

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES :

A CONTEMPORARY SECTARIAN COMMUNITY

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS:

The purpose of this thesis is to show how a sectarian group with a definite ideology and value system employs various insulating and isolating mechanisms to retain its members and to shield them from the harmful influences of the larger society. Some of the mechanisms we shall discuss are: (1) the importance and manner of proselytization, (2) the significance of the sect's value system and ideology in providing an alternate frame of reference, (3) the importance of one's social contact with sect members, and (4) the insulating function of the sect's normative system. We do not imply that other sects do not employ some of these mechanisms as well but note that Jehovah's Witnesses are peculiar in that they make use of all of these in a combination that effects ideological and social isolation of the sect from the secular world, resulting in a sectarian community.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.

This thesis will focus its attention on a religious group called "Jehovah's Witnesses."<sup>1</sup> Since its inception as a small, adventist Bible study group in 1870 under the leadership of Charles T. Russell, this religious group has steadily grown with such success that the present world membership is over 2 million people.<sup>2</sup> Such a membership increase is all the more significant when one considers the group's precarious existence at various points in its history. For the initial 50 years in the life of this religious group the first two Witness leaders, C.T. Russell and J.F. Rutherford, predicted the end and final destruction of the world. By their interpretation of certain ambiguous Bible verses they were able to indicate specific dates as to when the final cataclysm would occur. While such predictions temporarily motivate believers into a more intense religious activity, the consequences of a visible disconfirmation of the group's beliefs and expectations would certainly be significant and we would expect many believers to reject this particular belief system.<sup>3</sup> Such indeed, was the case, but the sect did survive, largely due to alternative explanations of the predictions one of which is still held today -- that Christ returned to earth invisibly in the year 1914. A total of five major organizational crises of this sort were overcome by various explana-

tions and rationalizations which the sect's leaders advanced. With the fifth prophetic failure in 1925, the leadership of the movement adopted a less specific policy with regard to predicting the end of the world, and now states that the final cataclysm will occur "in this generation."<sup>4</sup>

With this introduction we are now in a position to formulate a preliminary statement of our thesis. The Jehovah's Witness sect<sup>5</sup> constitutes a distinctive miniature social system that is basically in opposition to the larger social system in which the sect exists geographically. Secondly, this miniature social system maintains a certain degree of isolation from the dominant society through the integrative functioning of its cultural and social systems and the resultant personality systems of its membership. This thesis will be descriptive to some extent but also analytical. In this writer's opinion it is first necessary to describe the sect with specific reference as to how Witness values differ from those in the dominant society, what norms and roles affect the religious behavior of the sect member, and what motivates him to maintain the high level of religious involvement the sect requires of him. When we have described these clearly observable aspects of this sect we will seek to demonstrate how each of these aspects is essential for the maintenance of the sect and for members' isolation (psychological, social and ideological) from the dominant society. We are suggesting, then, that the sect as it now exists, employs certain mechanisms of isolation but especially that the sect per se is a

mechanism of isolation in that it requires -- and obtains -- prolonged and intense involvement of its membership to the extent that members generally tend to interact far more frequently with other members than with non-members.

#### A. Review of the Sectarian Literature.

With this brief statement of our theoretical problem we now consider the relevant sociological literature. We will focus particularly on the emergence of the church-sect typology with the view of elaborating on the sect aspect of this typology, as our thesis will also demonstrate that Jehovah's Witnesses as a religious group possess nearly all ideal-typical sect characteristics. But where a sociologist employs other relevant ideas and terms, we will also make reference to these.

Ernst Troeltsch was the first to formulate the church-  
 6  
 sect typology, an ideal-typical construct to differentiate between religious groups in an attempt to generalize about their characteristics, stability, origins of their members, and attitudes of their adherents. The Church-type is characterized by its universal scope (seeking to include as many members as possible), as institutionalized membership increase (one is born into the church), use of the state and the ruling classes to achieve its goals, asceticism of the senses with particular emphasis on individual achievement, and objective  
 7  
 holiness (that is, holiness criteria as defined by the church). The sect-type, on the other hand is characterized by small

groups (with an emphasis on brotherliness and personal fellowship), voluntary membership (generally with some prerequisites such as conversion which therefore eliminates the possibility of being born into the sect), opposition to the state and the ruling classes, asceticism in terms of detachment from the world and refusal to participate in patriotic activities, and subjective holiness (resulting from the emphasis on the individual's personal relationship to God).<sup>8</sup>

While sects are generally seen as small splinter groups breaking away from the established churches, they very often try to express the basic elements of the pristine Christian church, basing their beliefs on the New Testament and particularly on the Sermon on the Mount and accuse the churches of having fallen away from this ideal.<sup>9</sup> Additional characteristics of the ideal-typical sect, according to Troeltsch, include an emphasis on lay Christianity (conversely, an absence of clerical professionalization), personal achievement in ethics, and separation of the ideals of poverty and frugality.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, sects generally did not believe the world could be conquered by human power and effort; hence, they often adopted eschatological world views.<sup>11</sup> But the sect "appeals to the ever new common performance of the moral demands, which, at bottom, are founded only upon the Law and Example of Christ,"<sup>12</sup> a course of action which Troeltsch analyses as tending toward extreme legalism. The sect-type, then, is not an undeveloped expression of the church-type but constitutes a distinctive

"sociological type of Christian thought."<sup>13</sup>

Max Weber, a contemporary of Troeltsch, also contributed to the initial formulation of the church-sect typology and probably influenced Troeltsch to some extent. For Weber the church is a compulsory association for the administration of grace.<sup>14</sup> The compulsory nature of this association again suggests that one's membership in a church is "guaranteed" at birth as Troeltsch implied in his concept of an institutional church. The church's administration of grace suggests it takes on an intermediary position between man and God, a condition which the sect violently opposes in its emphasis on the subjectivity of religious life (that is, its emphasis on the mystical communion between the individual believer and God). The typical sect is a voluntary association of religiously qualified persons;<sup>15</sup> the voluntary aspect again stresses the matter of individual choice in joining the sect. The qualifications for membership imply the attainment of the sect's definition of salvation but also suggest that the individual's conduct must from now on be maintained according to the high and stringent moral standards of the sect. The sect member must constantly prove his worthiness in the presence of other members by acting in conformity to the normative standards of that group so that his conduct, at least for the time he interacts with like-minded believers, is under constant social pressure.<sup>16</sup> Elsewhere<sup>17</sup> Weber has suggested two types of asceticism, one of which applies particularly to Christian sects.



"World-rejecting asceticism" implies a formal withdrawal from the world, a breaking of social and psychological ties with one's family, a withdrawal from the political, artistic, and erotic realms.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the devout person would also detach himself from the possession of worldly goods. Such a "flight from the world" is not often found in Christian sects although to some extent in groups that isolated themselves geographically from the dominant secular society. An example of such are the Amish and the Hutterites, but this form of withdrawal is more typical of ancient Buddhism and in general is "typical of all Asiatic and Near Eastern forms of salvation."<sup>19</sup> More typical of Christian sects is the "inner-worldly asceticism" which suggests that salvation comes not from a total withdrawal from the world but rather requires participation in the world or in the institutions of the world while maintaining a stance of opposition to them.<sup>20</sup> The writer strongly believes that Jehovah's Witnesses constitute such an "inner-worldly ascetic" group.

This discussion of the value placed on asceticism immediately brings to mind another of Weber's works, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,<sup>21</sup> which, although not directly related to the development of the church-sect typology, is also relevant to our thesis. Weber's major purpose here was to "ascertain whether and to what extent religious forces have taken part in the . . . expansion" of the spirit of capitalism over the world.<sup>22</sup> To this end he considered the influence of Luther's concept of a "calling." Luther

referred to "calling" and Beruf as the "life-task" of an individual, that is, his career, for which he had received Divine sanction and blessing. This belief, in turn, created more positive attitudes towards work than was the case amongst Catholic people who tended to see secular work in a relatively neutral sense. For the Lutheran and similar Protestant groups, secular work became a moral activity imbued with religious significance and was also considered as the "outward expression of brotherly love."<sup>23</sup> Thus, one effect of this doctrine of a "calling" in post-Reformationary Europe was an increase in "organized worldly labor," according to Weber.<sup>24</sup>

Far more significant as a foundation of worldly asceticism, however, was Calvin's dogma of predestination which was not only the core of the Calvinistic faith but also of Pietism, Methodism and the Baptist sects.<sup>24a</sup> Briefly stated, the dogma of predestination states that some men "are predestinated unto everlasting life and others foreordained to everlasting death."<sup>25</sup> Since the Christian believer can never be quite certain in which religious state he finds himself, Calvin suggests that he should "be content with the knowledge that God has chosen."<sup>26</sup> In principle, Calvin rejects the view that one could determine an individual's spiritual condition by considering his overt behavior. In practise, however, Calvin states that the doubting individual should become involved in "intense worldly activity" if he wished to gain that extra-ordinary confidence of being one of the chosen. Such

worldly activity "alone disperses religious doubts and gives the certainty of grace."<sup>27</sup> Therefore, although "good works" in and of themselves are useless for attaining religious salvation, "they are indispensable as a sign of election."<sup>28</sup>

Thus far we have described the ascetic element in Protestant Christianity as Weber discussed it and have attempted to show how this element motivated individuals to work more conscientiously in their secular employment than they would have in the absence of their distinctive beliefs and values. The element of rationality, particularly in its economic implications, however, is equally important in the emergence of the capitalistic spirit. Weber indicated that this element of rationality was also found in Christian asceticism, particularly in its Protestant manifestations, in the methodical, planned attempt to implant the ideal of self-discipline and self-control into all aspects of life.<sup>29</sup> Even the name of one Protestant group, Methodism, suggests the emphasis on rationality for the devout Christian's life. It is precisely this emphasis or more correctly, the greater degree of this emphasis, on rationality that distinguishes Protestantism from Catholicism.<sup>30</sup> In Weber's view, Catholicism is more "other-worldly"<sup>31</sup> than Protestantism and in this sense it did not contribute to the increase in economic activity to the extent that Protestant groups did.

In summary, Weber traced the "influence of certain religious ideas on the development of an economic spirit, or

the ethos of an economic system,"<sup>32</sup> and suggested that Protestantism provided this new religious value system.

In this writer's opinion, Weber's analysis of the development of the Protestant Ethic and its impact on the society in which this occurred is relevant to the proposed thesis in that we shall suggest a similar though more specific proposition (that is, one applying to only one specific religious group): the adoption of a religious belief system, that of Jehovah's Witnesses, results in a substantial attitude change for those individuals who accept that belief system, and that this attitude change in turn affects their actions in secular employment and changes their entire way of life. Their religion, in effect, becomes a way of life. We reserve an elaboration of this statement for another section.

Returning now to further developments of the church-sect typology in its application to the American religious scene, we will consider Liston Pope's study of religion in Gaston County, North Carolina.<sup>33</sup> Pope concluded that Troeltsch's use of the church-and sect-types was basically static and suggests as a viable alternative an analysis of religious groups in dynamic terms, that is, in terms of the group's movement from one type to the other, particularly from the sect-type to the church-type<sup>35</sup> as H. Richard Niebuhr has also suggested.<sup>36</sup> Pope introduces the significance of another element to the church-sect typology in his discussion of social class as a variable in determining the type of change that

occurs in the sect. As it gains adherents and the "promise of wealth," the sect seeks to influence the society surrounding it to a greater extent and in the process of trying to win the world, it gradually accommodates itself to the dominant culture, thereby becoming more church-like and losing the influence it once possessed over the relatively disenchanted elements of that culture.

<sup>37</sup> Here Pope is suggesting that sects typically cater to the lower classes, and churches, to the middle and upper classes. This point is again brought out when he states that "sects substitute religious status for social status."<sup>38</sup> Here again we see similarities between his formulation and that of Weber and Troeltsch who emphasized the exclusive nature of the sect (that is, the sect creates the impression and perpetuates the belief that it, and it alone, possesses the road and the means to salvation and that therefore, its members possess a status higher than that of any non-members). Such status takes on as much importance to the sect member as does social status to the non-member and the sect may even create its own miniature society:

Excluded from secular society, they (sects) set up a religious society of their own, in which standards of membership are more rigid than those of the general culture that has ignored them. The inspired Scriptures rather than general cultural standards, provide the charter of their new community; without exception, the new churches (ie., sects) accept the Bible as their sole and adequate authority (in theory), and interpret it with direct literalness.<sup>39</sup>

Another contribution to our understanding of religious organizations is presented by Howard Becker in his am-

plification of Wiese's work.<sup>40</sup> Becker introduces "ecclesia" as an alternative to "church" to describe that religious organization that caters to the dominant classes of society,<sup>41</sup> but otherwise he changes the ideal-type very little. Likewise with the ideal-typical sect, Becker follows the pattern set by Weber and Troeltsch, concluding that the sect follows the injunction to "come out from among them and be ye separate" with extreme literalness.<sup>42</sup> The sect always prefers isolation to compromise.

Becker then introduces another organizational type, the cult, which in many respects resembles the sect but differs from it in its greater ephemerality and lack of stability. The cult is a fairly personally oriented religious group that emphasizes such personal aspects as the attainment of an ecstatic experience, comfort, and healing.<sup>43</sup> Again, the cult differs from the sect in that "instead of joining a cult, an act which implies the consent of others, one simply chooses to believe particular theories or follow certain practices, and the consent of other members of the cult is not necessary."<sup>44</sup>

Another categorization is that of the "denomination" which implies an "advanced" stage of sect development, as Pope indirectly suggested it and as Niebuhr also elaborated it.<sup>45</sup> The denomination represents an organizational adjustment to similar religious groups and to the secular society.<sup>46</sup>

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This organizational adjustment generally takes the form of a

compromise to secular values. The sect that exists for more than one generation is confronted with the task of educating its members' children who, at the same time, are being introduced to the secular value system in their interaction with non-members. This dual socialization process often brings out the basic contradictions between these two value systems. One solution for the sect is to state dogmatically that the two value systems are not at all related to each other. The other solution, and according to Becker the most typical one, is for the sect to compromise in the sense of "softening" its stringent norms and accepting some of the secular values, thereby becoming a denomination.

As our thesis will concern itself with value orientations to some extent, it would seem worthwhile to consider another of Becker's formulations, his sacred-secular typology.<sup>47</sup>

Becker defines human conduct as sacred "when through it an aversion to change is manifested ... the sacred is basically bound up with unwillingness or inability to respond to the new."<sup>48</sup>

And again, "the isolated sacred society is isolated mentally and socially but not necessarily geographically."<sup>49</sup>

While the specific religious group we are considering does not manifest some of the characteristics of Becker's constructed type (for example, in our group there is very little illiteracy) its general approach to the world does closely resemble Becker's description, particularly in terms of "mental immobility" which, in the case of Jehovah's Witnesses, is char-

acterized by almost total "closed-mindedness" to alternative religious ideologies and especially to some secular values.<sup>49a</sup>

More recently, Benton Johnson has suggested a modification of the church-sect typology, again in its application to the American scene.<sup>50</sup> He points out that the initial church-sect typology cannot actually be applied to America as this country does not have a national church as do European countries. Furthermore, he shows a possible limiting factor of the original typology: it was constructed on the basis of an examination of the history of Christian Europe prior to 1800 and numerous changes in religious organizations have come about since that time so that a redefinition of the typology was necessary. While Johnson's redefinition makes for a very broad typology, this may well be its strength as Troeltsch's typology appears to be geographically limited. For Johnson the ideal-typical church is a religious group that accepts the social environment as it exists and the typical sect is a religious group that rejects the social environment as it exists.<sup>51</sup> This redefinition has greatest utility, it seems, when it is applied to another development of the typology that we have not yet discussed, namely, the conception of an ideal-typical continuum of religious organizations along which groups may be analyzed for comparative purposes.<sup>52</sup> Johnson's definitions of church and sect would constitute the extremes of such a continuum.

Johnson continues his discussion of sects by referring



to Bryan Wilson's argument that H.R. Niebuhr's hypothesis regarding the instability of all sects probably applies only to those sects Wilson called "conversionist." In Johnson's opinion, these are the only sects that take on churchly characteristics fairly quickly because of their strong emphasis on gaining more members and their relative lack of structural safeguards against environmental influences. Other sects change very little organizationally, especially if they are "less interested in recruitment or better insulated or isolated from secular forces" in which case they would "tend to retain sectarian characteristics more or less indefinitely."<sup>53</sup>

Thus, at least certain sects do not move from a sectarian organizational structure to a more churchly structure as Pope, Niebuhr, and Becker have suggested. Since the typical sect tends to be in a state of tension with its surroundings, "we are safe in supposing that religions that have totally withdrawn from participation in a society or that are engaged in open attack on it fall quite close to the sect (end of the continuum)."<sup>54</sup>

This statement makes implications about the group's value system. While the vast majority of religious bodies seem to accept the dominant value system of a society,<sup>55</sup> "we may assume that religions enforcing norms on their adherents that are sharply distinct from norms common in secular quarters should be classed as relatively sectarian."<sup>56</sup>

Bryan Wilson, another contemporary sociologist of religion, has also expanded the church-sect typology although

in a slightly different way. While his organization of the ideal-typical church and sect characteristics provides an instructive summary of the theoretical developments to date,<sup>57</sup> it does not contribute new elements to the typology. However, Wilson does suggest a novel sub-classification of types of sects. This classification, based on the sect's predominant reaction to the worldly values, consists of: (1) conversionist sects, that seek to change men and thereby to change the evil world; (2) adventist sects that "predict a drastic alteration of the world and seek to prepare themselves and others for the new dispensation"; (3) introversionist sects, that reject the world's values and replace them with higher, inner values; and (4) gnostic sects that accept the world's goals to a large extent but employ new and esoteric means<sup>58</sup> to achieve conventional ends.

Elsewhere Wilson suggests in a way strikingly similar to that of Pope elaborated above, how sects may well function as a miniature society:

A sect serves as a small and 'deviant' reference-group in which the individual may seek status and prestige and in terms of whose standards he may measure his own talents and accomplishments in more favorable terms than are generally available in the wider society. It alters the context of striving, puts a premium on attributes different from those counted significant in the world, provides the reassurance of a stable affective society whose commitment and value structure claim divine sanction and divine permanence. Its ideological orientation and its group cohesion provide a context of emotional security so vital to the adherent that its teachings necessarily become, for him objectively true.<sup>59</sup>

J.M. Yinger has extended the church-sect typology to an even greater extent to a six-class typology: universal church, ecclesia, denomination, established sect, sect, and cult.<sup>60</sup> To classify religious groups into one of these categories, Yinger makes use of three variables:<sup>61</sup> (1) the extent to which the religious system includes the members of a society within its constituency, (2) the degree of accommodation between the values of the secular world and those of the religious group, and (3) the extent to which the religious structure has become organized and differentiated. Thus, Yinger has included all previous elements of the typology and has added some types as midpoints on the continuum. Space limits us to a discussion of his last three types. The established sect, in Yinger's terms, is a religious group that is an out-growth of the less stable sects and cults; consequently, it is somewhat more inclusive, less alienated from the world, and more structured than the sect but it still contains less of these "churchly" characteristics than the denomination.<sup>62</sup> The sect, in Yinger's opinion, becomes an established sect when its orientation in opposition to the dominant secular structure itself becomes an established value.<sup>63</sup> In his description of the sect, Yinger develops three analytic types of sects corresponding to their dominant orientations to the world:<sup>64</sup> (1) The acceptance sect, primarily a middle class movement, largely accepts the world's goals and does not oppose its institutions to any great extent. (2)

The aggressive sect, on the other hand, is a largely power-orientated movement that closely resembles revolutionary groups but that often fuses aggression with some form of withdrawal from the world. The aggressive sect, then, is a religious response to poverty and powerlessness.<sup>64a</sup> (3) The avoidance sect typically devalues the significance of this life and projects the member's hopes on the life to come. In this way the sect hopes to help its members keep some meaning in this life. The parallels of this scheme to Wilson's are obvious as Yinger points out in his discussion.

Elsewhere Yinger introduced another concept which appears to be relevant to our thesis as well. This is the concept of "contraculture."<sup>65</sup> The contraculture is defined as a normative system that establishes a series of inverse or counter values opposing those of the surrounding society. In the face of frustration and conflicts, the contracultural group establishes a set of norms that do not simply differ from those of the dominant society but actually reverse these norms.<sup>67</sup>

This concludes our brief survey of the theoretical development of the church and the sect constructs and any derivatives or interstitial constructs taken from these. A major reason for including a description of these terminologies is that this enables us to speak precisely about various aspects of a religious group by referring to one or another construct as employed by a given theorist. In addition to

this, our purpose in presenting this material is to provide the general reader with a framework of this classification of religious groups with the view of then being able to place a group such as Jehovah's Witnesses into one of the categories outlined above. Needless to say, we do not imply that such categorization is a major goal for a sociology of religion. In fact, we hope to illustrate that the particular religious group here under investigation in many ways defies clear-cut classification; in this sense some possible weaknesses of the present paradigms may be noted.

## B. Review of the Major Studies of Jehovah's Witnesses.

### 1. The Quasi-sociological Studies.

Having concluded our discussion of the specifically sociological literature dealing with the definition of sects and related religious groups, we now turn to a somewhat briefer consideration of the literature that focusses specifically on the Jehovah's Witness sect. We shall begin with a description of several general quasi-sociological works which are nevertheless relevant to our thesis. Following this, we shall discuss some analytical studies that made use of Jehovah's Witness groups to test sociological hypotheses.

William Stevenson, a former Jehovah's Witness, gives a basically descriptive account of the sect, <sup>68</sup> although he does indicate how its religious values are manifested in terms of the sect's norms. On the basis of his experiences in the sect, Stevenson states that all Witnesses very rarely

think about and much less question the dogmas "the Society" claims as "truth". He points out how "circuit servants" (the leaders of a circuit of about 15 congregations who travel to each local group to survey its efficiency and progress) are so busy in working for the Society that they have almost no time at all to think about the doctrines they are helping to establish in the minds of hundreds of people and that their involvement is "the key to understanding why once someone is so far into the movement, it is very difficult for him to see things in any other way than that taught by the movement."<sup>69</sup>

Speaking of the rank-and-file of the sect, Stevenson points out that "the complete uniformity of thinking throughout the movement, and the corresponding absence of individuality of thought and personal opinion, may be to some extent explained by the fact that the schedule of life of these busy people is so hectic that it leaves them with no time to formulate ideas and opinions of their own."<sup>70</sup> He concludes the book with an extensive description of specific norms of the sect and the corresponding sanctions for infractions of these norms.<sup>71</sup>

Another study of the Witness sect by Alan Rogerson is somewhat more analytic than that by Stevenson. Rogerson traces the gradual transference of the charisma of the sect's first two leaders to a group of relatively anonymous doctrine - and decision-makers who are called "the Society" by Witnesses and who constitute God's earthly spokesman in very literal terms. While the sect does have a president, his powers seem

to be limited to his personal influence on this body of decision makers, who, in some unknown combination, together compose the majority of the sect's literature in the form of magazines and books, all of which now appear anonymously.

"From 1938 onwards the Society became the supreme judge of what was right and wrong as far as every Jehovah's Witness was concerned."<sup>72</sup> Rogerson suggests that Jehovah's Witnesses are peculiarly susceptible to an acceptance of the authority of their religious organization and that they will always believe the Society is right in spite of any doctrinal contradictions or changes made on those doctrines that were formerly upheld with absolute certainty by the same religious leader.

An equally interesting study is William Whalen's Armageddon Around the Corner,<sup>73</sup> which presents the historical development of the sect in somewhat greater detail than the previous studies. Whalen points out that the routinization of charisma in the Society was accompanied by another significant organizational change. The first leader of the sect believed and practised the policy of congregational election in which each local congregation elected its own leaders without interference from higher levels. But when the Society gained control, it instituted a more or less appointed form of local leadership. Now the local leaders already in power send several suggestive descriptions of potential leaders to the headquarters of the sect where a group "under the guid-

ance of Jehovah" make the final appointment for all local leadership positions.<sup>74</sup> In effect, the sect has become a bureaucratic organization that virtually eliminates the potentiality of insurrection. A number of other changes were also instituted at this time such as the sanction against blood transfusions, and Whalen suggests that these changes now tend to make the group more sectarian than it was at its inception. Witnesses still maintain a very strict moral code, practice excommunication in the case of deviant members, and firmly believe that they are the only true representative of Christianity.<sup>75</sup> Whalen concludes his discussion with the suggestion that the motivational aspect of proselytization may soon become a problem as members' children may not wish to become involved in the sect to the extent their parents have been. In this writer's opinion, the sect could well perpetuate itself solely through the use of new and zealous converts once these individuals have familiarized themselves with the sect's values, beliefs, and norms. Through its extensive use of new converts, the sect would not need to rely exclusively on second-generation members for proselytizing.

## 2. Sociological Studies of the Witness Sect.

Turning now to Herbert Stroup's early sociologically definitive study of Jehovah's Witnesses,<sup>76</sup> we find that he described and at times analyzed the movement in a great variety of aspects. Consequently, we cannot possibly include all of his findings here and limit ourselves to his discussion of (1)



the social background of sect members, and (2) some social-psychological considerations of their belief.

Stroup's study confirmed Czatt's earlier finding that the Witness sect appeals to very few professional people and that a university education is the exception rather than the rule.<sup>77</sup> This fact does not disturb the Witnesses since secular education has very little value for them. While relatively well-educated converts are by no means rejected, their presence does not give the sect a special pride in its effective proselytization. But Witnesses do take pride in the few converts they have recruited from the Protestant ministry and the Roman Catholic priesthood, and consider such conversions to be a definite confirmation, a "visible proof" of the authenticity of their sect.<sup>78</sup> In addition, Stroup reported a "striking number of Jews" in the congregations he observed. For those Jews who cannot join the Jewish faith and cannot join Protestant churches, the appeal of Jehovah's Witnesses is especially great, since the sect's theological framework is taken largely from the Old Testament and since its emphasis on the name of "Jehovah" would also appeal to these people.<sup>79</sup>

Furthermore, another source of converts to the sect is supplied by elderly people who find comfort in its description of death as a mere "falling asleep" and in its promise of an ideal after-life, free from pain, suffering, and unpleasantness.<sup>80</sup> The absence of any conception of "hell" or a "place of torment" in the Witness doctrine would also appeal

to elderly people who may have had fears about this matter.

Stroup also suggests that the Witness sect gains many members from foreign immigrants who, because of language difficulties or some related reason, find their own church no longer meaningful.<sup>81</sup> Initially these people may only be attracted to the sect by its magazines which are now printed in over seventy different languages, but as these immigrants attend the five weekly Witness meetings, they soon acquire a working knowledge of English; even without it they are certain to obtain a sense of belonging to the sect.

Additionally, Jehovah's Witnesses offer a special appeal to "social outcasts" who have lost their "social identity." As they attend Witness meetings and learn the Witness teachings, such individuals come to see themselves in a new light, that they now live a life that is worthwhile because they now possess a "valuable treasure" -- knowledge of the future life -- which far exceeds the value of "mere earthly possessions."<sup>82</sup> The social outcast no longer considers himself an outcast and substitutes religious status for the social status he failed to attain in the "world".

Stroup implies -- but does not actually state -- that the Witness sect has institutionalized its religious belief to such an extent that doubt is theoretically non-existent.<sup>83</sup> Since the Society has "answers" to all questions, there can be no doubt for the Witness and where there is doubt, it must be a "Satan-inspired tactic" to shake him of his belief. More

doubt might be found among the Witnesses if they did not have constant access to "Bible-helps" which are also published by the Society. These remove most, if not all of the uncertainty that their beliefs will not be shaken.<sup>83a</sup>

Another equally classic study considers a specific problem in the sect's history: how Jehovah's Witnesses survived five prophetic failures.<sup>84</sup> According to Zygmunt, Jehovah's Witnesses are a typically chiliastic sect since they express the tension between the religious and secular spheres and since they have made numerous specific predictions of the final cataclysm of this world.<sup>85</sup> While many of the group's characteristics are typically sectarian, it differs with regard to its emergent career; that is, this sect does not appear to move structurally toward the denominational form of social organization.<sup>86</sup> Zygmunt believes this fact has considerable significance not only for future assumptions and theories about the development of religious organizations, but even more significant is the fact that a sectarian movement can undergo changes in its structure and its symbolic orientation without ceasing to be a sect.<sup>87</sup>

While the Witness sect espoused millenarianism from its very beginnings in the 1870's, no predictions of the second coming of Christ were initially made. In fact, Russell adopted the view that Christ had actually returned to earth invisibly, so that the only prophecy yet to be fulfilled would be that of the final battle between Christ and Satan. Through

numerous calculations, Russell arrived at the year 1878 as the crucial year but near the close of that year he found a biblical basis for extending the prophecy to 1881. This minor delay did not shake the movement to any extent. But with the arrival and passing of 1881 the crisis became more serious. For several years, Russell's faithful followers watched for a belated transformation of the world. Soon their tense expectancy relaxed, however, and new prophecies were cast.

"The harvest" (that is, the completion of the conversion of 144,000) which had been considered complete in 1881 was now redefined to the year 1914. With this year still well in the future, the sect reached its first stage of institutionalization in Zygmunt's estimation. Its leader had time to reorganize the group's power structure and to expand and integrate the sect's doctrinal and ethical systems. But as 1914 approached, excitement again grew. This time the movement's leadership had definitely committed itself to this prophecy and a failure would present a serious problem. The crucial year came and went, bringing with it the third prophetic failure. Contrary to expectations, however, this third failure did not have the deleterious consequences one might have assumed it would as the sect by this time had already developed such an extensive organizational framework and resources that even if half of its members had left the movement, it would have survived. The focus of the fourth prophecy was on the year 1918 but this prophecy also failed. At this time Ruther-

ford took control of the movement. He, too, ventured a prophecy for the year 1925, but with this fifth prophetic failure, all further dated prophecies ceased. Zygmunt sees this cessation as one long-term adaption of the chiliastic sect, as a means of maintaining millenarian characteristics and expectations without suffering the consequences of repeated prophetic disconfirmations.

By this time, however, the sect had reached a considerable size and it had to alter its doctrines to "make room" as it were for many new converts who would otherwise be excluded from the sect. Initially, Russell pronounced that all of his followers constituted a part of the 144,000 who would be taken out of this world at the Battle of Armageddon. This dogma proved satisfactory as long as the total membership of the sect was below that number. But soon there were more than 144,000 Witnesses and some hope for a future life had to be created for those individuals. Rutherford thus introduced the doctrine of a heavenly class (the "remnant") and an earthly class (the "Jonadabs" or "other sheep"). This earthly class would not ascend to heaven with the remnant but would remain on earth. After the Battle of Armageddon they would live a life free from aging, death, pain, or anxiety. Theoretically, the size of this earthly class is unlimited and most present-day Witnesses consider themselves to belong to this class.

Turning our attention to another study of Jehovah's Witnesses, we find that Werner Cohn considers the group to be

a "proletarian sect" largely because it is "separated by an almost air-tight spiritual barrier from the rest of American society -- the organization is a universe unto itself."<sup>89</sup>

Cohn suggests that the degree of tension between a religious group and society as a whole is an indicator of its "sectness," and that we can decide whether a religious group is a sect or a church by answering the question: does the group regard itself and is it regarded as an integral part of the whole community.<sup>90</sup>

A negative answer would make the group a sect in sociological terms. But Cohn is aware that this criterion is relatively unsatisfactory since a number of groups may be regarded as participating for society and yet they still consider themselves to be somewhat separated from society so that they could not be classed as a church. Cohn therefore suggests the ideal types of "proletarian" and "participating" to refer to the degree to which the sect participates in the larger social issues.<sup>91</sup>

While the participating sect believes in a mission of reform for the world and strives to accomplish this mission through charitable and welfare work, the proletarian sect believes the world is totally corrupted, that it cannot be salvaged and consequently withdraws itself as much as possible from that world. Cohn believes that Jehovah's Witnesses come as close as any religious group to the ideal-typical proletarian sect.<sup>92</sup> Particularly noteworthy is their rejection of the "common social institutions" and their rejection of secular truths and even the methods of arriving

at such truth.<sup>93</sup> In Cohn's opinion, Jehovah's Witnesses have constructed an "esoteric thought system" that exerts increasing influence on the Witness as he progresses to the core of the organization, that is, as he assumes increasingly greater positions of responsibility.<sup>94</sup>

For a word of recapitulation, Cohn's thesis contributed to the theoretical literature on sects by his distinction between "proletarian" and "participating" sects, a typology that might be integrated into Wilson's and Yinger's more specific sect typologies. Zygmunt's major contribution, in this writer's opinion, is his suggestion that Jehovah's Witnesses' relatively "abnormal" development from a sect toward the denomination may not be as atypical as has been assumed by previous theorists; this observation may well lead to a major modification of the church-sect typology. Stroup's early study of the sect still has relevance for present studies in the sense that one can draw on his observations for comparing the changes that have occurred in the past twenty years. His description of the social background of sect members and our observations of several present Witness groups lead us to the tentative conclusion that Jehovah Witnesses have been relatively upwardly mobile in the past twenty years. While most Witnesses would now be considered middle-class or slightly below, it appears that the sect still provides for the same needs as it did when the membership was predominantly lower class. The Society still promises, as it did twenty

years ago, that Witnesses' next life on earth will be far better than the present life of tension, insecurity and worry.

C. Some Critical Remarks of Previous Studies.

Now that we have discussed the redeeming features of the majority of prior studies of the Witness sect, we believe that a word of some shortcomings of these studies is also in order. Our intention in this regard is in no manner negative or derogatory but is designed to indicate the necessity of further discussion and study of the sect's internal processes, particularly the socialization processes and related extrinsic manifestations of the sect's ideology.

Some of the studies we have referred to above are clearly outdated. Considering that the sect is a rapidly changing social group in terms of structure, ideology and programs, time appears to be a particularly significant variable for sects. Therefore, we need to scrutinize those studies that would fall into this category with the view of deciding that study's adequacy for present theory building. While Stroup's 1945 study was very lucid with regard to the sect's organizational structure at all levels, major changes have come about since that time. The sect's meetings, for example, are now much more clearly defined and meeting attendance now is more institutionalized than in 1945. This means that at the present time sect members are definitely expected to attend all five weekly meetings without fail whereas in 1945 meeting attendance was a matter for each individual's conscience.



Very much the same argument applies to proselytization as the institutionalization of this program on a sect-wide basis was just beginning in 1943 with the initiation of the Theocratic Ministry School (designed to make every Jehovah's Witness a "public speaker").

Werner Cohn's thesis is dated 1954 and since that time the sect's proselytization techniques have been refined and the literature of the sect has gained further importance as a tool for winning converts. Similarly, while Whalen's study is to be praised for the discussion of the sect's history, we believe that the Society has increasingly emphasized the importance of proselytization and has advertised the "glamor" of the role of "pioneer" especially in the 1960's.

Another criticism we need to register applies to certain studies we dub as quasi-sociological. These studies do examine the sect with a certain degree of truthfulness, but the questions posed are not always sociologically interesting ones. Furthermore, it seems quite likely that these authors who are (in the main) ex-Jehovah's Witnesses are still somewhat in the habit of using the sect's language. This applies particularly to W.C. Stevenson and W.J. Schnell. While the questions posed by Stevenson are very interesting, his description of the sect is quite specific and could profit from a little more generalization. In speaking of the possible motivations for joining the sect, Stevenson refers to Witnesses' claim to be the sole possessors of truth. Yet he fails

to indicate in what sense this fact is related to the new-comer's previous everyday needs. Perhaps his study would have been more profitable had he taken this point one step further and asserted that the prospective member actually desires a sense of certainty regarding his present and future life and joins the sect in the hope of finding such certainty. While Stevenson's study is very interesting and lucidly informative, its sociological naivete is one of its major drawbacks.

W.J. Schnell also finds difficulty in reaching optimum levels of abstraction and generality. In addition to this, it seems that Schnell has experienced particular difficulty in remaining unbiased in his study. It is our belief (which we share with Alan Rogerson) that Schnell's theories about the sect are quite negatively affected by his previous association with it. Schnell also seems to assume that any form of institutionalization of certain of the sect's functions or processes (for example, proselytization) creates an almost certain dysfunction in that institutionalization "robs" the group of the spontaneity that it once possessed. Schnell frequently refers to this spontaneity as the "working of the Holy Spirit" and attributes the sect's growth prior to 1940 largely to this factor.

#### D. Why a Current Study of This Sect is Warranted.

Now that we have indicated some of the weaknesses of prior studies of the Witness sect, we must establish why a further and present study of Jehovah's Witnesses bears merit

for the social sciences. Firstly, Jehovah's Witnesses are still talking about the final cataclysm of the world. My conclusion upon listening to numerous Witnesses expostulate on this issue is that they expect the "end of the world" within the next five or ten years. The utility of "before-after" studies of groups maintaining a definite belief which is later disconfirmed (that is, which is a prophetic failure) was already demonstrated by Festinger.<sup>95</sup> In our case the prophetic disconfirmation is still to appear but there are definite indications that such is developing.<sup>96</sup> Already the Society is making more allusions to certain world events (such as the Arab-Israeli dispute) in conjunction with the sect's millenarian theological interpretations. Perhaps the Society will soon have forgotten the organizational dangers of advancing a time-specific prediction with regard to the beginning of the millenium. In the light of these developments, we believe that periodic studies of the sect's functioning are indicated if only to document members' involvement and expectations which can then be compared to those of a later point in time when a major organizational crisis (related to a prophetic failure or not) does occur.

But the major reason for this thesis' existence is to examine the sect's processes of recruitment, education, socialization, and support. To this writer's knowledge, no work to date has done so exhaustively or even partially. To accomplish this task well, however, we cannot simply speak

of or about the processes but we will need to examine some of the theory and ideology which gave rise to and which legitimated these processes. In conjunction with that end we will attempt to describe as accurately and as fully as possible the functions, duties, and actions of individuals, congregations, and the sect as a total religious group. Of particular interest will be the congregation, the local religious group, since this group is the focus of all of the processes we have referred to above. It is through the congregation that the newcomer first learns of the sect, is educated in its doctrines, is socialized in its normative behavior patterns, and is urged and exhorted to remain true to his newfound faith in a variety of ways. When we have elaborated on these processes, we will be in a position to proceed to our thesis proper: that Jehovah's Witnesses, although they live in and work in the world (secular society) are now no longer an active part of that world. Witnesses constitute a socially and ideologically insulated and isolated group which tends to be more impervious to the culture from which it grew than are most related sectarian groups in similar social settings. While our comparative analysis of this sect in relation to other sects will be very limited, our reasons for this statement will become clear throughout the following pages.

For the realm of theory building, a study of Jehovah's Witnesses also bears merit. Jehovah's Witnesses are an ex-

cellent example of a group which demonstrates the effects of the application of a specific ideology in the lives of its members. We are referring mainly to value, attitude, and subsequent behavior changes on the part of those who undergo the group's initiation processes. Our object, then, is relatively similar to that of Werner Cohn who attempted to demonstrate in his thesis<sup>97</sup> that Jehovah's Witnesses provide social scientists with an example of a "proletarian" group perpetrating a totalitarian ideology again emphasizes the dangers of such an ideology, particularly when that group's socialization methods foster a passive acceptance of such ideology. Our opinion on the study of Jehovah's Witnesses, however, is not totally negatively or preventative-ly oriented. We believe that the socialization processes as developed by the sect need not necessarily be considered solely in negative terms but also in positive terms. We believe there is still much to be gained in a comprehensive understanding of these processes, particularly in relation to some of the present efforts with regard to the rehabilitation of criminals and juvenile delinquents. While this study will limit itself to the functions and processes of a religious group, the knowledge here gained might well be applied to other groups.

E. Sociological Paradigms to be Employed.

Before developing our problem any further we now consider the sociological paradigm we shall employ for descriptive and analytical purposes. "Value theory" as proposed by Parsons suggests that the primary and most vital function of all parts of a social system is an integrative one.<sup>98</sup> This emphasis on the integrative function is entirely arbitrary, and in this writer's opinion, it is one of Parsons' major assumptions. Some other assumptions his theory implies are the following. (1) Value theory assumes the existence of a common set of values in the cultural system. This implies that all subsystems will operate with the same abstract values which the total system has legitimized. While these values change over time, their rate of change is sufficiently slow not to warrant attention to this aspect for an explanation of the system's integrative function. (2) A second assumption is that these abstract cultural values are somehow particularized so that they can be held in common by the majority of individual personalities of the social system. As a result of the majority's acceptance of these values and their specific means and ends for the greater part of the social interaction, the system functions as a unit. In other words, the abstract, non-specific cultural values legitimize the more concrete and specific clusters of rules, prescriptions, and norms which, in turn, determine individuals' behaviors in terms of culturally approved means and ends. (3) The third assumption of value theory, already implied in the

second, is that the legitimated norms in turn act as effective-guides-of-behavior for all members of the system in that these individuals have internalized the norms and standards in their personality systems through the process of socialization.

In short, Parsons' theory assumes that a set of common, universalistic values creates and legitimizes the existence of a set of specific norms which, in turn, define specific roles for all members of the social system, and that these individuals "play the roles" according to the rules, standards, and norms which these persons have incorporated and are continuing to incorporate and to internalize into their personalities through their continual interaction with other members of the system. While this description is very much ideal-typical in the sense that no actual social system would ever function as free of conflict as Parsons' theory suggests, his framework is of considerable utility in describing a specific social system as we now hope to demonstrate.

We will find Parsons' levels of human action systems particularly useful for describing and for analyzing the Witness sect. Parsons sees the cultural system as one that creates and maintains a given set of values and that legitimizes these values by various means such as claiming they are derived from Ultimate Reality or tradition. In speaking of the Jehovah's Witnesses' cultural system, we shall discuss in some detail the sect's religious ideology and belief system;

that is, how the now authoritative and charisma-invested group of leaders of the sect, otherwise known as the "Society," legitimizes its theological doctrines and world views. Thus, this part of our study will deal with the movement's ideology and another part of the thesis will consider individual's typical attitudes.

Secondly, we will employ Parsons' social system concept. The primary function of the social system is integration. The social system provides the ideal setting for the cultural system to influence the personality system (and also vice versa). The social system is integrative in the sense that it provides the social milieu for molding and socializing relatively plastic personalities into the cultural mold. The social system is also integrative in that it provides adequate visibility of behaviors. This allows for ready observability of most group behavior, hence contributes to punishment for non-conformity. We will consider three distinct aspects of the Witness organization as exemplifying the social system. (1) The first will cover the different religious activities of the movement in local Kingdom Halls, <sup>99</sup> in smaller groups that meet in Witness homes, and in their confrontation with the secular world during proselytizing. (2) We will then be in a position to discuss the potential religious roles that are available to the Witness and how he may increase his status in the movement. The latter point already overlaps with our third descriptive aspect of the Witness social system so that



we will limit ourselves to describing the typical channels and processes by which the rank-and-file Witness generally moves upwards in the total international organization. (3) The third element of the social system is by far the most significant but it would not function in the absence of the previous elements. I am referring to the specific, particular norms of the movement which are a direct manifestation of the values the sect holds. Specifically, our study will consider (a) Witness' emphasis on exclusiveness, on being the only true form of Christianity; (b) their emphasis on the fulfillment of the sect's normative requirements as an indication of the member's sincerity and dedication to God and to the Society; (c) the strong norms advocating endogamy and recommending as little as possible social intercourse with non-Witnesses.

The third and final system we will employ in this study is the personality system.<sup>100</sup> Abstract values, that were at one time totally alien and probably somewhat repulsive to the now fully committed Witness, gradually replace his former values so that he now has a different belief system and consequently he is motivated to strive for new goals using different means than he employed before joining the sect. Here we will discuss the Witness' typical Weltanschauung, his general definition of success and happiness in life, his attitudes to secular governments, to war, to education, and to work.

This concludes our brief description of Parsons' theory

of systems and the relationship this theory will have to our thesis. Now a word of caution needs to be added. While we no doubt will find great utility in Parsons' systems paradigm we do not intend it to monopolize our thinking or discussion and may at times deviate slightly from it. Nevertheless, this paradigm is very useful for systematically ordering the material we intend to present here. As already implied in our discussion of the three systems, our major focus will be on the cultural and social systems. Reasons for this are perhaps redundant to a topic such as the sociology of religion. As a further word of caution, we point out that our concluding chapter deals with some aspects of the cultural and social systems but not all. We found it necessary to discuss part of the sect's cultural system in Chapter II and part of the social system in Chapter III. We have used Parsonian theory as a basic guide and realize it contains other vital elements not included in this thesis.

#### F. Tools of Research.

Research in the religious realm is always very problematic but these problems are further complicated in the study of small sects and cults. Previous research on the Jehovah's Witness sect has indicated that the usual methods of data collection are quite ineffective.<sup>101</sup> In particular, systematic interviews and the use of questionnaires are virtually out of the picture. Reasons for such a conclusion are (1) Witnesses tend to view the world in a fairly dual-

istic sense; therefore, those individuals who are not actually interested in joining the movement must necessarily be intent on destroying it or at least in disrupting the meetings.

(2) Witnesses do not appreciate the value of education to the extent that the secular world does. Consequently they would believe that their time could be spent far better by proselytizing rather than surreptitiously providing information to a non-Witness about the sect.<sup>102</sup>

(3) There are indications that Witnesses at all levels of the movement may be rather poorly informed about the sects total operation and authority structure,<sup>103</sup> so that direct interviews along these lines would lack reliability.

It would appear, then, that the only viable alternative method of investigation is participant observation. We shall find it necessary to take on the role of a potential convert to the sect rather than the role of a university researcher, reasons being identical to those discussed above.<sup>104</sup> However, our identity was not totally disguised. During the early part of observation (November 1970-January 1971) the researcher did reveal his university background and even his subject of concentration. But for all intents and purposes the writer was regarded as an "interested outsider" who someday might accept the doctrines of Jehovah's Witnesses.<sup>105</sup>

Only two "Kingdom Halls" were used for data collection and observation. This apparent limitation has no deleterious consequences whatsoever in that all Witness groups make use

of identical religious literature, techniques of training members in proselytization and even sing the same songs for their respective meetings. As a measure of protection for my informants it has been suggested that the locus of my participant observation not be disclosed. In addition to the involvement in and study of these meetings, the researcher has had the opportunity to attend conferences of the sect and to observe sect members in their door-to-door proselytizing activity.

Perhaps the reader should also have some indication of the method of entry employed in establishing contacts with the sect members. We must admit that most sociologists enter the group they will be studying in rather unconventional manners. The same has applied to our entry. When it was clear that the sect would present some interesting questions to the outsider, the writer simply called someone from a congregation, asked what time the meetings were held and attended. Upon entering the Kingdom Hall, it became most evident to me that I was a stranger but surprisingly I received a warm welcome from most of the people already there. I was asked why I had come and stated that I had read some of the sect's literature and was interested in learning more about the group. Unofficially it appeared to me that a Jehovah's Witness "appointed himself" to be my informant and guide throughout the first meeting. He introduced me to various sect members when they arrived. During the remaining minutes before the

start of the meeting he suggested to me to share my present and past circumstances with him which I did. During the meeting itself my informant was careful to add any comments that might help me to see the purpose behind some of the activities and at the same time he encouraged me to participate even though I was only a novice in the sect.

For my second contact with another congregation I found my entree considerably more facilitated by the fact that I knew what was expected of me and what to expect during the meetings. Also, I had already familiarized myself with the special language employed by the sect so that in many ways my contacts with some of its leaders in this second group were more readily established.

I have decided to add an appendix to the thesis which contains in more detail some of the experiences of my participant observation as well as some of the comments I recorded from actual members of this sect. The major purpose of such an appendix is to indicate to the reader how the author arrived at the conclusion in this thesis and also it facilitates further contacts with other groups in the sect by an independent researcher.

A second useful tool in the completion of this thesis was found in the study of the sect's literature. Of particular benefit in this regard was The Watchtower, the official magazine of Jehovah's Witnesses. This magazine contains numerous articles in each issue including two or three major

articles. These major articles are an important subject of study for all Witnesses as any new theological knowledge is imparted via this channel from the Society to the rank-and-file member. In our attempt to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of Witness theology and values, we have studied more than one year's issues of The Watchtower. But other Witness literature has also been helpful. While attendance at Witness meetings did provide a basic knowledge of their proselytization techniques, for example, this knowledge was then supplemented through the reading of another Witness publication, Qualified to be Ministers. Another book which the writer has found extremely useful for an interpretation of Witness values and theology is entitled The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life. In this book it became evident how subtly the Society introduces the breakdown in the newcomer's faith in his old religion and replaces this with an absolute faith in the Society.

Not to be forgotten, of course, are the ever-present questions the researcher asked his Witness informers. We assume that these are a part of participant observation but felt a word of clarification might augment our research description. Whenever and wherever possible particularly in all initial contacts with new Witnesses we asked questions. Some of these were naive in the sectarian sense and others were tricky. One common denominator all questions had, however, was that their purpose was to elicit information about the

sect's detailed processes, programs, meetings, authority structure, and values.

If we may be permitted a word of the results of this questioning, we must state that the total picture which the sect presented was that of a highly organized religious group, functioning very well as a team. The greater majority of Witnesses left no doubt concerning their knowledge of the sect's doctrines, values and practices. All in all, they created the unmistakable impression that they were a highly informed group. We hope to demonstrate below that they were also a very indoctrinated group.

At the close of this introductory chapter, a word of clarification about the overall presentation of this paper is in order. Much of the content of this thesis will appear to be descriptive. It is our hope that the discussion of the Witness way of life will serve as a novel theory of indoctrination or attitude change. Seen in this light, this study presents highlights for both the sociology of religion and social psychology. Any generalizations or conclusions are reserved, hopefully, for the closing chapter of this paper.

## CHAPTER II. CULTURAL SYSTEM: WHO ARE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES AND WHAT DO THEY BELIEVE?

This chapter is designed to present a broad, total picture of Jehovah's Witnesses considering first their history and organizational developments and secondly focusing on some of the basic beliefs that are upheld in the sect at present. To answer our first question we shall consider the major highlights in each of the three presidents' leadership of the sect. We shall refer to any organizational and doctrinal changes we believe are significant to a present understanding of the Witness' philosophy. Our purpose in discussing Jehovah's Witness history and the development of their distinctive beliefs is that one cannot adequately understand the actions of any group unless one considers the cultural element which legitimizes the social elements (rules, norms, and standards).

### A. Who Are Jehovah's Witnesses?

#### 1. The Sect Begins With Russell.

The sect known as Jehovah's Witnesses began as a small religious group in eastern United States in the 1880's under the leadership of Charles T. Russell. At that time all forms of millenarism and adventism were very popular. The Protestant group of which Russell was a member did not emphasize these elements but when he learned of these doctrines



exhorting men of the impending second advent of Jesus Christ, he found them to be biblically based and soon began writing about these matters. He succeeded in finding a partner who agreed to combine his financial resources with Russell's so that a regular religious paper pertaining to adventism could be published. It was largely through these writings that Russell became known among adventists. Soon he began his own meetings and attracted followers. Much more could be said about the beginnings of this group and its successes and failures. Suffice it to say that the sect's major emphasis was this chiliastic element, implying the impending doom of the world and redemption of the saved or elect. As Zygmunt has expounded so lucidly,<sup>1</sup> Russell made numerous specific predictions as to the date of a cataclysm. These predictions were made on the basis of Russell's interpretations of the Bible and calculations obtained through these interpretations. Each prediction was followed by a frenzy of proselytizing especially as the date of the prediction approached. With each prophetic failure, however, a relatively large number of the sect's adherents discontinued their association with it. While these disorganizational trends must have been evident to Russell, these facts apparently did not deter him from his date-setting attempts. Somehow the movement did manage to survive. This may have been due to Russell's skills at altering the facts. With regard to the 1914 prediction, for example, Russell asserted that he had mistakenly understood

certain Bible verses to mean that Christ would return visibly in that year when in actuality Christ had returned invisibly . In this and related ways Russell persuaded approximately 50% of his followers to remain in the sect. Those who decided to break with Russell joined related Protestant groups or formed splinter groups some of which have survived to this day.

While Russell's efforts towards the creation of the present sect are definitely noteworthy, it is our belief that he laid little more than the groundwork for what was to follow.

## 2. Major Organizational and Doctrinal Changes Under Rutherford.

The second president of this adventist sect was J.R. Rutherford who assumed this charismatic position in 1922 following the death of Russell. For a few years Rutherford attempted to follow Russell's path and through his own calculations predicted that a final cataclysm would occur in 1925. With the coming and passing of this year, however, Rutherford decided to avoid further specific predictions of this sort and preferred to state that the end of the world would occur "in this generation" which was the generation (70 years) from 1914. This change amounted to the institutionalization of the chiliastic element with the elimination of all disorganizational consequences that could result from it. Present-day Witnesses still adhere to this interpretation and all indications are that their proselytization efforts have

not slackened.

If we were to choose the Witness leader most influential in introducing doctrinary and cultural change in the sect's entire history, that choice would undoubtedly fall to Rutherford. Whereas Russell tended to support many of the customary church procedures of his day, Rutherford decided to introduce several new ideas and doctrines. Rutherford succeeded in this regard largely because he previously or simultaneously authenticated and legitimized these changes with numerous Bible verses and interpretations. Shortly following Rutherford's election as president, the sect's literature emphasized the non-military aspect of the Christian's life, an area that Russell believed to be in the realm of the individual's conscience. Through his literature mouthpiece Rutherford stated that a devout Christian should not be compelled to go to war since this involved earthly governments to which the Christian should only pledge token allegiance. This interpretation was readily accepted as biblically authentic but was to cause much harm to sect members during the Second World War. A useful "latent function", however, was the publicity the sect obtained when many of its male members were arrested and imprisoned in spite of their statements that they were "ministers of religion."

Another change that Rutherford introduced also dealt with the Christian's relation to the secular world. As Rutherford interpreted the New Testament, the Christian should

not vote in a public election and should certainly abstain from holding a public office since such acts would give undue authority to man and might possibly imply that one's allegiance lay with the state rather than with God.

Much of the same situation applies to the flag saluting issue which Rutherford also introduced as a policy for devout Christians to follow. Rutherford believed that a salute to a flag was an undue paying of allegiance to the country represented by that flag. Consequently, sect members instructed their school-age children not to salute the flag at any time. This became another civil issue that caused Witnesses much public disdain as well as numerous court cases. In terms of the sect's existence, this issue became a life-and-death matter in many parts of the United States, so much so that Rutherford's legal talents had to be employed to convince the courts that Witnesses were in their rights to refuse to salute the flag on the basis of religious convictions.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to these changes, we note a further doctrinal change which has undoubtedly affected many of the lives of Witnesses and which has been even more influential in publicizing their existence. We are referring to the sect's blood transfusion dogma. This dogma was also introduced by Rutherford. An ancient mosaic law forbade the Hebrews from eating blood. Presumably this prohibition existed largely for health reasons and most likely it was for this same reason

that this injunction was again stressed in New Testament times with Paul admonishing the early Christians to abstain from eating blood. Witnesses interpret both Bible passages to mean that the eating of blood is an infringement of God's law and is therefore sinful. But Rutherford went one step further and took another Bible passage which speaks of one's soul as being in one's blood as further conclusive evidence that the practice of blood transfusions must have many adverse effects. Theoretically the person who accepts blood from someone then in a sense becomes a part of that person or vice versa. As with so many other doctrines, however, the sect's leadership was not totally satisfied with biblical confirmations. It is preferable in the eyes of the leadership if some outside authority can be quoted as stating that a particular practice has definite negative repercussions. Thus, present Witnesses often refer to medical reports of physicians who attributed the spread of various diseases to blood transfusions. What is not mentioned about this common medical procedure, however, is that it saves millions of lives annually.

Both the flag saluting and the blood transfusion issues may be seen in functional terms. Emile Durkheim's theory states that anomie, the normlessness or confusion of norms of a group may actually lead to cohesion in that group.<sup>3</sup> The group is held together by the common characteristics of its members. This applies to the two issues discussed above.

Jehovah's Witnesses in a sense are perpetrating a belief in a set of norms which are at odds with those of the dominant society. This may lead to Witness alienation from that society since the greater emphasis is placed on the sect's norms. At the same time, however, this anomie tends to stabilize the sect in that all members are able to think of themselves in "normal" sectarian terms.

Now that we have discussed some of the major doctrinal changes which Rutherford instituted, we must also consider some of the structural and organizational changes he effected. While Rutherford was a very dynamic, charismatic leader much like Russell, he believed that some centralization of decision-making (that is, power) would benefit the whole sect. To that end he planned a long-range program the first phase of which was introduced in 1932 and the final phase of which was introduced in 1938. Until 1932 each congregation was allowed to elect its own leaders. This is called the congregational form of church polity and is generally the most popular among sects and cults and even some denominations. In 1932 Rutherford decided that the elders of a local congregation should be replaced by a service committee whose ultimate responsibility was to be to the headquarters of the sect. This service committee was still elected by the local group but already had obligations to follow the rulings of the centralized committee which was under Rutherford's control. This change presented no organizational

crisis and was readily accepted throughout the movement.

In 1938 the final organizational change was made with the introduction of what is referred to as the "theocratic system of government" by Witnesses. Under this system the local service committee makes a number of recommendations of potential leadership candidates to the headquarters of the sect. There these "applications" are carefully screened and a final decision as to which candidate most suitably fits the leadership position is reached and forwarded back to the local congregation for enforcement.

Regardless of what Jehovah's Witnesses say about this policy, one cannot help but notice certain autocratic elements in this system of church government. While the system may look fine to them, they probably could not conceive of their headquarters as manipulating the congregations to the same extent that an outsider looking at the group may. From one point of view, this organizational change had definite benefits to the sect as far as future organizational stabilization is concerned. This theocratic system virtually eliminates the possibility of an insurrection among the sect's leaders. And considering that these leaders tend to be seen as role-models by the remainder of the congregation, rebelliousness very seldom reaches problematic proportions.

How did we arrive at this rather startling conclusion? We simply traced the processes of selection from publisher<sup>4</sup> upwards and examined the criteria for advancement.

Basically, any publisher has the potential to become a servant.<sup>5</sup> But he must display the leadership qualities which would make him particularly suitable for this position. Much the same applies for those servants who seek to become overseers.<sup>6</sup> While theoretically all have the opportunity for advancement, this is in actuality limited to the positions available and to a large extent to one's personal idiosyncracies and how these may be interpreted by one's superiors. The publisher, for example, tends to be "analyzed" by his congregation book-study servant who teaches him in a weekly study and who learns to know the individual publisher much more closely than does the overseer. Thus, if the publisher does make an early favorable impression on his superior in terms of knowledge, interest, enthusiasm, dedication, and willingness to serve, this greatly improves his chances of being "nominated" when a position becomes vacant. Precisely the same argument applies for "vacancies" as one moves upwards in the sect's power hierarchy. This method of choosing leaders, then, is clearly one of careful screening from the local level as well as from higher levels of authority. Now no person is ever elected or appointed for any leadership position in any congregation prior to approval from the national headquarters of the sect. Much of this discussion will gain clarity in a later portion of this paper when the potential religious roles will be discussed in detail but this matter was introduced here to indicate to what extent the sect has



been re-organized from a small and weak group to a strong, centrally controlled and directed group of dedicated people.

One positive result of this reorganization was the dramatic reduction in splinter groups which broke away from the sect. All potential leaders were carefully screened and were always checked to ascertain that their actions were not contrary to the sect's overall purposes. In this way a major problem - defection- has been partially eliminated. It still exists but only to the extent that some individuals or families now leave the sect. Reliable figures are lacking especially since the sect's leadership would be most reluctant to be truthful in this area in the fear that this information might endanger the faith of other adherents.

In addition to the doctrinal and organizational changes brought about in 1938, Rutherford finally gave the sect one common, unifying name. Prior to this time the sect was variously called Millennial Dawnists, Russellites, Rutherfordites, International Bible Students, among others. Now they officially adopted the name, "Jehovah's Witnesses." Again, a biblical basis was found for this in the Old Testament where God, in speaking to the Israelites, refers to them as his witnesses.<sup>7</sup> This change in the sect's name was probably one of Rutherford's most significant changes in terms of uniting the group as a total sect. Now they not only had a common belief but also a common name. All Witnesses over the world could now identify with each other, could refer to one another as

"brother" and "sister;" could see themselves as very special emissaries of God, and would tend to think of themselves naturally as separated from other religious groups and the secular society.

Disregarding for the moment any religious implications of the above changes in distinctives, let us pause to consider what the social implications of such a change in ideology are. We point out once again that these changes were made by Rutherford -- not by a central committee -- and often were based on statements that were quite contrary to Russell's interpretations. In our estimation it was Rutherford's aim to make a truly distinctive, set-apart religious group of the "Bible students" whose leader he had become. It appears that for this reason he could totally disregard many of Russell's statements and create his own. No doubt Rutherford's previous legal experience, slight as it was, proved to be a tremendous asset in producing new "interpretations" that were not only plausible but believable and acceptable alternatives over against those which Russell had forwarded.

It seems quite reasonable that Rutherford's object in the change was first and foremost to give the sect a new image. This is particularly true considering the acceptance of the name, "Jehovah's Witnesses," which set the sect apart from other Bible students and gave them the conviction that they actually were God's personal Witnesses.

### 3. Additional Changes Under Knorr's Leadership

While Rutherford succeeded in reorganizing the sect into a centrally directed religious group with many distinctive principles and with a sense of belonging together, his successor, Nathan H. Knorr, opened a further avenue of reorganization. Rutherford had already made some progress in this area but Knorr had a better plan. Rutherford had decided that the witnessing activity should become one of the primary functions of the sect and had announced this to be so in 1938. Before this time, the element of winning new converts was strictly in the hands of the individual member. Rutherford introduced an extensive literary barrage for proselytization purposes as well as a portable phonograph. This apparatus could easily be carried from house to house and interested persons would listen to short sermons from Rutherford.

Knorr realized the tremendous success of this program but had visions of even greater success. Why not have a "live" speaker at the door rather than a "dead" record? With this in mind, Knorr instituted the Theocratic Ministry School in 1942. This school was to meet each week and each publisher was expected to enroll in it. Its purpose was to educate the publishers in the sect's basic doctrines and to provide them with the opportunity to learn how to present the sect's message in short five to ten minute talks. At first this program did meet some resistance particularly in rural

areas and in those where the population was relatively uneducated. With time, however, all Witnesses learned to benefit from it. Without doubt this change in "sales tactics" has done much to increase the sect's membership during the past thirty years. This program was found to be so effective that it is still in existence today and even helps those Witnesses who are not naturally gifted in public speaking.

Another area of reorganization which Knorr introduced is probably a result of the astounding effects of the proselytization program. Knorr divided all parts of each country inhabited by Witnesses into hierarchical districts. In effect, this was somewhat similar to a political electoral change, structurally speaking. Each country is divided into a number of districts each of which is the responsibility of a District Servant. Each district, in turn, is divided into a number of circuits which are the responsibility of a Circuit Servant. Each circuit, then, is composed of ten to fifteen congregations each of which is the responsibility of its own overseer. The line of authority and responsibility is apparent: the overseer is responsible to the circuit servant who is responsible to the district servant who is responsible to the Branch Servant. The Branch Servant (country elders) in turn are directly responsible to the Society, the group of presiding elders for the total sect. The process also works in reverse with a change flowing through each superordinate to his immediate subordinates.

A further relatively significant change introduced in 1942 was the institution of public meetings on Sundays. Prior to this date the public was no doubt welcome to attend but now a special meeting was designed for the public as well as sect members. It also became a practice for all newcomers to be welcomed personally by the overseer or his assistant. This no doubt helped to win many new converts as these neophytes experienced a much friendlier group of people among the Witnesses than in larger church groups.

Largely as a result of the tremendous reorganization and redirection of the human potentials in the sect, membership increases have been noteworthy. Judging by the increase in the sales of the sect's literature alone, for example, one realizes the sect's growth. In 1956 the combined sales of The Watchtower and Awake magazines amounted to 36.5 million.<sup>9</sup> By 1969 this figure had risen to 70 million for The Watchtower<sup>10</sup> alone. And as far as the sect's overall growth is concerned, in roughly 80 years it grew from a mere handful to a worldwide group approaching 2 million people.

#### B. What Do Jehovah's Witnesses Believe?

In the earlier portion of this chapter we have already made reference to several distinctive Witness beliefs. Consequently, no further mention is made of these here. We chose instead to focus on what we consider to be some of the basic beliefs of the sect, judging these in part through our

reading of the sect's literature and in part from discussion of these beliefs with Witnesses. We have called these beliefs basic because it is from these that the specific attitudes and actions of typical sect members arise. These beliefs, then, will provide us with a clearer understanding of Witnesses' thoughts and motives.

1. A Deterministic World View.

Jehovah's Witnesses' conception of God or Jehovah is a typically Old Testament one in which God is the just and at times jealous God who will not tolerate other gods. In addition to this, Witnesses on the whole tend to follow a very literal interpretation of the Bible. Consequently, they observe how God has dealt with previous nations and individuals and conclude that he is ultimately the one who directs the minutest course of human action. God's ways are such, however, that man has a certain amount of freedom at his disposal. He may choose to accept God's sovereignty or to ignore it completely. Regardless of which course any man chooses, however, God is still the determining factor throughout history. He has allowed much suffering, pain, and hardship, so Witnesses state, to indicate to man that He is in control. He alone determines the major events such as floods, earthquakes, volcanoes, and related disasters. Witnesses tend to argue that since God is in control it is more logical to please him than not to please him. They refer to many previous instances where people have failed to

please God as evidence that He wishes to be pleased. To avoid God's wrath, then, it is important to know what His expectations of human beings are and how these may be met. The Society argues that it has knowledge of all of these expectations and that therefore it alone with its adherents will escape the wrath of God and will enjoy the benefits of the millenium.

## 2. Presence of the Millenarian, Chiliastic Element.

Jehovah's Witnesses have always placed an emphasis on the chiliastic element in their religion. This was particularly strong at the sect's beginnings at which time many similar groups with millenarian expectations existed. At that time Witnesses believed that Christ's second coming was about to occur. When He did not appear in 1914, this belief was altered to state that Christ had appeared but invisibly and that He was making preparations for the final destruction of the world. This view is still held today so that Witnesses are looking forward to a major change in the world, the final annihilation of all wicked persons and the start of a new world. Throughout their sect's history, however, the chiliastic element has had the same results: it provided a very intense form of motivation for all believers to proselytize, to warn those who had not accepted this message.

The chiliastic element, then, provides a dual function for the sect. It assures the sect that its members will be duly sincere in their meeting attendance and in their will-

ingness to commit themselves for the sect. Whether this be financially or time-wise is immaterial at this point. The chiliastic element clearly allows for a greater average degree of involvement in religious activities in relation to a group in which this element has lost importance. This increased availability of the membership, in turn, allows for larger scale programs, particularly for proselytization than would be possible in a sect which lacks this element. Thus, the sect is able to rapidly expand its membership which in turn provides a favorable factor as far as each individual's belief in the sect is concerned. Witnesses openly admit that one of the purposes of their many conferences is to illustrate to newcomers in their faith just how many fellow believers stand with them in the battle against opponents. Thus, a membership increase serves as a confirmation of members' faith in the sect.

### 3. Acceptance of an Evolutionary Theology.

By "evolutionary theology" we are referring to the belief that religious knowledge is seldom acquired by one generation of scholars. Thus, subsequent scholars may interpret an identical passage of the Bible in a new way without any negative repercussions from the rank-and-file. Again, it was J. Rutherford who introduced this belief among Witnesses. Once it was accepted, he had no difficulty in introducing the numerous organizational and doctrinal changes we have referred to above since Witnesses then believed that the



new viewpoint was the correct one even though several years before they may have insisted that exactly the opposite interpretation was correct. Thus, someone's interpretation in the 1890's, for example, while still in the minds of some Witnesses of the 1930's was slowly forgotten perhaps never<sup>11</sup> to be uncovered again.

The acceptance of this belief in the sect greatly eased any form of transitional crisis which might have otherwise disrupted the sect during the major organizational and doctrinal changes which Rutherford introduced.

#### 4. The Gradual Evolution of the Witness Sect.

While Russell was no doubt the closest sect member in relation to present Protestant groups, he already introduced an idea that Rutherford would later on mold into a very powerful tool for the legitimization of doctrinal changes. Russell stated in his writings that he believed many early Christians, especially during reformation times, already had the knowledge of the need of the Christian to break with tradition and to recognize the imminence of the world's end. When Rutherford became president he found this argument to be very useful to establish his own authority. He could state that such early men as the disciples of Christ, Paul, Luther, Wycliffe, and even Russell all had an element of God's truth. Yet all failed in the one aspect that they still could not totally eliminate the traditional element from their religious practice. The early Christians, so Witnesses came to state, were influenced by their culture and came to accept

that Christ had died on a cross (a pagan symbol). Rutherford's searchings were to disclose that Christ was actually impaled on a "torture stake." As a representative of Reformationary thought let us consider Luther and his shortcomings in Rutherford's understanding. Luther was still bound by tradition in that he celebrated Christmas (another pagan feast) and even advocated the Christmas tree of "pagan Germanic origin." Rutherford taught his followers that such a practice was to be discontinued by devout Christians as this again was "paying tribute" to the pagan traditions rather than to God. Much could also be said of Rutherford's interpretation of Russell's beliefs and practices. We again will limit ourselves to one point, the blood-transfusion question. In Rutherford's view, Russell had failed to stress the dangers of this practice. Therefore, Russell was to be classed along with the earlier "Christians" who also had only a portion of the "truth." To date little direct criticism against Rutherford has been expressed but we can be quite certain that this form of justification of one's present viewpoint will again be used.

The belief in the gradual evolution of the Witness sect tends to strengthen the Witnesses' argument (at least for themselves) that they are, indeed, God's chosen people. It is very convenient to state that some of the early Christians already possessed a part of the truth because this will help present Witnesses to be more aware that they are the

Christians and that all others are not since these are still involved with "tradition." In this sense, this belief effectively insulates the Witnesses from related Protestant groups. Furthermore, Rutherford's efforts effectively de-emphasized the sect's actual beginnings with Russell, thereby enhancing the Society's authenticity and authority even further.

#### 5. A Dualistic View of Man.

Over the years of developing their ideals of distinctiveness, Jehovah's Witnesses have also developed a typically fundamentalistic, dualistic view of man. This view might actually be called one of absolutism. One is either an absolute saint or an absolute sinner. One either belongs to the Witness sect, or else one is still a part of the world (of which traditionalistic religious groups are all considered a part). This policy has been one of the sect's powerful tools in winning new members. The urgency of joining the sect (referred to by sect members as "God's Organization") is always stressed for newcomers, even in those books read by potential converts. We shall elaborate on this point later on, particularly in the light of what we consider to be the concerted efforts of the sect to break down the neophyte's faith in his former church group. Suffice it here to state that the sect's clear-cut view of individuals does provide considerable motivation for the neophyte to join, particularly

once he has partially accepted some of the sect's doctrines. He then already feels a little closer to other Witnesses and tends to find the last major step of faith much easier than earlier ones.

The dualistic view of man also provides the established Witness with protection against opposing religious groups. By this time he is fully convinced that only Jehovah's Witnesses are Christians and any arguments other so-called Christians point out to him leave him totally unshaken.

#### 6. The Believer's Dedication to God and to the Society.

One cannot become a Jehovah's Witness without having a basic knowledge of the sect. Coupled with this knowledge, however, is action. A second prerequisite to membership, therefore, is the act of baptism which is carried out by way of immersion. In the 1950's and 1960's this rite was often performed in relatively public places such as beaches, lakes or rivers. Recently, however, the trend has been to make this an act which only the novitiate's family and close Witnesses may observe. This limitation has not changed the meaning of the act. In baptism the convert symbolizes his total dedication to Jehovah as the only God who is to be served. Likewise, the individual recognizes that the Society and Jehovah's Witnesses on the whole represent "God's earthly organization." Therefore, his act of dedication to Jehovah clearly implies a similar dedication to the Society, a dedication which

is put to the test immediately following baptism: all newly baptized converts begin their own "publishing activities" as full-fledged proselytizers. In effect, the member's dedication to Jehovah comes to be reflected in his dedication to proselytizing and the religious activities related with this (all highly observable factors) which brings to mind Calvin's predestination doctrine.

Another very vital aspect in the act of dedication involves the acceptance of the Society's authority. We are quite certain that no Witness initially ever questions this authority since he has been fully convinced and persuaded that the Society's Word is Truth in literal terms. Here again we see a vital pillar against rebelliousness as anyone who doubts the Society's teachings is stigmatized as being "controlled by Satan." The newly baptized convert, then, has already substantially accepted and internalized the authority of the Society and is very likely to accept any changes made in doctrine since he feels any resistance may jeopardize his attainment of salvation.

#### 7. Priority of the Spiritual Life.

Each Witness takes his dedication to Jehovah to be a very serious matter. At his baptism he is again reminded that various temptations will most likely arise. As long as he remains intent on serving Jehovah, that is, attending meetings and doing his proselytizing, he may expect the benefits of God. This intense emphasis on the religious element

results in the subsequent de-emphasis of the material elements. The new convert's former strivings for a multitude of material possessions and comforts are now replaced by his desire for spiritual progress. Consequently, Witnesses' attitudes to their occupations and careers differ drastically from those commonly held in our society. All that the Witness desires is to be able to maintain a livelihood for himself and for his family. He does not strive after extravagancies and usually refuses to work more than the allotted number of daily hours even if he were to obtain more money.

Much the same situation applies to the convert's family relations. If he is the first of the family to become a sect member, he will tend to spend much less time with his family. This stands to reason when one considers that he now attends different religious meetings, is required to appear there on at least four different days, and is also required to read and study a substantial portion of literature each week. But even if all members of a family belong to the sect, their life as a family unit tends to be quite segregated because they become "religious utilitarians." Although the writer has been informed of recreational activities among the youth, pastimes of this sort appear to be extremely rare. So strong is the emphasis on religious life that time becomes of the essence. Witnesses are even encouraged to spend a portion of their vacations as full-time proselytizers and the Watchtower is careful to announce any successes along these

lines.

In all justice we must state, however, that many families do allow for free time and often learn to adapt to the rigid demands of their religion admirably well. At the same time there are reports of numerous families with marital problems even where both marriage partners are sect members. These problems are largely attributable to the tense strain which the hectic religious life places on the family, particularly where the wife is a full-time proselytizer. Without doubt, then, the sect emphasizes the spiritual aspect rather than the social or material aspects. This emphasis is another insulator of the member from outside culture. With a certain amount of truth, then, Witnesses are correct in considering themselves to be "ministers of religion."

#### 8. Members' Prophetic Self-Concept.

In the light of the previous point of priorities, we may now state that the Witness considers his primary allegiance to be centered towards God and to His organization, the Witness sect. Witnesses cherish membership in this organization because they firmly believe that it is an exclusive organization, the only true Christian community that ever existed. Once the Witness has accepted this doctrine (as obviously all do to be baptized and to belong to the sect) the Society is in the favorable position to state to all Witnesses that they are God's special envoys, representatives, spokesmen, and prophets. Witnesses have accepted this des-

cription without noticeable objections and without doubt they are very pleased with their privileged religious status.

In functional terms of analysis, the positive function of this belief, of course, is that of protecting the sect member from the ever-present sources of doubt he encounters during proselytization and possibly even from his close associates or relatives. A latent dysfunction, however, is that this "feeling of superiority" may be taken too far by some Witnesses to the extent that they tend to forget that humility is a virtue which is also extolled in the Bible. In these instances their success rate in proselytization will most likely be much lower than for those Witnesses who realize that they too are human and not divine even when they proselytize as "God's representatives."

In closing, this chapter has been designed to present the broad scope of the sect's historical and cultural development. In the latter category we would also include the theological and normative changes brought about during the past eighty years. Without doubt, this chapter would have proved to be much more interesting if we had had the time to discuss some of the live issues which have united the sect against all "evil governments." Our lack of time has limited us to a mere reference in many cases to issues such as the flag-saluting issue, conscientious objection,  
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blood transfusions and even persecutions. All of these



that it discourages involvement in political or philanthropical endeavors.

It is hoped that our discussion of Witnesses' sectarian beliefs has laid the groundwork for an understanding of members' reasoning, attitudes, and actions and that now the legitimations put forward by the Society can be more clearly understood and related to one another.

### CHAPTER III: SOCIAL SYSTEM: ROUTINIZATION OF THE SECT'S MEETINGS AND ROLES.

Our aim for this chapter is to delineate as much as possible the "provisions" the Society has made for sect members' education and spiritual advancement. We emphasize that the sect provides information not only to the new members but continuously to all members. The fact that there is always something new to learn in itself is a justification for meeting attendance. We have concluded that the meetings contribute positively towards the socialization of new members and the "perpetuation" of established members who continually need to be reminded of the Society's doctrines.

Considering the sect's beginnings, it is obvious that a certain degree of institutionalization of meetings, meeting attendance, and religious roles has come about. While we will not be able to examine the actual process this institutionalization took, we hope to look at the present sect processes and meetings and realize the extent to which such routinization occurred. Russell may have had "public meetings" but probably preferred to call them "services" following the Protestant tradition. Certainly he had not heard of a "Theocratic Ministry School" nor the program of study that is carried on there. With respect to the Christian's witnessing activity, Russell would have believed it to be an infringement upon God to limit or to designate witnessing to a certain time

each week and to make such an activity compulsory for members.

As our first area of concern we shall consider the five weekly meetings the sect now holds. Meeting attendance is now compulsory. As we have already indicated in the previous chapter, the Society has gradually become more centralized and has stressed meeting attendance and religious involvement to a far greater extent than did Russell who actually built the sect's chiliastic foundation. We have taken the liberty to analyze what we consider to be the Society's motives in making the organizational changes. Our four points may well follow a typical pattern which has elapsed since 1942 with the introduction of the Theocratic Ministry School.

Rutherford was clearly interested in making Witnesses a group set apart from the larger society. We see this in his many policy and organizational changes. Knorr, on the other hand, appears to be a man whose prime goal is to see the sect grow. For this reason the ministry school was started so that all sect members, regardless of their background or education, might possess at least a basic knowledge of the sect's teachings, at best an extremely comprehensive knowledge of the Bible as it applies to these teachings. But besides this education in content, technique was also emphasized. To that end members were given the opportunity to learn to speak with clarity, vitality, confidence, and precision so that the limited time at their disposal to talk to people at the door could be maximized. This brings us to the third point which was and

continues to be stressed by the Society--proselytization. Only those persons who have a complete knowledge of the sect's doctrines and a practical training in basic public speaking could be suitable salesmen to market the product the Society considers to be so important. These three elements, (1) adequate education of sect members in doctrines, (2) adequate training in the method of presentation, and (3) organized and regularized proselytization programs, are all contributing factors towards the sect's tremendous growth. Yet growth per se means very little unless this increased membership can be established. Nowhere is this more apparent than in sects. Thus, Witnesses have developed what we shall call a socialization process which virtually guarantees that the new convert will remain in the sect. We shall not discuss this matter in this chapter but allude to it as certain functions of the meetings we are about to discuss may be referred to in the next chapter. Suffice it here to say, then, that the sect concentrated on producing dedicated members first following which they were trained in proselytization methods. They were not left to do this on their own as is the case with many other sects and denominations but a definite time, place, and opportunity (indeed, a compulsion) was established for proselytization. This activity in turn brought about rich returns which were capitalized upon by the very structure of the sect. Its meetings were held so frequently and contained so much ideological content that the newcomer

was soon socialized to be as other Witnesses, a proselytizer. In this sense the four-part cycle of the process continues its endless circular path.

#### A. Religious Meetings and Activities of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Jehovah's Witnesses are no doubt one of the most meeting- and action-conscious religious groups today. Meeting attendance is now considered to be so important that it has become a measure of the member's sincerity within the sect. All together the Witness spends five hours each week attending five distinct meetings. In addition to this, the Witness is expected to proselytize about ten hours per month.

As each meeting is discussed, the reader should keep in mind that there is a very significant coherence and unity between them even when the separate discussion detracts from this. It is recognized that the content and methods of introducing new religious beliefs to converts are also significant topics of consideration. For the present, however, we will concentrate only on the specific nature of these religious meetings. This will then provide a clearer picture of the explicit program of study that is open for all Witnesses.

##### 1. The Public Lecture.

The Public Lecture is a Sunday meeting which is open to the general public. At this meeting the majority of interested people make their first social contacts with Witnes-

ses as a group. Before this contact these newcomers only see Witnesses in their homes. Because of the public nature of the meeting, the speakers tend to select topics which are of a religious nature but general enough and simple enough for the newcomer to understand the discussion with a minimum of questions being asked. The Public Lecture is generally given by the leader of the local group. Among Witnesses he is known as the "Overseer." Several times a year a higher official of the sect presides at the local Kingdom Hall for observation and counseling purposes during other meetings. At such times the higher official is the one who delivers the Public Lecture.

In effect, this meeting resembles the Sunday-morning service of many churches in North America. Several songs are sung by the congregation and a prayer is spoken. The lecture resembles a Protestant sermon in that its purpose is to motivate the listener to think, to reason, and to act upon that reasoning. The newcomer is certain to leave with the impression that the Witness sect and its meetings are well-organized and that Witnesses appear to be extremely rational and biblical in their beliefs. At the same time, the element of emotionality should not be forgotten. While Witnesses will deny it, this element also exists in the sect. The newcomer will probably leave with the sense of being a part of a closely-knit group even before he has committed himself to this way of life. On the basis of these first favorable impressions,

the newcomer is very likely to continue attending Witness meetings.

This first meeting, then, is a very crucial one for the continuing spiritual life of the newcomer.<sup>2</sup> Officials of the sect seem to realize this as well and it appears that all local congregations are "coached" on the techniques for making a stranger feel welcome in their meetings. All Witnesses are asked to be friendly to all newcomers, to chat with them and to answer their questions. A Watchtower article on this subject also pointed out to parents that they must watch their children so that newcomers may leave with the impression that even the children of sect members respect the Kingdom Hall and respect the speakers by sitting as attentively as possible. And it is almost superfluous to mention that the overseer or his assistant has the responsibility of personally greeting each newcomer and welcoming him to come to further meetings. With these techniques of "winning people" the Witnesses certainly do make a favorable impression on the newcomer.<sup>3</sup> Assuming that our newcomer has been favorably impressed, we can say with considerable confidence that he will remain with all of the other Witnesses for a further hour of study called the Watchtower study.

## 2. The Watchtower Study.

As already implied above, this study immediately follows the Public Lecture. The study serves to introduce new Witness doctrines to all members and also provides the in-

interested non-Witness with some indication of Jehovah's Witnesses learning techniques. In effect, the study is only a review for Witnesses. The Watchtower is generally distributed one to two months ahead of time so that Witnesses have plenty of time to schedule their activities to allow for study time of the Watchtower articles. Each Watchtower contains two or three major articles which are the basis of such intensive study. Each week one such article is then reviewed in the Watchtower study. Witnesses say that such a review helps them to know whether they really understand what they were reading. Before talking about the method of review, I point out that this method closely resembles that of the Congregation Book Study and some aspects of the Theocratic Ministry School. Because of such similarity this writer has decided to elaborate somewhat more extensively on the procedures of the Watchtower study. Such procedures provide some indication of the effectiveness of the learning techniques of Witnesses and may partially explain their proselytization success.

Basically, the Watchtower study is a session of questions and answers. The questions are directed to the congregation by the overseer or his assistant. These questions are taken directly from The Watchtower, each paragraph containing questions in proportion to its content. In this manner Witnesses are able to prepare themselves for questioning before the Study and then give their answer when they indicate they



know it. For study purposes the Society actually recommends that Witnesses read the questions for each paragraph before the actual reading of the paragraph as it is believed the reader would then be more sensitized to the content of the reading material and would be less likely to skim over significant points. However that may be, it is quite clear that the major purposes of reading The Watchtower (from a sociologist's and possibly from the Society's point of view) is to gain new knowledge. These are almost magic words for Witnesses as all are ready and eager to read, understand, and accept new doctrines without question. In this writer's opinion, the Society has succeeded masterfully in creating an aura of knowledge. It certainly has as much charisma as the previous leaders of the sect possessed.<sup>5</sup> This again serves to indicate the passive receptivity of Witnesses and would strengthen the thesis that the sect is a universe unto itself in that it provides a pattern of thought that is not at all questioned by the recipients of such a thought pattern.<sup>5</sup>

I might also point out that the Witness who answers the Study conductor's questions answers in his own words rather than using the same words as the Watchtower article did. In this manner the Society hopes to transfer "book knowledge" to "head knowledge" and this, in turn will become "heart knowledge";<sup>6</sup> that is, it eventually becomes a part of the Witness' attitude set and value system.

### 3. Theocratic Ministry School.

This School is a further one hour meeting that is attended by all Witnesses each week. The School was started in 1942 when the Society concluded that Witnesses were rather ill-informed of the techniques of preaching and teaching their doctrines. Now most Witnesses own a copy of the book, Qualified to be Ministers,<sup>7</sup> which fully informs them on the techniques of public speaking. A secondary purpose of the School is to educate Witnesses in the content of the Bible. Both purposes are achieved in that each "student" is given the opportunity to practice one specific aspect of public speaking using some Bible topic. For example, a young man may be asked to give a short five minute talk on the subject of death indicating the Bible's and the Society's views on this matter and paying particular attention to the techniques of using interesting and attention-producing words. Thus, each speech serves the dual purpose of educating the speaker in a Bible-related topic as well as training him on a public speaking technique.

Both "brothers" and "sisters" are given the opportunity to give talks in the School but only the brothers actually speak to the congregation. Such sex discrimination--which applies in other areas of Witnesses interaction as well--is worthy of mention and shall be discussed elsewhere in the study. Here we only point out that women are now allowed to make use of the training of the Theocratic Ministry School due to the fact that female Witnesses are far more active

proselytizers than the males since females have more time<sup>8</sup> available for this purpose. Women are allowed to address the congregation in an indirect manner. This consists of a simulated conversation between Witnesses and a householder. In effect both "role players" are Witnesses but only the speaker, that is, the Witness woman who takes the role of "representative of the Watchtower Society," is judged on the content and techniques of her discussion.

For each Ministry School session four or five students, male or female, will give their talks. Following each speech the Theocratic Ministry School Servant makes a few comments, advising the student on his or her good points as well as other points of improvement. In this way the students receive some constructive criticism as long as they live. I say this because no Witness ever "graduates" from the Theocratic Ministry School unless he accepts or is accepted for a higher (that is, above the congregational) position of full-time work. In response to further questioning about the School, Witnesses will answer that no one can ever say he knows everything about preaching. In this way they justify their life-long attendance at these meetings.<sup>9</sup>

#### 4. The Service Meeting.

This meeting immediately follows the Theocratic Ministry School and is also of a one-hour duration. While Witnesses may say then attend five weekly religious meetings, these two meetings might actually be considered as one since

they follow one another almost without interruption. But as far as content is concerned, the Service Meeting is quite different from the Ministry School. While the Ministry School makes allowances for counselling from the local level, that is, from the School Conductor, the Service Meeting is the locus of a higher form of counsel--that of the Society. Often letters of recognition or criticism from the national and international headquarters of the sect are read at this time and taken to heart by the fully committed members. The overseer may also speak to the congregation and may admonish, criticize or encourage the group in the name of the Society. When Witnesses in another country require special help or a special strategy, the Service Meeting is likely to be the place to announce such a strategy. For example, in the recent ban of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Malagasy Republic, local congregations in Canada were requested to send letters of protest to the officials of the Malagasy Republic.

The Theocratic Ministry School and the Service Meeting are held either on Tuesdays or Thursdays depending on the local inclinations of the congregation. As we shall see, there is still another meeting, the Congregation Book Study which is also held on Tuesdays or Thursdays, on the day which is free, again depending on the congregation.

##### 5. The Congregation Book Study.

Relying on the experience of William Schnell and also drawing from our own, we summarize the newcomer's gradual

introduction to Witness doctrines. At first he only receives one book. Soon the Witness calls at his home and wishes to start a "Bible Study" with him. The "Bible Study" is actually a misnomer because it is really a study of the sect's book that the newcomer has purchased. The Bible is used only incidentally to corroborate or to give seeming validity to Witness teachings. Following this phase of socialization into the sect, the newcomer starts to attend the meetings outlined above. Eventually he also comes to the Congregation Book Study. This study is conducted along lines similar to those of the Watchtower Study. A noticeable difference, however, is that the group in the Congregation Book Study is much smaller. Although it is called a "congregation study" it is actually only a small area or a group study. Each congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses is divided into smaller groups or units that form their own Congregation Study. Each of these units has its own study conductor who is responsible for leading the study and for organizing the proselytization activities for that group.

In a smaller group such as the Congregation Book Study it is harder for members to be silent and this results in a more intense or a more frequent involvement in the activities. While in the Watchtower Study it hardly would go noticed if one did not answer any questions at all, in the Congregation Study which usually consists of approximately fifteen people, the silence of one individual is quite ap-

parent. This has the effect of stimulating Witnesses to prepare more adequately for this Study by reading ahead in the book and by knowing something about the material to be discussed.

In addition, the size of the group has the effect of stimulating the newcomer. First of all, he will tend to feel a more personal, Gemeinschaft-like atmosphere in these studies than he would have felt in similar religious meetings of other denominations or secular groups. Such a milieu may be particularly refreshing to him in today's hectic world of formal, distant, and secondary social relationships. Secondly, the newcomer will feel some obligation to answer some of the questions of the leader and such a feeling will then impel him to prepare for the Study as well. Once he does prepare and knows the answers to the study questions, his ego will be bolstered and he will receive some social recognition from the group (even though he may not be consciously aware of this) and so he continues not only in learning more about the Society's doctrines but also in proselytizing.

Sociologically speaking, then, the function of the Congregation Study and its related proselytization activities is to gradually replace whatever ideas the newcomer may have in common with the "outside world." When he starts to think and speak in terms of being on the "inside," however, he is already quite committed to the ways of the sect and one would hardly expect him to spend several nights per week in the local

pub with his "worldly" friends.

It is this writer's belief that the Society implants in the newcomer the notion that he will be persecuted for his beliefs. Once the individual accepts this, it becomes very hard for anyone to shake him of his faith in the Watchtower Society since he considers anyone who might attempt that as being a "representative of Satan" - the Society's negative label for opponents. Thus, even though he may not initially accept all of the Society's teachings, if he comes to accept the idea that Christians are persecuted for their belief--and the Bible's statements on that point are quite unambiguous--then the local sect members will hardly have any difficulty to convince the newcomer that they indeed are being persecuted and are therefore real Christians. Furthermore, the newcomer is told that if others try to shake him of his faith this is a mild form of persecution but that this is a definite sign that forces are at work to lure him out of "God's Organization." In this manner the Society succeeds in changing the newcomer's views of himself, of his previous religious affiliation, and definitely of the Society itself. If he has fallen into the patterns of acceptance just described he soon comes to believe as do the other two million Jehovah's Witnesses that obedience to the Organization is his primary requisite in life and that such obedience assures him a better life in this world when this mortal life expires.

Judging from the above description of the sect's paths

to salvation, one can well argue that for Jehovah's Witnesses salvation is achieved by good works rather than by faith. This is not to say that faith is not essential in the sect. We already know that it is since the newcomer accepts on faith the veracity of the Society's doctrines. But this faith is still of lesser importance than the quality of obedience. Only the obedient Witness is a sect member in good standing. To this writer, such a teaching indicates a kind of regression or at least transgression from the typical Christian doctrine of salvation by faith as enunciated in the Pauline epistles and as re-established by numerous reformers during the sixteenth century. This would again confirm our hypothesis that Witnesses, in striving to differentiate themselves from other Christian groups, have gone back to an Old Testament model of salvation. But even here we need to be careful. Witnesses do not sacrifice offerings for the atonement of their sins as was the case in Old Testament Israel. Yet Witnesses themselves can well be considered offerings to the Watchtower Society in the sense that their total lives are dedicated to its cause.

Clearly, salvation has become conditional for this sect. Salvation is based primarily on the condition of the sect member's fulfillment of the normative requirements which have already been copiously described elsewhere in this paper. Because all Witnesses want salvation, that is, want a better life in the world to come, all will strive to live up to the



expectations the Society places on them. But there are transgressions and these are naturally made known to all members. This results in a wide-spread atmosphere of uncertainty among Witnesses, uncertainty as to whether or not they personally shall remain in good standing for the remainder of their lives. I suspect that for many Witnesses this uncertainty eventually culminates in the emotion of fear, specifically, the fear of being "found out."

I am basing this statement on one specific organizational factor that I find worthy of note here. I am referring to the structure of the sect's leadership. Every appointment in the sect is ultimately made on the recommendation of the previous holder of that position or on the recommendation of someone directly superior to that position. Hence, a local overseer is likely to select a few likely candidates for the task of "servanthood" in any one of the five servant categories. Once the overseer has determined such individuals, he will watch them carefully and will send reports of their proselytizing and similar religious behavior to the higher authorities. When a position as local servant then becomes available, a selection committee examines all of the reports submitted to them by the local overseer and on the basis of these reports appoints one man for the job. A similar procedure is used for higher positions. Keeping this technique in mind, then, it is quite clear why Witnesses would exhibit some characteristics of the anxious, uncertain individual

since any substantial, detected failure on their part could set them back to the status of a newcomer. The same applies for those sect members who do not aspire to leadership status. Even these Witnesses' efforts are carefully recorded and they are watched by their particular servant who is also the "Congregation Book Study Conductor."

#### 6. Proselytization Activities.

I am including this aspect under the section of Witness meetings because in my opinion it is not only equivalent to other meetings but actually adds considerable unity and coherence to the total program of the sect. Certainly the newcomer who starts to become involved in the meetings might find some unity to the meetings per se since they all emphasize the need for witnessing in the present time. But not until he becomes actively involved in some form of proselytization will he really appreciate the value of the other meetings in terms of the total, overall objectives of the sect. Then he will also see the unity between these meetings: the Watchtower Study and the Congregation Book Study emphasize doctrinal matters; the Theocratic Ministry School and the Service Meeting stress the various witnessing techniques. Both the doctrinal and the technical aspects are then applied in the proselytization efforts of the sect. In effect, this is the "in-service training" for Jehovah's Witnesses. For this reason we are including it here and are treating it more or less as a regular meeting when it is actually far more than

that.

The particular form of proselytization is quite commonly observed by non-members of the sect. Witnesses go mainly from house to house in residential areas. But they also speak to their fellow-workers on the job, sometimes stand on busy street corners holding up their books and magazines, and sometimes "swarm in" (as they call it) on one particular residential area during their conventions. Sometimes those members who cannot use these routine channels of witnessing will make use of the telephone to win potential converts.

While on first appearance, these efforts might suggest that the major purpose of proselytization is the selling of the sect's literature, this is not at all the case. Literature may be used to gain an entree into the thoughtways of the householder and to obtain some feedback from him when he has digested the elementary literary material that was initially presented to him, but the ultimate purpose of this approach is to introduce the householder to the sect itself. This involves considerable skill and effort on the part of the proselytizer. He must discipline himself firstly, to limit his conversation to one particular aspect of interest which will motivate the newcomer to think along the same lines of thought as the sect member. The latter upon finding a "person of goodwill" will then expend much effort and many hours of "helping" this person to see the "truth."

Thus far I have mainly explained the basic purpose

and mechanism of proselytization. Now we shall consider in what way it is truly a significant aspect in the continued maintenance and vitality of the sect. Relying on my personal experiences as a church member, I suggest that most Protestant churches are faced with the grave problem of compartmentalizing the religious life of their members into a few hours' religious activity per week. The average Pentecostalist, Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, or United Church member feels he is "serving God" by attending the weekly functions of his church. He does not feel any compunction to "live a Christian life" outside of the confines of the church and tends to become a "Sunday going to meeting Christian" who lives a sacred life on Sundays and a secular life little different from his non-churched neighbors for the remaining portion of the week. Exactly the same could be said for Jehovah's Witnesses even though they may attend a greater number of meetings per week were it not for one significant point. I am suggesting that the active, purposeful engagement of the sect member in proselytization provides a testing ground for the theoretical and practical aspects the member has learned in his previous meetings. When the newcomer accompanies a more experienced Witness in such proselytization, the latter may comment about the "hardness" of most people today. But when the two-some experience a friendly subject the Witness will say that Jehovah is still working on some individuals. Thus, the Witness tends to define and interpret the situation for

the newcomer who accompanies him and thereby leaves the latter with the idea that the Watchtower's doctrines are true and that the techniques applied are the best ones. As time goes on, then, proselytization will strengthen rather than weaken the newcomer.<sup>11</sup> We shall make additional comments on the significance of proselytization and particularly on the time factor involved in a later section of this paper.

#### B. Potential Religious Roles in the Sect.

Now that we have discussed the different meetings of Witnesses and their religious activities we shall explore the major potential roles that are open to the bona fide sect member. A consideration of the sect's roles will again help us to understand how significant proselytization is at all levels of the sect's authority structure. In the previous chapter of this paper it was already pointed out that being a Jehovah's Witness often means being in competition with other sect members. Nowhere is this more correct than in the individual's efforts to climb to heights of authority in the sect.

Another outcome of this discussion of the roles open to individuals in this sect is a clearer understanding of the significance of the religious aspect in the lives of these people. They simply would not live without it and would rather die than give up their faith in the Watchtower Society. This in itself, then, is a strong indication that the sect will be isolated from the larger society whose values and particularly whose goals are largely at odds with those of the sect. But

we shall also note that the member's involvement per se both in time and in effort contribute towards his isolation from the larger society.

With this brief introduction we shall proceed to a discussion of the roles in the sect, beginning with the most important roles at the local level and progressing to higher levels after these have been discussed.

#### 1. Publisher.

The "publisher" is a regular rank-and-file member of Jehovah's Witnesses. The name, publisher, appears to be connected with a Bible verse that enjoins Christians to "publish" the glad tidings of Christianity. Another possible explanation as to the use of this name is that all members sell books and literature to the general public and so might be considered as the representatives of the authors of their books.<sup>12</sup> In this sense they might be thought of as "publishers."

The interested newcomer generally attends meetings for about one-half year before he feels he is ready to dedicate his life to Jehovah in the act of baptism or immersion. Upon the completion of this act, performed under the auspices of the local congregation, the newcomer becomes a publisher which means that he has the following privileges. He is allowed to attend all meetings of the sect. Before this he may also have been allowed to attend but he may not have experienced the truly Gemeinschaft-like aura as he now does that he belongs. Secondly, he is allowed to participate in the "service work" on his own and can purchase the Society's literature at mem-

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bers' prices. This gives him a sense of being wanted, being needed, and being respected.

But the most significant privilege of being a publisher in the eyes of the sect member is to be considered a member in God's Organization of Jehovah's Witnesses. For the Witness this means a hope of a blessed afterlife free from all the problems and pains of the present one. Yes, he may have believed in the same hope before he joined this sect but now he knows that all of that belief was false and his present religion is the only real, authentic one.<sup>14</sup>

Being a publisher brings not only advantages and privileges but also certain duties which must be fulfilled. During the first years in the sect member's life his religious fervour may be intense enough that he thinks of his duties as privileges but some day he may come to see them as a burden or at least as a necessary evil that he has to accept and to which he must accomodate himself in order to qualify for the prize of eternal life the Society has promised him. The first and major duty is proselytization. At first this may be rather difficult for the publisher to accomplish efficiently but soon he learns the special language Witnesses use and also learns to speak fluently so that not even the most obstinate householder can throw him. In many ways this proselytization may well be pleasant, enjoyable and worthwhile. But when one considers what effort and what time are involved in it and in the additional meetings each member attends, it is indeed sur-

prising that the sect can boast of a membership approaching two million.

Concomitant with the duty of proselytization is the duty of meeting attendance. Again, the initial period in the publisher's life may be quite pleasant and he may not mind coming to all the meetings each week. But soon the novelty wears off and he becomes aware of the tremendous burden that such meetings place upon him. It is not simply a matter of attending five meetings each week. That would not be difficult at all. What is difficult is that practically every meeting requires some preparation on the part of each publisher. Practically everyone's knowledge of the material discussed is probed each time so that it is imperative for the publisher to spend some time in study prior to meeting attendance, preferably on a previous day if he finds the time.

As I have already indicated, meeting attendance is an absolute requirement for every sect member. Consequently, one often finds people with minor illnesses faithfully attending. Women tend to bring all of their children as it would be financially unfeasible to leave them with a babysitter for four or five nights each week. Thus, meeting attendance involves all sorts of problems including the discipline of children. Also, we have strong reason to believe that meeting attendance may well be a religious norm for this sect and that it has taken on such significance that obedience to it becomes the touchstone to the Witness' faith. That Witness who at-



tends faithfully tends to be considered as a good member, but he who is haphazard in coming to the meetings and perhaps makes too many excuses tends to be thought of as a member of mediocre quality. Thus, meeting attendance is but a part of the larger plan to make effective proselytizers out of publishers and likewise, it is part of the system of compelling members to be involved. In this sense, non-involvement spells spiritual doom.

In conjunction with proselytization and meeting attendance, the starting of "Home Bible Studies" is considered to be a duty and privilege of the publisher. Before such a study can be started in the home of an interested newcomer, the newcomer needs to know something about the nature of the sect and the type of literature it publishes. All of this he obtains from his initial contacts with the publisher who by this time has discussed most of the basic religious issues with the newcomer and has established the newcomer's "receptivity" to the Society's message. But even if the newcomer should at first appear relatively hostile to the sect and unwilling to start a Bible Study, it is the duty of the publisher to continually suggest such a course of action to him and to impress on him the importance of such a course for his spiritual life.

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We have now indicated the extent to which the regular publisher is involved in his sect's religious activities. As we shall see below, what is demanded is not only his efforts

of preparation, learning, understanding but also his time. When one considers each publisher's involvement along these dimensions it becomes hard to dispute his loyalty to the Society and it becomes quite clear why Witnesses do not adopt the world's standards, values, and aspirations. We must remember that at this point we are talking only about the minimum involvement in the sect. But precisely the description of this level of involvement indicates how isolated and insulated the average Witness is from the larger society in terms of values, goals, and social relationships. Next we will discuss some avenues of service and proselytization open to the talented and dedicated publisher.

## 2. Vacation Pioneer.

The Vacation Pioneer is a publisher who elects to spend two weeks or more as a full time worker for the Society. His summer vacation from his secular employment will provide him with the suitable time, and his savings help him to meet travelling and living expenses. It is not uncommon to hear reports of whole families of Jehovah's Witnesses working as vacation pioneers in some area of the country that has been selected as a special area of concentration by the Society. These families often make use of tent trailers for accommodation and so their living costs are held at a minimum.

As a vacation pioneer, the Witness spends at least eight hours each day in proselytizing for the Society. Again,

this is not simply a matter of being involved, but being sincerely involved in such a way that real results are achieved. This factor in itself may suggest why the Society strongly advocates the vacation pioneer program. A more basic reason or function of this program, however, is that it serves to strengthen the Witness' belief in the vitality and validity of his Society. As with the sect's other programs, then, the vacation pioneer program serves to isolate sect members from the larger society even though paradoxically it allows for open confrontation with potentially faith-destroying elements.

This may be the ideal place to make reference to some differences in values and goals between sect members and the world. Considering the significant number of Witnesses who are involved in the vacation pioneer program, it certainly would seem that sect members are not striving for pleasant, relaxing vacations as do most Canadians. Hence, they are not tempted to plan for and to save for such possessions as expensive sports equipment, a motor boat, and related luxuries. Again we see that their major interest tends to be religiously oriented rather than materialistically oriented.

Of course we cannot rule out the possibility of extrinsic interests on the part of Witnesses participating in the vacation pioneer program. There is no denial that participants are somehow treated with more respect than the usual rank-and-file members who may not have opted for this additional service.

Often the sect's magazines print stories of families that were particularly successful in their pioneering endeavors and this then appears to motivate many Witness families to do the same. Thus, the factor of social prestige cannot be ruled out in a discussion of this program. At the same time we must be constantly reminded that the Witness works for the Society to gain a foothold on its promises. To that end his efforts as a vacation pioneer will put him in good stead even if his previous record was not to be admired.

The religious role as a vacation pioneer, then, is open to any bona fide Witness. This program not only enhances the individuals involved in it but also builds up the sect as its mobilization and direction of labor is extremely successful in totally inundating one particular geographical area until all residents have had the opportunity to accept or reject the sect's doctrines. Without these vacation pioneers, then, the sect's numerical and geographical growths would be much more haphazard. Admittedly, the sect's strong workers are the regular and special pioneers, but its growth would certainly be less remarkable in the absence of the vacation pioneers.

### 3. Regular Pioneers.

The "regular pioneer" is a full-time worker for the Society in those communities where expansion of the local congregation is most promising and most warranted. Each regular pioneer spends approximately 100 hours each month in

proselytizing and may also have a part-time secular job besides that. But clearly, the major goal of the regular pioneer is not to support himself physically or materially but to proclaim the Society's message as strongly and assuredly as possible. Quite often the local publishers take their turn in having the pioneer stay at their home for a week or two and in this way the pioneers are able to make a living on their absolutely minimum income.

But not all regular pioneers fit the above description. A fair number of them are ordinary housewives whose husbands are publishers in the local congregation. These women dedicate their time and efforts to the Society not in an attempt to win its special favors but to sincerely advance the work it is doing. Women are particularly suited for full-time work because they generally are not burdened with the role of being the breadwinner for their family as is the case with men.

As may be already apparent at this point, the major purpose of the regular pioneers closely resembles that of the publishers. In this writer's opinion, however, there is more of an emphasis on the selling of literature for both regular and special pioneers, particularly for those who depend entirely on this form of income. When one adds this meagre income to the "poverty-line" monthly allowance granted to each regular and special pioneer, one has little reason to doubt the sincerity of each of these pioneers.

#### 4. Special Pioneer.

"Special pioneers" as their name already implies are rather closely related to the regular pioneers but are "special" in the sense that they pledge themselves to 150 hours proselytizing each month. This is approximately equivalent to the time the average secular worker spends on his job but by no means does this imply that the special pioneer's activities cease after eight hours of proselytizing each day. Then begins the regular procedure of study, understanding, and meeting attendance to which all sect members are attached. In a certain sense, then, the regular and special pioneers tend to be almost as "inundated" with their doctrine as are beginning students in theology. The Witness overseers, on the other hand, while being regarded as "ministers" generally hold secular jobs that would not allow them the depth of sectarian involvement most pioneers experience daily.

#### 5. Servants in the Local Congregation.

Now that we have looked at some of the avenues of involvement in the proselytization activity of the local congregation, we turn to a description of several other positions at the local level. For each of these positions there is a servant and an assistant. These positions largely indicate additional activity at the sect's meetings but also require some special preparation on the part of the servant. Each servant is also head of one local congregation book study and so only the knowledgeable and able men are selected for appoint-

ment for servanthood. Now we shall briefly describe each position with the intention of indicating what avenues of advancement are open to the diligent Witness.

(a) Watchtower Study Conductor.

This servant has the responsibility of leading each Watchtower Study, selecting a brother to do the reading of each paragraph when it is fully discussed, and asking and answering all questions. This procedure was already fully discussed previously and deserves little comment here. We might add, however, that even the Study Conductor must spend time in study since doctrinal changes are often introduced. It is his responsibility to be among the most well-informed individuals of the congregation. This demands considerable study on his part over and above the regular study of the magazine articles. In addition to this, of course, the holder of this position is expected to contribute in an extraordinary manner towards the proselytization program of the congregation, that is, he is expected to be a successful "fisher of men." This also applies to all other servants. Any noticeable or prolonged laxity when reported to the headquarters may result in their "demotion" to the publisher level.

(b) Theocratic Ministry School Servant.

This servant is responsible for leading the Theocratic Ministry School. To that end, he plans well in advance who the speakers are to be and what topics and techniques they

shall employ. He also makes arrangements for replacements in the event that one speaker might be unable to be present. Additionally, the servant introduces the School for each session and when each speaker has completed his speech, the Ministry School Servant presents an oral analysis of it and indicates the speaker's positive and negative points. In this way it is hoped that each publisher learns how to be an effective public speaker, one who is not afraid of any type of audience and one who brings the Society's message across to the listener as unambiguously as possible. With such a task, then, the Ministry School Servant must be well informed of all of the Society's techniques and must have a special understanding of the major text-book recommended by the Society for this purpose.<sup>18</sup> The Ministry School Servant must also be able to make very tactful statements and suggestions to those who require improvement of some sort. Along with the Watchtower Study Conductor and the Overseer, this servant is one of the most well-informed in the whole congregation and also one who would be most committed to the Society's cause.

(c) The Magazine Territory Servant.

Now that we have discussed the job descriptions of the sect's main theoretical and technical leaders at the local level, we turn to some other servants who also contribute not so much by their knowledge as by their skill as organizers and planners. These servants are also vital to the congregation for the fulfillment of its complete program. As his name im-



plies, the Magazine Territory Servant is responsible for all aspects of the magazine work. This involves not only keeping inventory of the number of magazines required by each publisher but also the ordering and subsequent selling of the same to the publishers. In addition to this, the servant keeps an accurate track of the areas of the city which have already been covered and sometimes redirects publishers to those areas that still need to be covered. While most of this servant's work is of a person-to-person nature, this does not imply that he will not be an accomplished speaker. All servants are excellent in this regard as that is a major qualification upon which they were initially selected since each servant has the additional responsibility for leading a Congregation Book Study.<sup>19</sup>

(d) The Literature Servant.

The average congregation purchases 500 magazines each month. In addition to this, the average publisher buys about one dozen books, pamphlets and Bibles from the Society each month. Most of this literature is then resold to interested householders but a substantial portion of literature also remains in Witness hands. I am referring mainly to those books that are made especially for Witnesses such as bound copies of one year's issues of either of the two magazines or other books of theological interest to the rank-and-file member. Since the Society has a guaranteed market (at least several million copies are sold with no difficulties) there can be no risk in publishing new books as these are purchased faster than they can

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be printed in New York. Consequently, each local literature servant is kept very busy with the ordering and selling of books to publishers. He also does some promoting for the Society but often this is limited to an announcement that a new book has been released. Advertising for the Society's literature is not necessary among Witnesses. Their "desire for new knowledge" is sufficient motivation to purchase new books.

(e) The Accounts Servant.

If it is not already known by the reader, we might add that Witnesses do not give one tenth of their income to their church. Neither do they collect offerings in any of their services.<sup>21</sup> A small box at the rear of the Kingdom Hall is provided for any donations that members may wish to contribute. Another distinctive feature of the sect is that it has no fully salaried workers at the local level. Consequently the accounts servant is able to use the monies that are channelled to him<sup>22</sup> mainly for the purchase or upkeep of the Kingdom Hall.

All of these servants including the overseer and his assistant constitute the core of leaders at the local level. Any male publisher who strives for prestige will try to obtain one of these positions. But clearly only a few positions are available so that it is likely that only about one-fifth of all eligible male publishers ever reach one of these positions. Another live option for the younger publishers is attendance at the Witness school called Gilead about which we comment be-

low. But in the local group, upward mobility does have severe limitations.

#### 6. The Overseer.

We will not make special mention of the overseer's assistant but add here that his duties directly tie in with those of the overseer in the latter's absence from meetings. The overseer is perhaps equatable to most Christian clergyment or ministers but the limitations of such a comparison are so blatant that it is hard to begin with any one point. With regard to educational qualifications, we can definitely state that Witnesses are sectarian in that their overseers do not require any special training although some of them may have attended at Gilead. Whereas most sectarian groups tend to elect their minister, Jehovah's Witnesses overseers are more or less appointed. In the event that a congregation does not have an overseer, several of the servants complete resumes of some prospective candidates and these forms are then sent to the Society in New York where a decision of the movement has insured that no insurrectionist would ever become the overseer to lead a splinter group away from the sect.

The overseer is, in effect, appointed upon his "merits" -- his previous performance as a servant or publisher. Three areas of special interest to the leaders who appoint an overseer are: (1) his knowledge and understanding of the Society's teachings, (2) his success as an organizer and proselytizer and (3) his Witness maturity, that is, his application of the

precepts that he knows to be true and correct. While most overseers do not complete a special religious training course, we have strong reasons to believe that they are very knowledgeable. But even more important, they have the right (that is, the Society-approved) attitudes towards themselves and the sect and so function smoothly in leading those below them according to the principles and directives of those in the higher echelons of the sect.

While the overseer has many small duties, these may be summarized by stating that he carries full responsibility for all actions of his local group. This means that he must see to it that all changes suggested from the higher levels of authority are implemented and that all members work to their fullest capacity and with the best techniques. To that end a report and discussion with the servants will prove most helpful since they keep a careful eye on each publisher, particularly on those in their Congregation Book Study.

A more specific duty of the overseer is to inform all servants and the congregation of any new ideas and theological changes the Society might advance. These may be rather substantial at times but often they are minor and may only represent a little technicality. At any rate, the overseer is the official liason between the Society and the congregation.

In addition to this, the overseer is also the liason between the congregation and "outsiders", especially when the latter are beginning to attend Witness meetings. The over-

seer greets each newcomer personally and also makes a special effort to give newcomers answers to any questions they might have about the sect. On Sundays he presents the Public Lecture which is geared primarily for outsiders.

There is no doubt that the Society expresses considerable trust in the overseer as he is also the chairman of the committee that suggests the new prospective candidates for the servant positions. The overseer, then, may be thought of as the congregation's steward.

#### 7. Some Potential Roles Above the Local Positions.

What we have said above may have suggested that pioneers occupy local positions. Actually the pioneers are already above the local level even though they function in and through the congregation. The only certain way to advancement in the sect is to become a pioneer. Only in very rare instances is a regular publisher ever permitted attendance at the Gilead School, the next level of advancement. And as far as vacancies for servant positions at the congregational level are concerned, the pioneer is often preferred to the publisher. Another alternative for advancement is for the pioneer to apply for the position of special pioneer, a task that will demand even more commitment on his part. And as a special pioneer, the Witness would not experience difficulty in moving to the next highest position as a student of Gilead.

##### (a) Gilead Student.

To elaborate on this point a little, we begin with

what it means to be a student at the Jehovah's Witness school called Gilead, in Brooklyn, New York. To become a student at the Witness school, the publisher needs to meet certain requirements. Secular education is not stressed to any extent but students with a high school education are probably preferred. The major prerequisite is two years' experience as a pioneer. The Society feels that this experience guarantees that all students are already fully dedicated and committed to the sect and to its teachings. So precious are these hours of teaching at Gilead in the eyes of the sect's leaders, that only the most committed Witnesses may attend, and the Society believes that the majority of pioneers fall into this category when they have withstood the opposition of the "world" for at least two years.

There seems to be some evidence that the Gilead student is more privileged than most rank-and-file sect members in that he is given some further insights into the secret workings of the sect not normally disclosed to the rank-and-file.<sup>23</sup> As far as the factor of prestige is concerned, there can be little doubt that the Gilead student's far exceeds that of any pioneer. It is considered a definite privilege to be accepted as a Gilead student as there are probably at least five to ten times the number of applications than can be accepted. We would estimate enrollment at Gilead between 550-1000 annually. Even though it may seem realistic for the young Witness to apply at Gilead, his chances of being accepted

are rather slim simply because of the tremendous competition from his fellow-Witnesses all over the world.

While perhaps 5% of Witnesses desire to go to Gilead, many others do not wish to sacrifice so much of their lives to their religion. "Going to Gilead" in effect means preparing for some full-time religious work in the framework of the sect. The new breed of Witnesses of the 1960's and the 1970's tend to be increasingly satisfied with their religious roles as publishers.

But for the ambitious and upwardly-mobile Witness, graduation from Gilead is definitely desirable if not totally necessary. If he applies for missionary service in another country or for a position as a circuit servant in an established area, the Gilead graduate has a far better chance than the special pioneer in obtaining that position.

Perhaps we should stop briefly at this point to elaborate on both options that are open to the Gilead graduate. If he decides to become a missionary for the sect, this will mean that he leaves his country and proselytizes in a foreign country. Here again, the same methods are used and the same organizational structure prevails as in the United States and Canada. While most Witnesses see the missionary position as one that replaces their secular employment, we feel that this missionary service may also at times serve as a stepping-stone to higher positions. A look at the returning missionaries and the positions they occupy at that time will confirm this state-

ment.

(b) The Circuit Servant.

Now a few words should also be said about the Circuit Servant. Alan Rogerson suggests that the most direct route to the position of circuit servant is via the positions of "special pioneer" or "Gilead graduation."<sup>24</sup> The regular pioneer does have the opportunity for advancement without necessarily using the conventional channels but again, this is a rather indirect route of upward mobility.

The duties of the circuit servant have already been discussed at various points in this paper but a word of clarification appears to be in order. As with the overseer, the major function of the circuit servant is to "oversee" all of the congregations in his territory. To that end he makes about two annual inspections to each of his ten to fifteen congregations and evaluates these on their program. In this manner he can watch carefully that no deviations from the Society-prescribed pattern becomes routinized and is also in a good position to introduce new Society-inspired ideas to his congregations. While the description of the duties of the circuit servant to this point may have given the impression of a relatively leisurely life, this is not at all the case.<sup>25</sup> The circuit servant is always busy. He usually spends a whole week with each congregation and is also expected to give a number of speeches at the meetings he attends, particularly the Public Lecture on Sundays. He would also attend



the weekly meetings of the congregation and make comments wherever these might be warranted and may even participate in the proselytization. In addition to these duties to be performed in each congregation, the circuit servant is expected to send in progress reports to his superiors about each of his congregations and the officials in these wherever he has sufficient knowledge of their situations. Then he is also required to make the necessary arrangements for the numerous circuit assemblies which are held each year.

(c) The District Servant.

Much of what has been said about the circuit servant also applies to the District Servants who check on the former just as much as the Circuit Servants check on the overseers. Whalen and Schnell suggest that a pseudo-spy-system was in effect at one time and perhaps still is. <sup>26</sup> A consideration of the sect's organizational structure lends considerable validity to that presumption. In many ways the structure of Jehovah's Witnesses' international organization resembles that of a large modern bureaucracy as there is a distinct downward flow of authority and there is a provision for the enforcement and feedback to the central authority. While feedback may be quite important in curtailing non-enforcement in the sect, a more satisfactory answer would be that the lower echelons obey the wishes of their superiors quite gladly. The major reason for regular checks on the performance of all Witnesses from the sect's standpoint, then, is to insure that no insurrection-

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ist gains control.

(d) The Branch Servant.

From the district servant we move to the Branch Servant, the highest position in one's particular country. Directly above the branch servants we find a Board of Directors. These Witnesses act as the chief body of writers, leaders, decision-makers and dogma-producers for the sect. They do not proclaim themselves as "the Directors" but prefer to remain totally anonymous in all of their writings. To this writer's knowledge, they are known personally only to the Branch Servants.<sup>28</sup>

From an analytic standpoint we may suggest that this group--the Society--has taken upon itself the charisma that Russell and Rutherford, the first leaders of the sect, at one time possessed. Whatever the Society now proclaims is considered as "absolute truth" by all Witnesses.

(e) President of the Sect.

The highest position in the Witness sect is that of President. Only three individuals have occupied that position to date: Russell, Rutherford, and Nathan H. Knorr. The first two presidents were very dynamic and charismatic men who formed and shaped the sect's organizational structure much as they saw fit. Rutherford, in particular, has played a considerable role in the formation of the sect's present social structure and doctrine. Particularly in the 1930's Rutherford instituted major changes in the sect's theology. These changes have made Jehovah's Witnesses a group that is very distinctive even from

otherwise similar religious groups such as the Protestant fundamentalists and various millenarian groups. Our study of the sect's history leads us to the conclusion that Rutherford is also responsible for the creation of "the Society" as the major spokesman for Jehovah in that he de-emphasized the honoring of a single individual, even if he was president at that time. In effect, Rutherford transferred the charisma he held to the anonymous group of leaders he called the "Society." This does not imply, however, that the present president's powers are simply nominal. From our far-removed perspective, it appears that N.H. Knorr is still very much a powerful man in the eyes of the Directors. All Jehovah's Witnesses consider him to be their special representative to the "world" and he is duly respected and admired for his work and position. But the ultimate in respect and loyalty is now given to the Society. All correspondence with local congregations emphasizes what the Society considers to be the best course of action rather than what the president considers best.

The president's major function appears to be that of oral spokesman for the Directors and no doubt he has considerable influence on these persons. But he does not sign his name to published material as the previous presidents did. In a sense, then, the President's charisma has been transferred to the anonymous group of Witness leaders referred to as the "Society" or the "Brothers in Bethel."

We have discussed the spiritual and social aspects of Jehovah's Witnesses' meetings and roles with the view to understand how each meeting and role supports the other and thereby supports the total program of the sect. The Watchtower Study and the Congregation Book Study undoubtedly form the locus of doctrinal dispensation, although the sect's literature cannot be overlooked at this point. Clearly, a doctrinal, ideological foundation is an immediate prerequisite for the group that wishes to set itself apart from groups that are similar to itself in terms of goals, organization, membership background and size. But the sect does not stop at "indoctrination." The Theocratic Ministry School and the Service Meeting are designed to give the sect member the opportunity to take a particular doctrine in the sect and to apply it to an everyday matter. Simply the fact that he is talking about the subject in his own words will aid the Witness<sup>29</sup> in remembering this doctrine at a later point in time.

A very vital test for all believers comes when they are asked to proclaim the sect's doctrines to the "world." This is done through the regular weekly proselytization program. Practically any Society doctrine may be validated for the Witness in his every day life. With regard to blood transfusions, for example, the Witness will tend to see the "world's" opposition to this viewpoint as "evidence" that they are wrong and are not at all familiar with Bible passages on this point. Even if a Witness' ill child should die due to inadequate or

totally lacking blood transfusions, Witnesses will attribute death to other causes.

Still in another sense, all Witness' doctrines are confirmed in proselytization activities. Since the Witness has been prepared for any objections the householder may raise about any doctrine, many householders are simply dumbfounded and are likely to create the impression that their religion is truly inferior to the Witness sect. Even if a non-Witness should vehemently argue a point, the Witness can console himself in that he labels the householder's skill or knowledge in negative terms. This negative labelling appears to be a very common but useful device that sect members are encouraged to employ. We would tend to interpret such labelling as but another means the Society uses to separate its members from the world in that negative labelling prevents an actual confrontation of any Witness doctrine with a contradictory one. Thus, the Witness is protected in his proselytization at the same time at which he obtains what appears to him to be definite confirmation of the Society doctrines.

What we are saying, then, is that meeting attendance and religious activities that involve a portion of the sect (for example, proselytization) provide the important faith- and belief-sustaining function. Again, we notice that Jehovah's Witnesses perhaps more than any other sect, and certainly more than a denomination seek to keep their members once they have "won" them. This applies to newcomers to the sect as well as

those who may still harbor some doubts about it or who did not bargain for the involvement which is now demanded of them. We wish to emphasize, then, that the religious activities in which all sect members are involved comprise an ongoing process of socialization. The Society clearly states that no Witness ever knows enough about the sect or its doctrines and must, therefore, continually attend all regular meetings of the sect. As we have already pointed out, the combination of meeting attendance and literature reading is the locus of this ongoing process of attitude and value changes. This leaves the Witness with little time to preoccupy himself with "worldly" thoughts or associations. That fact may be considered a latent function of the Society-prescribed religious requirements. Furthermore, the fact that meetings are held on every second day of the week would tend to discourage the newcomer from continuing to remain attached to former non-Witness friends. These individuals are likely to label him as a "religious fanatic" on the basis of his meeting attendance (Sundays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays) and are apt to dissociate themselves from him, leaving him only with other Witness acquaintances. Thus, the prescribed meeting attendance, per se, contributes towards the sect member's isolation from the world and several by-products of this norm also add towards this goal.

With this we can close our discussion of the sect's meetings and religious roles and are in a position to consider some significant elements of proselytization.

#### CHAPTER IV. AN ANALYSIS OF THE SECT'S SOCIALIZATION PROCESS.

The purpose of this chapter is to give special attention to the socialization process this sect has developed over the years; that is, the various techniques and steps through which each neophyte is expected to pass before becoming a fully-recognized Witness. Quite obviously, since the sect does engage all of its members actively in prolonged witnessing activity, these contacts with potential converts will form a very vital part of the total process we are about to discuss. But we must never lose sight of the fact that socialization is an ever-continuing phenomenon and so even those sect members who have already established themselves as fully-committed believers in the sect's ideology still have some adjustment to make over the years in the sect. This is all the more the case in a religious group that is as ideologically (perhaps doctrinally) fluid as Jehovah's Witnesses.

But considering the importance of proselytization for a group's growth and application of its socialization techniques, we should endeavor to construct a working ideal-type of proselytization on the basis of present knowledge of these activities in related sects and other church groups. We hope that this crude model will provide us with a baseline along which we will be able to compare the Witness sect along such dimensions as organization, institutionalization, and the use

of supportive literature. Our intention in this matter is to indicate the remarkable development the Witness sect has made in the area of proselytization which may be more correctly called socialization and perhaps at times indoctrination. There can be little question that this particular sect has developed very workable methods of attitude and value change, the principles of which might well be applied to groups other than religious. The understanding of these processes, then, shall be one of our goals in this chapter.

A. Attempt at an Ideal-Type of Proselytization For Sects and Related Religious Groups.

While not all sects emphasize proselytization, we would expect the majority of adventist, millenarian, conversionist sects to do so. The religious group that teaches its members of the impending doom of the world will also teach these people to spread its particular "cure" to the world's problems. There are a number of religious adventist groups, however, where this is not the case. The Domsday Cult studied by Lofland, for example, did emphasize the urgency of "winning the lost" but did not actually establish a regular time for proselytization and did not even establish this as a norm.<sup>1</sup> The latter point is confirmed by the fact that those hangers-on who did not get involved in this cult to the point of proselytizing were still considered to be bona fide members.

A larger and more known religious group, the Mormon sect, also emphasizes adventism and the impending end of the



world. Some Mormons are said to store one years' supply of food out of their conviction that Christians will one day be persecuted.<sup>2</sup> In the Mormon sect proselytization is much more established than in many others. Mormons are asked to devote two full years of their life to their religious group and many do this and spread their doctrine to all parts of the earth. This has resulted in a tremendous growth of this sect over the two million mark. Even though proselytization could be called institutionalized on this basis, we find little evidence that the sect advocates daily witnessing of its members. The leaders of the Mormon sect seem to feel that the individual has done his share when he has given the two years of his life and as long as he continues to give one-tenth of his income to the church. The majority of Mormons, then, are not urged to proselytize in their normal day-to-day contacts with non-members even though they are told of the importance of acting out one's religious convictions in such an environment. The sect has found it very difficult to measure and to control the proselytization activities of its members in this regard and seems to have left this matter totally in each Mormon's hands.

Let us now consider another group, an adventist but introversionist group, the Hutterites. There could be little question that chiliasm is still quite strong in this group. Sect members are constantly reminded that this life on earth is limited and that the end of the world is imminent. But since the sixteenth century this sect has become increasingly

geographically isolated from the dominant society until at present its proselytization activities with "outsiders" are virtually nil. The sect's leaders do try to "win" those who visit the colonies out of curiosity but these efforts at proselytization are quite passive and are largely limited to a description of the sect's basic beliefs. The major source of growth for the Hutterite sect comes from its children, a factor which should not be underestimated when one considers that the average family size is eight.<sup>3</sup> From this example, then, we see that a sect may be chiliastic yet de-emphasize proselytization almost to the point of non-existence. In fact, we are not far from the mark in stating that an excessive influx of neophytes to the Hutterite sect would probably lead to a major change in the sect if not to its total breakdown.

To indicate the breadth of variation in proselytization we have selected another group, properly defined as a cult, which Festinger studied in detail.<sup>4</sup> This group again predicted the end of the world in very dramatic terms, yet limited its proselytization to members' own initiative and inklings. The member who did not try to persuade outsiders to join was not looked down upon and vice versa, the active proselytizer was not really praised. Surprisingly, when we consider the first thirty years of Jehovah's Witnesses as an organization, we also note that much the same situation prevailed. During this period and partially following it, each

Witness believer was accepted and respected solely on the basis of his faith rather than on the basis of his "good works." Considering some of the fundamentalistic Protestant groups which have been denominationalized over the years (for example, Pentecostalists, Church of God, some Baptists and Quakers) we note that here again a strong chiliastic element did exist and probably still does, yet these groups have failed to institutionalize a regular proselytization program. It seems that related religious activities -- which may have been rationalized as "proselytization" -- have taken a dominant place in these groups. Activities or meetings such as Sunday School, camps, Vacation Bible School, and "revival meetings" for "outsiders" are generally held to be sufficient to indicate to the "world" that that religious group is still proselytizing, warning the world of the impending doom. Yet very rare indeed is the religious group that has established a regular proselytizing program which involves more than a mere handful of the group's members. Peter Berger's statement that most Americans employ different logics in family and religious life versus their secular roles suggests that these individuals have compartmentalized their religion.<sup>5</sup> Many sects and denominations make it extremely convenient for their members to retain dual personalities in that they may don their "religious role" on Sundays and their "everyday role" on week days with little or no conflict developing between the two. In this way the church member can justifiably state that he is prosely-

tizing at least once a week in his own church, perhaps through the Sunday School class he leads or some other religious activity. If his church had instituted a regular visitation program for the neighborhood and had placed some pressure on its members to participate in such a program, perhaps the religious scene would change. Considering the great freedom of movement that exists between Protestant denominations, however, we may speculate that those members who would feel the responsibility of religious performances too heavy for them might simply decide to attend at a less troublesome church where attendance rather than participation leads to respectability. Without doubt a number of denominational leaders realize this and prefer to retain their membership rather than to alienate these people. However that may be, there is little question that a full-fledged proselytizing program is indeed very rare in most of today's denominations and sects.

From the above discussion several general points of interest emerge. (1) The chiliastic sect may not proselytize at all. In this category we would place certain introversionist sects and those who feel they can conquer the world by isolating themselves from it geographically. (2) The chiliastic sect may proselytize quite effectively through a segment of its membership based on a voluntary term of service. Since not all members need to be involved in this activity and since it may occupy only a small portion of their lives, we may conclude that this method of proselytizing has its shortcomings

in that very little pressure can be placed on members who have been socialized to think of proselytization as voluntary.

(3) The sect or denomination may have institutionalized a proselytization program but may have done so again on a voluntary basis. Theoretically, such a program could involve some of the members throughout their life-time but again the aspect of voluntarism suggests that in all likelihood only a fraction of the total membership will actually be involved at any given time. Furthermore, programs of this sort often are loosely structured and simply provide a definite time when proselytization or pseudo-proselytization (visiting the sick and "shut-ins", for example) can be carried on. It is also expected that members who volunteer their time for this activity know the techniques of discussion, the doctrinal content of their religious group and some possible rebuttals to typical "problem questions" that are often asked.<sup>6</sup>

On this basis, then, we may conclude that the ideal-typical proselytization for chiliastic sects and for some established sects is (1) voluntary, (2) not accompanied by training the sect would provide for this purpose, (3) not accompanied by special literature for free distribution or for sale, and (4) generally not regularized weekly or monthly. The ideal-typical chiliastic sect, then, even though its goal may be to warn and to win the world, falls short of this goal in the areas stipulated above.

Jehovah's Witnesses, on the other hand, provide a

totally different picture of proselytization. While it must be admitted that some sects such as the Mormons are also very successful in winning thousands of converts annually, there appear to be very few other sects that approach the success of Jehovah's Witnesses in organization for proselytization, expansion to new areas, training for witnessing, moral support by the sect's leaders, supportive literature for proselytization and number of converts won and kept in the sect.<sup>7</sup>

B. Jehovah's Witnesses' Proselytization System in Comparison to the Ideal-Typical Pattern.

As already indicated in the preceding sentences, the Jehovah's Witness sect exhibits a remarkable degree of organization and membership involvement in proselytization. Before we discuss the actual process of proselytization in this sect, we point out some of the basic distinctions of which Witnesses proudly boast. What they fail to mention, however, is that this program was not actually begun until the 1930's with Rutherford's introduction of the portable phonograph. Only in the early 1940's did sect members receive the "command" to present their own "talks" to householders. We point these facts out here to indicate that the institutionalization of this highly organized activity is quite recent and no doubt accounts for a substantial portion of the sect's present growth.

For Jehovah's Witnesses proselytization is highly organized. Before any member is sent from door-to-door, he is well-prepared for this activity. Apparently, the Society has

experienced the negative repercussions of early failures of those individuals who did not know what to say or how to say it. The present learning system may be referred to as the apprenticeship system in which the prospective sect member accompanies an experienced Witness, listens to him, and observes him as he discusses religious doctrines with householders. Gradually, as the neophyte becomes better versed in the sect's doctrines and as he "knows what to say" he may contribute a few words of his own. Rarely, however, will he "deliver" a complete talk to the householder until he is baptized into the sect. A second reason why we have labelled Witness proselytization as organized is that this activity is clearly defined as and considered to be an integral part of the sect member's religious life, the organization of which has already been established. Perhaps we could even state that proselytization is the key factor in any Witness' life. Furthermore, in spatial terms, the Society has organized proselytization to assure that all territories of a country will be covered and has instituted several positions in the local group (magazine territory and literature servants) to assure that some direction will be given to the "masses" as they proselytize.

Secondly, the Witness sect distinguishes itself from related groups in that its proselytization has been institutionalized and regularized. Each Book Study Group sets a definite time each week for some form of proselytizing. While Witness leaders do prefer this group to witness simultaneously,

other arrangements can be made for those individuals who prefer another time. Very rarely, however, does the Witness proselytize individually. Usually there is at least a group of four to six "in the field" at the same time. Witness leaders feel that the moral support in numbers is a factor that should not be overlooked. Quite often two adults will go together but recently parents have taken one or two children with them on their door-to-door excursions. Following a given time "in the field" Witnesses often meet in a member's home to relate their experiences of the day and to hear any announcements their leader may have.

At this point it may appear that Witnesses do not differ from some other sects we have described above. The difference is found in the fact that for Witnesses proselytization is one of the most compulsory of their religious activities, even superseding meeting attendance. At this point one is likely to question how such a scheme can be workable in the area of religion considering that most sects have not succeeded in claiming so much devotion and commitment from their members. Part of that answer lies in the very process of becoming a Jehovah's Witness. All neophytes dedicate their lives for the service of Jehovah and his earthly organization, "the Society." A more explicit answer to the question of devotion will be found in the subsequent section which deals with the actual socialization of neophytes, that is, the major attitude and value changes they experience during contacts with sect



members.

A third point which is related to the first deals with the literary ammunition with which the Witness is equipped. Virtually all books and magazines published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society can be used for proselytizing as all contain the basic elements of the sect's teachings and certain interesting topics that may catch the householder's attention. However, the Society recommends that the magazines, Awake and The Watchtower, be used first and if possible, the booklet, The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life.<sup>8</sup> Other tract societies have established a more or less gratis system of tract distribution but Witnesses continue to ask for money for their literature unless extenuating circumstances would prevent the householder from contributing. This has the added advantage<sup>9</sup> that further literature can be cheaply prepared.

With this wealth of literature, then, the Witness is at a certain advantage over other groups who proselytize. Most likely the attractive covers of the sect's magazines will catch the eye of many householders especially when the topics<sup>10</sup> are contemporary. Without doubt, the reasonable price<sup>11</sup> of this literature also makes it easier for the Witness to gain an entree into a new home so that he might explain the contents briefly. The relatively new Bible translation published by the Watchtower Society<sup>11</sup> is another useful tool for gaining an entree into new homes. This is particularly true for those religious individuals who may have heard little or nothing about

Witnesses but who are impressed with their new Bible.

We are on safe ground, then, when we say that the Witness proselytizer is well prepared in terms of knowledge, skills of presentation, and literary material. Knowledge is very helpful especially in those cases where there may be a slight chance to persuade a householder to read only one article. As the discussion continues, the subjects may change until the Witness reaches that subject of most interest to the householder. If the Witness knows his magazines well it will be a simple matter for him to locate a back-issue of an especially interesting appeal. The householder is then more likely to buy this magazine. Thus begins the process of gradual socialization into the Witness sect.<sup>12</sup>

### C. The Socialization Process of the Sect.

We have entitled this section the "socialization process" rather than the proselytization process because we have reason to believe that the term, proselytization, generally refers to the act of winning a convert to a religious group and fails to draw attention to the techniques by which that group succeeds in internalizing its ideology in the convert.

To gain membership in the majority of Protestant sects and denominations, some type of conversion experience is a vital prerequisite. This conversion is usually spoken of as a dramatic event that has changed the individual's view of the particular religious group he was planning to join. In some cases it is merely a decision to accept a certain doctrine

or simply a decision to lead a better life (following new religious principles). While this act of conversion may appear to be a relatively spontaneous phenomenon, often the preceding events have prepared the individual for this decision. Yet the majority of Protestants refer to a definite event or time at which they determined to "join" that religious group. This act of decision is usually referred to as "conversion."

When we consider Jehovah's Witnesses, we note surprisingly that this typical conversion experience is totally lacking. This is all the more surprising when one considers that the founders of the movement did value such an experience and that such was most typical until the 1930's in this sect. Yet surely some similar rite or process must exist to act as a prerequisite for membership. To our knowledge, all that is required of the newcomer is that he "take in knowledge" of the Society's doctrines. This procedure may take several months, considering that at least six of the sect's books will require reading and many of the sect's meetings must be attended. Somewhere during the course of this time of study and familiarization, the individual may determine that he wishes to "serve Jehovah." But when he applies for baptism, he is not asked when he determined to do so, simply that he is determined to follow this life-style and that he is aware of the Society's doctrines. So important is religious knowledge, in fact, that a candidate, upon being examined prior to baptism, may be advised to study the literature more thoroughly before

he can be baptized.

With this brief discussion of the equivalent of conversion in the sect, we can now consider the typical processes by which a newcomer is won towards and into the sect. The complexity of these processes will be noted. We hope to advance the explanation that these processes were intentionally institutionalized by the Society in an effort to curtail the sect's otherwise high defection and insurrection rate. At this point in time, the Society seems to be very confident that its Witnesses can live in a secular atmosphere but need not become a part of that world in that their values and attitudes have been effectively altered by the Society. As a result, Witnesses' actions and goals are centered around their religious rather than their secular roles.

(1) The First Contact With a Prospective Member.

When two Witnesses approach the householder in his home (the most usual method of proselytization) they appear to be very ordinary, normal, intelligent people who have a sincere desire to share some of their knowledge. Witnesses usually create the distinct impression of being well-informed about contemporary news and world events. The subject of religion is introduced rather quickly but in such a manner that it applies to the present. For example, if the world had recently witnessed a flood or an earthquake, Witnesses will try to relate this to their interpretation of the Book of Revelation which suggests that these are indications that the end

of the world is approaching. When the discussion is ended, the Witness will suggest the purchase of a magazine. At this point, the Awake magazine is probably most useful because it tends to cover topics of a more general interest such as human interest stories, some aspects of child training and methods of self-discipline. Only tangentially is religion introduced to the reader.

Following his first contact with Witnesses, then, the householder is likely to think of them as being a typical Protestant group and will probably be favorably impressed by their approach. Before leaving, the Witnesses may have suggested that the householder consider starting a "Home Bible Study." It will be pointed out that such a study takes only about one hour each week and would greatly augment one's Bible knowledge.

With this the Witnesses leave the householder and continue their proselytization. They are certain to record the volume and number of any magazine left behind so that for the next contact with this householder they are able to discuss the same topic again and determine if he has taken the time to read his magazine. The sect feels that this system of recording is also advantageous in the event that the original Witnesses are unable to return to this particular householder. Perhaps one or two months later Witnesses will again call at this door and if the non-Witness reacts favorably towards the sect he will be given further literature and will be asked to start a "Home Bible Study" in his own home. We

now turn to this second stage in the socialization process into the sect.

(2) The "Home Bible Study."

Once the householder has found Witness doctrines to be interesting and worthwhile reading, he is most likely to accept his Witness friends' offer for a Home Bible Study. This study is designed solely for novices to the sect. Consequently, the Bible is only one of the books studied. A  
 13  
 sectarian publication forms the central content of the study. In this book the Society's basic doctrines are gradually introduced to the newcomer with ample biblical references which he may be asked to check so that he is certain to accept the doctrine on biblical authority (assuming that he has accepted that authority).

As far as the specifics of this Study are concerned, usually one sect member comes to the newcomer's home on a weekly basis and "studies" a portion of the Witness publication with him. As with most other Witness books, the "Truth Book" contains a set of questions for every paragraph. It is expected of the newcomer that he read, study, and understand the content of each paragraph particularly in the light of these questions. When the Witness then "studies" with him, these questions are reviewed much as the Watchtower Study. The neophyte is allowed to advance in this study at his own speed, depending entirely on his ability to comprehend and to give the "right answers." The criterion for correctness is

the degree to which the newcomer's answers correspond to Society doctrine. Usually the Witness will also give the neophyte the opportunity to ask questions related to the religious realm. At this rate, the Study takes approximately six months to complete at which time it is felt the neophyte has absorbed the sect's basic doctrines and is therefore ready to attend and enrol in the usual meetings.

Hopefully we have not implied above that the process of the Home Bible Study is always smooth and easy. In many cases this period is the most crucial for determining whether the neophyte will accept or totally reject Jehovah's Witnesses' doctrine. The Witness he is studying with will frankly confront him with difficult questions concerning the doctrines of "Christendom." Most church-goers are not very well versed in their religious doctrine; consequently they are not able to find supportive Bible verses for their own views. This puts the Witness and his Society in the advantageous position of stating their sectarian views as the authentic ones. Naturally the Society also supplies ample Bible references to substantiate these views. Unless the neophyte is extremely cautious he may simply accept these passages as valid indications of the Society's doctrines. It seems to this writer, then, that at some point in the Home Bible Study the neophyte either rejects the sect entirely or else succumbs to the constant, steady pressure the Witness places on him and then decides in favor of the Society. This act of decision is comparable to

conversion in other religious groups although in this sect it is totally devoid of any emotion. In fact, Witnesses consider the emotional element a hindrance to religious understanding and advancement. While most neophytes are likely to reach a definite decision concerning the sect at this point, there are some individuals who still prefer to reserve judgment for a later point in time. They may first attend many of the sect's meetings and often become extensively involved in religious activities before they conclusively determine to join the sect.

### (3) Introduction to the Sect's Meetings.

If the Witness studying the "Truth Book" with a neophyte feels that the latter is sincere in that study, he will often invite the newcomer to attend the sect's meetings before he has finished the six month study. The basic purpose for this is to give the neophyte some idea of the meetings Witnesses attend and what religious activities they perform. Other neophytes may require more time to dissociate themselves from their religious affiliates; consequently, the Witness would not ask these to attend until they have completed the "Truth Book Study" and have opted in favor of the Witness sect. The Society does not appear to give members any special directive as to when to bring the neophyte to the meetings but does imply that he should be able to comprehend some of the religious vocabulary that is employed there and that he should have a "sheep-like attitude,"<sup>14</sup> that is, an attitude of genuine in-



terest and receptivity with a minimum of critical thinking. Surprisingly, very few neophytes first attend the sect's meetings alone. They are always accompanied by their Witness "instructor" who will introduce them to most Witnesses at the meeting including the servants and the overseer.<sup>15</sup> It is expected that the newcomer will sit with his instructor who attempts to involve the neophyte as much as possible in the meeting. No one is allowed to simply sit and observe, but all are encouraged to participate, to sing along, to answer questions asked, or to listen carefully to what is being said. The sect actively seeks to make participants rather than observers out of all Witnesses.

The first meeting to which the neophyte is usually invited is the Public Meeting which we have already discussed above and which has been established as being the most "world-oriented" of the sect's meetings. While the topics of discussion may be quite broad, they always are related to the sect's ideology in some manner. A typical topic for the Public Meeting may be, "What is the Christian's attitude to sports and to work and how should he budget his time in these areas?". A topic such as this is sufficiently general so that the sect does not need to state dogmatically that it alone follows or should follow these standards. Consequently, the neophyte is not antagonized but may notice that the sect does seem to place a greater emphasis on external factors such as activities and time which his own church probably places into the background.

He will probably find these Public Meetings to be quite "practical," that is, to contain certain thoughts he can readily apply or test in his everyday life. Another factor that is likely to put the newcomer at ease is that the Public Meeting actually resembles his own church service in that there is singing, prayer, and a short lecture or sermon.

If we place ourself in the neophyte's place for the moment, we notice that from the social or sociological viewpoint he is likely to note several positive characteristics in this sect. Quite obviously, he is overwhelmed by their friendliness and interest in him personally, in his background and occupation, and in his religious affiliation. If he compares his reception at the sect's meetings with the typical reception he would have received as a stranger to his own church, he would be forced to conclude that Jehovah's Witnesses are far friendlier and appear to be genuinely interested in every newcomer. A second factor which he may or may not notice on his own--but one which will definitely be pointed out to him by his "Witness guide"--is the discipline and organization of the congregation. Children sit exceptionally quietly during the meeting and many of them also answer questions. Organizationally, he will notice that everything is well-planned and that the meeting starts on time and closes on time. He may not notice this at first but as time passes he comes to believe that in a certain sense sect members become "slaves of the minute hand;" rare indeed is a meeting or

even a short talk which is two or three minutes too long. Even in this first meeting the newcomer may notice that there exists a definite spirit of togetherness in the sect and that all work as a team. The practice of calling one another "brother" and "sister" rather than the conventional modes of address may strike him as rather odd at first but he will come to realize that this form of salutation is not taken lightly by sect members and that this ties them together and provides a sense of belonging to them which they find lacking in their relationships with non-Witnesses.

As time passes, the neophyte will become increasingly involved in other meetings, one of the most important of which is the Theocratic Ministry School. When his knowledge of the sect has improved, he may be asked to enroll in this school, an act that commits him to a study of the Witness books on speaking techniques. Initially, he may be asked only to read a passage of the Bible, taking care to speak clearly and to emphasize certain portions that he considers to be important. To that end he will follow a certain portion of the book on techniques and he will be judged on how well he applies the techniques suggested there. As time progresses, he will start to present short three or four minute talks on certain topics of religious interest and again he will be judged on a particular technique of presentation but also on the content of his talk.

With reference to the remaining meetings, the prosely-

tizing activities and the Congregation Book Study are the most important factors regarding the neophyte's total attitudes towards the sect. As already stated, he is very gradually introduced into proselytization and only after he has mastered the speaking techniques. In the Congregation Book Study, however, he is expected to spend enough time each week reading and studying the assigned portions so that he can answer the leader's questions well. This meeting is no doubt equal in importance to the "Truth Book Study" as an indicator of the newcomer's sincerity in becoming a Witness.

The sociological importance of meeting attendance should not be forgotten. Firstly, the very fact that the neophyte associates with Witnesses implies that he will enter into some form of relationship with them, whether this be friendship or otherwise. As he will be asked to speak about himself on many occasions, he tends to develop a considerable attachment to sympathetic Witnesses who may well relate their own experiences with which he is able to identify. Concomitantly, the longer he associates with Witnesses, the less he tends to associate with his own religious group. If that group is sensitive to the matter of defection, he will likely be visited by someone regarding his absences, but the Society by this time has probably warned him that opposing forces may exert pressure on him. Quite often the pleas from his former church friends fall on a deaf ear. Again concomitantly with attendance at Witness meetings particularly as his involvement

increases, the neophyte will note that he has less spare time than he had previously and he is very likely to lose his "worldly" friends. It is also likely that his co-workers on the job will note that he has little time nor interest to go to pubs or parties with them, his sports club friends will also find him too busy and his personal friends may find that he had somehow lost interest in them. Thus, in a brief period of perhaps one-half year, the neophyte's friendships have been altered considerably, much to the chagrin of his wife and relatives who may not have found the sect attractive. With the formation of these new sectarian social bonds, the neophyte should find it considerably less difficult to break his old ones. We may then conclude that meeting attendance is a very important factor in his socialization into the sect.

In addition to this, meeting attendance is significant for learning more details about the sect's doctrine, for familiarizing himself with the typical behavior patterns and norms, and for learning the basics of the sect's special language. Obviously one cannot sit in the many Witness meetings and not become somewhat familiar with the sect's doctrines. Since this is true even for the perhaps disinterested individual, we would expect the typical neophyte--who by this time is at least mildly interested and at best very excited about his discovery of the sect--to show much improvement in his knowledge of the specific beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses. At the same time, the neophyte will notice that certain behavioral patterns and

norms are firmly upheld. All talks and all meetings are carefully timed and any deviation from the allotted time is likely to be accompanied by an apology. This applies also to any absences from any of the meetings so that the neophyte truly wonders at Witnesses' dedication. With regard to some specific norms, he will notice that Witnesses on the main do not smoke or drink alcoholic beverages, do not swear and rarely associate with outsiders. This area of behavioral restrictions may be problematic for some neophytes but they already have heard the Society's arguments regarding these matters and may be seriously thinking about any possible rationalizations regarding these norms. Of course, by this time the neophyte has also learned that the enemies of Jehovah are likely to tempt him away from the sect and this "knowledge" may make it more difficult for him to rationalize the norms away. As already pointed out above, the practise of calling sect members "brother" and "sister" will also leave its repercussions on the newcomer and may provide him with a special sense of belonging when this mode of salutation is applied to himself by other sect members. Actually, these terms of address are a part of the totally new vocabulary which the newcomer learns. Instead of a minister, he greets the "overseer", instead of deacons there are "servants", instead of members there are "publishers", instead of sermons there are "talks", in place of services there are "meetings", and "assemblies", and so the list continues. It appears to this writer that the sect uses

these terms mainly to distinguish itself from related religious groups, to give sect members and neophytes alike an added support for believing that the sect is special and God-appointed. In fact, the sect has gone to great lengths to find Bible verses that employ similar terms in its effort to legitimize this new terminology.

All told, then, the newcomer's extended attendance at Witness meetings provide him with numerous social contacts to replace some of those he may be expected to relinquish, provides added familiarity with Witness doctrines and norms, and gradually reduces any feeling of foreignness as he becomes more and more like other Witnesses in speech, thought and action.

#### (4) The Pressure Towards Commitment.

It is erroneous to assume that at some stage in his socialization career the newcomer is suddenly confronted with social pressures to join the sect. The pressure is placed on him in moderate amounts almost constantly until he finally decides to join, at which time the pressure continues in a "collective surveying" of his progress; that is, all Witnesses will continue to be interested in him and in how he is growing into a mature sect member. Particularly during the "Truth Book Study" in the newcomer's home and during his attendance at the sect's meetings will he note that he is gently but firmly urged to join the sect for a host of reasons that all other Witnesses seem to have at their fingertips. The sect will actively encourage him to examine his religion

using the sect's criteria of authenticity. It is quite understandable that many people will note that their church has its shortcomings but it is another matter to say that on the basis of these shortcomings those religious groups are totally lacking in authenticity and that none of their members could possibly be sincere believers and Christians. Through some unknown combination of (1) continued suggestion that all other Protestant groups are inauthentic, and of (2) the pressure to join the sect, however, many neophytes eventually accept the Society's definition of the situation and forsake their religious affiliations to join the Witness sect. We shall now examine some of the most common pressures the sect applies to newcomers as soon as they express some interest in the sect's literature.

The first and most persistent pressure to join the sect is exerted by one's Witness "acquaintances" who actually act much as informants to newcomers. Even during early contacts, the Witness will gently suggest the benefits of reading the sect's literature. When the newcomer does yield to this initial pressure, he is drawn further into the net of sectarian involvement. Witnesses suggest that he try the "next step", which may be starting a Bible or "Truth Book Study", attending and enrolling in the Theocratic Ministry School, and so on. All along the path of socialization into the sect there are opportunities for an individual to become permanently involved. He can be asked to decide positively or negatively and upon



that decision rests much of the success in this sect. Once the individual has committed himself in this manner, the local Witnesses can use this decision to enforce his participation in their activities. Should he decide to opt out, the newcomer is likely to be bombarded with a host of reasons why this would be harmful, even fateful for him. In this way the sect succeeds in involving many interested persons who simply cannot find a satisfactory reason for themselves and their Witness acquaintances why they should sever their ties with the sect. Consequently, these individuals' involvement in the sect increases proportionately as time advances until one day they too consider themselves full-fledged "Jehovah's Witnesses."

In addition to the continual prodding from sect members, the newcomer is likely to find some pressure towards commitment during meeting attendance. When he starts to attend one meeting on a regular basis, this already implies that his faith in his previous church has waned considerably. When the newcomer considers the expectation and anticipation with which other Witnesses look forward to their other meetings, he soon tends to feel that something in his life is lacking unless he also attends. Part of this pressure may be induced by his Witness friends, but this phenomenon is largely social psychological in that the newcomer feels isolated and strange until he attends all of the sect's meetings regularly.

A third important factor with regard to commitment is

the newcomer's attendance at the sect's conferences, called "assemblies." These are held about three times annually so that during any four month period there is at least one assembly to which the newcomer will be most cordially invited. Essentially, an assembly is a gathering of five to ten or more <sup>18</sup> Witness congregations. At these meetings the newcomer is immediately impressed with the large number of "believers" in the sect. This fact will also be pointed out to him by his Witness friends. What is never mentioned, however, is that a substantial proportion of those attending are still searchers, much as he is, people who have not yet committed themselves to this sect. As the meetings continue, the newcomer will hear that there will be a "dedication of new publishers." His Witness informant will explain to him that this is the act of baptism for those neophytes who have studied the sect's literature thoroughly and who are willing to commit their lives to the sect's cause. At a later point in time some of these individuals may address the gathering and explain their own experiences and how they were brought into the sect. In all likelihood, the newcomers in attendance will note certain basic similarities between those accounts and their personal experience and may then be in a better position to identify with these "baptismal candidates." Additionally, the "conversion accounts" of these totally committed Witnesses are likely to be somewhat more emotional and possibly more convincing than the usual Witness service. At the close of this meeting the

candidates leave for their baptism and many newcomers now know the path they must take to find total acceptance in the sect.

By this time the dedication meeting has probably passed the two-hour mark and the program calls for a "lunch fellowship." Following this time, the "field work" is begun. The newly baptized converts are again highlighted and are the first to begin proselytization. Witnesses as well as newcomers will gain new confidence in this activity as it is a truly impressive sight to see hundreds of people swarming over a neighborhood to proclaim the sect's message. If the newcomer had not been convinced of sect members' sincerity and fervor, this experience is certain to leave that impression. Furthermore, simply the large numbers of Witnesses will lend moral support for other Witnesses and newcomers alike. The numerical factor also lends plausibility to the newcomer in that he may think it would be unlikely for such a large number of people to believe an inauthenticated doctrine.

At this point in time he will probably be asked to join a small Witness group in proselytization. The newcomer will be truly astounded but will receive assurances from his Witness acquaintances that all he really has to do is accompany a more experienced Witness. This seems simple enough and he will probably feel that if he refuses he may jeopardize his position in the sect. In this way Witnesses, through a combination of assemblies and skillful planning, successfully

begin to enrol newcomers in door-to-door work. Whether he realizes it or not, however, the neophyte was gently pressured into this activity and this act of commitment is at least as important as his commitment to meeting attendance. These early experiences are very significant in terms of his total view of the sect since here the Witness is able to define the situation in new terms. We shall reserve discussion of this matter for the next sections.

#### (5) The Final Act of Commitment: Baptism.

For the first four to eight months the newcomer who attended Witness meetings may have committed himself rather loosely. Even though he has committed himself to study the "Truth Book," to attend all of the sect's meetings, the sect still has only a partial control over him, a control that is largely limited to the neophyte's whims and fancies and a control that is proportionate to his belief in the Society's authenticity. It is the sect's final aim to change this by directing the neophyte to the importance and urgency of a final public commitment of himself to the service of Jehovah and to the Society. This act of commitment is the act of baptism.

Not every neophyte is automatically baptized upon his request. There are certain qualifications which he is expected to meet before he is allowed to dedicate himself to Jehovah. The first of these is knowledge. He must have a Verstehen, an empathetic, comprehensive understanding of the most im-

portant doctrines of the sect. In this regard, many of the magazine articles suggest the importance of internalizing the sect's doctrines. This process is referred to as a transfer of "head knowledge" to "heart knowledge."

Additionally, the potential convert is expected to have a favorable attitude towards the sect and its various programs. While it appears that this goal would be difficult to achieve, we feel that the sect does remarkably well in this regard. The most important element to this end of attitude change is seen in the neophyte's proselytization training. It is when the newcomer accompanies an experienced Witness in door-to-door canvassing that he learns to see the world as <sup>19</sup> Witnesses do. The sect member in effect defines the situation for the newcomer. Whenever they find a friendly person, the Witness will comment what a wise, open-minded, scientific householder that was. Conversely, when the pair finds a more rejecting individual, the Witness is certain to label him negatively as an "enemy of Jehovah", a narrow-minded person, an ignoramus. Over the successive weeks and months, the neophyte will come to agree with this definition of reality and will tend more and more to analyse himself by the same standards by which he judges others. In this sense, then, proselytization does create certain attitude changes in the neophyte. He probably realizes how often Christians (that is, Jehovah's Witnesses) are ridiculed, scorned, mocked, and he most likely has already accepted that this treatment is "persecution."

When he is the active person speaking with householders, such negative reception is all the more ego-deflating as then he is directly involved. Such events facilitate an acceptance of the sect's definition of social reality, that all who are not totally for the sect must necessarily be opposed to it.

This form of involvement and partial commitment on the part of the neophyte may continue for several months but each week will bring him closer to an acceptance of the Witness doctrines as the "Truth." Every week of proselytizing will bring many "confirmations" of the Society's teachings: "worldly people" do mock the sect, other religious individuals do find it difficult to refute Witness arguments, individuals are impressed with the sect's doctrines. All of these pseudo-facts will strengthen the neophyte's faith in the Society and in himself for having attended the sect's meetings. While he may not realize it, he is constantly becoming more like a Jehovah's Witness: he attends meetings with stringent regularity, he knows increasing portions of Witness doctrine, and other Witnesses come to think of him as a good baptismal candidate on the basis of his sincerity with regard to the external manifestations of spirituality. This is what the sect calls a "right attitude" and those individuals who can be spoken of in these terms qualify for baptism.

What does the rite of baptism entail? Witnesses consider this to be their finest profession of faith in Jehovah and his Society, believe that this rite must be performed

through immersion in water, and practise an almost immediate proselytization program following immersion. Each of these points shall now be considered individually.

As with most forms of adult baptism in the western world, this rite in the sect implies an act of confession and profession on the part of the neophyte. Firstly, the neophyte confesses his error in not coming to Jehovah's earthly representative earlier. At the same time, however, he proudly speaks of his total trust in the Society as God's earthly spokesman and proudly he is baptized. This first act, even though it appears to be very similar to that of many Protestant groups, deserves further discussion. Every new convert in effect swears total allegiance to the Society, a group of people he has never seen or heard. As previously mentioned, this has the advantage that the Society can act as God's spokesman without suffering the stain of humanity that usually accompanies any mortal's most prophetic and charismatic words. A further safeguard this system of enrolment provides is that here the individual finally admits that the Society alone is God's spokesman and representative; therefore, all other groups are false impersonations and abominations. The advantages of such a belief to any group are obvious.<sup>20</sup> This technique provides immense power for that group's leaders in that the believer is bound to that group since he has no other alternative beliefs which he can logically accept. The sect has built into its doctrine a mechanism by which all related doctrines are

considered false, all other ideologies are simply negatively labelled; thus, these ideologies can be conveniently set aside or overlooked by Witnesses. In this sense, the public confession the neophyte makes prior to his baptism will imply in no small terms that he is forsaking all other religious affiliations and that he has come to believe that these are totally false.

This act of profession is one of the most important acts in favor of the Society. All of the neophyte's previous decisions may have been the result of some prodding from other Witnesses and he may have passively accepted their invitation to start being involved. His profession of faith however, is absolutely active. He is motivated solely out of his study of the sect and only partially out of his desire to conform to other Witnesses. Furthermore, since this act of baptism is strictly voluntary, this commitment will be more psychologically binding than any previous commitment.

Baptism actually seals the neophyte's commitment to the Society. As already stated above, this rite is performed in relative privacy with the relatives and close friends of neophytes being the only people present to observe the ceremony. Following his statement of faith in Jehovah and in the Society, each neophyte is baptized by immersion. Significantly, immersion rather than affusion is used as the mode of baptism. Perhaps this is symbolic of the total commitment and involvement the Society expects of neophytes.



The third and final element of initiation into the Witness sect is again symbolic of what the sect will expect of neophytes. About one hour following baptism the "field work" or proselytization is begun for the afternoon with the newly created publishers leading the way. This is the first time these new publishers actually become responsible for their "performance" as proselytizers: they must now keep an account of their calls, hours worked, magazines and books sold, and Bible Studies started. At this point in time they are hardly aware of the duties they are resuming. Their major desire now is to be a true servant of Jehovah. Consequently, their proselytization is a tremendous success and they may find many confirmations of their faith during this their first official duty as sect members.

At this point the reader is likely to question the sect's possible motives in having the proselytization activity follow immediately upon baptism during conventions. To this writer this procedure suggests symbolically the tremendous urgency the Society creates for proselytization. So urgent is the need to warn people of the time of the world's end that not a minute or a publisher can be spared. In fact, during these conventions it is the practice to take along many hangers-on. In this way the sect's outreach is extended in that each true Witness can be theoretically accompanied by a fringe-member. Furthermore, the fact that proselytization follows so closely upon one's commitment to the sect suggests that this

element is entwined closely with one's commitment to Jehovah. In this sense the publisher's spiritual condition can always be measured by the sect in the external manifestations of each publisher--his works.

The final act of commitment to the sect, then, is a very definitive act which is difficult to revoke. It is based on the understanding that no other religious group is in any way authentic. This act then has the protective function that the individual who has made such a public commitment will find it very difficult to sever his relations with the sect even if he became disenchanted with the Witnesses.

(6) Continued Loyalty to the Sect: The Norm of "involvement."

Even though the sect might well be satisfied with every new convert won, knowing that few of these can conscientiously break their "vows" made to Jehovah and to the Society, it endeavors to keep a tight hold on the members it has already socialized. Even the very name of the rank-and-file members, "publishers," denotes an air of activity and involvement. The Society realizes that socialization is an ongoing procedure, that it is insufficient to think a newcomer will always remain true to the Witness faith provided that he attends the sect's meetings. The Society realizes that commitments can be broken quite easily unless a social contact is maintained between the parties concerned. It therefore creates a means of enforcing its norms in a pleasant manner which will not be repugnant to the individual but which will be firm enough so that he con-

tinues to be a useful tool for the sect. The sect also feels that a norm of "involvement" greatly reduces the possibility for defection from its ranks.

To accomplish the end of continued supervision of its publishers, the Society has instituted many norms which aid the members to realize the significance of meeting attendance, apartness from the world, and study. Rutherford was the first leader to emphasize the importance of regular meeting attendance but Knorr greatly enhanced this norm with the introduction of the Theocratic Ministry School and regular door-to-door<sup>21</sup> proselytization. In effect, these norms now make it necessary for the Witness to spend some time in his Kingdom Hall on four different days each week. Any Witness who misses meetings is considered to be insincere in his faith and may become the object of a slight form of "shunning" from other Witnesses. The same can also be said for proselytizing which is considered of prime importance so much so that the sect has created a negative label, "inactive publishers," for those Witnesses who do not spend the quota of hours the Society has recommended.

Knorr realized that personal religious knowledge as a proselytization tool would be greatly superior to Rutherford's pre-recorded talks. It was on this basis that the sect's total meetings were revamped with a special emphasis on the methods of proselytizing and the methods of acquiring knowledge of the Society's doctrines. Knowledge is considered so important

that no Witness ever ceases his studies in the Theocratic Ministry School even when he has already learned and successfully employed all of the speaking techniques and already has a broad, comprehensive knowledge of the sect's teachings.

Most sects are quite unstable in terms of membership and show a high defection rate.<sup>22</sup> Jehovah's Witnesses, however, have succeeded through their extensive socialization program and their norms of continuing involvement, in reducing the number of defectors considerably.<sup>23</sup> The socialization program creates a sect member who is willing to listen to the Society, who has placed his total trust in the Society, who relies totally on the sect as his means of salvation and who has no alternative religious goals in view. Yet even such an individual could fall away from this absolute faith in the sect. Therefore, the Society makes many provisions for its members. One of the main ones of these is simply social acquaintances. A major norm the Society stresses, especially for the younger generation, is that they should limit their friendships and living arrangements to Witnesses.<sup>24</sup> A related factor in this regard is that other sect members can continually assess the individual's spiritual condition. Therefore, the publisher must always be prepared to show his knowledge lest he be "found wanting" in knowledge and spirituality. At the same time, association with sect members provides the sect with an excellent opportunity to continue its socialization of these individuals into its own peculiar cultural mold.

To that end the well-known norms and some new variations of these are often stressed.<sup>25</sup> The Society also creates the illusion of ever-new horizons of religious knowledge and discovery by changing its doctrines occasionally. While this may have the practical function in that the Society has found some of these doctrines too difficult to explain, a latent function of such change is that it provides a convenient reason for all Witnesses to continue to read and to study all of the sect's literature with utmost diligence. Remarkably, then, the Society's basic norm of involvement is very functional in maintaining the majority of sect members and in keeping the sect working as a unit.

D. Analysis of the Basic Steps in the Sect's Socialization Program.

We have now outlined what we consider to be the basic steps in the socialization of neophytes into the Jehovah's Witness sect. We have attempted to show how well-planned, organized, and directed this program is from the upper echelons of the sect to the congregational level. From the above description it is conceivable that a total stranger to Witness thought can be converted into a total follower of this sect. This phenomenon is repeating itself daily to the point where Witnesses are one of the fastest growing religious groups in the world. Even if one does not accept the Witness religion, one cannot but admire their organization and proselytization effectiveness.

It is mainly from the latter point of view that we now wish to examine these proselytization steps further, perhaps from a more abstract level, in the hope that this examination will show the extent to which the sect is unique, set apart from related groups. This discussion should also strengthen our point that the sect does produce significant attitude changes in its socialization of members; these changes are reflected in the daily life pattern of these individuals and indicate that the sect is virtually imperious to secular influences. In this light, any doctrinal changes are largely intra-institutional and the mores of society leave the sect unaffected.

In its initial contacts with interested newcomers, the sect actively seeks to break down the newcomer's basic system of thought. This will involve his means of arriving at religious and secular truth and his logic. As the next step, the sect will establish its own criteria of religious truth which it considers as universally valid. Following this, the sect will usually make it a point to ridicule and criticize all Protestant and Catholic groups in general terms. Criticism ranges from insincerity among Protestant clergymen to idol worship among Catholics. The sect introduces this invective quite casually and very generally with very little corroboration of any of the statements made. Yet the newcomer usually accepts such general criticism quite readily, partly through his basic trust in people, partly through his ignor-

ance of other religious groups in North America. Now the sect faces a more critical stage since it now seeks to convince the neophyte how his former religion also has shortcomings which place it into the same category as all other Protestant and Catholic groups. If the neophyte survives this hurdle, he is completely stripped of any faith he once had in any religious group. This now places the Society in the favorable position to claim that it alone can provide salvation for the neophyte. Quite understandably, the newcomer can now accept the Witness faith with ease.

We have considered all of the above points for both the "Truth Book Study" and the total socialization program. While they are most obvious in the former (through the very content of the "Truth Book") they are very much applicable to the total process by which a newcomer's social and intellectual self is adapted to the sect.

(1) The Establishment of a Definitive, Alternate Means of Arriving at Religious Truth.

Our study of the Society's doctrines led us to the conclusion that the Jehovah's Witness sect seeks to distinguish and to separate itself as much as possible from the Protestant background that initially gave it birth. It is our opinion that the sect has achieved and continues to achieve this goal remarkably well. Firstly, the sect is very fundamentalistic- it adheres to a very literal, biblical exegesis in constructing its doctrines. This fact alone tends to set Jehovah's Witnes-

ses apart from the increasingly liberal-minded denominations of Protestantism. The Society still preaches the fundamentalistic doctrine of the irreconcilable dualism between religion (that is, the Bible) and science, for example. Science is thought of as the work of men who are not under divine direction. Thus, evolutionistic theory is summarily dismissed as demonic in that it contradicts the Genesis account of creation.<sup>26</sup> Witnesses believe that they are basing their religious faith only on the Bible. Apparently they have not yet realized the extent to which this faith is built on the interpretations of the Bible as explicated in the Society's literature.

Secondly, the sect attempts and succeeds in establishing the validity and authority of its books. This is most clearly evident in that the "Truth Book"<sup>27</sup> is used with the understanding that it is a "Bible help." Anyone who accepts this book as it is defined by the sect already has accepted (at least temporarily) its authority. As the "Truth Book Study" progresses, the neophyte is asked to place more and more confidence in the book and in the Society's reasoning. As an example of the authority this book exercises we quote: "Only by regularly sharing in these congregation meetings (that is, of the sect) can you develop the faith, appreciation<sup>28</sup> and conviction that you need to gain God's approval." This book contains many such exhortations to forsake one's "pagan religion" and to join the elect group of Witnesses. The in-



dividual who accepts these and the logic on which they are based is already well on his way to becoming a dedicated servant of Jehovah.

A third point which should not be overlooked in a consideration of the means the sect uses to establish authority is its use of the Bible. The majority of present religious scholars realize that there is a very substantial time difference between the Old and New Testaments. Added to this factor, the setting and spirit with which a particular book was written is usually considered vital to its interpretation for everyday man. Jehovah's Witnesses, however, have left these matters totally untouched. They therefore created an aura of authority by quoting ambiguous passages with a certainty the careful theologian could not imagine. The sect considers the Old Testament on equal grounds with the New Testament and does not hesitate to use both simultaneously if one of the Witness doctrines is "affirmed" thereby. Such totally inferior religious scholarship is not revealed to the layman who often concludes that the sect's leaders must be among the greatest extant religious figures.

The fourth and final point to consider in a discussion of the sect's system of authority creation applies to the method of study that has been institutionalized. First, the Society poses certain questions which newcomers are likely to ask and then provides them with an answer. The basic questions are similar to those with which other religious groups struggle

(why is there war, suffering, disease, death) but the specific questions differ substantially. In fact, we may say that the neophyte is bombarded with questions for which he has no answer to such an extent that he turns to the already supplied answer the Society gives. In doing this he is already caught in the spiralling process of "question-answer" which will be his constant inspiration or exasperation as long as he remains in this sect. Witnesses eventually learn to ask the acceptable questions and to ignore those that may be problematic to the Society. An example of this is tithing, the very well-established Old Testament practice of giving a part of one's income which one would expect a Jehovah-fearing religious group to continue. Not so, however, decreed the Society. The Witness shall not give of his earnings as this too is "unbib-<sup>29</sup>lical." Witnesses do not appear to have the initiative or courage to "search the Scriptures" on their own to determine whether this practice is indeed biblical. Instead, they rely solely on the questions and answers the Society has constructed for them. It is with little surprise, then, that we hear a former Witness state that sect members are totally lost with-<sup>30</sup>out the crutch of the Society's books.

(2) Establishing the Characteristics of the Valid, Authentic Religious Group.

The second major function of the "Truth Book Study" as well as of the sect's total socialization program is to establish what constitutes a truly authentic religious group. Witnesses, however, would say that there is only one exclusive

group that exhibits all of the essential characteristics and that follows all biblical practises. Here we shall review the major characteristics that Jehovah's Witnesses consider essential. We point out that the sect finds all other religious groups lacking in some or all of these characteristics and on this basis Witnesses conclude that these groups are inauthentic and that they alone are the true, Christian church. The neophyte who accepts this ideological perspective and who finds valid the characteristics we are about to describe is well on his way to a total acceptance of the sect and will find an acceptance of an alternative ideology at a later point in time extremely difficult if not totally impossible. For this reason alone the Society constantly emphasizes its authenticity on the basis that it alone exhibits all of the characteristics we shall discuss.

(a) The Characteristic of Members' Love For Each Other.

Many Protestant groups would agree that this is a valid characteristic for a church. The Society, however, points out that a verbal acceptance of this is not sufficient. A religious group must apply this principle at all times and apparently the Society feels that no group other than itself succeeds in this regard. The Society frankly asks the neophyte, "Do they (other religious groups) instil in their members a love (for one another)...?"<sup>31</sup> Through questions such as this one the Society hopes to shake the neophyte's faith in his church so that he can become receptive to the sect's message.

It appears to this writer that Witnesses believe they have a special love for each other mainly as a result of the relatively small size of their congregation and meetings. Witnesses tend to assume that this factor allows for greater interaction between themselves and that this would in turn lead to a closer attachment to each other. In this they are probably correct. Yet their definition of love lacks validity even from an existentialist standpoint in that love is far more than close interaction on a Gemeinschaft-like basis. The Society's dictum of "sacrifice for the sect" is a blatant contradiction to this characteristic and suggests that once a member has become established in the sect, others' "love" towards him suddenly wanes.

(b) The Characteristic of Respect for God's Word.

At this point Witnesses' extreme fundamentalism is again evident. Witnesses tend to define respect for the Bible as acceptance of its contents regardless of the difficulties connected with these. Thus, a figurative passage is likely to be interpreted quite literally. The crossing of the Red Sea, for example, is considered to be a definite miracle of God. Witnesses believe that any attempt to "explain" miracles in naturalistic terms would detract from one's faith in God, in fact, would make one God's enemy. Understandably, then, Witness invective falls heavily on many liberal theologians and the denominations they represent. Yet Witnesses fail to realize that at present there are many Protestant groups who

are equally as fundamentalistic as they with regard to the interpretation of miracles and many other doctrines.<sup>32</sup> Witnesses quickly conclude that the Watchtower Society alone interprets the Bible in such a manner as to respect it and Jehovah.<sup>33</sup>

(c) The Characteristic of "Sanctifying God's Name."<sup>34</sup>

Jehovah's Witnesses define this characteristic of the true church as the use of God's proper name YHWH or Jehovah. Again, they immediately point out that they alone are practicing this and that even orthodox Judaism is neglecting this important element. They argue that God can be pleased only with that group which calls him by his proper name. Apparently no Witnesses are aware that their own literature uses the term, "God", as frequently as the term "Jehovah."<sup>35</sup>

(d) The Characteristic of Separation From the World.

Again, many fundamentalistic groups consider this a valid criterion for determining a "true" religious group. An isolated sect such as the Hutterites, however, would say that Witnesses are a part of the world in that they perform secular tasks for their livelihood. Witnesses do not consider these tasks at all relevant to their total existence. They consider a religious group as separate from the world if it does not become involved in the multitudinous campaigns be they medical, charitable, political, nationalistic or even class struggles. Witnesses believe the church must be separate from the state.<sup>36</sup> The sect defines isolation or separation from the world as predominantly ideological and would frown on military,

political or even civic careers. At the same time, however, this separation is social in that Witnesses are exhorted to limit the number of their "worldly" friends.

The Society concludes this section of the "Truth Book" with the remark that the true church must possess all of the above characteristics: "On the basis of the evidence...we do not hesitate that they (that is, "true worshippers") are the Christian witnesses of Jehovah."<sup>37</sup> The Society continues and makes it clear to the neophyte that he must "examine his religion" to determine whether or not it matches the Society-described criteria.<sup>38</sup> There can be little doubt that the response will be in the negative if the neophyte has accepted the sect's criteria of truth and its means of arriving at truth. The realization that his own church has weaknesses which he cannot explain away places the neophyte on very unstable ground and prepares him for the next phase, an examination of the "faults and evils" of Protestantism and Catholicism.

(3) Establishing the "Faults" of Protestantism and Catholicism.

It is rather difficult to limit this goal to this specific sequence in the neophyte's socialization process. Witnesses often refer to the "evils" of "organized religion" at many of their meetings and gatherings.<sup>39</sup> These faults of Christian churches are most definitively elaborated in the "Truth Book" which all neophytes study. Basically, the sect refers to these "faults" in other religious groups in terms

of deviations from the God-ordained system of worship. References are often made to historians who traced the popular early Christian customs back to Babylonian times.<sup>40</sup> From these statements as to how a custom was introduced into Christian circles, Witnesses deduce that the basic nature of that custom must necessarily be evil. The sect does not consider the symbolic meanings behind these customs and condemns them on the basis of their tentatively established "pagan origins or affiliations."

The sect has succeeded in introducing many new doctrines to its converts by down-grading long established doctrines of orthodoxy. Perhaps the prime example here would be the trinitarianism which has been characteristic of orthodox Christianity for the past two thousand years. Jehovah's Witnesses have dispensed with the Trinity as they argue that it too has pagan origins and denounces Jehovah, the monotheistic God. They argue further that the biblical references used to substantiate trinitarianism are at best unclear, at worst ambiguous and that this doctrine should therefore be eliminated. If the Society succeeds in persuading the neophyte to accept their view on this point, he must then either defend his church or else leave it. The latter alternative is usually the least painful at this point for him not only socially speaking (he has attended many Witness meetings by now) but also cognitively speaking (he would have to "shake" his belief in the Witness doctrine before he could be reconciled to his church).

A further practice which the sect attacks is the use of the cross as a symbol of Christ's suffering and death. Witnesses state that this too is a pagan symbol and that Christ was actually impaled on a "torture stake," an upright pole.<sup>41</sup> Understandably, such a doctrine is upsetting to the neophyte who has sung "In the Cross of Christ I Glory,"<sup>42</sup> and has believed this all of his life. Yet the Witnesses' claim appears to be so well-founded on evidence that the neophyte again has little choice but to accept this doctrine. By this time he has considerable faith in the Society and has lost much of his trust in his former clergyman so that the easiest course of action again is to accept the doctrine of the torture stake.

Watchtower invective finds a further target in the religious images and pictures of "Christendom," particularly the Roman Catholic see. Again the sect refers to the "Babylonian origins" of the use of religious images, shrines, and pictures and attributes such use to "pagan influences" that affected the early church.<sup>43</sup> While this argument may bear some validity for some present churches, it would be a gross error to state that all Protestant groups are evil on this account -- as Witnesses imply.

Still another area of attack the sect employs against its fellow-religious groups is described as "honoring humans and institutions."<sup>44</sup> Here the Society argues that saints should not be honored as they have been in the past. Birthdays, too, the Society decrees, are too much an honoring of



individuals and will interfere with one's honor towards God. The celebration of Easter as commemoration of Christ's resurrection is likewise denounced with some "evidence" that this institution was started much later and that the early Christians did not celebrate this occasion. Again, the Society has discovered that the celebration of this day has earlier origins and for this reason it is totally condemned by the Watchtower. A similar argument is applied against Christmas as celebration of Christ's birth so that Witnesses differentiate themselves in many ways from typical religious groups in North America and argue that they alone are adhering to the high standards the Bible demands of a Christian.

(4) Defining the Neophyte's Religion in Negative Terms.

Most Witness literature speaks of other religions in generalities. This applies also to the "Truth Book." It will be quite natural for the neophyte to turn to his Witness instructor with specific questions concerning his own religious group. By this time the neophyte will have accepted the Watchtower definition of the criteria of a true church. This puts the Witness in the position of using these criteria to indicate the weaknesses in the neophyte's religion. At the same time, the Witness can again affirm the strengths of the Witness sect in maintaining and upholding all of the criteria that are said to be necessary for a "true religion."

Without doubt, this stage is the most crucial as far as the neophyte's religious future is concerned. If there is

any point at which he must decide for or against the Witness sect, then this is that point. Needless to say, however, the neophyte has been well prepared for this decision through his prior contacts with Witnesses and through the sect's literature. He has been taught to accept the Bible in very literal terms. This will ease his entry into the sect since the Witness can "convince" him that the Society is "right" simply by showing him Bible passages that appear to confirm the sect's religious doctrines. At the same time, the neophyte has been encouraged to accept the Society's word as "truth." All of the Witnesses he has met recognized the Society's literature as truthful and worthy of study so that he too may have begun to place his faith in this group of scholars that claim to have made thorough researches in Bible doctrines. In addition to this, the neophyte has learned and accepted as valid the prerequisites to a "true church" and has accepted that any religious organization must exhibit all of these basic characteristics. At this point in time the neophyte has already "invested" considerable time and effort in the study of the sect. This investment, per se, would act as a deterrent from breaking one's ties with the sect. Furthermore, the elements (1) that a true church must possess all Witness-defined criteria and (2) that the neophyte's church is lacking in some of these, create a situation of cognitive dissonance which the individual is forced to resolve in some logical manner. As already mentioned, however, the investment factor must also

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be taken into consideration. The neophyte has formed some close friendships with sect members which he may not have had with members in his own church. He will then need to consider the "cost" of breaking these sectarian ties with the cost of breaking the ties with his church or vice versa, will compare the price of breaking his ties with the sect with the cost of re-establishing relationships with his church. Strictly in social psychological terms, then, it should be more profitable for him to remain in the sect than to leave it. In the religious realm, of course, the Witnesses will present him with the potent argument that if he leaves the sect, he endangers his eternal life.<sup>47</sup> On these two counts then,

(social psychological and religious) the potential convert to the Witness sect experiences definite pressures towards a decision to join the sect. We do not imply that all potential converts will succumb to these pressures and to this mode of reasoning but have elaborated on this point to indicate the typical thought processes with which the potential Jehovah's Witness must deal and as an indication of the extent to which the Society has prepared him for this decision both in terms of developing close social ties with him in that it instils its ideology in him.

Now if the potential convert is honest in his examination of his own religion, he will recognize that it does have definite shortcomings in Witness terms. Since he has accepted these terms as universally valid for all religious

groups, he is confronted with the problem of rejecting his own group to which he has belonged all of his life. But if he truly has accepted the Witness criteria as valid, he will find less problems in rejecting his former religion and will tend to conclude that that group's shortcomings are its ultimate downfall.

In short, the neophyte is likely to join the sect on four separate accounts. Firstly, the social ties which he forms with sect members provide him with a live option to any relationship he may have had within his church. In this way it is relatively easy to make the change on a purely social level. As Stroup has suggested,<sup>48</sup> a number of so-called "social outcasts" come to the sect out of purely social reasons and then accept the sect's doctrine out of a desire to conform to the group. Their major purpose in joining the sect is to benefit from the close interaction such a group affords, and the religious setting becomes a mere by-product. A second factor which is closely related to the social factor is that the neophyte who maintains lengthy contacts with the sect cannot avoid learning about the sect's norms and behavior patterns. As time progresses, this knowledge is likely to be carried into action particularly as more and more Witnesses become significant others for the neophyte and as he not only imitates their behavior but begins to internalize their norms. A third factor which is also sociological concerns the special language the sect employs. As the neophyte becomes increasingly ac-

quainted with Witness literature, he also familiarizes himself with the sect's jargon. This special terminology becomes but another mechanism by which the sect isolates the neophyte not only from the world but also from other religious groups.

Through use of this language the neophyte also obtains a sense of belonging to the sect. But the most likely reason for the neophyte to join the sect is that he has accepted its values and ideology. Whether we speak of his socialization into the sect as indoctrination or brainwashing is immaterial.

We have not altered the fact that over the successive months' contact with Jehovah's Witnesses, the neophyte too has become a "believer."

## CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION.

Throughout this thesis our major attempt has been to show that the sect of Jehovah's Witnesses is a rather unusual, unique religious group. We have reason to believe that this group may actually be spoken of as a social system in miniature. Our attempt in this section shall be to speak of the sect largely in cultural and social terms, making partial use of the paradigm Talcott Parsons has constructed. Our total discussion should indicate how well-isolated the social system is from the larger system in which it finds itself. At the same time, however, we should be aware that certain elements and values have been retained by the sect with no apparent inconsistencies. We intend to explore the major ones and hope to show how admirably the sect has protected its members from typical worldly goals such as materialism and the desire for security.

Another distinctive feature of this sect which we have already emphasized is its socialization-proselytization process which is quite comparable to many forms of indoctrination with the exception that the sect's process is totally voluntarily entered into by the parties concerned. The sect succeeds very well in socializing new converts to its new ideology and then protects them from many outside harms and possibly competing ideologies to the extent that the sect's defection rate

is quite negligible.

Basically, we shall attempt to develop our discussion of the sect according to Parsons' paradigm of cultural, social, and personality systems. This discussion should indicate how all systems contribute to the total unity of the sect and how Jehovah's Witnesses may be considered as a miniature social system, in but not of the larger social system.

#### A. The Sect's Cultural System as a Foundation For Its Existence.

As already suggested in this title, Jehovah's Witnesses' theological and ideological distinctives form the basis of the sect's entire existence. We have already demonstrated how the sect differentiates itself from related sects and denominations and how it has succeeded in perpetrating the myth that it alone represents the true Christian church. The Society's charisma also deserves mention here. Sect members appear to be socialized to accept the Society's word as truth so that practically any institutional or doctrinal changes can be made with almost no opposition or even questioning from the Society's followers.

This would suggest that the Society has created a fairly stable sect which might be defined as a contraculture which successfully perpetuates itself with a high degree of regularity and stability. Werner Cohn's work, however, suggests the opposite:

It may be objected that the proletarian movement itself constitutes a kind of human community -- albeit in miniature. I reject this view because --

as I shall try to show in this study -- the proletarian group has no stability, no logical coherence; since it cannot satisfy the most elementary needs of its members, it is in a stage of permanent restlessness.<sup>1</sup>

In the remainder of his thesis, Cohn discusses the distinctive Witness theology, the sect's esoteric language, its knowledge system and then suggests that the organization's structure is "irregular." He claims such irregularity on the basis of three observations: (1) the Society is incorporated in three different corporations with almost identical leaders in each group and with overlapping functions as well; (2) the most rigorous bookkeeping at all levels of the movement goes hand in hand with "complete anarchy" and "lack of form," and (3) the Society claims that Witnesses are not really members but continually assesses and tabulates their religious activities as though they were fully committed members. These observations are no doubt correct, but it seems to this writer that Cohn is analyzing the sect from his own "secular" perspective when he should be aware that the sect's adoption of a set of standards and values different from the scientific or secular values does not necessarily imply a lack of stability in the movement. Rather, the fact that the leaders are able to gloss over these inconsistencies and contradictions within the sect to the extent they do and are able to win and to socialize more and more individuals who are relatively familiar with the dominant secular definitions of logic and truth, indicates the effectiveness of the Society's proselytization and



socialization techniques.

We have already referred to the institutionalization of the basic elements of the sect's structure: (1) definite local and regional leadership positions with certain means to reach these, (2) an effective proselytization program, and (3) a most effective on-going program to reduce the rate of defection. All of these elements suggest structural regularity and stability rather than instability as Cohn suggested.

Furthermore, we believe that this sect's regularity and effectiveness in isolating itself from the "world" is most clearly indicated by certain basic values which have been accepted by the sect for its own purposes, values which are quite predominant in the secular sphere. We shall elaborate on these briefly in the hope that such discussion will indicate that the sect as a social system does rely to some extent on the larger system which gave it birth but that it is largely on its own in matters pertaining to the total lifestyle and orientation of its members.

(1) Emphasis on Competition in the Sect.

Although they would probably deny it, Jehovah's Witnesses emphasize competition in their religious activities at least implicitly. This statement is based on the externally observable criteria of activity and involvement which are easy to measure by observing Witnesses' knowledge and meeting attendance. Secondly, the sect's religious environment is not a private one but a predominantly public one. The rewards

for conformity to the sect's behavior patterns and norms are consequently first and foremost social rewards<sup>2</sup>. Perhaps the major criterion in determining one's standing in the sect is proselytization regularity, sincerity and success. Those members who spend many hours in proselytizing and in starting Home Bible Studies and who bring neophytes to the meetings tend to be respected and admired, whereas the casual proselytizer is considered as a mediocre fellow who may eventually be labelled as an "inactive publisher." It appears that a common reward is a type of praise which is particularly accorded to the full-time pioneers in the sect.

Yet this factor of competition is not limited to publishers alone. It exists in all levels of the sect. Those in authority must remain careful of their tasks lest they be demoted. In addition to this, it is safe to say that neophytes are also affected by the value the sect places in competition but from a different perspective. The neophyte's primary aim is to obtain knowledge rather than to proselytize. Those neophytes who complete their course of studies quickly will tend to be shown more respect than those who are less adept at absorbing the sect's doctrines and at learning the required speaking techniques.

As male Witnesses alone can occupy leadership positions, we would expect some competition among themselves for the attainment of these. Yet we must not assume that females are not guided by this value. They too are able to benefit from

the sect's praise, consequently they are often among the most successful proselytizers. In closing we note again that for both sexes the value of competition is strictly limited to the religious sphere. This suggests again that the sect has adapted the value of competition to its own purposes.

(2) Emphasis on the Value of Activism and Pragmatism.

That a predominant characteristic of the American life-style is its action-orientation hardly needs mentioning. Every minute appears to be occupied by a plethora of activities. Consequently, periods of waiting can be quite psychologically unpleasant. In a related way, the members of the Witness sect are socialized to a life of religious action. This sect has succeeded in maintaining an almost total control of its members' actions for a greater period of weekly time than most other religious groups. Religious action in this sect refers to the attainment of religious knowledge and techniques and to proselytization. So total does the sect member's religious involvement become that his other interests--such as economic--wane and lose importance. Consequently, Witnesses prefer an average, regular income and do not seek to excel in their occupations or careers nor do they seek to work over-time as this would necessitate a loss of time that could be spent for religious purposes.

While Witnesses do manifest a definite pragmatism, this is of a particular kind. Certainly the sect differs from other pragmatically oriented religious groups such as the

measure. It is easy to see, for example, which member misses meetings, does not know his material, and fails to proselytize as frequently as required. Admittedly, some fine norms are more difficult to observe in that they apply largely to the sect member's private life. Observability of the important norms, however, assures that the recent convert will remain a loyal Witness in that his gradual compliance with the norms and his implicit acceptance of the sect's doctrines does eventually lead to a total identification and inner acceptance of the same.

It is interesting to note that the sect has adapted these three values for its own purposes in such a way that any possibly negative repercussions are avoided. Perhaps the existence of these and related pseudo-secular values gives the rank-and-file member some assurance that the sect is a social as well as a religious group. Some Witnesses may actually consider elements such as competition to be quite secularly oriented. The fact that the sect is able to contain certain seemingly secular elements and is able to function in a predominantly anti-sectarian setting (that is, in the world of industry and business) suggests most definitely that its systems of socialization and thought control are stable and effective in isolating or insulating its members from alternate ideologies.

As we conclude this section on the importance of the cultural system in this sect, we again emphasize the signifi-

cance of a distinctive ideology. In the sect's early years the membership was quite unstable as at that time the religious doctrines of Witnesses showed little variation with those of related groups and members could readily join these groups. Following the 1930's however, the sect's ideological distinctive set it increasingly apart from other groups until it now considers itself as an exclusive group. A recognition of such exclusiveness per se on the part of neophytes suggests that alternative ideologies have been rejected and that the neophyte is now insulated from other religious groups. This appears to be the only feasible explanation when one considers the almost totalitarian tactics the Society employs. If any other religious group attempted to control its members' behavior to this extent, that group would fall apart yet Witnesses are held together either because they want to believe or because they fear the consequences of non-belief and disobedience.

B. The Sect's Social System as Arena of Value Changes.

Where the sect's cultural system provides the basic theological and ideological distinctives to the group and a reasonable legitimation of these, the social system is the locus of the sect's specific policies, norms, mores, and behavior patterns. Quite understandably, many of these will be at odds with the standards of secular society and it will appear that Witnesses find normative fulfillment difficult.

While the sect does stress an inner acceptance of its norms and ideals, it appears that for all intents and purposes,

members' sincerity is measured by externalities; that is, by how well they fulfill the sect's normative requirements.

While Jehovah's Witnesses are already protected from possibly divergent secular influences through their beliefs, a number of the sect's norms appear to be directly designed to restrain or curtail members' involvement with other religious groups and with the larger society. In this sense, these norms may be considered as another means for isolating sect members from the secular sphere. A discussion of these shall adequately shed light on our contention.

(1) The Norm of Avoiding "Worldly Associations."

The Society provides no further explanation regarding this norm but that such friendships or living arrangements may be harmful or tempting to the sect member. From the sociological perspective, of course, this norm functions in that it shields the sect member from a knowledge of possibly alternative life styles which he has either forgotten or has never experienced (as is the case for second-generation sect members). Aside from this, the norm insures that the sect member really never has the opportunity to discuss religion on a casual basis, something which might shed considerable light on the subject for him. The Society apparently is of the belief that the best tool to detection and prevention of defection is isolation.

(2) The Norm of Avoiding Other Religious Affiliations.

Many neophytes come to the sect with the belief that they can learn something about religion and the Bible but that

they would not join this sect. As time passes, however, the Society's credibility increases especially as more and more of its "revelations" and "researchings" are manifested to the neophyte. Consequently, its authority for him also increases and he is apt to accept its dictum to refrain from attendance at other religious meetings. This norm is legitimated by the Society with the statement that all other religious groups are anathema; therefore, one is on safest ground in totally avoiding them.

The Society is so careful about this norm that it has even specified the "dangers" associated with attendance at various types of Protestant or Catholic functions. Attendance at funerals or weddings, for example, is frowned upon for all but the most firm Witnesses with the statement that these functions might possibly again attract the new convert to these groups and might contribute to his practise of their "traditionalistic" elements.

### (3) The Norm of Studying the Sect's Literature.

This norm is so basic it hardly requires elaboration. We mention it here to point out the possible isolating effect the enforcement of this norm creates. The neophyte who studies the sect's literature intensively soon spends much of his spare time for this purpose (and consequently reaps the social rewards that accompany knowledge in the sect). A consideration of the volume of literature digested by the average Witness suggests that relatively little time nor energy shall remain

for reading non-religious literature. In this sense the sect positively protects its members from any deleterious influences such literature might have on them.

(4) The Norm of Respect for the Society in Place of Intellectualuality.

This norm is equally as basic as the previous one and is equally well followed when the neophyte has concluded his Truth Book Study and still wishes to retain his sectarian ties. These intentions per se indicate that he has already accepted the Society's superiority over his own reasoning and thinking.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, such associations with the sect have caused him to believe it alone represents Christianity and he has the cognitive problem of breaking out of this dilemma. If he denies the validity of the Society, he fears a loss of eternal salvation. If he remains true to the Society, this fear may temporarily pass but may reappear later on as a threat should his patience and stamina be insufficient to meet the Society's stringent schedule of activities.

In a sense, then, this norm is somewhat superfluous to the committed sect member yet still holds much importance in winning neophytes who might otherwise resort to their own thinking and reasoning. The Society has succeeded very well in creating and sustaining its image of scholarship, research, and authenticity. Its "facts" are sufficient to win the admiration of many neophytes who lack the resources and scholarship to thoroughly examine all religious evidence before accepting the Society's word.



(5) The Norm of Meeting Attendance.

In negative terms, this norm has already been discussed under the injunction to refrain from worldly associations and from attendance at other religious meetings. This norm is now positively expressed in the dictum to attend the sect's meetings with great regularity. As already mentioned, to fulfill this norm will require four separate weekly trips to the Kingdom Hall.

Enforcement of this norm is easily achieved through the usual social pressure techniques so that Witnesses attend with unfailing regularity to retain their social status (which, incidentally, is a reflection of their religious status).

This norm's functions for the sect are noteworthy. Firstly, it assures that all sect members are constantly reminded not only of their commitment to the Society but also of their hopes which, even though they are conditional, do not appear unattainable. Secondly, regular attendance at the sect's meetings assures constant exposure to the sect's doctrines which in turn assures greater measures of internalization of the same than would be the case for haphazard attenders. Thirdly, meeting attendance necessarily implies that the member will be shielded from possibly harmful contacts with non-members. While the actual number of hours spent at the sect's meetings each week approximates ten, this figure is at least doubled when one includes travelling time to and from meetings and time spent before and after the meetings in in-

formal discussion with other Witnesses. Most weekly meetings fall between 7 and 10 p.m. so that alternative associations prior to or following these times are necessarily limited. Furthermore, the fact that meetings are held on every alternate day appears significant in that Witnesses are constantly reminded of their tasks as sect members in contradistinction to denominations or churches that meet only once each week.

From this we conclude that the norm of meeting attendance has a special protective or insulating function in that it limits the sect members' contacts with outsiders and continually instills the sect's ideology on numerous occasions each week.

(6) The Norm to Proselytize.

This norm is actually an overlap or continuation of the previous one in that proselytization is one of the weekly religious activities the Society demands. Fulfillment of this norm is probably the most sought after goal in this sect for a number of reasons. Proselytization is extremely important as a confirmation of faith for the Witness. At first appearance it might be argued that proselytization could have its negative consequences in that the believer is exposed to non-believing or even antagonistic elements which might shake or destroy his faith. The Society has virtually eliminated this possibility in its system of redefinition of the proselytization situation. All opposition to the sect's message has been defined as a basically "negative response" and is expected to

be treated as such. Witnesses are sensitized to expect this response; consequently, they are not upset or disturbed by it when it does occur. They are told that such responses indicate that Jehovah's enemies are still active and that this is but another means used to lure the Witness out of the sect's "fold." Even during the neophyte's early training in proselytization, Witnesses will refer to a negative response in these terms so that by the time the neophyte is a full-fledged sect member, he firmly believes that all people who oppose his message must be seeking to destroy the sect to which he now belongs. He will be careful to leave the scene as gracefully as possibly only to recount these incidents in friendlier Witness company where these experiences serve not to weaken but to strengthen his faith in the Society and its doctrines.

(7) The Norm of Abstaining From Secular Affairs.

The previous norms have all emphasized the protective function in ideological terms. We have shown how the sect protects its members from alternate ideologies and strengthens their faith in the Witness sect. We have also shown how the sect's norms restrict or limit any possibly harmful contacts with outsiders. Now we shall indicate further specifics in which sect members are warned. These too serve as protectors of the sect member's views and assure the Society that Witnesses' energies shall not be spent elsewhere.

Witnesses are warned not to vote in public elections

and not to hold any public office. Apparently these activities are too time consuming and involve secular powers which the sect's leadership does not recognize. Many other areas of non-involvement could be mentioned. One of the most conspicuous of these is Witnesses' refusal to salute the national flag. In the United States this matter had led to considerable problems but seems to have been settled in favor of the sect.<sup>6</sup> There can be little question that the norm of non-involvement in secular matters has benefitted the Society and that this norm continues to be a viable protective mechanism for the sect's membership.

#### (8) The Norm of "Mediocrity" For Secular Jobs.<sup>7</sup>

Canadian and American cultures are still guided by the Protestant Ethic to the degree that most citizens strive to advance and to better their social and economic position even if this means foregoing certain luxuries in time or effort to achieve these goals. Although Jehovah's Witnesses' doctrines are very similar to the Protestants' out of whose ranks this ethic materialized, the Society has ruled an alternative course of actions. The Society has taught and Witnesses have accepted that their secular employment is only a stop-gap measure, a means to maintain a living, not a way of life. Consequently, most Witnesses remain satisfied with a relatively menial job and do not strive to make a career. The sect's views on education prevent many of its young people from obtaining a university degree or technical diploma, absence of which in turn

disqualifies them from many of the more psychologically and economically rewarding positions. Most Witnesses appear to accept their secular tasks quite readily but do not place their total energy into these tasks.

Witnesses are told so much about the "evils of the world" that they prefer to remain as far removed from it as possible. Consequently, they are the mediocre workers who perform their tasks well but who do not wish to advance in their work out of fear that this success will loosen their ties with the sect. Religious issues are always first in  
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their minds.

All of these norms again reaffirm the extent to which the sect has established its own social system socially and ideologically separated from that of the dominant society, yet relying on the dominant system for "commodities" such as language, economics, some education, remunerative employment, and the usual benefits such as protection from violence and other conveniences.

Yet we must not assume that this sect's social system is adequate for all situations or individuals. Without question, the complex interaction of ideology, norms, behavior patterns, and social associations provides an excellent climate for socializing those individuals who were already socialized in the dominant system and are then brought into the sect. A problem arises, however, with regard to the socialization of

sect members' children; that is, potential second-generation members. These children have been exposed to the functionings of the sect for a number of years and often have had no choice but to attend the sect's meetings. They have not had the opportunity to explore alternative religious groups as their parents did, but one would expect them to be at least as inquisitive as non-sectarian youngsters. Furthermore, they may well come to visualize the sect's normative structure as being unduly regimented and oppressive. This may eventually lead them to question the basis on which such a system has been established, a questioning which would lead to the discovery that the sect's ideology has been rather poorly legitimized.

Another salient point in this matter is that for second-generation members there is no novelty to the Witness religion. Consequently, they will view the sect's programs as a matter of fact and will not be as emotionally aroused as first generation members. Unfortunately, information in these matters is difficult to obtain and our conclusions are drawn largely from our observations of teenagers' behavior during the sect's conventions. One most striking fact was the casual attitude with which these youngsters attended. Somehow they appeared to be far less involved than their elder counterparts.

Considering this sect's extremely phenomenal rate of proselytization and subsequent growth rate, however, any fears regarding any substantial changes in the next years are re-

latively unfounded. It is well known that recent converts are the most effective proselytizers largely because these religious activities are still novel to them; consequently they remain quite enthusiastic even when the initial routine sets in.

One possible problem against which the sect appears to be relatively defenseless concerns the possibility of youngsters becoming sect members without a sincere commitment to the sect. We believe this is particularly problematic to this group because Witnesses stress the significance of obtaining sectarian knowledge as a prerequisite for membership. Such knowledge is almost an inevitable by-product for youngsters who have attended and studied in the sect during their childhood years. There are indications that the Society has now established some controls in its assessment of applications for baptism from sect members' children. Sociologically, we envision this as a necessity since it would become very likely that those youngsters raised in the sect would naturally seek to join it to please their parents and friends and also to conform to their peer group--one which is over-religiously inclined. The sect's request for a definite commitment to itself and to God may suffice for recent converts who are still enthralled by its novelties but hardly seems realistic for those people who have been "pseudo-Witnesses" for many years in which they accompanied their parents in proselytization.

With this we conclude our discussion of the normative

aspects of the sect's social system. We have discussed a number of other aspects of the social system in this study but feel that further reference to these is redundant. The major aspects of the Witness' personality can now be discussed.

C. The Role of the Personality System in the Witness Sect.

Considering our description of the social system of this sect in the above section and elsewhere in this study, it is clear that the sect has created a totally distinguishable life style for Jehovah's Witnesses in contradistinction to that which is typical in the dominant society. This characteristic, on the one hand, makes the sect very appealing to some outsiders and on the other hand, possibly boring for younger members who find their friends' activities (for example, hobbies and sports) most interesting. As the sect does not favor much involvement in these activities, it might be conceivable that youngsters will desire to "explore" the outside world much as is the case with Hutterite youngsters. This shall lead to numerous discipline problems in the Witness family and may lead an already problematic situation to worsen.

At its best, the family life of a Witness family is hectic. Quite frequently the housewife is a "pioneer," a task which demands that she spends just as much time outside the home as her husband except that she proselytizes and he works at his secular job. This makes for hasty meal preparation and a general flurry of activity on at least the four days each week when the family must also attend at the King-



dom Hall. On the remaining days additional proselytizing may be done and some time will also be allotted for study purposes so that the whole family is familiar with the content of the next Watchtower study. In addition to this, of course, the devout Witness family will adhere to a stringent schedule of family devotions which consist largely of a reading of an older Watchtower article. Basic household tasks and chores comprise the remaining spare time of the typical Witness family.

This hectic life-style of Jehovah's Witnesses is one of the major contributing factors of family breakdowns. While most Witness marriages are held together by law rather than by love, one does hear of occasional separations and divorces, courses of action which greatly humiliate both marriage partners and which probably lead to the expulsion of at least one of them from the sect. To avert such drastic repercussions, many Witness couples try to keep their problems to themselves as much as possible. They have no one to confide in. If they turn to other Witnesses or even to their leaders, their pleas will fall on deaf ears since the Society's predominant concern is for the religious well-being of its members to an almost complete neglect of other concerns. The Witness couple will have great psychological difficulties in confiding in any non-Witness counsellor since they have accepted the belief that all non-Witnesses are to be regarded with caution. This leaves the couple much to their own resources which are often quite limited particularly if they have been sect members for many

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years.

Another common family situation involves religiously mixed marriages. Perhaps in no other combinations of religions is there more potentiality for friction than in these. Reasons for this are obvious from our description of the insistence of Witnesses as being correct and in their total disregard and disrespect for alternative religious views. Part of this problem can be alleviated if the "errant partner" compromises by attending at the sect's meetings occasionally but friction is likely to develop especially in areas such as recreation, spare time, and vacations.

While religiously mixed marriages often falter on points of religion, other factors also enter in and may affect families in which all are sect members. As already mentioned above, Witnesses' life is quite hectic to the degree that very little spare time for relaxation remains. This life-style becomes especially burdensome to those housewives who are pioneers for the sect, who devote 100-150 hours monthly to proselytization for obvious reasons. We suspect that housewife-pioneers seek to compensate for their lack of time by setting priorities with religious matters in first place; consequently, their household tasks may often remain incompleted in order that they are able to study their religious literature.

I again stress that this argument applies mainly to the presumably most committed housewives who would like a more definite role in the sect than the regular publishers. Marital

problems easily develop, however, around petty issues such as housework, particularly in situations where time is of the essence. Consequently, the wife is likely to find herself the object of criticism from her husband.

This factor is even further aggravated by another. Jehovah's Witnesses, according to Werner Cohn, have a peculiar<sup>10</sup> attitude towards sex. Sexual relations tend to be considered in a prudish, Victorian manner--something which is done for procreation rather than for pleasure. The sect's relatively negative definition of sexual relations is likely to reduce the normal number of sexual encounters between husband and wife. In addition to this, the wife's strenuous schedule of activities may make her less willing for a sexual encounter. This, in turn, is likely to be interpreted by the husband as her retaliation for his criticisms all of which creates further marital problems which are difficult for the Witness couple to resolve.

The above indicates the extent of involvement the sect demands of its members and some of the social problems connected with such involvement. Our main concern here is to indicate that sect members' personalities are affected, their values and attitudes are changed when they become full-fledged Jehovah's Witnesses. With regard to attitude changes, before-after studies are impossible as explained in the introduction. Out of necessity we shall assume that Witnesses held to the

basic values of our society, desire for achievement, success, security, happiness, peace, certainty in the future.

As these individuals became sect members, they accepted a new set of values which are often at odds with those of the secular world. The major change in action will be a decrease in time and effort spent for monetary and personal gain and a marked increase in time and effort in the religious sphere. In fact, we can say that the religious sphere dominates all others so that the new sect member is in a "new world" and is able to "forget" his previous existence. In this sense this sect may be described as an "opiate of the people" in Marxist terms. The economically underprivileged are able to substitute poverty with their special religious status. The sick and disabled are able to sustain a hope for a life of health in the "New World." The bereaved look forward to the time of reunion on this earth and no longer fear the Protestant teachings of hell and torment.<sup>11</sup> All of these individuals and others profit by their new faith in that their inadequacies are placed into the background. Sect members' religious status and belief is emphasized to such an extent that other areas lose relevance. All Witnesses consequently believe they are the most "blessed" and happy people in the world.

While the sect does draw many converts from those who are alienated from society and self, it is false to state that only those individuals join the sect. In their door-to-door

campaign, Witnesses try to win the psychologically and economically healthy as well as the sick and maladjusted. The only criterion the sect employs in determining followup of initial proselytization is the householders' initial level of interest or antagonism.

While many present Jehovah's Witnesses may be quite "normal" in all meanings of the word, the sect does help all its members to cope with the uncertainties that modern North American life presents. The sect's strong and clear-cut norms and mores leave little question in the minds of Witnesses as to how they should behave. Stevenson reports that the sect has strongly negative views on issues such as masturbation,<sup>12</sup> petting, wearing of tight fitting clothing, and dancing.<sup>13</sup> Artificial insemination is frowned on as adultery.<sup>13</sup> Abortion is considered to be taking a life and sterilization is defined<sup>14</sup> as an infraction of the mosaic law. All told, a Witness can be excluded from membership in the sect for fornication, adultery, sodomy, stealing, gluttony, drunkenness, for attending other religious meetings, or for giving or taking blood.<sup>15</sup> Some other areas in which the sect has definite views include education, sports, and overtime secular employment. We have described these and other areas at various points throughout this study. Without doubt, the Jehovah's Witness will have far less questions concerning the so-called "grey areas" of normative behavior than do Protestants or Catholics. This certainty gives sect members a sense of security, knowing that if they abide

by the sect's explicit norms, they shall eventually be able to lay a claim to their spiritual hopes and rewards. This offers a two-fold certainty. First there is the certainty of an explicit set of behavioral standards which are easy to interpret for everyone. This averts any uncertainty concerning the "rightness" of any action. Secondly, there is the certainty that conformity to the sect's standards brings its inherent and deferred rewards. The inherent rewards have already been discussed as social rewards such as praise, recognition, or admiration. The sect's deferred rewards remain as hopes for all sect members, particularly when we refer to any predictions the sect makes of a future life. Even though such predictions may seem far-fetched to the amateur student of the sociology of religion, we believe the sect's approach does have considerable merit over some alternatives, sociologically speaking.

The sect's predictions of a future life are clear and explicit, sprinkled with numerous illustrations and metaphors. One obvious advantage this sect has over similarly based religious groups is that its "heaven" or "nirvana" is not a "pie in the sky" but a description of a realistic setting. For Jehovah's Witnesses the ideal life is not a life of obedience to a God in Heaven where streets are paved with pure gold but a life on this earth free from the common problems and troubles that plague man now. This conception of the future life is clear, easy to conceptualize and easy to understand.

Since the sect's rewards include both present and future situations and since the ultimate reward--a happy life on earth--is quite conceivable for everyone, the sect has fewer problems concerning this area of faith than groups whose "rewards" are less clearly outlined.

D. Some of the Sect's Potential Problems From the Sociological Viewpoint.

No group, particularly a religious one, is ever free from organizational or ideological problems. Without doubt, Jehovah's Witnesses have already had a share of such problems considering the many organizational crises which developed as a result of a failure in prophetic predictions or as a result of a change in doctrines or leadership.

In the realm of ideology and doctrine, it is quite conceivable that the sect may soon be faced with another task of altering its doctrines. Sociologically we may call this a form of accommodation but we must be careful to distinguish it from the typically accommodative group which adjusts its norms so that they are in agreement with those of the dominant culture. The Witness sect would only accommodate itself in the event that its strict doctrines concerning the discoveries, theories, and explanations of science are proven false. The resulting accommodation would only effect certain doctrines and would exert little if any change at the normative level.

As more and more progress is made in various scientific endeavors, the sect may be confronted with scientific evidence

which may reduce the credibility of a theory the sect may have accepted. At that time it becomes imperative for the sect to alter its doctrines so that they could satisfactorily "explain away" or incorporate the new scientific knowledge.

A possible example of this might well be the theory of evolution which is strongly denounced by the sect. In the event that this theory could be carried to its logical conclusion and its universal validity established, the sect would be forced to abandon its one-time opposition to this portion of scientific research. The Society would then be compelled to explain why and how this theory can be incorporated in the  
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sect's doctrines.

A further problem which could cause complications as the sect's age increases is the problem of second-generation members, the children of adults who have joined the sect. This point has already been discussed in sufficient detail above in this study. We point out here that this problem is relatively dormant as long as the sect's proselytization and "conversion" rate nets sufficient new converts who provide the sect with ever-obedient individuals (versus possibly problematic second-generation members).

A final problem which deserves mention is the marriage and family breakdown potential which exists in this sect. If the Society fails to become more accepting of outside marriage counselors or does not compensate by sensitizing its overseers to the great needs along these lines, many families will be



shattered and the likelihood for defection among these should greatly increase when the individuals concerned begin to realize that the sect is an "ardent taskmaster" with little help to spare for its needy people.

E. Some Strengths of the Jehovah's Witnesses' Sectarian Community.

While the above-discussed problems may appear to be quite substantial and could well be the cause of the breakdown of other groups, we have reasons to believe that the Witness sect is well-equipped to cope with many crises.

Considering the sect's history, many organizational crises have been averted, largely through skillful alternative explanations and through the amazing adaptability of this sect's message. Any group that adheres to a fundamentalistic, literal biblical exegesis can easily protect itself from a loss of credibility with the statement that a previous doctrine was misinterpreted, as long as alternative Bible passages are furnished as corroboration for the new doctrines. This technique has been used by the Society on numerous occasions with success.

A further advantage this sect has is its superb organization. In ideology and doctrine all matters are carefully defined. Techniques of proselytization and socialization have been perfected in the past two decades to the degree that the present success rate in both areas is amazingly high. Coupled with this organization is the social structure of the sect,

its staggered yet well planned meetings and continuing enforcement of the sect's norms. Such enforcement in turn is a substantial factor for the eventual internalization of the sect's standards in the minds of new converts. In addition to this, however, it is safe to say that the sect has taken many precautions to protect, insulate, or isolate its members from opposing cultural, social or ideological influences. The combination of all of these designs strongly suggests that this sect is a well-organized, Gemeinschaft-like sub-society, a society in miniature.

The sect is self-sufficient in terms of social relationships. One's relationships within the sect soon replace former relationships outside of the sect. Eventually the desire for outside friends ceases altogether and the sect member relies solely on his contacts in his close-knit sectarian community for friendship, socializing, recreation and relaxation.

In conclusion, we have shown that this chiliastic sect is not only highly organized in its doctrines but that this organization is reflected in all areas of sectarian life. This ideology has been accepted by a group of believers who live in the secular world but who are of it only in nominal terms. The sect is a universe unto itself in so many significant aspects that its interest for the sociologist is not to be denied.

## FOOTNOTES

### Footnotes for Chapter I

1. This name was not instituted until 1931, approximately 50 years after the sect's inception before which it was called International Bible Students, Russellites, Millennial Dawnists, among others.

2. This does not include hangers-on who are in the process of being socialized into the movement.

3. L. Festinger, et. al., When Prophecy Fails, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1956. This study confirmed the opposite finding--namely, that a disconfirmation of a religious belief does not necessarily result in a rejection of that belief but that the said belief may actually be strengthened. However, in the case of Jehovah's Witnesses, the opposite appears to hold true at least for those individuals who left the movement when the prophecies of its leaders failed.

4. Joseph F. Zygmunt, "Jehovah's Witnesses: A Study of Symbolic and Structural Elements in the Development and Institutionalization of a Sectarian Movement." unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1967.

5. The term, sect, is not elaborated at this point as it is discussed in greater detail below.

6. Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, translated by Olive Wyon, vol. 1, Harper and Row, New York, 1960, pp. 328-349; and vol. 2, pp. 993-1000.

7. Ibid., pp. 331-332.

8. Ibid., pp. 331-333.

9. Ibid., pp. 333-334.

10. Ibid., pg. 336.

11. Ibid., pg. 337. In the Jehovah's Witness sect these views are evident in their belief in the imminent destruction of the present world and the creation of a new world in which they alone shall live.

12. Ibid., pg. 336.

13. Ibid., pg. 338.

14. H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills (translators and editors)  
From Max Weber, Oxford University Press, New York, 1953, pg.  
314.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., pg. 320.

17. Max Weber, The Sociology of Religion, translated  
by Ephraim Fischhoff, Beacon Press, Boston, 1963, pg. 166.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., pg. 169.

20. Ibid., pg. 166.

21. Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of  
Capitalism, translated by Talcott Parsons, Scribners, New  
York, 1958.

22. Ibid., pg. 91.

23. Ibid., pg. 81.

24. Ibid., pg. 83.

24a. We stress again that this interpretation is Max  
Weber's and not our own. The writer is of the opinion that  
Weber tended to generalize the element of predestination to  
too many Protestant groups and tended to attribute too great  
an importance to this element for adherents' total religious  
behavior. This matter cannot be dealt with in this thesis,  
however.

25. Ibid., pg. 100.

26. Ibid., pg. 110.

27. Ibid., pg. 112.

28. Ibid., pg. 115.

29. Ibid., pp. 118-119.

30. Ibid., pg. 40.

31. Ibid., pg. 40.
32. Ibid., pg. 27.
33. Liston Pope, Millhands and Preachers, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1942.
34. Ibid., pg. 118.
35. Ibid.
36. H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism, Meridian, New York, 1957, pp. 19-21.
37. Pope, Op. cit., pg. 119.
38. Ibid., pg. 137.
39. Ibid., pg. 138.
40. Howard Becker, Systematic Sociology, Wiley, New York, 1932, pp. 613-642.
41. Ibid., pg. 624.
42. Ibid., pg. 625.
43. Ibid., pg. 627.
44. Ibid. This is quite an accurate description of the prerequisites for membership in the Witness sect. However, it appears that their constant surveillance of members' conduct suggests the organization does not cater to individual members, but that members work entirely for the organization and only indirectly for themselves in the sense that they are "guaranteed" a life in the "New System of Things."
45. H. Richard Niebuhr, Op. cit., pp. 19-21.
46. Howard Becker, Op. cit., pg. 626.
47. Howard Becker and Robert C. Myers, "Sacred and Secular Aspects of Human Sociation," Sociometry, vol. 5, 1942, pp. 207-229.
48. Ibid., pg. 212.
49. Ibid., pg. 219.
- 49a. By "secular values" we imply those that are the generally accepted values in present-day North American society

as derived from previous generations who cherished democracy, freedom of speech and the press and so on.

50. Benton Johnson, "On Church and Sect," American Sociological Review, vol. 28, 1963, pp. 539-549.

51. Ibid., pg. 542.

52. Russell R. Dynes, "Church-sect Typology and Socio-economic Status," American Sociological Review, vol. 20, 1955, pp. 555-560.

53. Benton Johnson, Op. cit., pg. 543. While the first part of this statement does not hold for Jehovah's Witnesses, the latter part clearly does as we shall demonstrate in the thesis. It is when we have demonstrated this that our argument gains the support of Johnson's statement here cited.

54. Ibid., pg. 544.

55. Peter Berger, The Noise of Solemn Assemblies, Doubleday, Garden City, 1961, pg. 40 and pg. 102.

56. Johnson, Op. cit., pg. 544. Again, if we can demonstrate that Jehovah's Witnesses enforce norms contrary to those held in the dominant culture, we would receive support from this source that the group is sectarian.

57. Bryan Wilson, "An Analysis of Sect Development," American Sociological Review, vol. 24, 1959, pp. 1-15.

58. Ibid., pg. 14.

59. Bryan Wilson, Sects and Society, Heineman, London, 1961, pg. 354, (emphasis added).

60. J.M. Yinger, The Scientific Study of Religion, Macmillan, New York, 1970, pp. 252-281

61. Ibid., pp. 259-260.

62. Ibid., pg. 266.

63. Ibid., pg. 270.

64. Ibid., pp. 275-278.

64a. Interestingly, Yinger cites Jehovah's Witnesses in this type of sect rather than as an established sect as we might assume he would, considering their bureaucratized in-

ternational organizational structure.

65. J.M. Yinger, "Contraculture and Subculture," American Sociological Review, vol. 25, 1960, pp. 625-635.

67. Ibid., pg. 629.

68. William C. Stevenson, The Inside Story of Jehovah's Witnesses, Hart, New York, 1968.

69. Ibid., pg. 108.

70. Ibid., pg. 109.

71. Alan Rogerson, Millions Now Living Will Never Die, Constable, London, 1969.

72. Ibid., pg. 61.

73. William J. Whalen, Armageddon Around the Corner, John Day, New York, 1962.

74. Ibid., pg. 63.

75. Ibid., pg. 200.

76. Herbert H. Stroup, The Jehovah's Witnesses, Columbia Press, New York, 1945.

77. Milton S. Czatt, The International Bible Students Jehovah's Witnesses, Mennonite Press, Pennsylvania, 1932, and Stroup, Op. cit., pg. 75.

78. Stroup, Op. cit., pg. 76.

79. Ibid., pg. 80.

80. Ibid., pg. 78.

81. Ibid., pg. 80.

82. Ibid., pp. 97-98.

83. Ibid., pp. 97-98.

83a. Ibid., pg. 98. In this writer's opinion, it is this "technique," used over and over by the Witness, that effectively shields him from opposing arguments during the course of his proselytizing activities. In this sense, a confrontation with alternative values does not shake his faith but rather strengthens his conviction in the validity of his belief.

84. J. Zygmunt, Op.cit.

85. Ibid., pg. 36.

86. Ibid., pg. 10.

87. Ibid., pg. 12.

88. The annual "Memorial Evening Meal" is the only occasion at which time the observer can determine which Witnesses belong to which class. Only those who consider themselves to be a part of the "remnant" partake of this meal. The remaining Witnesses are content to witness the occasion.

89. Werner Cohn, "Jehovah's Witnesses as a Proletarian Sect," unpublished M.A. Thesis, New School for Social Research, New York, 1954, pg. 1.

90. Ibid., pg. 3.

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid., pg. 4.

93. Ibid., pg. 5.

94. Ibid., pg. 77.

95. L. Festinger, et. al., Op. cit.

96. We arrived at this conclusion by listening to Witnesses speak of the "evils" of the present generation as their interpretation that the imminent destruction of the world is near.

97. Werner Cohn, Op. cit.

98. Talcott Parsons, Societies, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1966, pg. 7.

99. For practical and descriptive purposes we shall employ Witness terminology throughout our study when this is warranted. In this case, the term refers to their "churches."

100. While Parsons also speaks of the organismic system, for our purposes both systems can be considered as one.

101. Werner Cohn and H. Stroup have borne this fact out in their studies.

102. My recent experiences in this regard, however, indicate that the majority of overseers tend to be extremely



optimistic. This might also be said for all Witnesses. But upon attending their meetings regularly, it becomes increasingly more difficult to obtain purely factual information. Instead, one is flooded with ideology.

103. Cohn, Op. cit., pg. 12.

104. Speaking more generally but in a way that clearly applies to the Witnesses, Parsons says, "The cognitive distortions which are always present in ideologies, often compulsively motivated, will tend to be uncovered and challenged by the social scientist ..... more or less inevitably, there will be a tendency for the guardians of ideological purity in a social system to be highly suspicious of what social scientists are doing." The Social System, Free Press, New York, 1951, pg. 358.

105. Regarding the ethics of this procedure, the writer can state with honesty that a part of his motivation to study this sect stems from previous contacts with Witnesses, contacts which have been puzzling and at times frustrating.

106. The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life (1968), Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose, (1959), Let Your Name Be Sanctified, (1961), Let God Be True, (1946), New Heavens and a New Earth, (1953). Note: All of the above-named books are written and published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York.

107. Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Qualified to be Ministers, New York, 1955.

108. The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, New York, (1968).

## FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER II

1. Joseph Zygmunt, Op. cit., (Ph.D. Dissertation.)
2. D.R. Manwaring, Render Unto Caesar, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1962.
3. Emile Durkheim, Suicide. (translated by J.A. Spoulding and G. Simpson) Free Press, New York, 1951, pg. 214, 246-258.
4. A "publisher" is a rank-and-file Witness who has studied the basic doctrines and who has been baptized into the faith; that is, who has dedicated his life to Jehovah's service (and, of course, to the service of the Society). This position will be discussed in full detail below.
5. The position of "servant" is equivalent to that of "elder." The servant must exhibit certain mature, Christian characteristics and have a particularly comprehensive understanding of the sect's doctrines, policies, and practises.
6. The position of "overseer" is equivalent to that of "minister" or leader-of-a congregation.
7. Isaiah 43:12. Jehovah's Witnesses are careful to spell their name with a lower case letter (thus: Jehovah's witnesses). By this they wish to indicate their ultimate inferiority to God and feel that they do not rob him of the honor he deserves. Throughout this paper we are using upper case letters as this will eliminate any contradictory interpretations concerning the word, witnesses.
8. If we are not prepared to accept this interpretation we are left with a number of alternatives: that the greater part of sect members were either too ignorant to notice that a major ideological, doctrinal, and organizational change was being made, that they had total and unshakable faith in Rutherford regardless of what he would say, or that the greater part of the membership was already so socially dependent on the sect that its doctrinal change meant little to them as long as their social ties remained intact. At the present point in time all but the last of these alternatives appear to be inapplicable. With regard to the last, we may find further use for this theory.
9. W. J. Whalen, Op. cit., pg. 120 ff.

10. This figure is the sum total of all figures quoted for Watchtowers for the year 1969.

11. We have tentative evidence that a relatively small percentage of Witnesses actually take the time to read their "classics" of Russell. That is well understandable considering the monthly deluge of literature which they are expected to "digest."

12. At various times Jehovah's Witnesses were prevented by law from attending their meetings in both the United States and Canada. Now they enjoy religious freedom here but in other countries the sect is still quite often persecuted.

13. We believe this element of conformity to the sect's norms and regulations exists at least to the degree that it does in our society, that is, to the degree that we are "other-directed" rather than "inner-directed" individuals.

### FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER III

1. Much of the content in this section is the result of participant observation. Consequently, little other documentation is given.

2. I interject at this point that the newcomer is most likely to have had some form of continuous contact with a Witness long before he attends this first meeting. By the time he does attend, he has already learned much about the sect. Obviously the fact that he attended indicates that he appears willing to consider becoming a member. In that regard this first meeting is important from the sect's viewpoint.

3. The author's own experiences may be considered as verification of this statement. In both of the congregations studied, Witnesses made a favorable impression of genuine interest in the newcomer. I have used the word "impression" because I now believe this tactic is but another link in the sect's efforts to win new converts. Quite noticeably, after several months of meeting attendance the author was more or less left on his own, probably because Witnesses now believe he had already decided to attend their meetings regularly.

4. It may appear to the reader that our use of the word, "charisma," is rather unusual. While it is true that Weber did generally use this term in the singular, we can state that the Society as the anonymous leaders of the sect are actually acting as a unit and are revered as much--if not more-- than the earlier leaders. Also, various "interpreters" of Weber such as Reinhard Bendix for example indicate that the word "charisma" can refer to the plural as well as the singular..

5. Such lack of questioning can be construed to mean that (1) members have accepted the Society's authority unquestioningly, (2) members are afraid to question because they desire to belong to the sect as they believe it alone makes provision for a future life. Particularly the second point becomes valid when we seek to understand the absence of questioning elements in the sect, then this would indicate the presence of partially-committed people and those who still adhere to the logic, reasoning and related methods of arriving at truth which are typically employed in the secular realm.

6. Cf. The Watchtower, Vol. XCII, no. 5, March 1,

1971, pg. 133 ff.

7. Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Qualified to be Ministers, New York, 1955.

8. Indications are that there are very few Witness couples where both the husband and wife work. Even in one-parent families the desire for secular work appears to be lacking whenever alternative means of support are available. We make this statement on rather slender evidence but it does seem to comply with Witnesses' attitudes towards secular work. This "evidence" we are referring to comes from a young unwed Witness mother with one nine year old child. Due to financial circumstances she was receiving public assistance from a government agency. When approached as to the possibility of work she became very hostile but later stated she would write to the national headquarters of the sect to obtain the proper directives for her future life. This example would confirm our point that wherever possible Witnesses prefer to strive first and foremost for the Society. We shall elaborate on their attitudes to secular work at a later point.

9. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that they have internalized the Society's justification for attendance at the Ministry School.

10. Cf. The Watchtower, vol. XCI, no. 23, Dec. 1, 1970, pp. 722-728.

11. I have considered this matter of the effect of proselytization on the newcomer at considerable length in a previous paper and am certain that no argument will shake the new Witness of his beliefs. When he first learns about witnessing he merely accompanies a more experienced Witness and does not speak to householders until he knows very much about the sect and at that point he is already convinced by the over-whelming evidence of multitudinous new converts that the sect is, indeed, the only living organization of Jehovah (versus all other religious organizations who are considered Satan's followers).

12. All books are now written and published by the "Society" or a committee of the top leaders of the sect. No one author is ever mentioned and the similarity of style of writing of the books and literature suggests that all of this literature is written by the same committee.

13. These prices tend to be slightly lower than what the literature is sold for in public. Clearly, selling literature is not a money-making business as it was at the time when the sect was less well-known and many Christians

bought this literature out of curiosity or ignorance.

14. As a guard against any possible misunderstanding on this matter, I might add that this paragraph was written from the Witness' viewpoint and definitely tries to avoid any biases the author might have.

15. This author was often approached by one Witness who wished to start a study with him. While some excuse was always given, the publisher never seemed upset and one could almost guarantee that at the next meeting he would again ask, "Would you like to start a Bible Study with me?"

16. We have previously pointed out that the selling of literature is at best a most unprofitable proposition. While both regular and special pioneers do obtain all literature at a rate even lower than the rate at which publishers purchase this literature, the earnings would only amount to a few cents per week, an amount that barely serves as spending money for the pioneer.

17. This monthly allowance comes to approximately \$30.00 and is meant to cover all costs including food, clothing, transportation, and so on. As one observes the diligence and fervour with which these pioneers carry on their tasks one truly stands in amazement at their devotion to the Society. For this reason this author considers these pioneers as the "backbone" of the sect. While they are not perhaps as isolated from the secular sphere as their superiors, they are much involved with the comprehension, understanding, and recapitulation of the doctrines and dogmas of the sect that the "worldly temptations" they encounter inevitably leave them untouched and they are as certain of their faith as if they had not even encountered non-Witnesses.

18. Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Qualified to be Ministers, New York, 1955.

19. Numerically, this is the smallest of Witness meetings designed to help educate the congregation in some of the content of the Society's latest books. The study conductor directs this meeting by asking questions much like the Watchtower Study conductor asks for that study.

20. This statement, unfortunately, could not be documented other than by cross-checking many Witnesses.

21. While this practise may have had its beginnings in the sect's early days when members could little afford to give to their sect, there are also indications that the practice gained popularity during Rutherford's time. Considering how

Witnesses refer to this today, there can be little doubt that they consider this practice with much pride. It has become another "distinctive" by which they separate themselves from other Christian groups. In passing, what Witnesses do not seem to realize is that the practice of tithing giving one-tenth of one's income, is well advocated in both Old and New Testaments. This is but another indication of the extent to which they have accepted the Society's doctrine unquestioningly with little or no thinking and "Bible searching" on their own part.

22. Judging from the rather poor sample of Kingdom Halls we have examined (two in Eastern Canada and three in Western Canada) it appears that Canadian Kingdom Halls are not very elaborate structures. Quite often they are older buildings that are simply remodeled. In this way Witnesses are able to advance much of their funds to the headquarters of the Society to be used for further expansion in other parts of the world. The Society often advances capital to interested groups who need a new Hall in their area.

23. This implies that the Gilead student is already somewhat of a "chosen vessel" to be used by the Society for administrative purposes.

24. A. Rogerson, Op. cit., Diagrammatic chart.

25. W.C. Stevenson confirmed this. Cf. W.C. Stevenson, Op. cit., pg. 108.

26. W.J. Whalen, Op. cit., and W. Schnell, Op. cit.

27. This is particularly applicable when one considers the many splinter-groups which formerly broke from the main sect prior to the time that stricter controls were placed on leadership selection.

28. While questioning about these matters from the local informers is problematic, the anonymity of the Directors is well-established. They feel that they would receive too much honor and respect from sect members if they openly admitted that they produced all of the sect's literature. From the outsider's viewpoint, of course, anonymity has the advantage of totally eliminating any negative imaginations the rank-and-file may develop about the Directors (which they would then be likely to place on their literature as well). Thus, the Society has developed its own special kind of charisma in addition to a very unique means of institutionalizing that charisma.

29. Actually, internalization of a doctrine is likely to occur with time. This is especially true because the sect

allows for its own kind of "testing" of doctrines. With regard to their own authenticity, for example, they will say that the true Christian organization will be persecuted. They also define this persecution as indifference, mocking, or violent hatred towards the sect and towards individual members. Quite understandably such a broad spectrum of persecution can be witnessed daily as one observes "outsiders" reactions to Witnesses' door-to-door proselytization. Thus, this in itself tends to strengthen the sect member's faith in the Witness group since on this basis he believes that it really is being persecuted and that therefore it must be the authentic Christian group.



#### FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

1. John Lofland, Doomsday Cult, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1966.

2. Thomas O'Dea, The Mormons, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1957.

3. I am basing this on my personal study of this group.

4. Festinger, et.al., Op. cit.

5. Peter Berger, The Noise of Solemn Assemblies, Garden City, Doubleday, 1961, pg. 37.

6. The questions to which I am referring deal with the problems of pain, poverty, suffering, death, and related existential problems.

7. I am aware that my argument could well be strengthened with statistics. Unfortunately one cannot rely on the sect's statistics as previous studies (e.g. Cohn) have shown. Therefore, we are left with the option of examining as closely as possible the phenomenon to be studied.

8. Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life, (for future references this source will simply be called "Truth Book.")

9. Witnesses have a valid reason for this. People tend to regard an item they have purchased more highly than one which they received free so that a purchased magazine has a better chance of being read than a free one. Also, the Society is able to print this literary material for a ludicrously low cost (free labor from Witnesses and so on) so that any literary material that brings in monetary gains results in sufficient funds for the production of at least twice as much material again.

10. The "Truth Book," for example, is hard cover and has 190 pages yet costs only 25 cents.

11. Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, revised edition 1961. I have been informed that a further translation has now been completed.

12. I point out that the sale and placement of lit-

erary material is meticulously noted by all publishers even when they cover an area that is not normally their own (as is the case during conventions). When that area is covered again later on, a special effort is made at those homes where literature was first accepted in the hope that a further foothold may be gained there.

### 13. Truth Book.

14. Witnesses often refer to "sheeplike persons" in their literature and conversation. Witnesses define these individuals as "easy marks" in that they are usually quite psychologically ready to accept the Witness doctrine in contradistinction to many people who require more work and "cultivation" to be won for the sect.

15. My experiences differ in this point but do indicate that my statement is true. I started attending totally on my own and gave the story that I started coming out of curiosity following my reading of some of the sect's literature. This is a totally unconventional manner of entering into the sect and immediately someone "appointed himself" to be my "instructor." This was again repeated in another congregation where members had not known the extent of my involvement with the sect at another location. What I am suggesting, then, is that the sect seeks to maintain as much as possible a close personal contact with all neophytes regardless of their manner of entry into the sect. This seems to be a basic policy of the sect and Witnesses openly boast of the "closeness" that exists between sect members and newcomers.

16. I might point out that after several months' attendance at Witness meetings, I was also addressed in this manner most casually by Witnesses. To the serious potential convert this mode of address would provide a strong link of social attachment especially as he begins to identify himself as a "brother" in the sect. This identification is no doubt the hope of the sect and perhaps experienced Witnesses have found this technique to be an efficient device for creating the sense of belonging in the newcomer even before he has fully committed himself to the sect.

17. I point out briefly that my personal observation in the sect has indicated the permanence of the pressure to commitment. If one is not willing to commit oneself, Witnesses assume one is not psychologically ready for that step and wait several weeks before asking again. But never is anyone considered hopeless in the sect's attempts at proselytization (except, of course, where there is open antagonism but here we are talking about open, interested meeting attenders).

18. Let it be noted that practically all Witnesses of a participating congregation attend at least some of the time. Considering that the average congregation has about 100 members, there may well be 1000 to 1500 people present, especially when one counts newcomers and friends.

19. Much of this material was derived from my participant observation but is so obvious that any duplicate study will confirm my conclusions.

20. That group obviously controls its believers because they have no alternative group to join unless they change their whole thought system.

21. Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose, New York, 1959.

22. Figures vary from sect to sect and reliable ones are difficult to obtain. High defection is largely attributable to too stringent moral codes imposing too many prohibitions on sect members.

23. Unfortunately, there are no figures here. We need to rely only on our observations in the congregations we observed. I do not feel that the sect tries to hide the fact that there are defectors. Rather, it is obvious that each congregation is often reminded of these people and actively seeks to have them come back into the sect.

24. Watchtower, 1969, pg. 204, pg. 231, pg. 173. (It is pointless to mention the numbers of the magazines as pages are numbered sequentially.)

25. At Christmas, for example, the sect usually stresses that this is not an exceptionally joyous season for Witnesses and that they must not get the impression that because of inclement weather their proselytization should stop. Rather, it is emphasized that at this time of the year the chances of finding householders at home are much better and that because "worldly" people give gifts at this season, it is a great time to sell the sect's Bible translations and books.

We mention in passing that the process as we have described it may actually be reversed. The Society compels meeting attendance and a by-product or latent function of this will be association with Witnesses.

26. Many sects, including the Mormons, now try to accommodate modern scientific discoveries and even theories into their religious thought. They do not see these secular elements as a threat but as a partial confirmation of their religious beliefs in that no universe could be as diversified and yet remain in harmonious order unless a superior Being

directed it and gave it order. The Witnesses, however, are still far from assuming such a position as this would be the ultimate in compromise for them.

27. The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life.

28. Ibid., pg. 138.

29. Ibid., pg. 138; Nothing is mentioned as to why one should not regularly give of his earnings to the religious organization.

30. W.J. Whalen, Op. cit.

31. Truth Book, pg. 124; As an aside, the Society most certainly gives itself away at this point by the syntax of the sentence referred to. Firstly, the Society implies that it does instil this love, not the Spirit of God. If we understand the New Testament correctly, love is a "fruit," that is, a by-product or end result of faith. Love is not a characteristic that can or should be instilled but a characteristic that should automatically exist in the authentic Christian Church. The Society's attempt to instil it then raises serious questions concerning the sect's religious authenticity.

32. This author has never located Witness literature which gives credit to related religious groups who also adhere to a very literal biblical interpretation. This absence could probably be explained in that Witnesses find these other groups lacking in some other characteristics which the sect considers to be vital. Yet my reading of the sect's literature has led me to conclude that this religious group is fond of "blanket statements" and tends to generalize from one Protestant group to all without explaining how this can be done. But this is a moot point here.

33. Truth Book, pg. 125.

34. Ibid., pg. 127.

35. We have reached this conclusion on a representative sample of Watchtower articles. We have not considered the term, "Jehovah God," as a fragment of the sect's distinctives in that it also contains the usual name, God. Yet the term, "God," is used by itself just as frequently as the term, "Jehovah," is used by itself. This suggests to this writer that this characteristic is merely a cover used by the sect to distinguish itself from other sects and to give it an air of superiority and authenticity for the sake of maintaining an ever-growing membership.

36. Truth Book, pg. 129.

37. Ibid., pg. 130.

38. Ibid., pg. 126.

39. Just to give an example of the manner in which this is done, I relate a personal experience. I was returning from a proselytizing campaign with a group of Witnesses when one related how a Catholic clergyman openly condoned premarital and extra-marital sexual relations. Immediately the others stated that this is a good example of "organized religion" and that it was typical of all other groups as well. No one has actually taken the time to determine the veracity of many of the Society's strongest criticisms against Christian churches. It almost appears that Witnesses want to believe regardless of any blatant weaknesses the sect's doctrines might possess.

40. For example, Truth Book, pg. 134.

41. Ibid., pp. 141-143.

42. For the benefit of the totally unchurched reader, I point out that this is a typical Protestant hymn, written by Sir John Bowring to the music composed by Ithamar Conkey.

43. Truth Book, pp. 143-145.

44. Ibid., pg. 145.

45. L. Festinger, A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance, Palo Alto, Stanford University Press, 1957.

46. G. Homans, The Human Group, New York, Harcourt, 1950. And Peter Blau, Exchange and Power in Social Life, New York, Wiley, 1964.

47. Truth Book, pg. 131 ff.

48. H. Stroup, Op.cit.

## FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER V.

1. Werner Cohn, Op. cit., Footnote in Chapter 1.

2. The fact that competition is a vital factor in the attainment of social rewards is plainly understood and requires no further elaboration.

3. A more satisfactory explanation for their success is also related to their status in the sect. Women are considered inferior to men, hence could not exercise authority over any except their young children. Proselytization, however, provides them with the ideal situation to exercise such authority over both men and women since they have the truth for which neophytes are looking. As we all enjoy a position of authority and as women's authority in the sect is virtually nil, this situation appears to provide a powerful latent function to the sect: women are very effective and joyful proselytizers as this activity alone affords them the position of authority. Considering that the sex ratio is quite high (well over 100) this may explain why Witnesses never lose their "proselytization fervor": the women obtain the by-product of "ego-enhancement."

4. David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd, New Haven, Yale, 1950.

5. We point out that this is not simply a glib statement but one that can be substantiated when one reads the "Truth Book." Perhaps some individuals could continue their involvement in the sect without having committed themselves but these are definitely in the minority. The issues referred to in this introductory book (The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life) are so explicit that a confrontation for most individuals is inevitable and the result of this confrontation is obvious for those who complete the study and who still attend the sect's meetings.

6. D.R. Manwaring, Render Unto Caesar (Flag Salute Controversy), University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1962.

Recent United States court decisions concerning the rights of the Amish to refrain from sending their children to high school suggest that the validity of a separate way of life is gradually being recognized by others including some judges. It would appear that Witnesses do not face further persecutions in Canada or the United States if their present program remains unaltered. If their attacks on democracy and the governments continue, however, it could be

conceivable that the group would again be mildly persecuted by various radicals.

7. The term mediocrity is not used by Witnesses but adequately covers their basic feelings in this matter.

8. We have indicated elsewhere in this paper how some Witness women have come to welfare agencies in Alberta and have lived "off the government." While this is not typical of all Witnesses, their negative view towards the state would suggest that sometime in the future it would be conceivable to have a greater percentage from this sect on the welfare rolls. One young crippled girl, for example, had no desire at all for a job or for training. She was probably satisfied with her work for the sect and did not wish to spend her time on a secular activity which could eventually be of monetary value to her in the future.

9. On numerous occasions the author has noted a peculiar dependence of Witnesses on the "Society." One lady wished to ask the Society whether she should work or look after her nine year old son. Another younger girl wished to hear the Society's views on education before she decided to take a course. While we cannot determine how typical these responses actually are, we suggest that the Society has created a peculiar form of dependency in its members. After years of involvement in the sect, the Witness forgets how to think for himself, especially since he never thinks analytically or critically in the religious area which occupies so much of his time, thoughts, and actions.

10. Werner Cohn, Op.cit.

11. The sect has eliminated this from its doctrines in the belief that a loving God cannot punish human beings. Witnesses apparently have forgotten that God's justice necessitates some form of punishment for those who have flaunted his provision for salvation.

12. W.C. Stevenson, Op.cit., pp. 197-200.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. I should add that this matter and related ones concerning doctrinal changes are easily overcome by the sect since the majority (about 95%) of the membership have placed their absolute trust in the Society. In this sense, matters of this sort are only problematic for the Society, the group

which must alter the sect's doctrines in a pseudo-rational manner.



## APPENDIX

Basically, this appendix is added to provide additional behind-the-scenes information concerning Jehovah's Witnesses. Such a review can be particularly useful to the student of the same or other religious groups and to those who may prefer the method of participant observation over some other methods. Wherever possible, I have attempted to include actual quotations from sect members whom I met. At times it was necessary to paraphrase as I could not copy much of this conversation down verbatim. Dates and times of participant observation are indicated at the beginning of each new section. At times I may also add some interpretation to the observations made. Some of these may be speculative and may have indicated my line of reasoning prior to the final formulation of the ideas expressed in the thesis itself.

November 26, 1970, 7:20 p.m.

Upon entering Jehovah's Witnesses' Kingdom Hall for the very first time, I was greeted warmly by several of the men there and was soon asked how I happened to hear of their "organization." I replied that I had read some of their magazines and had just now found the time to come and visit the group. At this stage I was not certain that I would study the sect for any length of time but I did mention that I was interested in the organizational and doctrinal aspects of the

sect. The first meeting I attended was the Theocratic Ministry School but on this day the group had a periodic review of some of the material covered so that I was able to ask additional questions of my informant who sat beside me. At the time I believe he was engaged to a girl approximately fifteen years younger than he and this struck me as being unusual. I was informed, however, that this is quite typical in the sect. My informant told me that the course of the Ministry School continues indefinitely for every Witness. A written test sheet was handed out and every student was asked to fill this out using the Bible as a reference if necessary. The Society's books could not be used as these contained their specific answers to the questions. Following this written quiz the assistant overseer (who was replacing the overseer at the time) came to the platform, reviewed the questions, asked the audience for some answers, and gave some answers himself. Each student marked his or her own work. What struck me was that there were very few incorrect answers. If a Witness did not give a totally satisfactory answer the first time, the assistant overseer would ask another person the same question or else he would elaborate on the original response. Following this, the actual talks for the evening began. It was demonstrated how one should go about talking to others, giving particular emphasis to the use of Bible references. A ten-year old girl very successfully answered the questions of the inquiring female householder about matters

such as whether ministers of religion are to be paid. It appeared that the preparation for these simulated proselytization or role-playing sessions had been made by both the representative of the sect and by the householder as there was very little hesitation in asking or answering questions. The actual person being tested for her talk was the girl who was taking the role of representative of the sect. The Ministry School leader pointed out to her how well she had placed the questions for the "householder." Following several of these short talks, there were a number of other talks in the Service Meeting. Again, the men were the only ones who spoke to the congregation directly. Frequently these speakers would ask questions from the audience and the replies were then made when the speaker acknowledged the uplifted hand of either a male or female in the audience by referring to the males by their surname and to the females by their first names. The prefixes "brother" and "sister" were always used. Later in this meeting the present stand of the organization and the amount of work accomplished were reviewed. It was pointed out how significantly the "Bible studies" had increased even in Canada. Added "evidence" for this was brought up by sales figures of the sect's magazines and books in Canada. I was very surprised that even young children of six years and older were allowed to answer some questions during both of these meetings. When their answer was correct, they were immediately positively reinforced with words such as, "That's correct" or "that is a good answer, Paul." The service meeting usually

discusses a small pamphlet published exclusively for sect members called the "Kingdom Ministry." It appeared that all sect members had already read the latest one but the leader still felt it was a good idea to review the major points again and asked many in the congregation to answer some questions pertaining to the review. Typical of the content is this statement, "The fine October report represents an increase of 6,082 over the average number of publishers for 1968, and that is as if a good-sized town had come into the truth in just two short years. Think of it!" It was also emphasized that publishers should not just try to get along without preparing special talks when they go proselytizing but that they should definitely know what to talk about and to which Bible passages to refer people. The leader mentioned that it would be best if the Witness could persuade the householder upon his first contact to start a Bible study since later on the householder might be busy or might not be home when the Witness would call again. Also, it was stated that if the Bible study was done right away this might prompt the householder to avail himself of "this free and educational service which other religious groups are not able to provide." Also emphasized was the point that simply selling the sect's literature was not sufficient -- there must also be follow-up to determine whether the householder has any questions and whether he has read the material. It was also pointed out that "outsiders" must get a new view of the sect; the impression that Jehovah's Wit-

nesses do nothing more than sell books must be eradicated -- each Witness should try to leave the thought that the sect offers free Bible studies to all individuals who are interested. Several people in the congregation were then asked to give their experiences in this regard. These accounts then served as a corroboration of what had been said.

At the rear of the Hall was a place for purchasing magazines. I noted that most Witnesses did purchase some before or after the services. Many books could also be purchased but I was not pressured into buying any of these. In fact, I was not even asked if I wanted to have someone start a Bible study with me.

Following the meeting most Witnesses remained and chatted with each other, relating some of their experiences from that week. I was introduced to a number of other Witnesses who seemed very happy to see me there and who treated me not as a stranger but as someone whom they expected to come to the group -- as someone whom they had "unconsciously known" already. This particular Kingdom Hall was now used by two groups as there were too many Witnesses for only one group. Each group makes use of the Hall for the majority of its meetings but the times are different. One group uses the Hall on Sunday mornings, for example, while the other uses it in the afternoons. The same applies for other days; house studies are held on Tuesdays by one group and on Thursdays by the other. In this way the operating costs such as upkeep of the building,

taxes, utilities can be shared by both groups. Each group at this time had approximately 80 members.

When I indicated that I was about to leave the Hall, several of the people I had met asked if I had a means of transportation home which I did. Otherwise I suppose they would have driven me to my residence.

December 1, 1970, 7:30 p.m.

During this meeting it became obvious that the same methods of review, the question-answer methods, were used. Before the meeting began, several other Witnesses approached me and chatted about the sect. Because I knew what to expect for this meeting, I felt much more at ease than during the first meeting. This time the overseer was my "informant." I asked about the feedback the speakers receive from the Theocratic Ministry School servant and learned that I was correct in noting that most of this feedback is positive. Yet in cases where the student is not employing the Society's methods correctly or where greater emphasis should be given, the "teacher" will refer the student to the sect's textbook on technique, Qualified to be Ministers. I also questioned the overseer as to what approach is used for the selection of overseers and immediately he referred me to several Bible passages which indicated that the procedure Jehovah's Witnesses are using is indeed biblical. Essentially, the process is one in which an individual is sought who has the characteristics described in I. Timothy 3. Now there will be many potential overseers

in a congregation. The committee at the local level (consisting of the overseer and all of the remaining servants described in the thesis) meets, prays, and reads the Bible passage indicated, then selecting two people using the "information available about these people" as a basis for selection. These "nominations" are then submitted to the headquarters of the sect where essentially the same procedure is followed. After a decision is reached the local congregation is notified of who its new servant or overseer will be.

Following this meeting, I had the opportunity to meet a sect member who had joined the group shortly after the Second World War. He also introduced me to his family. With regards to his "motives" for the joining the sect, he stated that "all of the so-called Christian churches in Europe hoped that God was on their side even if this meant that the enemies, who also believed in the same God hoped exactly the same thing and prayed that God would give them victory." This man continued, "The German church, for example, was definitely off the track when it started to give in to Hitler and followed all of his wishes." Now this man has a high position in a local congregation but stated that it is not so much the amount of work that an individual does as the "condition of his spiritual-well-being" which really matters. As a further confirmation of his belief, this Witness pointed out that the printing presses of the headquarters of the sect in New York were now being used day and night and simply "cannot keep up

with the demand for our literature." This then corroborated the idea -- for him -- that more and more people are now interested in reading and buying the sect's literature.

With the festive season of Christmas approaching, it was pointed out that all publishers should budget their time during the month of December, being sure to keep in mind that the festivities of Christendom and of "worldly" people would hinder the work of the Witnesses since at this time people are hardly ready for the sect's message. Consequently, it was suggested that all Witnesses attempt to meet their quota for proselytization before the beginning of the holidays "before the spirit of Christmas had aroused the people to the point of celebration." It was also emphasized that for the cold months it was imperative to make the initial entree to the point, to tell who you are, what you are selling and what it costs. Again the speaker stressed that the major purpose of the sect is not to sell literature but mainly to make individuals aware of the new Bible translation which is the "most beautiful and easy to understand ever made." Of course, not to be forgotten is that the Bible is then supplemented by "another little booklet which outlines the main areas of study in the Bible, Aid to Bible Study, and that this book is sold along with the Bible for a nominal charge."

In the subsequent service meeting the issue of the bulletin board was brought up. A brother came to the front and started debating with the overseer (probably in a "rigged"



situation) about whether or not to put up a letter written by a rather well-to-do Witness who had made a sizeable contribution to the local Kingdom Hall. A dialogue ensued between the publisher and the overseer and they came to the conclusion that the purpose of the information board was to provide the congregation with information that would be pertinent to all and that has value for all members. The matter of the wealthy Witness, however, was emphasizing the prominence and possible "glorification" of one individual and should not be publicized since some less well-to-do person might feel offended. The matter of posting wedding notices on this board was also discussed. The headquarters of the sect had reached a ruling on this already but the local setting served to imprint the "truth" of this on the minds of all present. When each Witness asked the question as to whether such a posting would be of information to all in the congregation, the answer was obviously "no" since these matters had nothing to do with the witnessing work or some related area and since nothing in such a notice contributed as to how the "work" was being forwarded and carried out. This example clearly shows why I have referred to Witnesses as being very pragmatically oriented.

December 3, 1970, 7:30 p.m.

This meeting was another Theocratic Ministry School. This time I met an informant who would later be very useful in another setting. He told me of the functions of publishers

and that they pledge to spend ten hours per month for the sect. I was also informed about the pioneers. This particular organization had nine pioneers but no special pioneers as they were not needed -- enough of the work was carried on by the regular publishers and the pioneers who were active on a daily basis. Another congregation in this area has only one regular pioneer so that I suspect the latter congregation is the more established one in the area. Even though I had not attended very many meetings at this point, it became obvious that the men were the only ones who addressed the congregation directly. All women who were "students" spoke indirectly through the simulated proselytization sessions described in the thesis. At this point in time, I started to become aware of the various servants and their duties.

As it appeared that there were an inordinate number of unmarried Witnesses present, I questioned my informant about this but learned that Witnesses can get married just like people of other religious groups. At first I was under the impression that they took Paul's words in Corinthians seriously where he stated that he wished all could be like himself -- in the celibate state. As already mentioned, however, most Witnesses marry later in life and it is not unusual for the wife to be ten or even fifteen years younger than her husband. This means, usually, that the wife will be quite young and the husband in his 30's. One possible explanation

for this is that young men can either devote more time "to the work of the Kingdom" or else earn sufficient money in preparation for marriage.

My suspicions about the absence of the conversion experience in this sect proved to be correct. All that is required of the neophyte to join is that he read and become familiar with the Bible and Jesus' forgiveness -- the sect teaches -- follows automatically. The individual then dedicates himself to the work of God through the act of baptism -- the most important step as a commitment to the sect. Yet, the Society insists that the sect member is not a member in the usual sense. Apparently no records are kept of the names of members yet the local congregation continues to tabulate the efforts of these members with scrupulous accuracy! I believe the major "motive" we may attribute this to would be that the sect wishes to set itself apart from other groups that call themselves Christian but are not according to the sect.

February 11, 1971, 7:30 p.m.

On this date I attended for the first time in another Kingdom Hall. I was rather surprised to see a number of Negro women in attendance as well as a Chinese lady. In the part of the country where these two groups are situated, however, my personal denominational affiliations indicated a high concentration of immigrants so that this situation in the sect may have been typical of the area. At any rate, these ladies were

conducting the talk for the evening and indicated some of the mechanics as to how to tell one's Bible students about the "persecution" they would necessarily undergo when they continued studying with Jehovah's Witnesses. The sect members pointed out that it would be good to mention to the neophyte that Witnesses are "on the narrow road" and that this will mean that the majority of people will be "opposed to those who want life via the narrow road." It was emphasized that a good tactic would be to prompt neophytes to state that they are willing to face opposition as long as they can continue to study the Bible with the help of a Jehovah's Witness teacher. Later on in the conversation, the Witness may wish to mention that even the neophyte's relatives may be very much opposed to his novel involvement in the sect. While this may be a difficult step, "with Jehovah's help all can overcome their persecutions."

If we may now be permitted a word of interpretation, we feel that the above, while not overly emphasized within the sect, has great functions from our standpoint. The sect has acted well in sensitizing neophytes to the "dangers, rejection and ridicule" they will experience as a result of their association with the Witnesses. Since most newcomers by this time are also aware that persecution is a sign of "authenticity" of the religious group, this will make it all the more difficult for the neophyte to terminate his contacts with this group.

Following this meeting, I had the opportunity to chat

with another of my informants and referred to a large convention in New York in the 1950's. At this convention a Witness physician was interviewed and his views on blood transfusions discussed. The doctor was asked if he would conscientiously prescribe the necessary transfusions for non-Witness patients. He stated that he always did so and did not see this as an infringement of the sect's views. I stated all of this to my informant and asked him how he felt about this doctor and how this would tie in with his personal views. He categorically denied that any true Jehovah's Witness could have made such a statement. From all appearances he could not tolerate this form of disconfirmation of his beliefs about sect members; consequently, he had to deny that the person making this statement was a Witness.

A number of Witnesses also approached me this time and asked me if I would not like to start a Bible study with them. Perhaps I was rather conspicuous in this meeting as I had not met this intense "pull towards involvement" at the previous congregation. I learned also at this time that the congregation was making plans to divide its Theocratic Ministry School into two sections so that more individuals could be given the opportunity to present their talks. With two schools in progress at the same time, each member of this congregation would be able to present a talk at least once every three months which is probably the normal period.

February 18, 1971

During these two meetings several further observations were noted. I noticed that Witness women are not even allowed to read the Bible to the congregation. The only time they are allowed to read the Bible in the Kingdom Hall is during the simulated role-playing situations. This again emphasized for me the intense sex differences the sect makes.

In this particular congregation about fifteen members have fallen away within the past year or so. It was pointed out to those present that whenever possible these former members should be encouraged to continue their attendance particularly as the Memorial Meal was approaching. This meal represents the annual ritual in the sect where Christ's death is commemorated and is the one time where all Witnesses actively attempt to bring back those who may have belonged to the sect at one time.

I was also informed, along with everyone present, that the next week's meetings at the local Kingdom Hall were cancelled in light of the coming assembly of a number of congregations.

Lastly, members were urged to write many letters to the officials of the Malagasy Republic in Africa in protest against the "injustice being caused by banning the activities of our brothers there." Witnesses were informed of the addresses in Africa and also of the addresses of these officials at the United Nations in New York.

During these meetings I also met another young Witness who was just completing his Grade 10 at high school. He had been a publisher since age 11 and informed me that his parents were also sect members. His knowledge of the sect's doctrines was very good as attested by his score in various reviews and by his answers to various questions. When asked about his future plans, he gave a non-committal reply which seemed to suggest that he left himself open to the possibility of full time work in the sect. Also, his remarks that evolution "was nothing more than a theory" indicated that he had defended himself from some of the typical problems the young Witness is confronted with. This person was quite active in the group's recreational activities which did not appear to be very organized to me.

In this and subsequent meetings I also had the opportunity to meet some of the young people that had not yet totally committed themselves to the sect. One particular young man did very poorly in his review and even scored lower than I did even though I had not prepared myself for this and relied largely on my personal knowledge of the Bible. He commented about my score but left the impression that he was not yet fully committed to the sect.

February 26, 1971, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m..

This was the first meeting of the assembly of approximately fifteen congregations. I was told that this was the "normal" number of congregations that gather together for

meetings of this sort. There were at least 1,100 people present for this first meeting. Prior to the start of the meeting I had the opportunity to meet several Witnesses who gladly volunteered the following comments: "It is good to attend these meetings as one gets more of the spirit if one attends them all rather than just one." Implicit in that statement was the idea that sect members enjoy meetings of this sort as they provide some form of "relief" and "emotional uplift" which makes the day-to-day routine of proselytization somewhat more tolerable. Another Witness informed me that he felt that circuit assemblies (regional conventions) were of a "more human nature" than district or international ones as the latter are too large and are too hectic. Another Witness stated that he found the sect "to be far more logical than any other religion once you have read and understand the Society's books. You start with the truth book but it is not until you read and digest all the other books that you really find out how much coherence there is between them and that it all fits into a neat system." These quotations from actual Witnesses indicate that one possible function the sect provides is a type of ideological and doctrinal security which cannot be found in the larger groups of Christianity.

February 27, 1971, 9:00 a.m.

Even during this meeting the pattern of presenting several small talks was followed. It was pointed out how householders could be invited to these special meetings and



how the sect's magazines could be sold. I was left with the impression that the speakers were addressing a totally new group, not a group of dedicated Witnesses but I suspect that this form of repetition of content and techniques is very typical of the sect.

The baptismal candidates were informed of their great "privilege of service", that this was a "time for rejoicing but that this also brings with it the responsibility to study on one's own and to attend all of the meetings without continually being asked to do so." My impression was that the actual act of immersion has less significance than the commitment to Jehovah and to the Society. As an example, one second generation Witness was baptized at age 14, fell away from the group because his commitment was more "social than personal," was later rebaptized when he again committed himself and is now a member in mediocre standing. Of the twenty candidates about 15 were female.

I was asked to "go into the field" with some of my former acquaintances. This was a totally novel experience to me so I expressed my hesitation. I was encouraged however, so that I finally agreed. On our way to the proselytization area, a pioneer mentioned to us that every time she sees a dedication service "it is like a re-dedication" to her. She implied in this that she identifies strongly with all of the baptismal candidates and renews her commitment to the sect at least three times per year.

Upon arriving "in the field" my fellow-proselytizer (informant) mentioned that normally he does not mention to householders that he is a Witness unless he is asked specifically. He felt that most strangers "clam up" when they are confronted with someone they know to be a Jehovah's Witness. I asked my informant what differences exist between the Witness sect and related groups. Here is his reply: "Witnesses preach the pristine Christianity without traditions such as Christmas, Easter and so on and also have more of the holy spirit than other groups. The circuit assemblies are much more personal than the bigger ones and I enjoy them much more. Yes, I did fall away from the sect but now I really believe that what the Society teaches is the true Christianity and all other so-called religions are false. Take for example the notion of the Trinity. Other groups tend to accept this doctrine without really studying about it. How could there possibly be such a thing--three individuals in one; that certainly is not very logical."

Many of the homes that we called on indicated a relatively negative response. This did not shake my informant and he stated that this is quite typical. If someone is very hostile and does not wish another Witness to call this will be recorded and no one will call back for a few years. After that someone again calls as the original householder may have moved away. The informant stated that he was careful to walk on sidewalks as one unfortunate experience indicated: "I met

a man who said he did not want to have anything to do with Witnesses because one winter a Witness took a shortcut across his lawn and really messed it up. He said if Witnesses were in such a hurry and did not have respect for other people's property then he did not want to have anything to do with them."

March 7, 1971, 1:00 p.m..

This public lecture was given by a circuit servant who was making his regular tour of this area. His topic was "Christian Decision Making." "Basically, the Bible principles apply: there is to be no fornication, stealing, lying and so on. But often we are not sure just what is right. Take the example of sports: the Christian should examine this to see if the associations for such an activity are healthy or not. Quite clearly, associating with a football or hockey team will be a bad influence on you. Also, if you keep the long-term results in mind, you will find out that if you were to excel in sports and were to be awarded a trophy this might involve a nationalistic ceremony in which you effectively give tribute to a power other than Jehovah's."

"Here is another example: movie attendance. For the Christian who is strong in his faith, this might not necessarily shake that faith yet his doing so might be a bad influence on a newer or weaker brother and so he should refrain from seeing movies. Also, the very fact that movies are considered popular by the world is an indication of their appeal to man's lower nature and so the Christian certainly would not

want to be identified by watching such movies."

"The third example we want to consider is attendance at the funerals of our relatives in Christendom. For the strong Christian Witness this sort of thing might be all right and he might even be able to be a testimony by attending. However, for someone weaker in the faith, such an act might shake his faith and possibly cause him to return to his former pagan habits (such as crossing himself when walking out of a Roman Catholic church)."

"Here is still another example of what we are trying to say: our day-to-day jobs. We need to be careful about the type of work we do. Since we believe it is not right to live by the sword we must be careful not to work in any weapon manufacturing business because those who live by the sword will perish by it. A second matter we need to be careful about is our salary. In business, an increase in salary usually means that more demands are made on the worker. We need to assess our situation to see whether the slight monetary gain is worth the cost in additional time and effort. With regard to working overtime, this too should be avoided for the same reason."

March 11, 1971, 7:30 p.m..

I had the opportunity to talk to a physics major attending a university. He saw no real conflict between his religion and university but did admit that not too many Witnesses go to university because most see it as a waste in time.

Although his parents had been members and he had attended since childhood he stated that he was "just getting into the organization now." The meeting emphasized the "joy in serving Jehovah" and that there was not "very little time left in this wicked system of things so that witnessing in whatever form takes on prime significance and all other issues take on lesser importance."

March 23, 1971, 7:30 p.m..

This was the first time I attended at a Congregation Book Study and there were only about 15 people present. I was already well-known because I had attended the other meetings very regularly. Everyone present took turns reading the Bible references. I noticed that even the younger males tend to be addressed with their surname whereas all females are addressed by their first or personal name. This clearly denotes that the female has been given a subordinate position in the sect.

March 30, 1971, 7:30 p.m..

Before the start of the meeting I had the opportunity to chat with the leader concerning my subject of interest, sociology. I pointed out that sociologists are trying to discover laws just as the physical scientists have discovered certain laws. Immediately he pointed out that if men were to live by the laws of God, the problems of mankind would be over. Specifically, he was referring to the medical problem arising

from "loose sexual behavior." He also pointed out that rather than studying some subject as those given at university it would be far wiser to spend one's time studying the material presented by the Watchtower Society because this material is "really worth studying."

With regard to the seating arrangement, it was clear that the men sat closer to the leader than the women. Unconsciously, this again emphasizes that males tend to be given much more priority in the sect. Now that I am considered a part of the group (I am also called "brother") I am surprised that so little inquiry has been made into my past religious history.

I also noted that the males, especially the younger ones tend to take on a far more active role than the women. Teenage boys often ask questions of clarification whereas the women tend to limit their responses to questions directed towards them personally.

In another part of Canada I contacted all overseers in one community and asked for their reactions to a proposed sociological study of their group. Surprisingly, I found their response quite positive suggesting that they might go along with this. Checking this out more closely, however, I concluded that this was simply a trick to involve me ideologically. Even though most of the overseers I contacted are very busy people, they easily spent ten or fifteen minutes with me on the telephone indicating that they seemed to be interested in

"converting" people with my sort of background and interest in the group.

Recently I have also encountered a rather unusual form of identification which should readily gain popularity in the sect. As I was driving I noticed that the car ahead had the letters "YHWH" in gold on the rear window. Immediately I was aware that this was a Jehovah's Witness. While some other forms of advertising are also used the sect usually prefers personal contacts with householders.

All of the above quotations and descriptions again lend validity to our thesis that the Witness sect is indeed a very special group that has set itself apart from other religious groups and especially from secular influences.

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