. The strongest evidence available, because it cannot be attributed to a rogue individual.
- **Court record.** Judgments, convictions, filings, and testimony given under oath. Adversarially tested, which is more than most religious claims about themselves have been.
- **Government inquiry.** Royal commissions, grand juries, parliamentary and state investigations with subpoena power. Where these exist they are usually the best record of what an institution did rather than said.
- **Regulatory action.** Findings and penalties from bodies like the SEC or consumer-protection regulators. Narrow in scope, unusually precise in what they establish.
- **Financial record.** Filings, audited statements, tax returns, disclosed compensation, property transactions. Frequently the only place an institution tells the truth about its priorities.

- **Leadership statement.** Recorded sermons, conference addresses, published letters. The institution in its own voice, to its own people, on the record.
- **Independent investigation.** Reports commissioned by the institution but conducted externally. Weaker than a court and far stronger than a press release — and notable when the institution publishes them in full.
- **Academic source.** Peer-reviewed history, sociology, and demography. Best for context, structure, and scale; weaker for specific institutional conduct.
- **Former member testimony.** Firsthand accounts from people who were inside. Indispensable and interested at once — graded as testimony, never presented as documentary proof.
- **Pattern observed.** A recurring configuration with no single document behind it. Labeled as an observation rather than a finding, and the weakest claim type in this codex.

METHOD

- Separation of targets. This codex analyzes institutional control patterns, never the worth of believers or the truth of beliefs. Theology is out of scope; behavior, money, and power are in scope.
- Pattern over anecdote. A tactic is attributed to a tradition's high-control expressions only where the mechanism recurs — one bad congregation proves nothing; the same architecture in a hundred proves the architecture.
- Evidence weighting. Every factual claim carries a bracketed source-type label and should carry a grade (A–D). Claims marked SOURCE NEEDED or PATTERN OBSERVED are analysis, not established fact, and must not be published as fact.
- Steelman rule. Every tactic section presents the institution's strongest defense before countering it. If the defense cannot be stated in a form its adherents would recognize, the counter is not yet earned.

- Asymmetry honesty. Similar tactic does not mean identical severity. A shunning policy that costs your entire family is not the same as a community that cools toward doubters, and the codex must never flatten that difference.
- The mirror rule. Any framework this powerful can itself be misused — to smear traditions, flatter one's own, or manufacture grievance. The self-audit and language guardrails apply to this project as much as to any institution it examines.

CITATIONS

A small raised number in the text links to the matching item in this religion's Sources, near the end. Every source was checked, and the date of the last check is shown at the top.

01 At a glance

BEFORE YOU READ

The whole page on one screen: how big Jehovah's Witnesses is, who sits at the top, how that person is chosen and whether anyone can remove them, where the money comes from, and what leaving costs. The disclosure scorecard underneath asks six yes-or-no questions any charity or public company would be expected to answer. Every later section expands one of these rows.

SIZE	The organization reports ~9 million active 'publishers' (2025). It counts only those reporting preaching activity, so this is an unusually honest activity measure. About 20.6 million attend the annual Memorial (the yearly commemoration of Jesus's death). **OFFICIAL POLICY** · annual report
WHO'S IN CHARGE	The Governing Body is a self-perpetuating body of eleven men in Warwick, New York. Among them are Geoffrey Jackson, who testified before Australia's Royal Commission, David Splane and Stephen Lett. Appointments are announced, never explained; Anthony Morris III's 2023 departure was announced in one sentence with no reason.
CHOSEN BY	The existing members appoint the new members.
REMOVABLE BY	Themselves.

MONEY IN ONE LINE	The money comes from voluntary donations, and the real asset is unpaid member labor (preaching hours, construction, Bethel service, meaning work at a branch office or the world headquarters) and real estate. The sale of the Brooklyn headquarters properties realized on the order of $1B+ (25–30 Columbia Heights alone sold for ~$340M). FINANCIAL RECORD • Brooklyn sales to Kushner Cos. and partners, about $1 billion
LEAVING IN ONE LINE	The exit penalties are among the most severe formalized in this codex. Disfellowshipped (formally expelled) and disassociated (formally resigned) members are shunned by family and all Witnesses, and this is documented as organizational policy, not personal choice. OFFICIAL POLICY / GOVERNMENT REPORT
THE UNANSWERED QUESTION	The organization's own files held one thousand and six alleged perpetrators, and none was reported. Who above the elder level answered for the policy that kept it that way?
EVIDENCE	Three of the 30 techniques are sourced to a named document. The grades are Codified 18, Taught 7, Documented 3 and Cultural 2.
FAMILY	Restorationist & Adventist — mormonism, jehovahs-witnesses, seventh-day-adventism
LAST CHECKED	2026-10-03

Disclosure scorecard

ACCOUNTS	PAY	SAFEGUARDING	EXTERNAL FIRST	REMOVAL	REPLY
NO	NO	PARTIAL	NO	NO	NO

Y Yes — established from a public source · **P** Partial — true of some parts of the tradition, or true in some jurisdictions · **N** No — not established from any public source · **?** Not assessable — no institutional apex exists to assess

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The glance table's answer to who chooses the top office is "The existing members appoint the new members", and to who can remove its holder, "Themselves". Read that as though it described the board of a pension fund holding your savings. Would you accept the arrangement there? The scorecard finds no public evidence of accounts, leaders' pay, allegations going to police first, a written removal procedure or on-the-record replies. Each "No" is something the institution could publish tomorrow. Ask yourself why it hasn't.

02 A day inside

BEFORE YOU READ

One ordinary day, told from inside. The person is a composite built from documented patterns, not a real individual. The point is to make the structure visible at human scale: phrases like "removal mechanism" or "giving record" are easy to read past, but a Tuesday organized around them is not.

Donna · A Tuesday in April · An English market town

Study at seven with tea, this week's Watchtower (the study magazine), the highlighting she has done since 1987. Thirty-eight years in the truth (the Witnesses' own term for their faith). She has never been lonely, never been without a hall full of people who would drive four hours for her, and any account of her life that leaves this out is a lie.

Service (door-to-door preaching) at ten with Sister Prentice. Four doors, three not in, one polite. Donna reports at the end of the month whether she took part in the preaching, as she has every month since she was nineteen. Until November 2023 she reported her hours as well.

Her son Michael was disfellowshipped in 2019. He is thirty-one and lives in Leeds. She has not spoken to him properly in six years. When he called at Christmas she said *I can't* and put the phone down and then sat on the stairs for two hours. The elders did not instruct her to do that specifically. She had read what she had read for thirty years, and she knew.

At lunch she thinks about 1975 without meaning to, because Brother Hall mentioned it at the meeting and then moved on. Her parents sold the house. Her father did not take the apprenticeship. Her father died in a rented flat in 2004 and nothing was ever said about it, and Donna has never once, in her whole life, said the sentence *nothing was ever said about it*.

In the evening the midweek meeting. The warmth in that hall is real. Sister Prentice has kept her going through two bereavements. There is no substitute anywhere for what those people are to her.

At 10:40 she reads something on the noticeboard about the updated arrangement — that a disfellowshipped person attending a meeting may now be greeted. She reads it three times. And a thing happens in her chest that she does not have a word for, because if it is permitted now then it was permitted to permit it, and it was not permitted for six years, and

Michael is thirty-one, and she stands in the kitchen with the light off for a long time.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Did any moment in that day feel familiar: a cost nobody questions, a door nobody can see how to open? The section of this page that explains that moment is the one to read first. If nothing felt familiar, ask whether that's because it isn't your life, or because the patterns have become normal to you.

03 The forefront

BEFORE YOU READ

The page's thesis in one place. First, the single question the documented record could not answer. Then the widest gap between what the institution says and what the record shows, one cost of leaving set beside how it is officially denied, and the strongest objection to this whole page, answered rather than dismissed.

> You were taught that everyone outside is deceived, that the world is ending, and that your family's love is conditional on your standing with a committee of three men. If you are still inside, the next few paragraphs will feel like an attack. They are not. They are the organization's own documents, read back to you.

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

The organization's own files held one thousand and six alleged perpetrators, and none was reported. Who above the elder level answered for the policy that kept it that way?

The widest gap between word and record

THEY SAY	THE RECORD SHOWS	RECEIPT
Shunning is a personal decision by individual members.	It is described as required in the organization's own published instructions.	OFFICIAL POLICY

One cost of leaving, beside its denial

COST	DOCUMENTED?	DETAIL	THE OFFICIAL DENIAL
Family and all social ties	Yes — by written policy	Disfellowshipped and disassociated persons are shunned by every member including immediate family	"Members choose whom to associate with; it's a personal decision." — contradicted by the published instruction. OFFICIAL POLICY

The strongest objection, answered

The objection. This is apostate-driven persecution (driven by former members, whom the organization calls apostates) of a genuinely persecuted religion.

What is true in it. The persecution is real. Witnesses have been banned as extremist in Russia, imprisoned for conscientious objection and murdered in Nazi camps. That record deserves respect and this profile states it.

The answer. The internal record comes from the organization's own publications and from a government commission that found 1,006 alleged

perpetrators in its own files with no reports to police. The 2024 greeting adjustment proves the policy was always adjustable. None of that requires a single former member's word.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Try answering the unanswered question yourself: *The organization's own files held one thousand and six alleged perpetrators, and none was reported. Who above the elder level answered for the policy that kept it that way?* If you can't, who could, and would asking them be welcome? How an institution reacts to a fair question often tells you more than the answer does.

04 What healthy looks like here

BEFORE YOU READ

What genuinely works in Jehovah's Witnesses, stated first and separately from any critique. That is a standing rule of this book: no tradition is reduced to its worst documented moments. Anything criticized later is measured against the best of what is described here.

> Jehovah's Witnesses have ~9 million active publishers worldwide (2025). The movement is millenarian (it expects the present world to end

> soon) and restorationist (it seeks to restore first-century Christianity). It is known for door-to-door evangelism, political neutrality, refusal of blood transfusions, and centralized governance from the Watch Tower Society, its legal and publishing corporation.

Healthy practice here starts in the congregation, where warmth and mutual aid are real. The composite day in section 2 records a hall full of people who would drive four hours for a member, and a sister who kept her going through two bereavements.

Some of the standard this page applies is already on the record. The organization publishes its membership figures every year and counts only those who report activity [6]. In Britain its charity files accounts on the public register [13]. In September 2021 it joined Australia's National Redress Scheme [2]. In March 2024 the Governing Body announced that members may greet disfellowshipped persons at meetings, a softening of the shunning policy that shows external pressure producing internal reform [8] **OFFICIAL POLICY** · Governing Body Update, March 2024. In 1943 Witness families won *West Virginia v. Barnette*, which held that schoolchildren cannot be forced to salute the flag [4]. Each is a place where the institution met the standard this page applies, and each is recorded here as credit.

Sources for this section: 2 4 6 8 13

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

A bias check before the critique. People tend to read criticism of their own group as an attack and criticism of other groups as simply true. Social psychologists call this in-group bias; it shows up even when the groups are assigned at random (Tajfel's "minimal group" experiments, 1971). If you belong here, did this section feel fair? If you don't, did anything in it surprise you? The surprise is a rough measure of what you had assumed.

05 History

BEFORE YOU READ

A dated timeline and a few moments where the direction changed. Dates matter because they show that most rules had a beginning. A rule that began in a particular year, for a particular reason, is a rule that can be examined, and sometimes retired.

The movement began as the Bible Student movement of Charles Taze Russell in 1870s Pennsylvania. Joseph Rutherford reorganized it into a centralized theocratic structure (one that claims to be ruled by God through the organization), and today it is governed by a small Governing Body whose interpretations bind all congregations.

Timeline

HISTORY AT A GLANCE



Numbered markers match the timeline below; spacing is proportional to the years.

1 1870S–1916

Charles Taze Russell's Bible Student movement; Zion's Watch Tower published 1879

A publishing house is the organization's original form — literature is the institution.

2 1917–1942

Joseph Rutherford centralizes control; the name Jehovah's Witnesses adopted 1931

Loose Bible study becomes a theocratic hierarchy answerable upward only.

3 1930S–1940S

Persecution: Nazi concentration camps; U.S. flag-salute and draft cases

Genuine, severe persecution and landmark civil-liberties victories (West Virginia v. Barnette, 1943). COURT RECORD

4 1945

Blood transfusion prohibition adopted

A medical rule with life-and-death consequences becomes a condition of membership. OFFICIAL POLICY

5 1952

Formal disfellowshipping and shunning procedures established

Exit is converted into a punishable event enforced by every member.

OFFICIAL POLICY

6 1966–1975

Publications point to 1975 as a likely end date; members sold homes and forwent education

Failed prophecy followed by blame shifted to members' own expectations. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

7 1971–PRESENT

Governing Body established as the collective authority

A small body defines truth for millions with no election, appeal, or term.

8 1980S–2000S

Purges of dissenters; two-witness rule (elders act on an accusation only if there is a confession or two witnesses) applied to abuse allegations

Internal evidentiary policy shields abusers structurally.

GOVERNMENT REPORT

9 2015–2017

Australian Royal Commission case study 29 finds 1,006 alleged abusers recorded internally, none reported to police by the organization

The single most damning documented institutional record in this codex. GOVERNMENT REPORT

10 2016–2018

Brooklyn headquarters sold (properties totaling roughly $1B+; 25–30 Columbia Heights ~$340M); move to Warwick

Decades of donated labor and funds realized as real-estate capital.

FINANCIAL RECORD · Brooklyn sales to Kushner Cos. and partners, about $1 billion

11 2023–2024

Policy adjustments softening shunning practices (greeting disfellowshipped attendees)

External and litigation pressure producing internal change.

OFFICIAL POLICY · Governing Body Update, March 2024

Moments in the room

1943 — WEST VIRGINIA V. BARNETTE

The US Supreme Court held that schoolchildren could not be compelled to salute the flag, reversing itself after three years and a wave of mob violence against Witness families. The plaintiffs were Witnesses.

Why it matters. It is the tradition's genuine and permanent gift to everyone else's liberty. It belongs at the top of this list, and it is why the persecution loop on this page has real material to work with.

1989 — THE TWO-WITNESS POLICY IN WRITING

A body of internal directions instructed elders to keep abuse allegations confidential within the organization and applied the scriptural two-witness requirement to child sexual abuse allegations, which in practice meant most reports could not be established.

Why it matters. It applied a scriptural rule written for accusations of any wrongdoing (Deuteronomy 19:15: "for any iniquity, or for any sin"), the verse the organization cites, to a crime that has no second witness by design. It is written down, which is why the deniability here is the lowest in the codex.

2015–2016 — THE ROYAL COMMISSION OPENS THE FILES

Australia's Royal Commission found records of 1,006 alleged perpetrators in the organization's own files over six decades, not one of whom had been reported by the organization to police.

A Governing Body member, found to be visiting Australia, was subpoenaed and gave evidence in person.

Why it matters. The organization kept the count. It simply never told anyone. That single fact is why this page's unanswered question is phrased the way it is.

Sources for this section: 1 8 10 11 12

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Pick one rule that shapes your week and look for it on the timeline. If it has a start date, it was decided by people at a particular moment, for reasons of that moment. Were you taught it as timeless? What would it mean for you if it turned out to be younger than your grandparents' grandparents?

06 Branches & variants

BEFORE YOU READ

Jehovah's Witnesses is not one bloc. This section maps the main branches and variants, so that nothing documented about one community is read as true of all of them.

Jehovah's Witnesses are a single worldwide organization, with no denominations inside it. Small ex-member and dissident networks exist outside it. What varies is how close a person stands to the center.

LAYER	SIZE	WHAT IT MEANS ON THIS PAGE'S QUESTIONS
Governing Body	Eleven men, in Warwick, New York [7]	It sets doctrine and policy for every congregation [7]
Publishers	A peak of 9,205,326 in 2025 [6]	They are the members who report their preaching activity [6]
Memorial attenders	20,635,015 in 2025 [6]	Attendance is more than twice the number of publishers and includes people who are not members [6]
People removed from the congregation	Not published	They were formerly called "disfellowshipped", and since 2024 members may greet them at meetings [8]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you know one community of Jehovah's Witnesses, you know one community. Most bad generalizations about a religion, and most unfair defenses of it, come from treating one branch as the whole. Which branch is the one you picture when you hear the name? Is that picture yours, or one you were given by news coverage or by the community itself?

07 Structure

BEFORE YOU READ

The organizational chart: how many people and institutions there are, where authority sits, who holds the top office, and who holds what beneath it. The question to keep in mind is simple: if the person at the top got something badly wrong, what written procedure exists to correct or remove them?

Size and shape

Adherents	The organization reports ~9 million active 'publishers' (2025). It counts only those reporting preaching activity, so this is an unusually honest activity measure. About 20.6 million attend the annual Memorial. **OFFICIAL POLICY** · annual report
Regions	Its main regions are the United States, Mexico, Brazil, Nigeria, Italy, Japan, Zambia and the Philippines. It is banned or restricted in Russia (declared extremist, 2017), China and several other states. **GOVERNMENT REPORT**
Trend	Growth is slow globally and near-stagnant in Western countries. Turnover is very high, and survey research documents that a large fraction of those raised in the faith leave. **ACADEMIC SOURCE** · Pew retention data
Participation	Because the organization counts only active preachers, its figures understate cultural affiliation and understate the number of people subject to shunning policies as relatives.

Authority

- Doctrine is totally centralized. The Governing Body is the sole channel of truth, elders administer judicial committees (panels of three elders that hear cases of serious sin), and disfellowshipping carries mandatory shunning enforced by every member. **OFFICIAL POLICY** · Watch Tower publications

- The two-witness rule has historically been applied to child sexual abuse allegations, a policy repeatedly examined by courts and commissions.

  GOVERNMENT REPORT · Australian Royal Commission case study 29; COURT RECORD: multiple verdicts

The top of the chain

> Nine million members hold zero votes, at any level, and never have.

OFFICE	WHO SITS IN IT NOW	CHOSEN BY	REMOVABLE BY
The Governing Body	It is a self-perpetuating body of eleven men in Warwick, New York. Among them are Geoffrey Jackson, who testified before Australia's Royal Commission, David Splane and Stephen Lett. Appointments are announced, never explained; Anthony Morris III's 2023 departure was announced in one sentence with no reason.	The existing members appoint the new members	Themselves
Branch committees and circuit overseers	They are appointed downward from Warwick. Circuit overseers are traveling elders who each supervise a group of congregations.	The Governing Body	The Governing Body
The elders	They are local men appointed by circuit overseers, and they operate the judicial committees.	The upward chain	The upward chain

THE TELL

The body that can direct the shunning of a teenager for doubt cannot itself be questioned by any assembly on earth. Hold both halves of that sentence at once.

Who holds what

ENTITY	TYPE	HOLDER	HOLDS	WHY IT MATTERS TO YOU	RECEIPT
The Governing Body	Sole doctrinal authority	A small group of men, unelected, unappealable	Definition of truth for nine million people, and the shunning policy	It decides whether your mother speaks to you.	OFFICIAL POLICY
Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York	Corporate entity	Organizational directors	Publishing, property, and the legal identity that holds the assets	It holds the deed to the hall your family built.	FINANCIAL RECORD · property transactions
Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses	Corporate entity	Organizational directors	Congregational administration and the elder instruction apparatus	It issues the letters your elders receive that you never see.	—

The Brooklyn property portfolio	Real estate	Organizational entities	Properties acquired through donated funds and volunteer labor, sold at peak market value	It is decades of your family's unpaid work, realized as capital.	**FINANCIAL RECORD** · Brooklyn sales to Kushner Cos. and partners, about $1 billion
Judicial committees	Internal tribunal	Three male elders, unpaid, untrained	Power to disfellowship, which ends every relationship a member has	Your entire social existence is decided by three neighbors.	**OFFICIAL POLICY**
The two-witness rule	Evidentiary policy	The Governing Body	A requirement that made child abuse allegations effectively unprovable; a commission found 1,006 alleged perpetrators in the organization's own files and no reports to police	It decides whether a child is believed.	**GOVERNMENT REPORT** · Royal Commission Case Study 29
The blood transfusion prohibition	Medical policy	The Governing Body	A doctrine repeatedly adjusted on fractions and components, applied to children	It decides whether your child receives treatment.	**OFFICIAL POLICY / COURT RECORD**

Succession watch

OFFICE	NOW	MECHANISM	PREDICTION	WHAT WOULD FALSIFY IT
Governing Body, Watch Tower	Eleven men, Warwick, New York	The existing members appoint the new members; departures are announced without explanation	The codex predicts continued self-appointment with no explanation given for any change in membership, and no change to the two-witness requirement absent external legal compulsion.	Any published reasoning for an appointment or departure would falsify it.

Sources for this section: 1 6 7 9 10 11

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Eleven men in Warwick, New York, the Governing Body, appoint their own new members, and the glance table says only they can remove one of their own. There is no vote and no appeal above them. Appointments and departures are announced, never explained. Every rule a congregation follows, from shunning to blood, comes from that room. If you are a Witness, when did you last hear the reasoning behind a change, rather than just the change itself?

08 Law & state here

BEFORE YOU READ

What states actually do. That includes how they fund, protect, regulate or enforce the tradition, and which outside body, if any, can compel an answer from it. For most readers, this is where the institution meets their own passport.

COUNTRY	WHAT THE LAW DOES	WHAT HAPPENED
Australia	A Royal Commission had powers to compel documents [1]	The organization's own files named 1,006 alleged perpetrators since 1950, none reported by it to police [1]; it joined the National Redress Scheme in 2021 [2]
England & Wales	The organization's British charity is regulated under charity law [14]	A nine-year Charity Commission inquiry (2014–2023) found the trustees "not as straightforward or transparent as they should have been" about who held safeguarding responsibility [14]
United States	Courts can impose civil liability for abuse [15] [16]	A 2012 jury awarded Candace Conti $28 million; on appeal the court held there was no duty to warn the congregation and cut the award to $2.8 million [15] [16]
Norway	State registration and grants are conditioned on compliance with the law [3]	The state withdrew both in 2022; the Supreme Court held in 2026, by three votes to two, that the withdrawal was invalid [3]

Russia	The Supreme Court declared the organization "extremist" in 2017 [5]	Its 395 local organizations were liquidated [5]
Japan	Child-welfare law applies.	A 2023 report by lawyers supporting former members found more than three-quarters of respondents had been made to carry a blood-refusal card [17]
United States (1943)	*West Virginia v. Barnette* held that schoolchildren cannot be forced to salute the flag [4]	A Witness family won a landmark free-speech case [4]

Who can compel an answer

Child-safeguarding authorities and the courts can, and the Royal Commission is the working model. So can state registration authorities, whose decisions in Europe show the lever moves in both directions.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Governments have done what the organization would not. Australia's Royal Commission compelled documents. The Charity Commission for England and Wales ran a nine-year inquiry. A U.S. jury awarded a survivor $28 million, reduced on appeal because the court found no duty to warn the congregation. Where you live decides whether anyone outside can make the organization answer. Which of these bodies exists in your country?

09 Money

BEFORE YOU READ

Where the money comes from, how each flow is justified, how it can be used to control, and who benefits. Read it the way you would read any organization you give to: what is disclosed, what is not, and who decides.

Where it comes from

- The money comes from voluntary donations, and the real asset is unpaid member labor (preaching hours, construction, Bethel service) and real estate. The sale of the Brooklyn headquarters properties realized on the order of $1B+ (e.g., 25–30 Columbia Heights sold for ~$340M). **FINANCIAL RECORD** · Brooklyn sales to Kushner Cos. and partners, about $1 billion

- In many countries, congregations' local funds and halls are titled to the organization or a national trust; in England and Wales more than 1,000 congregations merged into the Kingdom Hall Trust in 2022 [25]. **FINANCIAL RECORD** · Charity Commission merger data

Follow the money

FLOW	STATED PURPOSE	HOW IT CONTROLS	WHO BENEFITS
Voluntary donations (no collection plate)	They are presented as support for the worldwide work.	Giving is genuinely low-pressure at the point of giving; the extraction is labor and assets, not guilt-driven cash.	The Watch Tower corporate structure benefits.
Unpaid member labor: preaching hours, construction, Bethel service	It is presented as sacred service.	Billions of hours of free labor build assets titled to the organization, and Bethel workers receive small stipends.	The organization benefits exclusively **INVESTIGATIVE REPORT**
Kingdom Hall property titling and sales	Kingdom Halls (the congregations' meeting places) are presented as places of worship.	Local congregations fundraise and build, in many countries the organization or a national trust holds title, and the organization has sold consolidated properties for large sums.	Watch Tower entities benefit **FINANCIAL RECORD**
Headquarters real-estate portfolio	It is presented as meeting administrative needs.	Brooklyn holdings were acquired cheaply through donated funds and labor and sold at peak market value.	The proceeds go to the organization's reserves, which it does not publish **PATTERN OBSERVED** · no public accounts
Education discouragement	It is presented as a focus on ministry.	It reduces members' outside earning capacity and exit options while increasing available volunteer hours.	The organization's labor supply benefits **LEADERSHIP STATEMENT**

WHERE THE MONEY GOES, AND WHAT IT HOLDS

Voluntary donations (no collection plate)

STATED PURPOSE
They are presented as support for the worldwide work.

HOW IT CONTROLS
Giving is genuinely low-pressure at the point of giving; the extraction is labor and assets, not guilt-driven cash.

→ The Watch Tower corporate structure benefits.

Unpaid member labor: preaching hours, construction, Bethel service

STATED PURPOSE
It is presented as sacred service.

HOW IT CONTROLS
Billions of hours of free labor build assets titled to the organization, and Bethel workers receive small stipends.

→ The organization benefits exclusively
INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Kingdom Hall property titling and sales

STATED PURPOSE
Kingdom Halls (the congregations' meeting places) are presented as places of worship.

HOW IT CONTROLS
Local congregations fundraise and build, in many countries the organization or a national trust holds title, and the organization has sold consolidated properties for large sums.

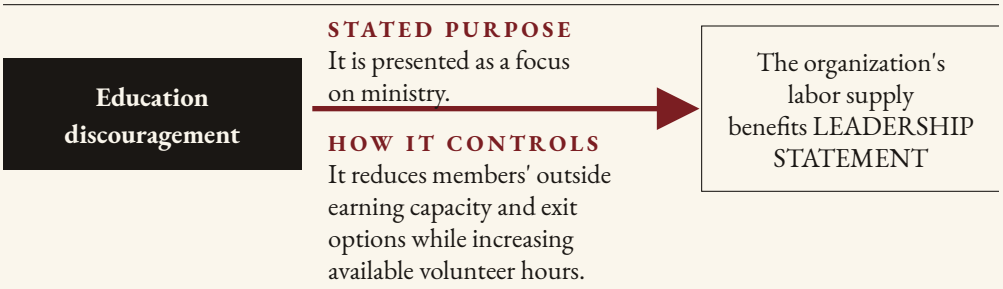
→ Watch Tower entities benefit

Headquarters real-estate portfolio

STATED PURPOSE
It is presented as meeting administrative needs.

HOW IT CONTROLS
Brooklyn holdings were acquired cheaply through donated funds and labor and sold at peak market value.

→ The proceeds go to the organization's reserves, which it does not publish
PATTERN OBSERVED · no public accounts



Not to scale. The table gives one figure, the German church tax of €6.75bn in 2025; the other flows are shown without amounts.

Pipelines this tradition shares

UNPAID LABOR TO TITLED PROPERTY

Source. Volunteers supply construction, service and administration.

Path. Local congregation builds → Title held centrally → Sale or leverage at market value

Disclosed. The sale prices of the Brooklyn properties were reported in the press [10][11].

Hidden. The destination of the proceeds.

LEGAL DEFENSE AND SETTLEMENT

Source. Not recorded on this page; the worldwide organization publishes no accounts.

Path. Institutional counsel → Settlements → Reputational continuity

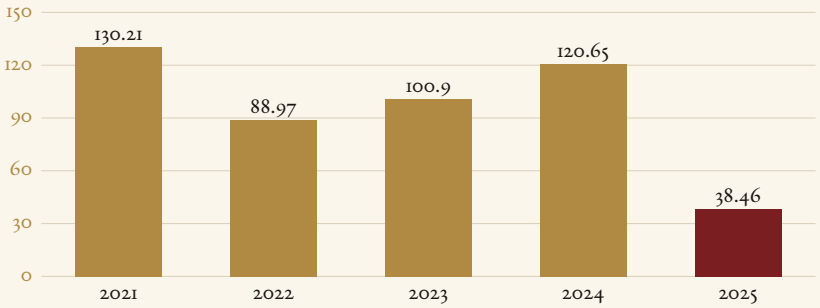
Disclosed. Settlement totals are occasionally disclosed under court order.

Hidden. Not recorded on this page: how much of the cost came from donations.

Sources for this section: [10] [11]

Money in numbers

WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF BRITAIN: INCOME



£ million, years to 31 August — These are the British charity's accounts. Nearly all its income is donations, and income swings widely from year to year. The worldwide organization publishes no accounts. [13]

- **Britain, year to August 2024:** Of £120.65m income, £114.04m came from donations, and £111.08m was spent [13].
- **Britain, year to August 2025:** Income fell to £38.46m, and £78.17m was spent [13].
- **Brooklyn:** Kushner Cos. and partners paid about $1 billion for the former headquarters properties [10] [11].

- **Unpaid labor:** Preaching, construction and branch service are done by volunteers (see Follow the money above).

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The page names the organization's real asset as your labor: preaching hours, construction work, Bethel service, and the halls it built. The Brooklyn headquarters properties sold for roughly a billion dollars. If your parents or grandparents volunteered on those buildings, their unpaid work helped create that capital. The scorecard finds no public accounts. Do you know where the proceeds went?

10 Genealogy

BEFORE YOU READ

Rules with a history. Each card asks the same three questions: what was this rule originally for, has that reason expired, and who benefits from the rule continuing anyway?

DISFELLOWSHIPPING WITH MANDATORY SHUNNING

Origin. It was formalized in 1952 as organizational policy, with instructions published to members. OFFICIAL POLICY

What it was for. It was presented as keeping the congregation clean, drawing on scriptural language about not associating with unrepentant wrongdoers.

Why that reason expired. It was never a defensible reading — the same scriptures never contemplated a parent ceasing to speak to a child. The practice's actual function is retention: a member who knows their entire family will vanish is not free to evaluate anything. The 2024 softening on greeting disfellowshipped attendees concedes it was always adjustable.

Who benefits now. The organization's retention rate benefits, exclusively. The shunning is performed by your mother, so the organization can truthfully say it never did anything to you.

THE TWO-WITNESS RULE APPLIED TO CHILD ABUSE

Origin. It is a scriptural evidentiary principle applied as internal judicial policy.
OFFICIAL POLICY

What it was for. It was an ancient safeguard against false accusation, a real concern in any judicial system.

Why that reason expired. Applied to child sexual abuse it produces a guaranteed outcome, because abuse does not occur in front of witnesses. Australia's Royal Commission found 1,006 alleged perpetrators recorded in the organization's own files, with none reported by the organization to police. GOVERNMENT REPORT

Who benefits now. Abusers benefit, and so does the organization, whose legal exposure is limited. It is the single most clearly documented example in this codex of a rule that manufactures impunity.

DISCOURAGEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Origin. It was taught from convention platforms and in publications from the late 20th century onward. LEADERSHIP STATEMENT

What it was for. It was framed as prioritizing ministry in a world about to end, and the end was repeatedly presented as imminent, including around 1975.

Why that reason expired. The world did not end. Members who sold homes and skipped education in the 1970s are now elderly without savings, pensions, or credentials, and the organization has never accounted for it.

Who benefits now. The organization's volunteer labor supply benefits, and so does its retention, because a sixty-year-old with no qualifications and no savings cannot leave.

BLOOD TRANSFUSION PROHIBITION

Origin. It was adopted in 1945 from a particular reading of scriptural blood prohibitions.

OFFICIAL POLICY

What it was for. It was a conscience position on a scriptural command.

Why that reason expired. The doctrine has been repeatedly adjusted — fractions permitted, components debated, and in March 2026 members were allowed to decide whether their own blood may be drawn, stored and reinfused while transfusion of others' blood stays prohibited [26] — which demonstrates it is interpretive, not absolute. Meanwhile it is applied to children, requiring court intervention. A position flexible enough to be revised should be flexible enough to spare a child.

Who benefits now. Doctrinal distinctiveness benefits, and so does the demonstration of total obedience. The cost is measured in specific patients.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The expired-reason test works on any rule. Take one you follow or enforce, name what it was originally for, and ask whether that reason still exists. If it doesn't, and the rule survives anyway, the section's last question is the one that matters to you: who benefits from it continuing?

11 Reach

BEFORE YOU READ

How far the institution's authority extends into three private areas: what members may read and hear, how children are raised and schooled, and decisions about their own bodies.

Information

- Reading 'apostate' literature is a disfellowshipping-level offense; former members' accounts are pre-labeled as lies from those who left the truth. **OFFICIAL POLICY**
- Higher education is discouraged as spiritually dangerous and a distraction from ministry, limiting members' economic independence and access to outside frameworks. **LEADERSHIP STATEMENT** · convention talks
- Doctrine changes ('new light', the organization's term for a revised understanding) supersede prior teaching without acknowledgment of error, and members are instructed not to keep raising superseded questions. **OFFICIAL POLICY**

- The organization has instructed elders not to retain certain records and, in the Australian inquiry, was found not to have reported allegations to civil authorities. GOVERNMENT REPORT

Children

- Children participate in door-to-door ministry from a young age and are trained to give scripted answers, which is a public performance of belief before it can be examined.
- Children keep no birthdays, holidays or school celebrations, so they are systematically marked as different from peers, which deepens their dependence on the congregation for belonging.
- Baptism of minors (commonly in early teens) makes them subject to disfellowshipping and shunning, so a child can be enrolled into the exit penalty before adulthood. OFFICIAL POLICY
- Blood-transfusion refusal in pediatric cases has produced repeated court intervention. COURT RECORD
- The two-witness rule left abused children unable to establish allegations without a second observer. GOVERNMENT REPORT

Bodies

- Women cannot serve as elders or ministerial servants (appointed men who assist the elders), or teach when a baptized male is present, and

headship theology (the teaching that the husband is head of the wife) governs marriage. OFFICIAL POLICY

- Judicial committees hearing sexual-abuse allegations are composed entirely of men, historically requiring female victims to describe assaults to a panel of male neighbors. GOVERNMENT REPORT
- Divorce is permitted essentially only for adultery; abuse alone is not scriptural grounds in the organization's framework, though separation is permitted. OFFICIAL POLICY
- Homosexual conduct is a disfellowshipping offense. OFFICIAL POLICY

Sources for this section: [12]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you are a parent, this is the section about your children: what they may read, what they are taught about their bodies, and who else has a say in their schooling. Ask what your child would need to do at sixteen to hear the strongest case against what they were taught. Would they be allowed? Would they know it existed?

Blood-transfusion refusal in pediatric cases has produced repeated court intervention.



12

The 30 techniques

How the thirty techniques are established here

18	3	7	2
CODIFIED	DOCUMENTED	TAUGHT	CULTURAL

STAGE 1 Idealize	1 Love Bombing **TAUGHT**	2 Weaponized Generosity **TAUGHT**		
STAGE 2 Hook	3 Future Faking **DOCUMENTED**	4 Hoovering **CODIFIED**		
STAGE 3 Devalue	5 Devaluation **CODIFIED**	6 Gaslighting **CODIFIED**	7 Double Bind **CODIFIED**	
STAGE 4 Confuse	8 Intermittent Reinforcement **CODIFIED**	9 Moving the Goalposts **CODIFIED**	10 Strategic Ambiguity **CODIFIED**	11 Projection **TAUGHT**
	12 DARVO **TAUGHT**	13 Normalization / Desensitization **CODIFIED**		
STAGE 5 Isolate	14 Isolation **TAUGHT**	15 Triangulation **CODIFIED**		

STAGE 6 Extract	16 Flying Monkeys **CODIFIED**	17 Smear Campaign **CODIFIED**	18 Silent Treatment / Stonewalling **CULTURAL**	19 Manufactured Consent **CODIFIED**
	20 Trauma Bonding **CODIFIED**	21 Learned Helplessness **CODIFIED**	22 Benevolent Control **CODIFIED**	23 Infantilization **CODIFIED**
	24 Identity Erosion **TAUGHT**	25 Spiritual Bypassing **TAUGHT**	26 Financial Control **DOCUMENTED**	
STAGE 7 Discard	27 Manufactured Crisis **DOCUMENTED**	28 Discard **CODIFIED**		
STAGE 8 Replace	29 Replacement **CULTURAL**	30 Plausible Deniability **CODIFIED**		

Thirty named techniques from domestic-abuse and social-psychology research, applied to institutions, in the eight stages of the cycle.

BEFORE YOU READ

A fixed checklist of thirty influence and control patterns from research on coercive control and social psychology, applied here to institutions rather than to individual people. Every entry carries an evidence grade. The grade matters more than the name of the technique: Codified or Documented means there is a paper trail; Contested means the claim is disputed.

Thirty named techniques from domestic-abuse and social-psychology research, applied to institutions, in the eight stages of the cycle. Each carries an evidence grade for this tradition.

Stage 1 · Idealize

You arrive with a need and are met with more warmth than you have had in years.

Repeated visits, patient attention, a Bible study in your home, and a complete explanation for why the world feels like it is falling apart. You are welcomed into moral separateness from a doomed system.

What it asks of you: You were given certainty at your loneliest moment. Ask what it cost later.

1 · Love Bombing

Overwhelming affection on arrival to create emotional dependency before terms are revealed.

How it shows here

- A lonely or grieving person receives repeated home visits, Bible studies, patient attention, and a ready-made explanation for why the world is falling apart.
- Congregation members may flood the newcomer with invitations, smiles, literature, and the feeling of being morally separate from a doomed world.
- The heavier demands come later: no birthdays, no holidays, no blood transfusions, door-to-door obligations, obedience to the Governing Body, and shunning risks.

The strongest defense. Witnesses are just sharing Bible truth and helping people spiritually.

The counter. Help becomes bait when the exit cost is hidden. If the same community that warmly studies with you will later cut you off for dissent, then the warmth is not merely kindness. It is the front porch of a locked house.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT Door-to-door study and the framing of moral separateness are directed through published instruction.

2 · Weaponized Generosity

Giving help that installs unspoken obligation.

How it shows here

- Jehovah's Witnesses may offer repeated home visits, Bible studies, transportation, friendship, congregation meals, help during illness, and a ready-made explanation for world chaos.
- A lonely person can receive intense attention from publishers and elders before understanding the costs: no holidays, no birthdays, strict sexual rules, no blood transfusions, field service obligations, and shunning.
- Members may receive support from the congregation, but the social safety net is conditional on remaining in good standing.
- If someone leaves or is disfellowshipped, the same people who once helped them may refuse ordinary contact.

The strongest defense. Witnesses are loving because they follow Bible principles and help people learn the truth.

The counter. Love that can be switched off by judicial status was never unconditional. If the people who brought groceries, gave rides, and studied with you will later avoid your eye contact because elders announced you are out, the generosity was attached to organizational compliance.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The home visits and Bible studies are directed through published instruction; that the congregation's help stops when a person is disfellowshipped follows the published shunning policy.

Stage 2 · Hook

You are given a future that cannot be verified, and a rope for whenever you drift toward the door.

Paradise on earth, resurrection of your dead, an end to suffering — and it has been imminent since 1914. Every failed date refreshes the urgency instead of damaging the credibility. Retrieval is reinstatement: sit at the back for months, say nothing, and your mother may speak to you again.

What it asks of you: A prediction that fails and increases your commitment is not a prophecy. It is a mechanism, and it has been running for over a century.

3 · Future Faking

Promising a future that keeps you invested but never has to arrive.

How it shows here

- Jehovah's Witnesses future-fake through the imminent paradise earth: no sickness, no death, resurrected loved ones, peace, abundance, and life after Armageddon.
- The current world is always almost over. The believer must stay separate, preach, obey the Governing Body, reject worldly life, and endure until the end.

- Failed timing does not kill the promise. It refreshes it. The end was near before; now it is even nearer.
- Members sacrifice education, careers, birthdays, holidays, blood transfusion options, non-Witness relationships, and family bonds because paradise is supposedly just ahead.
- The resurrection hope is especially powerful: stay faithful and you may see your dead loved ones again in the new world.

The strongest defense. Witnesses are motivated by sincere biblical hope in God's coming kingdom.

The counter. Sincerity does not erase the pattern of deferred delivery. If generation after generation is told the end is imminent, while each failed expectation produces more urgency instead of accountability, the paradise promise becomes a treadmill. The carrot is always close enough to keep walking and never close enough to reach.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> **DOCUMENTED** Imminent-end predictions with dates are verifiable in the organization's own archive across a century.

4 · Hoovering

Pulling someone back after they've started to leave, through guilt, love, or fear.

How it shows here

- When a Witness drifts, elders may visit, call, write letters, or request a shepherding call (a pastoral visit by elders); family guilt and the line "Jehovah is waiting for your return" carry the rest.

- Family members may pressure the person to return before Armageddon, warning that they may lose paradise or never see resurrected loved ones.
- If disfellowshipped, the person may be hoovered through controlled contact: return to meetings, sit quietly, meet elders, demonstrate repentance, wait for reinstatement.
- The same community that shuns them becomes the only route back to family contact.
- The person is pulled through fear of the end, grief over lost family, and longing for the only social world they were allowed to have.

The strongest defense. Witnesses believe discipline and reinstatement are loving ways to help someone return to Jehovah.

The counter. Love that requires institutional reinstatement before your mother can speak to you is not love. It is relational blackmail with religious paperwork.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CODIFIED Reinstatement after disfellowshipping is published procedure (attend meetings quietly, meet the elders, show repentance, wait). The 2024 Governing Body Update [8] permits only a greeting at meetings, and family contact outside that is still usually cut (section 24), so the practice described here has not materially changed. *(sourced)*

Stage 3 · Devalue

You are taught that you are broken, that your perception is unreliable, and that both exits from the trap lead back inside.

Until November 2023 every publisher's hours were counted and reported monthly, and pioneers still report them. Your service is compared to others'. You are never a good enough publisher, and for pioneers the metric is literally recorded [24].

What it asks of you: Pioneers submit a productivity report on their faith, and every publisher still reports whether they took part. Consider what kind of institution requires that.

5 · Devaluation

Reducing your sense of worth so you become dependent on the institution for identity.

How it shows here

- Jehovah’s Witnesses can devalue through constant contrast between Jehovah’s organization and the wicked world.

- Members are taught to distrust independent thinking; Watchtower literature has warned against "independent thinking" as a trait Satan promotes.
- The person's outside ambitions, education, career goals, holidays, friendships, and family bonds can be treated as spiritually dangerous.
- A member who doubts may be called weak, proud, spiritually sick, bad association, apostate-influenced, or insufficiently loyal to Jehovah.
- Disfellowshipping intensifies the message: outside organizational approval, you are spiritually dead to the community.

The strongest defense. Witnesses are trying to remain morally separate from a corrupt world.

The counter. Separation becomes devaluation when the person is taught that their own mind is the danger. If independent thought is satanic and loyalty to the organization is survival, then the member has not been protected from the world. They have been protected from themselves.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CODIFIED Watchtower literature has warned against "independent thinking", and disfellowshipping, which the entry names as the sharpest form of the message, is published procedure.

6 · Gaslighting

Making you doubt your own experience so you trust the institution's interpretation instead.

How it shows here

- A Witness questions the Governing Body and is told independent thinking is dangerous.
- Concerns about failed predictions, shunning, blood doctrine, abuse handling, or authoritarian control are reframed as apostate influence.
- Reading outside criticism is treated as spiritual poison.
- A doubter may be told they are proud, weak, rebellious, or letting Satan mislead them.
- The organization becomes the only safe interpreter of reality.

The strongest defense. Witnesses avoid apostate material because they believe it can spiritually harm people.

The counter. Truth does not need a quarantine around it. If members cannot examine criticism without being accused of satanic influence, then the organization is not protecting faith. It is protecting itself from inspection.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CODIFIED The prohibition on apostate material and the characterization of independent thinking appear in published material; recasting a doubter's concerns as pride or satanic influence is how members and elders apply them.

7 · Double Bind

A trap where both options lead to compliance. No exit serves you.

How it shows here

- Witnesses are urged to make the truth their own through personal study — using only Watch Tower publications. Independent research is 'spiritual pornography.' Study is mandatory; studying is forbidden.
- Members must report serious sin in others (loyalty) and confess their own (honesty) — to elders whose judicial committees can strip them of every relationship they have. Transparency is the crime scene.
- Disassociation is 'your choice' — announced to the congregation with the same shunning consequences as expulsion. The door is open; the bridge behind it is dynamited.

The strongest defense. Disfellowshipping is loving discipline that protects the congregation and motivates return.

The counter. Discipline whose penalty is the loss of one's entire family is not motivation; it is hostage-taking with a doctrinal permit. A choice priced at everything you love is not a choice — it is a ransom note with a signature line.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CODIFIED Each bind is built from published rules: study limited to Watch Tower publications, the duty to report serious sin to elders, and disassociation announced with the same shunning as disfellowshipping.

Stage 4 · Confuse

The rewards become unpredictable, the standard keeps moving, the answers stop meaning anything, and the accusation gets turned around.

Failed predictions become 'our own expectations.' Doctrine changes are 'new light' with no error admitted. Read a former member's account and you are the one endangering yourself.

What it asks of you: You were told the mistake was yours for believing what you were taught. That reversal has a name and it is on the tactics list.

8 · Intermittent Reinforcement

Unpredictable reward that creates addictive emotional dependency.

How it shows here

- Congregational standing is continuously variable — commendation from the platform, 'encouragement' visits, privileges extended and quietly removed — recalculated from monthly field-service reports (hours for pioneers; since November 2023 only whether they took part for other publishers [24]) and meeting attendance.

- Privileges (microphones, carts, parts, appointments) function as an explicit token economy dispensed at elder discretion; publishers can rarely predict which month brings advancement or removal.
- Armageddon's ever-imminence is itself intermittent reinforcement at civilization scale: dates and expectations raised, adjusted, renewed — the payout always close enough to keep pressing and never close enough to verify.

The strongest defense. Privileges reflect spiritual qualification per Scripture; adjustments are loving oversight, not rewards and punishments.

The counter. A system that records pioneers' hours and every publisher's monthly participation, and meters privileges to the numbers, has published its own reinforcement schedule — the only dispute is whether to use the behavioral name for it.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CODIFIED Monthly field-service reports are a published requirement (hours for pioneers; since November 2023 only participation for other publishers [24]); which privileges are extended or removed is left to the elders' discretion.

9 · Moving the Goalposts

The standard of success keeps shifting so you can never arrive.

How it shows here

- A Bible student starts with study. Then comes meeting attendance, field service, baptism, no holidays, no birthdays, no blood transfusions, loyalty to the Governing Body, and shunning compliance.

- Members follow current doctrine, but when doctrine changes, they must accept the new light and not question why the old light was treated as mandatory.
- A disfellowshipped person repents, attends meetings, sits silently, meets elders, waits, proves humility, and still may be told more time is needed.

The strongest defense. Spiritual growth and repentance require evidence over time.

The counter. Evidence becomes goalpost-moving when the organization can change doctrine but the member must never change trust. If obedience is required before, during, and after reversals, the standard is not truth. It is submission.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CODIFIED The steps to baptism and the reinstatement procedure are published; how long a disfellowshipped person must wait is left to the elders.

10 · Strategic Ambiguity

Language that sounds profound but means nothing specific — functioning as a shutdown to real questions.

How it shows here

- "New light" allows past doctrines to be treated as mandatory at the time but replaceable later without institutional accountability.
- The Governing Body can be described as guided by Jehovah, yet not inspired or infallible when errors are exposed.

- Shunning may be framed as loving discipline, family choice, spiritual protection, or organizational loyalty depending on the audience.

The strongest defense. Witnesses believe understanding becomes clearer over time.

The counter. Growth becomes strategic ambiguity when members are punished for questioning yesterday's certainty before it becomes tomorrow's outdated light. If leadership can revise doctrine but members cannot revise trust, vagueness serves control.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> **CODIFIED** The 'new light' teaching, and the Governing Body's description of itself as guided by Jehovah but neither inspired nor infallible, are published; how shunning is described varies with the audience.

11 · Projection

Accusing the outside world of the exact thing the institution practices.

How it shows here

- Jehovah's Witnesses may accuse ex-members of being apostate, bitter, proud, or influenced by Satan while avoiding accountability for shunning, failed predictions, blood policy harm, and abuse handling.
- Members are warned against independent thinking while the organization demands unquestioned trust in its own changing interpretations.
- A disfellowshipped person is blamed for family separation while the shunning policy enforces that separation.

- Critics are accused of spreading lies even when quoting the organization's own publications.

The strongest defense. Witnesses avoid apostasy to protect spiritual purity and loyalty to Jehovah.

The counter. Purity becomes projection when the organization calls the critic dangerous for revealing what the organization did. If family rupture is blamed on the person who left rather than the rule commanding avoidance, cruelty has been projected onto the victim.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The labels applied to former members (apostate, bad association) and the warning against independent thinking are repeated in published material without a formal rule for how to use them; the accusations and blame the entry describes are how members apply them.

12 · DARVO

Deny the wrongdoing. Attack the person who raised it. Reverse victim and offender.

How it shows here

- A Witness questions shunning, failed predictions, blood transfusion policy, child abuse handling, or Governing Body authority. The organization denies wrongdoing or says critics distort the truth.
- Then the questioner is attacked as apostate, proud, bitter, mentally diseased, influenced by Satan, or spiritually weak.

- The organization becomes the victim of persecution; the person harmed by organizational policy becomes the persecutor.
- Family shunning is blamed on the disfellowshipped person's choices, while the organization's policy creates and enforces the separation.
- The person who reports harm becomes "bad association."

The strongest defense. Witnesses practice discipline to keep the congregation spiritually clean and help sinners return.

The counter. Discipline becomes DARVO when the organization creates the punishment and then blames the victim for suffering it. If your mother shuns you because the religion tells her to, the rupture was not caused by your honesty. It was caused by the rule.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The labels applied to those who raise concerns (apostate, bad association) are repeated in published material; the denial, attack and reversal of roles that the entry describes is how members and elders apply them, and this page cites no document that records that sequence. The Royal Commission's finding of no reports to police concerns non-reporting, not this sequence.

13 · Normalization / Desensitization

Practices that would seem extreme to an outsider feel normal to insiders because they were installed before critical evaluation developed.

How it shows here

- Witnesses are normalized into meetings, field service, no holidays, no birthdays, no political participation, no blood transfusions, and suspicion of "the world."
- Shunning becomes normal because it is repeatedly framed as loving discipline.
- Members become desensitized to changing doctrine through "new light," while still treating current doctrine as mandatory.
- Children grow up hearing Armageddon, paradise, Satan's world, apostates, and bad association so often that fear becomes ordinary.
- The member's social oxygen is slowly moved inside the organization.

The strongest defense. Witness practices preserve spiritual cleanliness and loyalty to Jehovah.

The counter. Cleanliness becomes desensitization when people learn to accept family rupture, fear, and information control as love. If cruelty must be repeated until it feels righteous, the repetition is the mechanism.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CODIFIED The practices members are raised into (meetings, field service, no holidays or birthdays, no blood transfusions) are published requirements; the desensitization they produce is observed rather than written.

Stage 5 · Isolate

Your world narrows until every voice you hear is inside the system, and everything you came for now runs through a middleman.

Members keep no birthdays, holidays or school celebrations, form no outside friendships of substance and pursue no higher education. The congregation becomes the only social world you have — and that outcome is produced by instruction.

What it asks of you: Every alternative in your life was removed by teaching, not by accident.

14 · Isolation

Shrinking your world until the only voices you hear are inside the system.

How it shows here

- Jehovah's Witnesses isolate explicitly through warnings against "the world," apostates, higher education, holidays, non-Witness friendships, independent thinking, and outside religious or political involvement.
- Members are encouraged to associate primarily with other Witnesses and to view outsiders as spiritually dangerous or doomed.

- Critical material is treated as apostate poison, meaning members cannot safely investigate claims against the organization.
- Shunning creates one of the strongest isolation mechanisms: if someone is disfellowshipped or disassociates, family and friends may cut contact.
- The person's entire emotional world can be held hostage by organizational status.

The strongest defense. Witnesses remain separate from the world to stay spiritually clean and loyal to Jehovah.

The counter. Separation becomes isolation when it is enforced through fear, information control, and family loss. If the organization can make your mother stop speaking to you, it is not merely encouraging holiness. It is controlling your oxygen supply.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT Restriction on holidays, birthdays, and outside friendship is taught continuously in publications rather than issued as a single rule.

15 · Triangulation

Inserting intermediaries between you and the thing you came for, so the institution is always in the middle.

How it shows here

- Jehovah's Witnesses triangulate through elders, Governing Body, family, congregation, field service groups, judicial committees, and Armageddon fear.

- A doubter is encouraged to speak with elders, but elders represent the organization whose authority is being questioned.
- Family becomes the central pressure point: if you leave or are disfellowshipped, relationships may be restricted or severed.
- The organization triangulates through paradise: "Do you want to see your dead loved ones again?" "Do you want your family to survive Armageddon?"
- Loyal Witnesses are contrasted with "apostates," "bad association," and people destroyed by the world.
- The congregation becomes a social mirror: everyone notices whether you attend meetings, comment, preach, associate, and conform.
- The Governing Body speaks as the faithful channel; disagreement becomes not merely disagreement with men but danger to your standing with Jehovah.

The strongest defense. Witnesses use elders and congregation support to help people remain spiritually safe.

The counter. Support becomes triangulation when family access, social belonging, paradise hope, and elder authority all depend on organizational obedience. If the same system that claims to help you can command your loved ones to avoid you, then the triangle is a trap.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> **CODIFIED** The elders' authority over a doubter and the judicial committee are set out in published procedure, and the Governing Body's claim to be the faithful channel is in print; family pressure operates by custom.

Stage 6 · Extract

Now the harvest: your labor, your money, your identity, your silence, your children's schooling, your capacity to trust yourself.

Pioneers report preaching hours monthly like a productivity metric, and every publisher reports whether they took part. Kingdom Halls are built by members and, in many countries, titled to the organization or a national trust. Brooklyn property, acquired through donated funds and labor, was sold at peak value. Higher education is discouraged, which produces more available hours and fewer exit options at once. And abuse allegations require a second witness.

What it asks of you: A single policy took your working hours and your ability to ever leave. Ask which other institution has achieved both with one instruction.

16 · Flying Monkeys

The community enforces the institution's norms without being asked — mobilized by culture, not memos.

How it shows here

- A drifting Witness may receive elder visits, family pressure, congregation monitoring, shepherding calls, and reminders about meetings, field service, Armageddon, and paradise.
- If disfellowshipped, family and congregation members become enforcement mechanisms through shunning.
- The organization does not need to personally punish every person; loyal relatives and friends do it.
- Former friends may report contact, attitudes, doubts, associations, or "apostate" influence.

The strongest defense. Witnesses use elders and discipline to help people return to Jehovah.

The counter. Discipline becomes FLYING MONKEY behavior when family members are made into enforcement arms. If your mother, sibling, friend, and elder body all become instruments of organizational pressure, love has been subordinated to policy.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CODIFIED Members are instructed in print to shun disfellowshipped and disassociated people, so enforcement by family and friends follows a published instruction.

17 · Smear Campaign

Rewriting your character after departure to protect the institution from the implications of your leaving.

How it shows here

- Ex-members may be labeled apostate, mentally diseased, bitter, proud, satanic, dangerous, or bad association.
- Criticism of shunning, blood policy, abuse handling, or failed predictions may be dismissed as apostate lies.
- Family and congregation members may be warned not to listen.
- The organization protects itself by making the critic socially untouchable.

The strongest defense. Witnesses avoid apostasy to remain spiritually clean.

The counter. Spiritual cleanliness becomes smear when it requires making critics radioactive. If members are forbidden to hear the other side, the organization is not protecting truth. It is protecting its narrative.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CODIFIED Public announcement of disfellowshipping is prescribed procedure, not local practice.

18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling

Refusing to engage with legitimate questions in order to maintain control.

How it shows here

- A member questions failed predictions, shunning, abuse handling, blood doctrine, or Governing Body authority and is told to wait on Jehovah.
- Elders may refuse substantive debate and redirect the person to approved publications.
- Questions are treated as dangerous if they persist beyond permitted boundaries.
- Disfellowshipped people may sit silently at meetings for months while waiting for reinstatement.

The strongest defense. Witnesses rely on Jehovah's organization and avoid endless debate with apostate thinking.

The counter. "Wait on Jehovah" becomes stonewalling when it means never holding the organization accountable. If leaders can change doctrine but members cannot question the changes, silence is not faith. It is submission.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Telling a questioner to "wait on Jehovah" and redirecting them to approved publications is how elders respond in practice; this page cites no published instruction or record that directs it.

19 · Manufactured Consent

Creating the appearance of choice when the conditions of choice were shaped before you could evaluate them.

How it shows here

- A person "chooses" baptism after social life, family approval, paradise hope, and Armageddon survival are tied to organizational loyalty.
- Members "choose" field service, meeting attendance, no holidays, no blood transfusions, and shunning compliance under fear of disfellowshipping or spiritual death.
- A disfellowshipped person "chooses" repentance while family contact is withheld until organizational reinstatement.
- Silence toward changing doctrine is treated as faithful acceptance.

The strongest defense. Witness baptism and discipline are voluntary religious commitments.

The counter. Consent is manufactured when family access and survival hope depend on obedience. If leaving costs everyone you love, staying is not simply belief. It is hostage adaptation.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CODIFIED Baptism of minors makes them subject to disfellowshipping and shunning before adulthood.

20 · Trauma Bonding

The wound and the bandage come from the same hand.

How it shows here

- Witnesses are bonded through Armageddon fear, paradise hope, shunning, meetings, field service, and organizational loyalty.
- A member fears destruction, apostasy, disfellowshipping, and losing family; relief comes through obedience to the organization.
- Disfellowshipped people may endure social deprivation, then feel enormous relief when reinstated.
- The organization creates the exile and then becomes the only path back to family.

The strongest defense. Witness discipline is meant to help people return to Jehovah and survive spiritually.

The counter. Discipline becomes TRAUMA BONDING when pain is intentionally used to make return feel like rescue. If the same organization cuts off family contact and then restores it after compliance, it has engineered the wound and the cure.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CODIFIED The community that will shun a member entirely is the only community policy permits them to have.

21 · Learned Helplessness

Teaching you that your own judgment is unreliable until you stop trusting it entirely.

How it shows here

- A Witness questions doctrine or policy and is told to wait on Jehovah, avoid apostate material, trust the Governing Body, and stay loyal.
- If disfellowshipped, they may sit through meetings silently for months while elders decide when they are repentant enough.
- Family contact may depend on organizational status.
- The member learns that nothing works except submission.

The strongest defense. Witnesses believe Jehovah's organization provides spiritual direction and discipline.

The counter. Discipline becomes LEARNED HELPLESSNESS when the organization controls family access, truth sources, and reinstatement. If the only path out of pain is obedience to the people administering it, helplessness has been engineered.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> **CODIFIED** The instruction to study only approved material, and the characterization of independent thinking, are published.

22 · Benevolent Control

Control wrapped in the language of care, so that resisting the control feels like rejecting the love.

How it shows here

- Shunning is framed as loving discipline.
- Avoiding apostate material is framed as spiritual protection.
- Field service, meeting attendance, and elder oversight are framed as care for survival through Armageddon.
- Family members may cut contact while saying it is the most loving thing they can do.

The strongest defense. Witness discipline helps people return to Jehovah and remain spiritually clean.

The counter. Love becomes BENEVOLENT CONTROL when it withdraws itself to force compliance. If family affection is restored only through organizational reinstatement, discipline has become emotional coercion.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> **CODIFIED** Shunning and the avoidance of apostate material are published as loving discipline and spiritual protection.

23 · Infantilization

Positioning the adult believer as permanently childlike and dependent on institutional authority.

How it shows here

- Members are treated as spiritually unsafe without the Governing Body's direction.
- Independent thinking is discouraged, and approved publications define acceptable reality.
- Elders monitor conduct, associations, doubts, and repentance.
- Disfellowshipped adults may have to prove repentance over time to regain family contact.

The strongest defense. Witnesses believe Jehovah provides direction through his organization.

The counter. Direction becomes INFANTILIZATION when adults are not allowed to think without supervision. If independent thought is dangerous and family contact depends on elder approval, the organization has made spiritual childhood permanent.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CODIFIED The elders' oversight of conduct and repentance, and the reinstatement procedure, are published; the warning against independent thinking is in print.

24 · Identity Erosion

Gradually replacing your identity with a role the institution provides, until you can't separate who you are from where you belong.

How it shows here

- Witness identity reorganizes life around meetings, field service, Governing Body direction, paradise hope, Armageddon, no holidays, no birthdays, no political involvement, and separation from "the world."
- The person's outside ambitions, education, friendships, family ties, and personal dreams may be reduced as worldly distractions.
- Independent thinking is treated as spiritually dangerous.
- The person becomes "one of Jehovah's people" before they are allowed to be a complex individual.
- Leaving can feel like losing reality itself.

The strongest defense. Witness identity protects people from Satan's world and gives hope.

The counter. Hope becomes IDENTITY EROSION when the organization replaces the person's entire world. If outside identity is demonized and inside identity is conditional on obedience, the self has been narrowed to organizational loyalty.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT Separation from "the world", and a life ordered around meetings, field service and Governing Body direction, are taught continuously in publications.

25 · Spiritual Bypassing

Using spiritual language to avoid engaging with real pain, real questions, and real accountability.

How it shows here

- Failed predictions are bypassed with "new light."
- Shunning is bypassed as loving discipline.
- Blood policy harm is bypassed as loyalty to Jehovah.
- Abuse handling is bypassed through waiting on Jehovah and trusting the organization.
- Doubt is bypassed as apostate influence.

The strongest defense. Witnesses believe Jehovah progressively clarifies truth and disciplines lovingly.

The counter. New light becomes SPIRITUAL BYPASSING when it avoids accountability for old certainty. If harm caused by yesterday's doctrine is erased by today's update, revelation is being used to bypass responsibility.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The 'new light' teaching and the description of shunning as loving discipline are repeated in published material; answering harm with 'wait on Jehovah' is pastoral practice rather than a written rule.

26 · Financial Control

Extracting money through spiritual obligation while offering no transparency about where it goes.

How it shows here

- Jehovah's Witnesses may use donations, unpaid construction labor, field service, meeting attendance, literature distribution, and organizational volunteering.
- Members may be discouraged from higher education or ambitious careers, increasing dependence on the community and limiting exit resources.
- Leaving can mean losing social and family support, which has financial consequences.
- Time itself becomes a financial resource extracted through preaching and meetings.

The strongest defense. Witnesses volunteer because they believe in preaching and simple living.

The counter. Simplicity becomes FINANCIAL CONTROL when members are discouraged from building independent resources while the organization receives their time, labor, and loyalty. If exit leaves people socially and economically stranded, dependence has been engineered.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> **DOCUMENTED** In England and Wales more than 1,000 congregations merged into the Kingdom Hall Trust in 2022, which now controls their funds and property [25]; title-holding differs by country, and congregations fundraise and build. *(sourced)*

Stage 7 · Discard

You become expensive — too many questions, too much independence — and the urgency ramps up until you are removed.

It takes three elders, a private judicial committee and an announcement. Then your parents, children, and every friend you have stop speaking to you — by policy, in print.

What it asks of you: This is the most completely documented exit penalty in the codex. It is not your family's choice; it is an instruction they were given.

27 · Manufactured Crisis

Creating urgency to suppress critical thinking and generate loyalty.

How it shows here

- Jehovah's Witnesses may manufacture crisis through Armageddon urgency, apostate fear, Satan's world, bad association, blood doctrine, meeting attendance, and field service.
- A member questioning the Governing Body is treated as spiritually endangered.

- Leaving is framed as risking destruction and loss of paradise.
- Family may panic because the person may not survive the end.

The strongest defense. Witnesses sincerely believe the end is near and spiritual safety matters.

The counter. Sincerity does not erase MANUFACTURED CRISIS. If every generation is kept urgent and every doubt is treated as fatal, fear becomes the organization's renewable fuel.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> **DOCUMENTED** Predictions of the imminent end were published with dates, among them the 1966 book *Life Everlasting—In Freedom of the Sons of God*, whose chronology ended 6,000 years of human history in 1975 [23]. *(sourced)*

28 · Discard

Removing members who become too costly — too many questions, too much independence, too visible a contradiction.

How it shows here

- Disfellowshipping and disassociation can produce direct social discard through shunning.
- Family and friends may stop normal contact.
- The person becomes apostate, bad association, spiritually dead, or dangerous.
- Congregation identity is removed; social oxygen is cut off.
- Reinstatement becomes the only route back to many relationships.

The strongest defense. Shunning is loving discipline meant to encourage repentance.

The counter. Discipline becomes DISCARD when love is withdrawn to force compliance. If family contact depends on organizational approval, the person was not merely corrected. They were socially deleted.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CODIFIED Disfellowshipping procedure and the requirement that members shun are set out in the organization's own published instructions to elders and members.

Stage 8 · Replace

Your seat is filled before the door shuts, and nobody is responsible for any of it because the authority was attributed to God.

Your territory is reassigned, your Bible study transferred, and three elders announce your name in a sentence that ends every relationship you have. And the authority is Jehovah's, channeled through a Governing Body that no one elected and nothing corrects.

What it asks of you: Your family's love was made conditional on your agreement by a third party who will never meet you. That sentence is the whole of it.

29 · Replacement

Your seat is filled before the door closes behind you.

How it shows here

- A disfellowshipped person is replaced socially by loyal congregation association.
- Family members may redirect emotional energy toward those "in the truth."
- A publisher who stops field service is replaced by others who keep preaching and show loyalty.
- The organization continues emphasizing growth, meetings, and paradise while the discarded person is absent.
- The replacement is not always one person; it is the congregation itself.

The strongest defense. Witnesses associate with those who share their spiritual goals.

The counter. Association becomes REPLACEMENT when family love is transferred to organizational loyalty. If a person can be socially replaced by anyone "in good standing," then the relationship was subordinated to status.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The shunning instruction (technique 28) is published, but the filling of the person's place in the congregation is observed practice that no published instruction directs.

30 · Plausible Deniability

The institution is never responsible, because the authority is attributed to God — who isn't available for cross-examination.

How it shows here

- The organization says baptism is voluntary, but after baptism leaving can mean shunning.
- Shunning is framed as loving discipline, while individual family members are technically the ones withholding contact.
- The Governing Body can be treated as Jehovah's channel while also denying inspiration or infallibility when doctrine changes.
- Members are warned against apostate material, but the organization says it is merely protecting spiritual cleanliness.
- Failed teachings become "old light," while members who questioned them early were disloyal.

The strongest defense. Witnesses choose baptism. Discipline is loving. Understanding grows over time.

The counter. A voluntary vow becomes coercive when exit destroys family contact. Love that requires social erasure is not love. "New light" becomes PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY when leaders can change doctrine but members cannot question doctrine before it changes.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> **CODIFIED** Authority is claimed exclusively by the Governing Body in print, which makes disclaiming outcomes structurally difficult.

Sources for this section: [1] [8]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Count grades, not names. A long list of Contested entries says something very different from a short list of Codified ones. A bias to watch for in yourself: people rate the same pressure as "normal" when their own group applies it and as "manipulation" when another group does. Before you judge an entry, try imagining it applied by a group you distrust. Does it look different?

13

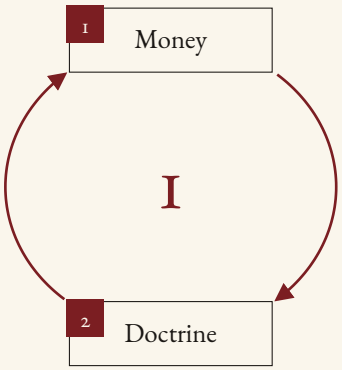
The loops

BEFORE YOU READ

How the techniques connect into cycles. A single practice can look harmless on its own. The loops show how one step feeds the next, so that, for example, a newcomer's welcome turns into an obligation.

> The seven loops below show how the practices connect, so that each step makes the next one easier and the last step feeds the first. The loops are analysis built from findings recorded elsewhere on this page PATTERN OBSERVED; each step names the section or technique where its fact is recorded.

1 · Money to Doctrine to Money



Donations are modest. The extraction is labor and property, and in many countries the halls members build are titled centrally.

How it runs.

1. Giving is voluntary, with no collection plate, and is presented as support for the worldwide work (section 9).
2. Congregations fundraise for and build their own Kingdom Halls, and in many countries the halls are titled to the organization or a national trust (sections 9 and 16; technique 26).
3. The organization holds the title and has consolidated and sold properties without member consultation (section 16).

4. The worldwide organization publishes no accounts, and its reserves are not disclosed (sections 1 and 9).

5. The Governing Body, which sets doctrine and policy for every congregation, presents the preaching and building as sacred service, and the labor and giving continue (sections 6 and 9).

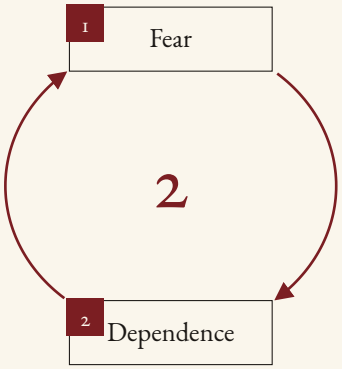
Techniques that feed it. 26 · Financial Control, 2 · Weaponized Generosity, 15 · Triangulation.

Why it closes. The body that defines the work as sacred service also holds what the work produces. No member votes at any level (section 7), and the member who builds or gives cannot see where the value goes.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens wherever accounts are published. In Britain the organization's charity files accounts on the public register, and the Charity Commission ran a nine-year inquiry into it (sections 8 and 9). A congregation can ask who holds the title to its hall and what a sale would fund. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. The Brooklyn headquarters properties, acquired through donated funds and labor, sold for about $1 billion to Kushner Cos. and partners (sections 9 and 16).

2 · Fear to Dependence to Fear



Armageddon is installed in childhood, relief is available only inside, and the shunning is demonstrated publicly whenever anyone leaves.

How it runs.

1. Children grow up hearing about Armageddon, paradise, Satan's world, apostates and bad association until fear becomes ordinary (technique 13).
2. The end is presented as always near, and leaving is framed as risking destruction and the loss of paradise (techniques 3 and 27; section 15).
3. Relief comes only through obedience to the organization: meetings, field service and loyalty to the Governing Body (technique 20).
4. When someone is removed, the disfellowshipping is announced to the congregation and every member, including family, shuns them (technique 17; section 15).
5. Every member sees what leaving costs, and the fear that keeps them inside is renewed (technique 21).

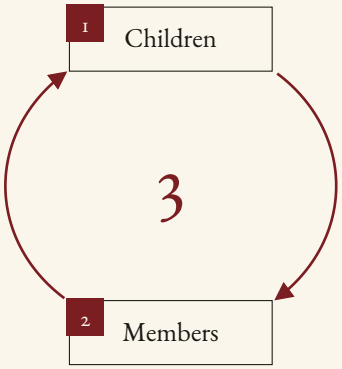
Techniques that feed it. 27 · Manufactured Crisis, 3 · Future Faking, 20 · Trauma Bonding, 17 · Smear Campaign, 21 · Learned Helplessness.

Why it closes. The organization defines the threat and is the only shelter from it, and each public removal shows members the price of leaving. Failed dates do not break it, because each failed expectation produces more urgency rather than accountability (technique 3).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where a member reads the dated predictions in the organization's own archive (section 14), and where families keep contact after a removal. Since 2024 members may greet removed people at meetings (section 24). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. In the composite day in section 2, Donna has not spoken to her disfellowshipped son properly in six years, and at lunch she thinks about 1975 and the house her parents sold.

3 · Children to Members to Children



Baptism of minors makes them subject to shunning, education discouragement removes the alternative, and the cycle completes in one generation.

How it runs.

1. Children take part in door-to-door ministry from a young age and are trained to give scripted answers (section 11).
2. They keep no birthdays, holidays or school celebrations, which marks them as different from their peers and deepens their dependence on the congregation (section 11).
3. Minors are baptized, commonly in their early teens, which makes them subject to disfellowshipping and shunning before adulthood (section 11; technique 19).
4. Higher education is discouraged, which limits economic independence and exit options (sections 10 and 11).
5. The young adult has few credentials and few relationships outside, stays, and raises the next child the same way (sections 10 and 17).

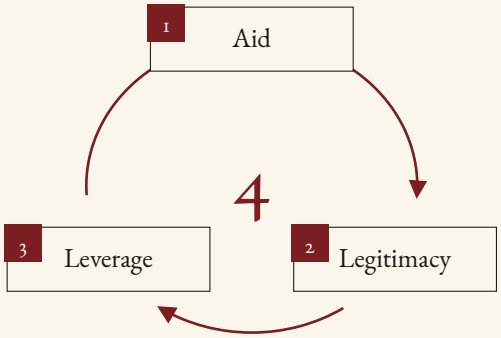
Techniques that feed it. 19 · Manufactured Consent, 13 · Normalization / Desensitization, 14 · Isolation, 26 · Financial Control.

Why it closes. The exit penalty is attached before the person is an adult, and the means of living outside are withheld before they are needed. Section 10 records that "a sixty-year-old with no qualifications and no savings cannot leave."

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where baptism waits for adulthood and where young members complete their education. That decision sits with parents, and with the Governing Body that sets the policy. Norway's attempt to tie registration to children's rights is the one state action on this page, and its Supreme Court held the withdrawal invalid (sections 8 and 22). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. A 2023 report by lawyers supporting former members in Japan found that more than three-quarters of respondents had been made to carry a blood-refusal card; the report was built from the accounts of second-generation former members (sections 8 and 21).

4 · Aid to Legitimacy to Leverage to Aid



There is little state privilege here. The loop that matters is legal defense funded by member giving.

How it runs.

1. Members give voluntarily, and the giving goes into general funds (section 9).
2. An allegation reaches a court or an inquiry: a California jury in the Conti case, the Royal Commission in Australia, the Charity Commission in England and Wales (sections 8 and 19).
3. The organization defends its policy. In the Conti case the appeal court held that the elders had no duty to warn the congregation, and Watchtower's share fell to $2.8 million (section 19).
4. It contests outside conditions. It declined to join Australia's National Redress Scheme until the government moved to strip charity status from institutions that refused, and in Norway it won in the

Supreme Court in 2026 (sections 8 and 22).

5. The policy under challenge continues. The two-witness requirement has not been publicly abandoned (section 20), and the next allegation meets the same process.

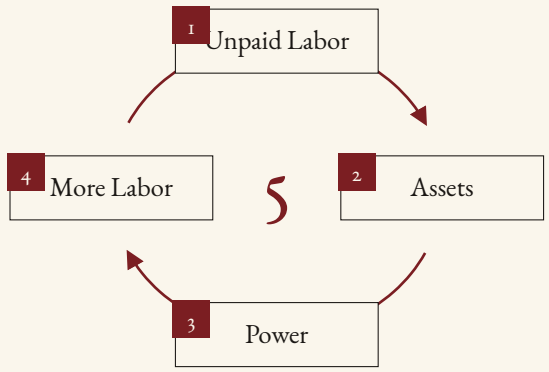
Techniques that feed it. 30 · Plausible Deniability, 18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling, 26 · Financial Control.

Why it closes. Member giving pays for the defense of the policy that members live under, and a successful defense leaves the policy in place. Members cannot see the cost, because the worldwide organization publishes no accounts (section 9).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where the law attaches conditions the organization must meet. Australia's move against charity status brought it into the Redress Scheme (section 22), and section 20 names the published reporting policy that would change the central finding. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. A jury awarded Candace Conti $28 million in 2012; on appeal the punitive award was struck and Watchtower's share fell to $2.8 million (sections 8 and 19).

5 · Unpaid Labor to Assets to Power to More Labor



Preaching hours, construction, and Bethel service produce a property portfolio realized at market value.

How it runs.

1. Members give unpaid labor: preaching, the construction of halls, and Bethel service for a small stipend (sections 9 and 18).
2. In many countries the buildings are titled to the organization or a national trust, not to the congregations that built them (sections 9 and 16).
3. Headquarters holdings acquired through donated funds and labor are sold at peak market value; the Brooklyn properties sold for about $1 billion (sections 9 and 16).
4. The proceeds go to reserves the organization does not publish (section 9).
5. The discouragement of higher education keeps members' hours available for the work, and the labor continues (sections 9 and 16).

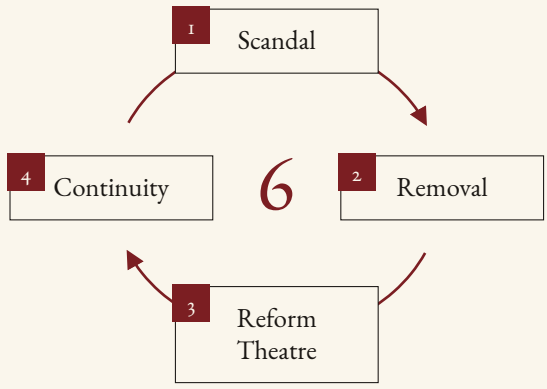
Techniques that feed it. 26 · Financial Control, 8 · Intermittent Reinforcement, 24 · Identity Erosion, 23 · Infantilization.

Why it closes. The people who produce the assets hold no office that controls them, and no member votes at any level (section 7). Section 16 records that discouraging education produces more available hours and fewer exit options at the same time.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where volunteers keep a written record of the years they give, the point section 18 names for Bethel volunteers, and where charity regulators require published accounts (sections 8 and 9). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. The Watchtower building at 25–30 Columbia Heights sold for about $340 million in 2016 (sections 5 and 9).

6 · Scandal to Removal to Reform Theatre to Continuity



A policy softens under pressure, no one is identified as having been wrong, and the Governing Body's authority is unaffected.

How it runs.

1. An outside body exposes the record. The Royal Commission found 1,006 alleged perpetrators in the organization's own files, none reported by it to police (sections 8 and 19).
2. The organization keeps the policy under review; it declined the Redress Scheme at first and maintained the evidentiary rule (section 19).
3. Change comes later, under outside pressure: redress in 2021 after the government moved against charity status, and the greeting adjustment in 2024, nine years after the Commission (sections 14 and 22).
4. The change is announced as an adjustment, and no one is identified as having been wrong (section 14; techniques 10 and 25).
5. The Governing Body goes on appointing its own members, and no body above it can remove them (section 7).

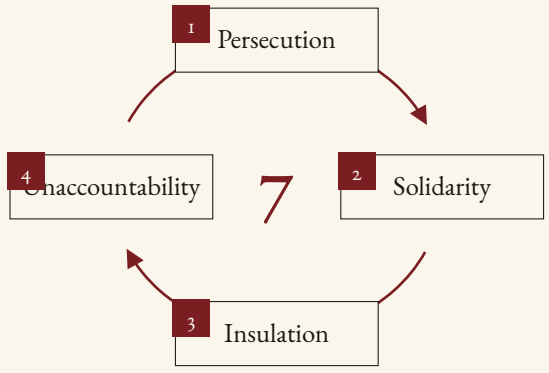
Techniques that feed it. 25 · Spiritual Bypassing, 10 · Strategic Ambiguity, 30 · Plausible Deniability, 18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling.

Why it closes. An adjustment presented as 'new light' treats the earlier teaching as right for its time, so nothing is admitted and no one answers for it (techniques 10 and 25). The authority that made the rule survives its revision.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. Section 20 names the change that would break it: a published policy requiring immediate reporting of abuse allegations to civil authorities in every jurisdiction, without the two-witness precondition. That lies with the Governing Body. Where it does not act, states have compelled documents, as Australia did (section 8). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. In the composite day in section 2, Donna reads that a disfellowshipped person attending a meeting may now be greeted, and understands that "if it is permitted now then it was permitted to permit it".

7 · Persecution to Solidarity to Insulation to Unaccountability



Genuine persecution — Nazi camps, Russian bans — is real and is invoked to make the Royal Commission's findings look like the same attack.

How it runs.

1. The persecution is real: Nazi camps, mob violence against Witness families in the United States, and Russia's 2017 extremism ban, under which 395 local organizations were liquidated (sections 3, 5 and 19).
2. The organization presents itself as persecuted, and critics as apostates spreading lies, even when they quote its own publications (techniques 11 and 12).
3. Members are warned not to read or listen to critics; reading apostate literature is a disfellowshipping-level offense (section 11; technique 17).
4. Findings from inquiries and courts are received as part of the same attack (section 3).
5. Nothing inside changes, and the next finding meets the same response (section 14).

Techniques that feed it. 17 · Smear Campaign, 11 · Projection, 12 · DARVO, 6 · Gaslighting, 27 · Manufactured Crisis.

Why it closes. The real history of persecution makes the claim of persecution credible, and the ban on reading criticism means members do not check the findings for themselves.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens when members see where the record comes from. Section 3 answers the objection with the organization's own publications and a government commission, neither of which needs a former member's word, and section 22 notes that the files the Royal Commission examined were the organization's own. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 3 sets out the objection that this page is "apostate-driven persecution of a genuinely persecuted religion", and answers it from the organization's own files.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The loops explain why good people stay in arrangements they would never sign up for from scratch. The more you have already put in, the harder it is to walk away. Researchers call this the sunk-cost effect (Arkes & Blumer, 1985), and it works on time, money and relationships alike. Ask yourself: if you were starting today, knowing what you know, would you join?

The seven loops below show how the practices connect, so that each step makes the next one easier and the last step feeds the first.

14 Say versus do

BEFORE YOU READ

Direct, checkable comparisons: a public statement on one side, the documented record on the other, and the receipt that links them. This is the most falsifiable section on the page, because each row either matches its source or it doesn't.

What they say, what the record shows

THEY SAY	THE RECORD SHOWS	RECEIPT
Shunning is a personal decision by individual members.	It is described as required in the organization's own published instructions.	OFFICIAL POLICY
We have always protected children.	A government commission found 1,006 alleged perpetrators recorded internally and none reported by the organization to police.	GOVERNMENT REPORT
We never set dates.	Publications pointed to specific years, and members sold homes and forwent education accordingly.	INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
Higher education is a personal choice.	It was discouraged from convention platforms for decades, and the members who complied are now elderly without savings.	LEADERSHIP STATEMENT
The blood doctrine is unchangeable.	It has been revised repeatedly on fractions and components, most recently in March 2026 on storing and reinfusing one's own blood [26].	OFFICIAL POLICY

Accountability or theatre?

Last time the chair ran. A commission documented a thousand alleged abusers. The rule survived. The greeting policy changed nine years later.

Who holds the chair now. The Governing Body holds it, and because it claims sole authority it cannot disclaim outcomes.

Prediction. The next reform will follow litigation by roughly a decade, will be announced as new light, and no one will be identified as having been wrong.

A commission documented a thousand alleged abusers.

Words used here

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS INSIDE	WHAT IT DOES	SAID PLAINLY
Disfellowshipped	A member is formally expelled following a judicial committee.	It triggers shunning by every member including immediate family. The clinical word conceals that its subject is usually a family relationship, and sometimes a teenager's.	'Your family will stop speaking to you.'
Theocratic warfare	It means withholding truth from those not entitled to it.	It supplies a doctrinal basis for incomplete disclosure to outsiders, including in some documented contexts to authorities.	'We are permitted not to tell you everything.'
Two witnesses	It is the evidentiary standard applied to accusations.	It applies a scriptural rule written for accusations of any wrongdoing (Deuteronomy 19:15: "for any iniquity, or for any sin") to a category of crime that has no second witness by design, which means most allegations can never be established.	'Unless someone else watched, this did not happen.'
Independent thinking	It is reasoning that departs from the organization's teaching.	It names the faculty itself as the danger. Few phrases in this volume are as structurally revealing.	'Do not think about this on your own.'
The faithful and discreet slave	It is the Governing Body, as the channel of spiritual instruction.	It locates interpretive authority in a body of eleven self-appointing men, which makes disagreement with them disagreement with God.	'Eleven men, and you may not question them.'

Sources for this section: [1]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Test one row yourself. Pick a "they say" line you have actually heard said in person, then read the receipt. If the record matches the statement, this page is wrong about that row, and you should tell us. If it doesn't, what does it mean that you had never seen the receipt?

15 Cost & cover

BEFORE YOU READ

What leaving actually costs here, in family, work, housing, money and legal status, and how each of those costs is officially denied. Where the cost is low, the page says so plainly.

What leaving costs

- The exit penalties are among the most severe formalized in this codex. Disfellowshipped and disassociated members are shunned by family and all Witnesses, and this is documented as organizational policy, not personal choice. **OFFICIAL POLICY / GOVERNMENT REPORT**
- Education discouragement historically limited members' economic independence. **LEADERSHIP STATEMENT** · convention talks

The ledger of exit

COST	DOCUMENTED?	DETAIL	THE OFFICIAL DENIAL
Family and all social ties	Yes — by written policy	Disfellowshipped and disassociated persons are shunned by every member including immediate family	"Members choose whom to associate with; it's a personal decision." — contradicted by the published instruction. **OFFICIAL POLICY**
Marriage and household	Yes	Believing spouses are pressured to limit contact, and custody disputes are documented.	"Family relationships continue for those living at home."
Employment and education	Yes	Discouraged higher education leaves limited credentials, and jobs often come through congregation networks.	"Career choices are personal."

Existential threat	Yes	In the organization's teaching, leaving means destruction at Armageddon, which is annihilation, not merely disfavor.	"We simply teach what the Bible says."

How the cost is denied

CHANNEL	LEVEL	NOTE
Explicit policy	Extremely low	Shunning, the two-witness rule, and blood prohibition are all published organizational policy — this is the best-documented control system in the codex.
Informal enforcement	Medium	Congregation surveillance supplements the written rules.
Leadership distance	Low	The Governing Body claims sole doctrinal authority, which makes disclaiming outcomes structurally difficult — and the Royal Commission said so. GOVERNMENT REPORT
Doctrinal ambiguity	Low	Doctrine is centrally defined and published; ambiguity is not the strategy here.
Cultural outsourcing	Low	There is no local culture to blame — practice is globally uniform by design.
Volunteer enforcement	Very high	Family members perform the shunning; the organization issues the instruction and takes no action itself.
Sacred secrecy	Low	Judicial committee proceedings are confidential; policy letters to elders have repeatedly leaked.
Exit cost denial	High	The organization publicly frames shunning as members' personal choice while instructing it in print — the cleanest example of stated deniability contradicted by its own documents.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

This page records one of the heaviest exit penalties in the book. People who are disfellowshipped or disassociate are shunned by everyone, including their own families, and this is written in the organization's own instructions, not left to personal choice. Since 2024 you may greet them at meetings. If you have a son, a daughter or a parent outside, what is the rule actually asking you to do to them, and do you believe it?

16 The ledger

BEFORE YOU READ

The balance sheet. It shows who benefits, who pays, and what leverage flows back to the institution in return for what it gives.

Who benefits

- The Watch Tower corporate structure benefits, with an unpaid labor force, donated assets, centralized real-estate wealth and an information monopoly over members' entire epistemic world. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Money out, leverage back

- Unpaid member labor — preaching hours, Kingdom Hall construction, Bethel service — built a real-estate portfolio titled to the organization. The Brooklyn headquarters properties sold for about $1 billion after decades of donated work and funds. **FINANCIAL RECORD** · Brooklyn sales to Kushner Cos. and partners, about $1 billion
- Congregations fundraise and build their own halls; in many countries the organization or a national trust holds the title, and the organization has consolidated and sold properties without member consultation. **FINANCIAL RECORD**
- Discouraging education produces a workforce with more available hours and fewer exit options simultaneously, so a single policy achieves both. **LEADERSHIP STATEMENT**
- The organization is genuinely persecuted in Russia and elsewhere, which is real and wrong, and does not answer for the internal record. **GOVERNMENT REPORT**

Who pays

- Children abused under the two-witness rule pay. The organization recorded 1,006 alleged perpetrators internally and reported none of them to police. **GOVERNMENT REPORT**

- Disfellowshipped and disassociated members pay, cut off by parents, children, and lifelong friends.
- Women pay, excluded from all authority and required to report abuse to male panels.
- Patients pay, including children, in blood-refusal cases.
- Those who forwent education pay, and now face old age without savings, pension, or credentials.
- Russian and other Witnesses genuinely persecuted by states pay, and that real harm coexists with the internal one. GOVERNMENT REPORT

Sources for this section: [10] [11]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Find yourself in this table. Are you among those who benefit, those who pay, or both? Most readers are both. The question is whether the exchange was ever explained to you in these terms, and whether you would agree to it if it had been.

17 Who gets hurt most

BEFORE YOU READ

Where the weight lands hardest, and what it compounds with: poverty, childhood, gender, a lack of civil alternatives. This is the human stakes stated plainly.

Where the weight lands

The costs in section 15 do not fall evenly. They fall hardest where a person has the least power inside the institution and the fewest places to go outside it. The table names who carries the most, how, and what makes it worse.

WHO	HOW	WHAT IT COMPOUNDS WITH
Abused children	The files held 1,006 alleged perpetrators, none was reported to police, and a rule required a second witness.	The harm compounds where the accused was an elder and the child had to describe it to a panel of men.
Disfellowshipped members	Every relationship ends simultaneously, by policy.	It compounds for those raised inside, who have no relationships outside.

Women	Women hold no authority, report abuse to all-male committees, and are told that abuse alone is not scriptural grounds for divorce.	It compounds where a woman has no independent income and no outside friendships.
Patients including children	Blood refusal has required court intervention.	It compounds where the parents' standing depends on refusal.
Members who forwent education	They are elderly now, with no savings, pension, or credentials, after a prediction that did not arrive.	It compounds because the organization has given no accounting of any kind.
Russian and other persecuted Witnesses	They have been banned as extremist and imprisoned for conscience.	The harm comes from outside; it is real, wrong, and separate from the internal record.

From The Children's Codex

- *Reporting, and the internal-first rule* — Australian Royal Commission on Jehovah's Witness records, 2015–2016: The organisation's own files contained 1,006 alleged perpetrators over roughly six decades. Not one had been reported by the organisation to police. The organisation kept the count; it simply never told anyone.

They fall hardest where a person has the least power inside the institution and the fewest places to go outside it.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The first row is abused children: 1,006 alleged perpetrators in the organization's own Australian files, none reported by it to police, and a rule requiring a second witness to a crime that is usually committed with none. If you are a parent in a congregation today, ask your elders one question: if my child disclosed abuse, would you call the police before anything else? Ask them to show you where that is written.

18 The middle tiers

BEFORE YOU READ

The people in the middle: local clergy, teachers, officials and volunteers who apply rules they did not write. The section exists so that an institution is not collapsed into a monolith, and so that people in the middle can see their own position in it.

Most of the organization's work is done below the Governing Body, by people who see decisions without making them. Elders, ministerial servants, publishers, Bethel volunteers and parents each carry part of the load, and each stands at one point where the next decision could be declined. The table sets out what each tier does, what it sees, what it is asked to do and where it could refuse.

ROLE	DOES	SEES	IS ASKED TO	COULD REFUSE
Elders	Serve unpaid and untrained, and are required to sit in judgment on their neighbors' sexual lives	The instruction letters, the case files, and the fact that a child's allegation will fail	Follow the two-witness rule and keep certain records off site	Convene a judicial committee on a child abuse allegation instead of calling the police

Ministerial servants	Run the practical operation of the hall	Who is struggling and who is about to be announced	Support the elders	Read the announcement
Pioneers (members who commit to a monthly target of preaching hours)	Report hours monthly, which is the organization's productivity metric	That the report is a performance record	Keep the average up	Submit a report at all, and see what happens
Regular publishers	Report each month whether they preached; since November 2023 they no longer report hours [24]	That the report records participation	Keep reporting that they took part	Leave the report blank
Bethel volunteers	Staff the organization for a nominal stipend	The property and publishing operation from inside	Treat it as sacred service	Work without a written record of the years given
Parents	Perform the shunning of their own children	That they were instructed	Be loyal to Jehovah rather than to their child	Put the phone down on their own child

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you are a local leader, a teacher or a volunteer, this section is about you. It is not an accusation: most of the people who carry out a rule did not write it. But the middle tier is also where a rule is most often quietly softened, or quietly enforced. Which do you do, and what would happen to you if you chose differently?

19 Documented cases

BEFORE YOU READ

Named, dated, sourced incidents: court records, government inquiries, regulators' findings and on-the-record reporting. Read the outcome lines in particular. They show what actually changed, if anything.

Royal Commission Case Study 29

WHEN: 2015–2017

WHAT: Australia's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse examined the organization's own case files and found 1,006 alleged perpetrators recorded since 1950. The organization had not reported any of them to police. The two-witness rule was found to make allegations effectively unprovable, and women were required to present accounts to all-male judicial committees.

RECORD: Royal Commission report, Case Study 29 (government inquiry)

OUTCOME: The organization declined to sign the National Redress Scheme initially and maintained the evidentiary rule. The files existed throughout; the reports did not.

TACTICS: 18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling, 30 · Plausible Deniability

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

Sources for this section: [1]

The inquiry that took nine years (England & Wales, 2014–2023)

WHEN: 2014–2023

WHAT: The Charity Commission opened an inquiry in May 2014 into how the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Britain handled safeguarding and advised congregations. Witness organizations told the national abuse inquiry of 67 allegations against 67 individuals between 2009 and 2019 [14].

RECORD: Charity Commission press release, 4 August 2023 (withdrawn from GOV.UK in September 2026) [14]

OUTCOME: The Commission criticized the trustees' transparency and concluded the charity was no longer the body responsible for safeguarding in congregations [14].

TACTICS: 30 · Plausible Deniability, 18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling, 10 · Strategic Ambiguity

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

No duty to warn (United States, 2012–2015)

WHEN: 2012–2015

WHAT: Candace Conti was abused as a child by a fellow congregant during door-to-door ministry. A jury awarded $7 million in compensatory and $21 million in punitive damages [15].

RECORD: Courthouse News, 14 April 2015 [15]; Reveal [16]

OUTCOME: The appeal court held the elders had no duty to warn members about a confessed molester and struck the punitive award; Watchtower's share fell to $2.8 million [15][16].

TACTICS: 30 · Plausible Deniability, 18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

Banned as "extremist" (Russia, 2017)

WHEN: 2017

WHAT: Russia's Supreme Court declared the organization extremist and ordered its 395 local organizations liquidated [5].

RECORD: Human Rights Watch, 20 April 2017 [5]

OUTCOME: The harm here is done *to* Witnesses, by a state [5].

TACTICS: —

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

These are not hypotheticals. Four documented cases on this page rest on a named record. The most common reaction to documented cases is "that was them, not us." Before settling on that, read the outcome lines. Did anything change in the structure that allowed each case to happen, or did one person leave while the structure stayed?

20 Precedent

BEFORE YOU READ

What has already been broken once, somewhere, and what would count as real change here. It is a benchmark, not a prediction.

It has been broken before

WHAT	WHO	WHEN	WHAT IT COST
The 2024 adjustment permitting greeting of disfellowshipped attendees	External pressure, litigation, and public documentation	2024	Seventy years of families were severed first.
Royal Commission Case Study 29 and the disclosure of the internal files	An Australian government commission and the survivors who testified	2015–17	Survivors testified against the only community they had.
West Virginia v. Barnette — the flag-salute case that protects everyone's conscience	Witnesses who refused	1943	It cost mob violence across the United States.
Advocacy networks documenting policy and supporting those who leave	Former members, at the cost of their families	1990s–present	It cost them complete severance from their families.

Promises on the record

COMMITMENT	MADE	STATUS	NOTE
Jehovah's Witnesses — responses to the Australian Royal Commission recommendations	2015–16 proceedings; joined the National Redress Scheme in September 2021	Partial	Redress-scheme participation followed sustained public pressure and naming. The two-witness requirement and the internal-first reporting structure the Commission criticized have not been publicly abandoned. Since the organization's 2018–2019 child-protection policy, its published position is that elders comply with mandatory-reporting laws and that victims and parents may report to the authorities [27]; the two-witness rule still governs congregational action.

What would change this page

A published policy requiring immediate reporting of abuse allegations to civil authorities in every jurisdiction, without the two-witness precondition, would revise this page's central finding.

Sources for this section: [4] [8]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Some rows here record a change that has already happened somewhere; others name what would count as change here. When you are told something "can't change", it is fair to ask: can't, or won't? And who decided?

21 Voices from inside

BEFORE YOU READ

People from inside Jehovah's Witnesses who raised the hard question publicly, often at real cost. They answer the objection that criticism only ever comes from outsiders.

- **Candace Conti.** Her $28 million verdict was described by her lawyer as the largest for a single victim in a religious child-abuse case in the country, before it was cut on appeal [28] [16].

- **The second-generation former members in Japan.** Raised in the faith by Witness parents, they gave the accounts that formed the 2023 lawyers' report [17].
- **The Barnett family (the court record spells it Barnette).** They were Witnesses whose children's refusal to salute the flag produced a landmark ruling for everyone's freedom of conscience [4].
- **Survivors who gave evidence to Case Study 29.** They testified against files kept by the organization itself [1].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Were these people traitors, or the most loyal members their tradition had? Most were treated as the first at the time, and some are honored as the second now. If someone in your community raised one of these questions tomorrow, how would they be treated, and by you?

22 Regional variants

BEFORE YOU READ

The same tradition under different governments. What a member can say, leave, marry or inherit depends heavily on the state, and these cards show how differently it plays out.

Australia

APEX: The Australian branch committee leads the organization there, under Warwick, New York.

LAW: The Royal Commission had compulsion powers. The organization initially declined to join the National Redress Scheme and joined in September 2021, after the government moved to strip charity status from institutions that refused.

DOCUMENTED: The organization's own files held 1,006 alleged perpetrators across roughly six decades, none reported by the organization to police. Governing Body member Geoffrey Jackson gave evidence.

EXIT: Exit costs are very high, because disfellowshipped members are formally shunned, including by immediate family.

REGULATOR: Reports go to state police and child-protection authorities. The ACNC (the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission) regulates charities, and the National Redress Scheme handles redress.

TELL: The Royal Commission remains the single most useful document in existence for any Witness reader in any country, because the files it examined were the organization's own.

Norway

APEX: The national body leads the organization there, under Warwick.

LAW: State registration confers financial support and marriage-solemnization rights, conditioned on compliance with law including children's rights.

DOCUMENTED: Norwegian authorities withdrew the organization's registration and grants in 2022; the Supreme Court ruled in 2026, by three votes to two, that the withdrawal was unlawful; the majority also found that shunning did not amount to undue pressure in breach of article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights [3].

EXIT: Exit costs are very high socially, as everywhere; the difference is that here the state took a position on the practice.

REGULATOR: The county governor and the Ministry of Children and Families regulate, and the courts decide.

TELL: A state tried to condition religious registration on how a group treats people who leave, and its highest court said it could not do it that way. That is the finding — and it cuts against this codex's own hope for the lever.

Sources for this section: [2] [3]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

This page covers Australia and Norway. Your country changes what this tradition can do to you, and what you can do about it. If you live somewhere not listed, ask which of these cards your country most resembles. If you are a voter, note that each of these arrangements was chosen by a government.

23 The questions

BEFORE YOU READ

The six questions the documented record could not resolve. Each is set out below: why it is being asked, and a concrete example already on this page that it points back to.

QUESTION 1 OF 6

A government commission found 1,006 alleged abusers in the organization's own files and no reports to police. Ask why the files existed and the calls did not.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

The files show the organization knew. The absence of police reports shows what it did with that knowledge. The question asks why the two diverged.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The law table records the Royal Commission's finding: 1,006 alleged perpetrators named in the organization's own files since 1950, none reported by it to police [1].

QUESTION 2 OF 6

If shunning is a personal decision by individual members, ask why it is described in the organization's own publications as required.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

If shunning were truly personal, the organization would not need to publish instructions about it. The question asks readers to compare the claim with the written policy.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The say-do table sets "Shunning is a personal decision by individual members" beside the record: it is described as required in the organization's own published instructions.

QUESTION 3 OF 6

The greeting policy changed in 2024. Ask what that proves about the seventy years before it.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

If a policy described as scriptural can change after seventy years, it was always changeable. The question asks what that says about the families who kept it in the meantime.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The history section records the 2023–2024 adjustments allowing members to greet disfellowshipped attendees, and calls them "external and litigation pressure producing internal change."

QUESTION 4 OF 6

The year 1975 came and went. Ask what the organization has ever done for the members who sold their homes.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

Failed predictions have a human cost when people act on them. The question asks whether the organization has ever taken responsibility for that cost.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The history section records that from 1966 to 1975 publications pointed to 1975 as a likely end date, that members sold homes and gave up education, and that afterward the blame shifted to members' own expectations.

QUESTION 5 OF 6

The blood doctrine has been revised repeatedly. Ask why it cannot be revised once more for a child.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

A doctrine that has already been revised on fractions and components is not fixed. The question asks why the next revision cannot come before a child's life depends on it.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The structure table lists the blood transfusion prohibition as "a doctrine repeatedly adjusted on fractions and components, applied to children," deciding "whether your child receives treatment."

QUESTION 6 OF 6

You were taught that reading criticism endangers your relationship with God. Ask who else it endangers, and be specific.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

A rule against reading criticism protects someone. The question asks you to name who.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The forefront section notes that the internal record comes from the organization's own publications and from a government commission. Neither is outside criticism in the sense members are warned about.

In closing

Here is the question nothing in your library answers: if the Governing Body is directed by God, why did the record of 1,006 alleged abusers require an Australian government commission to surface, and why did the greeting policy change only after decades of external pressure? Revelation does not usually arrive by way of litigation.

You are allowed to love your parents and know that what was done to them, and through them to you, was policy. If you leave, you are not losing God — you are losing an organization that made your mother's love conditional on your agreement. Those are not the same loss, and it took real courage to read this far.

Sources for this section: [1] [8]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Choose one question and ask it this month, out loud, to a real person who could answer it. Then write down what happened. Were you answered, redirected, or told that asking was the problem? Whichever it was, the response is information.

24 Leaving safely here

BEFORE YOU READ

Practical, non-theological guidance for someone who needs to step back or step away safely. It is a safety document, not an argument.

Practical guidance, not legal advice.

1. **Know the two exits.** Being removed (formerly disfellowshipped) or formally disassociating both lead to shunning by members, including family [1][8]; some people "fade" quietly instead.
2. **Since 2024** members may greet removed people at meetings [8]; family contact outside that is still usually cut.
3. **Update your medical directive.** If you carry a blood-refusal card, replace it with your current wishes and tell your doctor [17].
4. **If you were abused,** go to the police first; elders' records do not replace a police report [1]. The organization's published policy says victims and parents may report to the authorities [27].
5. **Find others who have left** [18][19][20].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Even if this section is not for you, it may be for someone you know. Most people who leave a high-demand community say that the first person who listened without trying to argue them back mattered more than anything else. Could that person be you?

25 Where to get help

BEFORE YOU READ

Organizations that can help, each checked directly against its own site, with the date of the check. Nothing here is endorsed beyond that check.

Checked 2026-09-27.

ORGANIZATION (continued)	FOR	WHERE	CONTACT
Recovering from Religion	People questioning or leaving faith	US, Canada and online	**(844) 368-2848** [18]
Faith to Faithless	People leaving high-control religion	UK	**0800 448 0748** (freephone; Monday 10:00–13:00, Wednesday 10:00–13:00, Thursday 16:00–19:00 UK time) [19]
ICSA	Former members of high-control groups; families	International	Via website [20]
NAPAC	Adult survivors of childhood abuse	UK	**0808 801 0331** [21]
Childhelp	Child abuse	US	**1-800-422-4453** [22]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Save one contact now, before anyone needs it: **Recovering from Religion** (people questioning or leaving faith; US, Canada and online). People in crisis rarely have the energy to research options. Having a name ready is one of the most useful things you can do for someone else.



26

Sources

BEFORE YOU READ

Every numbered citation on this page, with a named, checkable source. Spot-check a few before trusting the rest; that is the honest way to read any page in this book, including this one.

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10. Brooklyn Daily Eagle, "Jared Kushner's in a $340 million joint-venture purchase of the Jehovah's Witnesses headquarters" (Aug 2016). https://brooklyneagle.com/articles/2016/08/05/jared-kushners-in-a-340-million-joint-venture-purchase-of-the-jehovahs-witnesses-headquarters/

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WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Don't take this page's word for anything either. People tend to believe a claim more the more often they have heard it, whether or not it is true; this is the "illusory truth effect" (Hasher, Goldstein & Toppino, 1977). Spot-check three citations at random. If any fails, tell us, and it will be corrected and logged.

27 What changed on this page

BEFORE YOU READ

A dated log of what changed on this page: corrections, additions and new sources. Changes are logged in public rather than made quietly.

- **2026-10-03:** Corrected how preaching-hour reporting is described (since November 2023 only pioneers report hours), the Governing Body and membership numbers, and the scriptural basis given for the two-witness rule. Removed two money cards that did not describe this organization and corrected two others. Regraded seven techniques and removed "sourced" marks that named no document. Narrowed the claim that congregation halls are titled to the organization and cited the UK Kingdom Hall Trust merger. Attributed the largest-verdict claim to Candace Conti's lawyer. Added the 2018–2019 reporting policy, the three-to-two Norway vote, the March 2026 blood-policy change and Britain's 2025 spending. Replaced a Wikipedia source with The Watchtower and added six sources.
- **2026-09-27:** Added Branches, Law & state, Money in numbers (British charity accounts 2021–2025), three more documented cases, Voices from inside, Leaving safely and Where to get help.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

This page keeps a public log of its own changes, mistakes included. Does the institution you belong to, give to, or were raised in keep one like it? If not, how would you know what it got wrong, and when?

Colophon

Set in EB Garamond (SIL Open Font License), regular, italic and bold, with true small capitals and old-style figures in text and lining tabular figures in tables. Laid out with Paged.js in Chromium from the same Markdown that feeds the website. US Letter, single-sided, tagged for accessibility and checked against PDF/UA-1 with veraPDF. Built 2026-10-27. Text checked 2026-10-03.

Palette: ink, oxblood, gold, cream, rule. Seven type sizes. Rules of 0.4 pt and 2 pt only.