

A CHRONOLOGY of JW HISTORY (1/2020)

1843-1845	William Miller (1781-1849) attracts about 100,000 followers by predicting Christ's second coming for 1843. After disconfirmation this is revised to 1844. The movement then disintegrates but in 1845 survivors start to re-organize and are called "Second Adventists". Over the next decades they organize into many sects.
1852	Birth of Charles Taze Russell who grows up in Allegheny near Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania.
1869	C.T. Russell's faith, after a brief period as a skeptic, is rejuvenated by Jonas Wendel a preacher of the Advent Christian Church. [The Advent Christian Church, founded in 1861, is one of the many groups that organized from the Second Adventists.]
1869-1873	Russell attends meetings led by George Storrs (1796-1879) and George Stetson (1814-1879). [Storrs was a prominent figure in the Millerite movement and a founder of the Life and Advent Union (1863) which is another Second Adventist sect. Stetson was a minister of the Advent Christian Church.]
c.1873	William Henry Conley (1840-1897) a wealthy businessman and his wife, and C.T. Russell and his father and sister, start a new study group. Russell is baptized in 1874, whether within the Advent Christian Church or within the new study group is unclear.
1876	Russell is elected "pastor" of the Russell/Conley Bible class. His group unites with a group of Second Adventists led by Nelson H. Barbour and John H. Paton. [Barbour had experienced the disappointment of 1844 and lost his faith, but became a believer again in 1859.] An article by Russell titled "Gentile Times: When Do They End?" is published in <i>The Bible Examiner</i> (October 1876, pp 27-28) which is the magazine founded and edited by George Storrs. Russell predicts that A.D 1914 is: "when Jerusalem shall be delivered forever... When Gentile Governments shall have been dashed to pieces; when God shall have poured out of his fury upon the nation, and they acknowledge him King of Kings and Lord of Lords."
1877	<i>Three Worlds</i> , a book written by N.H. Barbour and C.T. Russell, is published. These two men at this stage believe and predict that the "living saints" would ascend to heaven in 1878. <i>The Object and Manner of Our Lord's Return</i> , a booklet by C.T. Russell, is published.

1879	Russell and Barbour split up over doctrinal disputes. The first edition of <i>Zion's Watch Tower</i> is published with a printing of 6000. Russell gets married to Maria F. Ackley (1850-1938).
1881	Russell and Paton split up. The latter had postponed the ascent of the "living saints" to 1914 (Russell had predicted 1881) and also preached universal salvation which Russell called heresy.
1881	Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society is founded as an unincorporated association with its three officers selected on the basis of \$10 shares: W.H. Conley – President (\$3,500) Joseph L. Russell – Vice-president (\$1,000) Charles T. Russell – Secretary-Treasurer (\$500) Extensive distribution of free tracts starts. In Britain boys are hired to give out 300,000 copies of <i>Food for Thinking Christians</i> outside churches.
1884	Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society is legally incorporated in Pennsylvania with C.T. Russell its president.
1886	The first of Russell's six-volumes on theology and prophecy is published: <i>Studies in the Scriptures Volume 1 The Divine Plan of the Ages</i> . Russell's followers believe that Jesus returned invisibly in 1874, God's Kingdom began in heaven in 1878, the "time of the end" is 115 years from 1799-1914, and world peace under the rule of Old Testament heroes raised from the dead would start in 1914.
1889	The Russell cult holds its first convention, April 14-18. The venue is their "Meeting Room" or "Hall" at 101 Federal Street, Allegheny, Pennsylvania. The attendance is 225 from 12 US states and Canada with 22 baptized. "Bible House" in Allegheny becomes Russell's headquarters. It includes a printery, accommodation for staff, and a hall with seating for 200.
1891	Russell takes his first trip to Europe to meet with people who read and believe his publications and get them organized.
1893	A convention in Chicago is attended by 360 with 70 baptized.
1894	Russell establishes the "pilgrim" program under which travelling representatives of Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society visit congregations to strengthen their allegiance to Russell. A split occurs in the cult because Russell's increasing control and demands are viewed as "Pope-like power". Rose Ball, Russell's "foster daughter", supports Russell in the conflict and is appointed as one of the seven directors of Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society.

1896	The name of Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society is changed to Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania (WBTS).
1897	Russell's wife leaves the cult over doctrinal disputes and Russell's intimacies with Rose Ball, resulting in negative publicity and court battles over the next dozen years. Their marriage according to Russell was "celibate for 18 years". Throughout the 20 th century JW leaders claim Rose Ball was only 10 to 15 years old and Russell therefore innocent. But she was 28 in 1897!
1900	The first foreign branch office of the WBTS is opened in London by Ernest C. Henninges and his wife Rose Ball Henninges.
1902	A WBTS office in Germany is opened.
1903	Ernest and Rose Henninges open a branch office in Australia.
1904	The sixth volume of <i>Studies in the Scriptures</i> is published. Publication of convention reports begin. Russell's sermons begin to appear in newspapers.
1909	Russell relocates his headquarters including the offices of the WBTS to Brooklyn, New York. The Peoples Pulpit Association is founded in New York to meet legal requirements and in 1956 becomes the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York Inc. <i>Zion's Watch Tower</i> is renamed <i>The Watch Tower</i> .
1912	Russell and a committee of followers make a westward around-the-world voyage to report on missionary work and to fulfil the preaching foretold in Matthew 24:14.
1914	The International Bible Students Association (Britain) is founded. <i>The Photo Drama of Creation</i> begins to be screened and over several years attracts millions of viewers. Russell's sermons are published in 2000 newspapers.
1915	It becomes obvious that the "time of the end" is not ending in 1914/1915 in worldwide revolution followed by paradise on Earth as Russell had predicted. Many leave the cult and the number of newspapers printing Russell's sermons plummets.
1916	Russell dies in October.
1917	"Judge" Joseph Franklin Rutherford (1869-1942) becomes president of the WBTS. The publication of <i>The Finished Mystery</i> causes strife and hundreds leave the cult and begin to establish separate Bible Students groups.
1918	Rutherford's sermon <i>Millions Now Living May Never Die</i> . Rutherford and other leaders are sentenced in June to 20 years under the Espionage Act and imprisoned in Atlanta Penitentiary. The cult loses about 20% of its members due to disputes over the legitimacy of Rutherford's presidency and because predictions in <i>The Finished Mystery</i> are already proving false. However, almost 4000 members worldwide (in the US about 750) remain active.

1919-1942

Rutherford blames the churches for his imprisonment and plans revenge, declaring while still in prison: "I'll take the dagger of truth, and I'll rip the innards out of old Babylon." (Yearbook of JW's 1975, p. 115)

There is evidence that Rutherford has a secret agenda which is to win so many converts to the WTS that other religions and governments will lose popular support, leaving the WTS to take over the rule of the world. To facilitate this goal he reorganizes the Russellites from 1919 to 1938 into the most united group of people on Earth, politically and religiously unified, because unified minorities can often dominate disunited majorities. A minority group of unified voters motivated by an agenda can, for example, sometimes swing elections in their favour. Small armies with high morale, unity, and using superior tactics often defeat much bigger armies and win the war. Under Rutherford's agenda prophecies of a supernatural imminent Armageddon are a means to an end i.e. to attract and retain converts and stimulate them to preach. The evidence includes quotes like these:

"Christ's reign has come; join us in the great movement that will prevent further bloodshed and revolution and usher in the new world... If the nations of the earth would peaceably surrender and render obedience to the Lord, the kingdom would be established WITHOUT TROUBLE. If not, then trouble must follow..." (Peoples Pulpit, December 1, 1922)

"...he [Rutherford] began to tell us that we should not selfishly anticipate going to heaven in 1925, when there was so much work still to be done on earth ... he showed us a great world organization. He pictured vast billions coming out of all the kingdoms of the world, person after person and class after class, slowly learning the kingdom." (Schnell, W. 1971, *30 Years A Watch Tower Slave*, Baker Book House, pp 47-48)

"Without the support of the common peoples that wicked system called 'Christendom' could not survive... Let the multitude of peoples completely and entirely withdraw all support morally, financially and otherwise from 'Christendom' or 'organized Christianity', so-called." (Freedom for the Peoples, 1927, 31-32, 40)

"After the wise men have failed to convert the world, God purposes to do it by the simple and seemingly foolish method of preaching." (The Watch Tower 1929, October 15, p. 316)

	<p>"The political leaders have been misled by the ecclesiastics, and their only way to succeed now in doing real good to the people is to sever connection with the ecclesiastical leaders, and to act under the Lord's leadership." [i.e. under the WTS or God's organization] (World Recovery 1934, p. 19)</p>
1919	<p>Rutherford and the other leaders are released from prison in March.</p> <p>A convention at Cedar Point, Ohio, in September stimulates renewed enthusiasm and emphasises going house to house which in the following years is made increasingly mandatory.</p> <p>The first edition of <i>The Golden Age</i> magazine is published. (Replaced by <i>Consolation</i> in 1937 and <i>Awake!</i> in 1946.)</p>
1920	<p>The WTS commences printing operations in Brooklyn, New York.</p> <p>Rutherford's book <i>Millions Now Living Will Never Die</i> is published to fulfil Matthew 24:14. In the book Rutherford predicts that the resurrection of the "ancient worthies" will take place in 1925. The book and prophecy cements Rutherford's control over most of Russell's followers and helps to activate them to go door to door.</p>
1920-1922	<p>In 1920 Rutherford requires his followers to turn in weekly report slips of their door to door activity. Terms such as "witnesses", "witnessing", "service work" and "service worker" start to enter regular use.</p> <p>In 1922 another convention is held at Cedar Point, Ohio, where Rutherford declares: "Advertise the King and the Kingdom". About 9000 followers report "service work" i.e. their door-to-door activity.</p>
1922-1928	<p>Annual conventions are held. At each convention Rutherford announces a "resolution" which is distributed in printed form (up to 50 million copies).</p> <p>In 1930 the seven resolutions are interpreted as the "seven last plagues" of Revelation 15-16. (<i>Light</i>, Volume II, pp 20-38, 57-67)</p>
1924	<p>In February the WBTS's radio station, WBBR on Staten Island, New York, begins broadcasting.</p>
1925	<p>The doctrine that God's Kingdom was set up in heaven in 1914 is made official truth. This makes defunct God's (i.e. Russell's) heavenly kingdom of 1878 which is no longer taught.</p>
1926	<p>In 1926 Brooklyn headquarters celebrates Christmas for the last time — henceforth Christmas is considered a pagan celebration.</p>
1927	<p>The first yearbook is published, titled <i>Yearbook of the International Bible Students Association</i> (1926), reporting statistics for 1926.</p>
1926-1930	<p>The cult loses about 70% of its attendance due to failed prophecy and increasing pressure on everyone to go door to door and report their activity.</p> <p>In 1928 about 24,000 on average report their service work.</p>

1929	Beth Sarim ("House of Princes") is built in California to advertise the imminent takeover of the world by Abraham, Samson, Daniel and other Old Testament heroes, which is expected in the 1930s.
1930/1931	Christ's "second presence" is transferred from 1874 to 1914.
1931	The name "Jehovah's witnesses" is adopted. <i>The Watch Tower</i> is changed to <i>The Watchtower</i> . Door to door "witnesses" number near 50,000.
1931-1932	Prophecies of Israel's literal restoration which Rutherford had reaffirmed in his books <i>Comfort for the Jews</i> (1925) and <i>Life</i> (1929) are discarded and reinterpreted as fulfilled in JWs and their Organization.
1932	Rutherford abolishes Russell's arrangement of each congregation electing its elders. In the book <i>Preservation</i> (1932) Rutherford divides JWs into pre and post 1919 members and asserts both groups must preach until Armageddon which some of them will see and survive. This ends belief in a miraculous ascent of all of them together to heaven.
1934	JWs start to use portable record players to play short sermons by Rutherford at doors and in public places.
1935	Until 1935 all JWs are members of the 144,000 and believe they'll go to heaven when they die. In 1935 a new "harvest" is announced, that of a "great multitude" or "great crowd" who will get eternal life on Earth but have to first join JWs. The term "publisher" is introduced to refer to all who go door to door.
1933-1945	JWs are banned in Germany and (for differing periods) in about 40 countries.
1938	Rutherford has by now made JWs the most unified religion on Earth. The WBTS appoints all overseers, determines all doctrine, permits no dissent or alternative viewpoints, and has abolished political divisions and other sources of conflict, and is even opposing marriage and childbirth. This worldwide unity which critics later call "totalitarianism" JWs call "Theocracy" and "Theocratic organization".
1941	Number of "publishers" passes 100,000.
1942	Rutherford dies. Nathan Homer Knorr (1905-1977) becomes Watchtower Society president. <i>The Watchtower</i> clearly links the phrase "this generation" to 1914, stating: "Pointing to the events of our time since 1914 Jesus said ... "Verily I say unto you, This generation [including the remnant] shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." (1942 7/1 204)
1943	Gilead Missionary School is established. The United States Supreme Court rules in favour of JWs in 20 of 24 cases.

1943-1944	Training in congregations is introduced to make JWs effective "ministers" and later supplemented with the books <i>Theocratic Aid to Kingdom Publishers</i> (1945), <i>Equipped for Every Good Work</i> (1946) and <i>Qualified to be Ministers</i> (1955).
1944	The "Governing Body" is identified as the seven "directors" of the Pennsylvania Corporation of the WTS. All Governing Body members have to also be members of the "remnant" (i.e. the remnant of the 144,000 who go to heaven when they die). Hayden C. Covington resigns as vice president because he is not of this "heavenly class" and is replaced by Frederick W. Franz. (1893-1992) In practice two men are in charge, Knorr and Franz.
1944	The WBTS Charter is amended so that share-holding voters who annually re-elect the directors of the WBTS and whose votes are proportional to their donations are from now on limited to one vote each. In 1971 Franz interprets this amendment as fulfilment of Daniel 8:14.
1945	The interpretation that the days of creation were each 7000 years long is published in <i>The Watchtower</i> (February 15). This doctrine implies that Armageddon and paradise on Earth will occur 6000 years after Adam & Eve sinned. With Adam's creation date calculated as 4028 BCE this suggests the 1970s.
1945-1951	<p><i>The Watchtower</i> again links "this generation" to 1914, stating:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">But what about when we refer to the Bible to compare its predictions long ago made with the happenings of recent years, from A.D. 1914 onward? ... The Bible foretells what is to come upon this generation at Jehovah's hands, putting an end to all the inhuman acts, woes and destructions brought upon our race by demons and men. (1945 1/1 4)</p> <p>The Governing Body now sets all congregations the "quota" of increasing by 10% yearly, sometimes suggesting 20%, and in the <i>1951 Yearbook</i> (p. 28) even 34%.</p> <p>JWs become "the fastest growing religion" with publishers increasing as follows: 1945 15.8%; 1946 24%; 1947 14.5%; 1948 27.3%; 1949 21%; 1950 18.9%; 1951 17.1%.</p> <p>After 1950 "this generation since 1914" becomes standard doctrine and gets frequent mention. Projecting the 1940s publisher-numbers by 10% or 20% yearly for 60 years comes to billions and implies world-takeover by the Governing Body within the lifetime of people alive in 1914. However, the growth markedly slows down in the 1950s and more so in the 1960s.</p> <p>[The previous WTS interpretation started the final generation in 1878! And previous to that the last generation began in 1799!]</p>

1946	<i>Awake!</i> magazine replaces <i>Consolation</i> . <i>Let God Be True</i> is published and becomes the textbook for "home bible studies" with the public until 1968.
1948	Beth Sarim the "House of Princes" is sold.
1950	Opposition to blood transfusion, hinted at in 1944, is now an established doctrine and deaths from blood loss occur in hospitals. The <i>New World Translation</i> of the New Testament is released in English.
1952	The doctrine of vaccinations being "against the law of Jehovah", taught since the 1920s, is discarded because it hinders the JW leaders and the missionaries when going overseas.
1953	The peak number of publishers for the year is over 500,000. Renewed emphasis on training for house to house ministry.
1946; 1950; 1953; 1958; 1963; 1969; 1978.	International Conventions with many attendance figures above 100,000. The largest is in New York in 1958 with an attendance of 253,900.
1959	The Kingdom Ministry School for training congregation overseers and travelling "circuit servants" commences in South Lansing, New York.
1961	The <i>New World Translation</i> , the entire Bible in one volume, is published in English. <i>Awake!</i> confirms that Armageddon will come in the 20 th century: "Revelation 16:16 calls it the "war of the great day of God the Almighty," Armageddon. This war will come in the twentieth century. " (1961, February 22, p. 8)
1963	Over 1,000,000 publishers. <i>New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures</i> released in six more languages.
1965	JWs acquire an "Assembly Hall" in New York, the first of many assembly halls around the world.
1966	Strong hints are published in the book <i>Life Everlasting...</i> (pp 28-30) that Armageddon would occur around 1975. The reasoning is that the days of creation including the seventh day i.e. God's "day of rest" are each 7000 years long. The final 1000 years of God's 7000-year rest would be the post-Armageddon millennium of peace and paradise on Earth. With creation completed in 4026 BCE this implies 1975, but the unknown length of time between Adam and Eve's creation has to be added to October 1975. This unknown period is later defined as "months", not years, implying Armageddon would take place in 1975 or 1976.

1967-1980	JWs oppose organ transplants which are said to be "unscriptural" and equivalent to "cannibalism". In the 1970s a few JWs reportedly choose blindness over a cornea transplant.
1968	<i>The Truth that Leads to Eternal Life</i> is released along with the announcement that home "Bible studies" with the public should now be limited to six months unless they are "making progress". The pocket-size "Truth" book eventually reaches a printing of 108 million in 117 languages. <i>The Watchtower</i> anticipates Armageddon in the 1970s. (p. 270)
1969	The booklet <i>The Approaching Peace of a Thousand Years</i> is released at the Peace on Earth International Conventions.
1971	The book <i>The Nations Shall Know That I Am Jehovah—How?</i> forecasts the "day of Jehovah" i.e. Armageddon "within our twentieth century". (p. 216) JWs still anticipate Armageddon around 1975 but 2000 is the most distant possible date. The Governing Body is increased from seven to eleven with chairmanship "rotated" i.e. to be changed annually. It is still only a theoretical Governing Body since Knorr and Franz still make important decisions.
1971-1972	JW publications refer to the JW work as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most widespread preaching campaign in the history of the world. (<i>The Watchtower</i> 1971 8/1 479) • The largest unified activity on earth. (<i>Awake!</i> 1971 9/22 3) • The greatest preaching and teaching work ever done. (<i>The Watchtower</i> 1972 10/1 605)
1972	The one-man overseer arrangement in JW congregations is changed to oversight by a "body of elders".
1973	A new WTS printery at Wallkill north-west of Brooklyn goes into operation and eventually replaces printing at Brooklyn as part of a program to decentralize. Opposition to smoking cigarettes is enforced and smoker-publishers are given six months to stop the habit.
1974	Over 2,000,000 publishers. The annual Memorial (commemoration of Christ's death) attracts 4,550,000 worldwide.
1975/1976	The Governing Body forces Knorr and Franz to share power and organizes itself into six committees. Decisions on doctrine and policy are henceforth made by 2/3 majority vote.
1976	Circulation of <i>The Watchtower</i> passes 10,000,000 but then declines due to the false predictions for the mid 1970s. It passes 10,000,000 again in 1983. Branch offices henceforth to be run by three-man committees instead of one branch overseer.

1977	<p>Nathan Knorr dies. Frederick Franz becomes WTS president.</p> <p>The "Pioneer Service School" is introduced for additional training of pioneers (i.e. fulltime door-to-door goers).</p>
1977-1980	<p>JWs decline due to false prophecies for the mid-1970s but regain their previous numbers in 1980.</p> <p>From 1973 to 1981 about 500,000 publishers leave JWs.</p>
1980	<p>Organ transplants and organ donations are made a matter of conscience and are no longer "cannibalism" or "against the Scriptures".</p> <p>Raymond Franz, nephew of F.W. Franz, resigns from the Governing Body and in 1981 is disfellowshipped (i.e. excommunicated). He subsequently authors <i>Crisis of Conscience</i> (1983) and <i>In Search of Christian Freedom</i> (1991).</p>
1970s-1980s	<p>Numerous building works including printeries, branch offices and assembly halls built largely by JW volunteers in dozens of countries distract publishers from failed hopes, renews their commitment, promotes pride in "God's organization", and prepares for renewed organizational growth.</p>
1983	<p>Governing Body member Lloyd Barry visits Australia and tells JWs:</p> <p>"All over the world...people are flocking to the truth. Jehovah's Witnesses are now labelled the second largest religion in Italy. And that's the way it will keep going. Some day they will be the largest whether the Roman Catholic Church likes it or not."</p>
1984	<p><i>The Watchtower</i> describes the JW preaching activity as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The greatest global proclamation in all history. (1983 3/15 21) • The mightiest preaching activity ever to be conducted on this earth. (1984 2/1 14)
1985	<p><i>The Watchtower</i> says of JWs in Turkey:</p> <p>They were found guilty of violating article 163 of the Turkish Penal Code. According to this, it is a crime 'to make religious propaganda with the aim of changing the social, economic, political, or legal order of the State.'</p> <p>... In Addition the Directorate of Religious Affairs claimed that Jehovah's Witnesses engage in activity "to establish a Bible-based religious order over the entire world,"...</p> <p>The religious advisers said, "Under the appearance of the Kingdom of God they lay a foundation for some political developments in an unknown future." (1985 4/1 26, 29)</p>

1985	<p>The 1985 <i>JW Yearbook</i> predicts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We know that this grand expansion will continue on and on until the whole earth is filled with Jehovah's glory. (p. 5) • That righteous Kingdom rule must keep growing and expanding until it fills the whole earth. (p. 61)
1985	<p>Over 3,000,000 publishers. Memorial attendance — 7,792,000.</p>
1987	<p>Beginning of the "Ministerial Training School" for additional training of congregation "ministerial servants". The first training-class is held in Pennsylvania.</p>
1989	<p>The break-up of the "Communist King of the North" means the failure of another set of prophecies (in the book <i>Your Will</i> 1958). Nevertheless JW's hold large conventions in Poland and expand over Eastern Europe.</p>
1990	<p>Over 4,000,000 publishers. Memorial attendance is 9,950,000.</p>
1991	<p><i>The Watchtower</i> circulation passes 15,000,000.</p>
1992	<p>Death of F.W. Franz. The fifth WTS president is Milton Henschel (1920-2003).</p> <p>The first International Congress of "True Faith Jehovah's Witnesses" takes place in Romania, possibly the biggest organized split from WTS control since the 1930s.</p>
1993	<p><i>Jehovah's Witnesses: Proclaimers of God's Kingdom</i> replaces <i>Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose</i> as the official history of the movement.</p>
1995	<p>Publishers number 5,200,000. Memorial attendance is 13,147,000.</p> <p>The doctrine that "this generation" which saw 1914 would live to see Armageddon, and taught as "the Creator's promise" and "Jehovah's prophetic word", is changed by redefining the word "generation".</p>
1997	<p><i>The Watchtower</i> circulation passes 20,000,000. The official website of the WBTS goes online.</p>
2000	<p>Publishers number over 6,000,000. Memorial attendance is 14,872,000.</p> <p>Governing Body members who are also members of the board of directors of the Watch Tower Society resign from the latter position. For the first time the Governing Body and board of directors are distinct groups. Some commentators speculate that the reason for this change is to avoid WBTS legal liability for Governing Body decisions. With Henschel's resignation Don Adams (b.1925) becomes the 6th president of the Pennsylvania Corporation.</p>

2000	The prophecy of Armageddon "within our twentieth century" fails.
1999-2002	Despite over 1000 million hours of preaching per year the JW increase-rates are the lowest since 1979.
2001-2002	Child sexual abuse among JWs and a secret WTS data base of 20,000 possible child molesters receive media attention. New Governing Body policy introduced in 2002 prevents JW child molesters going door to door alone and permits victims of sexual abuse to contact the police without JW elders hindering them.
2004	The WTS sells its 14-story building at 360 Furman Street, Brooklyn, for \$205 million. This begins a program to sell more than 30 properties in Brooklyn and build a new JW world headquarters NW of New York City with JW volunteers doing much of the work. WTS printing operations in Brooklyn cease. The center for JW literature production is now at Wallkill 79 miles by road (or 61 miles "as the crow flies") NW of Brooklyn.
2005ff	<p>Critics point out that the time required to build the new World Headquarters and transfer thereto from Brooklyn disagrees with the prophecy that Armageddon would occur within the lifetime of people who witnessed 1914. In 1969 <i>The Watchtower</i> said:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">People who were only just old enough to understand what was happening to the world in 1914 are now approaching seventy years of age. Yes, the numbers of that generation are dwindling fast, but before they all pass away this system must meet its end in the war of Armageddon. Surely this highlights what a very short time now remains to return to Jehovah. (1969 7/1 395)</p> <p>In 1995 the Governing Body changed the meaning of "generation" so that a "generation" could go on indefinitely, but add: "Does our more precise viewpoint on "this generation" mean that Armageddon is further away than we had thought? Not at all!" (<i>The Watchtower</i> 1995 11/1 20) In 2005 the people "only just old enough to understand what was happening to the world in 1914" are therefore approaching $70+36=106$ years of age!</p> <p>[The relocation of headquarters, with thousands of JW volunteers helping, continues the strategy begun already in 1879, of distracting the followers from failed prophecy by means of new buildings, new publications, new types of ministry and new doctrines. People who have sacrificed their time, sweat, careers and money for a sect are less likely to drop out, and others are carried along by the enthusiasm and "progress". The failed prophecy meanwhile recedes into the past and eventually new prophetic dates are set. Adherents who criticize are stigmatized as being "disloyal" and "like Satan" and are soon replaced with new converts.]</p>

2005-2010	<p>Publishers increase slowly since each baptism now requires on average over 5000 hours of preaching.</p> <p>Regular news reports appear of the WBTS making huge payments to victims of JW child sexual abuse.</p>																		
2006	<p><i>Awake!</i> magazine becomes a 16-page monthly publication.</p>																		
2005-2012	<p>The WTS sells more of its Brooklyn real-estate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standish Hotel at 171 Columbia Heights for \$50 million (2005) • 67 Livingston Street, a 26-story tower, for \$19 million (2006) • 89 Hicks Street for \$14 million (2006) • Bossert Hotel on Montague Street, \$81 million (2012). 																		
2008	<p>The Watchtower is published in two separate editions, one for the public and the other for JWs.</p> <p>Publishers pass 7 million and reach a peak of 7,124,000. Memorial attendance is 17,791,000.</p>																		
2010	<p>"Generation" is redefined yet again and now means two overlapping generations:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"the anointed [i.e. the remnant or final batch on Earth of 144,000 individuals who get to go to Heaven] who were on hand when the sign began to become evident in 1914 would overlap with the lives of other anointed ones who would see the start of the great tribulation." (The Watchtower 2010 4/15 10)</p> <p>In preparation for this new interpretation the Governing Body allowed the number of "anointed" to increase. For about 70 years it was emphasized that the "anointed" had all been chosen and the 144,000 vacancies for heaven filled by 1935, except for a few who might "apostatize" and had to be replaced.</p> <p>It was also predicted that Armageddon would take place before the steadily-decreasing "anointed remnant" died out. The following table shows the decrease:</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td>1935</td> <td>52,465</td> <td>1960</td> <td>13,911</td> <td>1990</td> <td>8,869</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1940</td> <td>27,620</td> <td>1970</td> <td>10,526</td> <td>2000</td> <td>8,661</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1950</td> <td>22,723</td> <td>1980</td> <td>9,564</td> <td>2010</td> <td>11,202</td> </tr> </table> <p>Every year JWs would consult their latest <i>Yearbook</i> to see how many "anointed" were left to estimate how near Armageddon is. When after 2000 CE the "anointed" began to increase, another prophecy charade of the JW leaders was busted!</p>	1935	52,465	1960	13,911	1990	8,869	1940	27,620	1970	10,526	2000	8,661	1950	22,723	1980	9,564	2010	11,202
1935	52,465	1960	13,911	1990	8,869														
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2013	<p>Leopold Engleitner, an Austrian JW and the oldest known survivor of the Nazi concentration camps, dies aged 107 and was probably the last surviving JW of the 1914 generation, i.e. "the generation that will not pass away".</p> <p>The WTS receives planning board approval to build the new World Headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses on a 253-acre site at Warwick, a town about two hours drive NW of Brooklyn.</p> <p>Five WTS buildings in Brooklyn sell for \$375 million to Jared Kushner a real-estate developer. With this sale the WTS's Brooklyn sell-off passes \$1000 million.</p>
2014	<p>Making converts is getting harder and requires an average of over 7000 hours of "witnessing" to achieve each baptism.</p> <p>The WTS purchases the former Federal Aviation Administration facility at Palm Coast, Florida, to serve as a "Watchtower Educational Center" and "School for Kingdom Evangelizers".</p> <p>[The word "evangelizer" is not in English dictionaries. JWs use it instead of "evangelist" because they regard all JWs as "evangelizers" whereas in Christianity and in the Bible only "some" are evangelists — Ephesians 4:11; Acts 21:8; II Timothy 4:5]</p>
2015	<p>The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Australia finds that the Australian JW headquarters received the names of 1006 alleged child sexual abuse perpetrators among JWs since 1950 but reported none to the police.</p> <p>Their victims numbered at least 1800. Some 579 perpetrators had confessed of whom 401 were disfellowshipped and of these 230 were later reinstated.</p> <p>The Royal Commission reported 514 perpetrators to the police.</p>
2016	<p>The WTS sells 85 Jay Street, Brooklyn, a 3-acre parking lot, the "largest plot of undeveloped land in the city", for \$345 million. [https://thebridgebk.com/huge-new-buildings-will-change-facedumbo/]</p> <p>Publishers worldwide pass 8 million and reach a peak of 8,132,000. Memorial attendance passes 20 million — 20,085,000</p>

2017

A panel of representatives from the WBTS of Australia appears before the Royal Commission and Stuart McMillan states: "I am deeply sorry that we didn't protect and care in accordance with our Christian values..."

However, sexual abuse among JWs increasingly looks like a worldwide problem due to their worldwide unity under which the Governing Body enforces identical policies in all congregations in all countries. For example:

"Current and former Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada have filed a \$66 million class-action lawsuit against the religion's leadership claiming that its policies protect members who sexually abuse children. The suit was filed in Ontario on behalf of alleged victims of sexual abuse across Canada..."
(<https://www.revealnews.org/blog/jehovahs-witnesses-suedin-canda-for-history-of-sex-abuse-cover-up/>)

"Some 80 reports of sexual abuse involving the Jehovah's Witnesses community have been made over the past month..." (Dutch News, December 2017)

Sales in Brooklyn continue — a 29 story hotel at 90 Sands Street purchased by the WTS in 1992 sells for \$117 million.

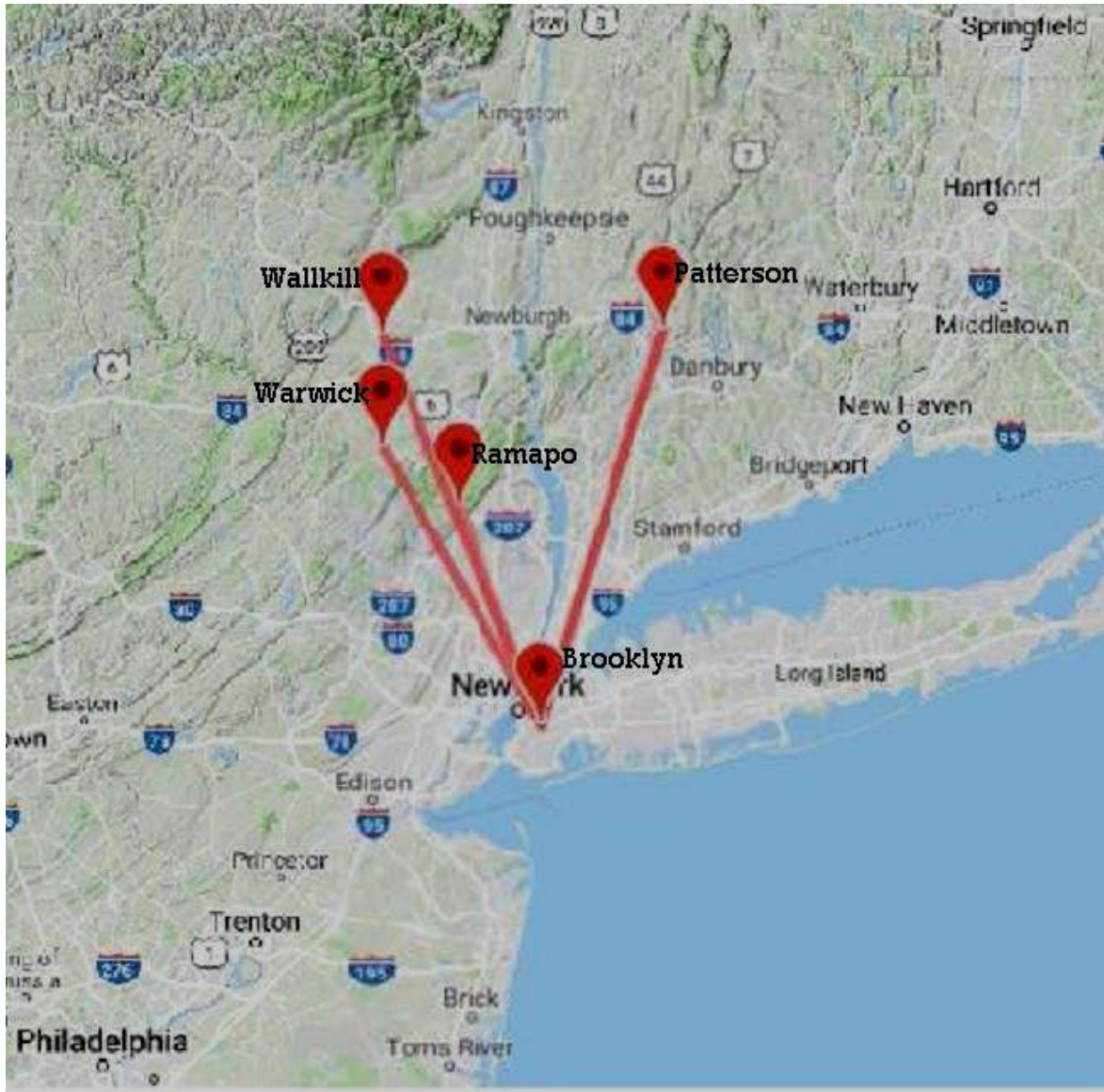
The new "World Headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses" opens in Warwick, New York State.

Warwick (population 32,000 in 2010) is 47 miles "as the crow flies" NW of the previous JW headquarters in Brooklyn, New York. The new World Headquarters is a 253-acre site next to a lake and forests, and with eight large buildings including four residential buildings for 800 staff, and a Bible museum.

Wallkill (population 27,000) is 61 miles NW of Brooklyn (and 16 miles north of Warwick). Wallkill is the location of "Watchtower Farms" and the center for the production of JW literature.

Ramapo (population 127,000) is 34 miles NW of Brooklyn (and 14 miles SE of Warwick). Here, on a 248-acre site, purchased in 2009, is the "Watchtower Administrative Complex".

Patterson (population 12,000) is 60 miles NE of Brooklyn (and 44 miles from Warwick). Patterson is the location of "Watchtower Education Center" including "Missionary Training School". The Center has 27 buildings including six apartment buildings and a 144-room hotel.



(From Google Maps and <http://tjpeiffer.com/crowflies.html>)

2018

Publication of the *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* ceases but a chart of statistics goes on the <https://jw.org/> website.

The following table shows how many hours of "field ministry" or "witnessing" it takes JW's on average to achieve each baptism:

Year	Baptisms	Hours	Hours per Baptism
1970	164,000	267,000,000	1600
1990	302,000	895,200,000	3000
2000	288,900	1,171,270,000	4100
2010	294,400	1,604,764,000	5500
2018	281,744	2,074,655,497	7400

Some observers interpret results like these as indicating that JW's will stop increasing by mid 21st century.

2019

The sell-off of the WTS's properties in Brooklyn, New York, is completed.

Since 2004 37 properties including 30 buildings have been sold. A report dated December, 2018, says:

DUMBO, BROOKLYN — The Jehovah's Witnesses have officially moved out of Brooklyn — or at least their headquarters have. The religious group announced that they sold the last remaining piece of their former Dumbo headquarters last week ... 30 Front Street, was sold to development group Fortis Dumbo Acquisition [for] a whopping \$91 million... It was once used as a parking lot for the organization's staff. [<https://patch.com/new-york/heights-dumbo/jehovahswitnesses-sell-last-piece-former-brooklyn-headquarters>]

Another property, apparently the final one in Brooklyn (1128 Saint Johns Place), sells in May 2019 for \$2.45 million.

[<https://www.bizjournals.com/newyork/news/2019/05/16/jehovahs-witnesses-jettisons-brooklyn-development>]

Here are some of the recent worldwide results of the JW ministry:

Year	Average Publishers	% Increase	Bible Studies	Memorial Attendance
2015	7,987,000	1.5	9,709,000	19,863,000
2016	8,132,000	1.8	10,115,000	20,085,000
2017	8,249,000	1.4	10,072,000	20,175,000
2018	8,360,600	1.4	10,080,000	20,329,000
2019	8,471,000	1.3	9,618,000	20,919,000

The recent publisher increases were mainly achieved in Africa and South/Central America. JWs have lately had little increase in countries where their history is better known. Typical is Australia where the JWs' percentage-increases are lower than the population and the proportion of JWs in the population is therefore decreasing:

Peak publishers and Memorial attendance in Australia, and their ratio to the population:

	Peak	Ratio 1 to	Memorial	Ratio 1 to
1995	61,100	294	110,900	162
2000	60,900	313	112,000	170
2005	61,400	327	111,300	181
2010	65,200	345	116,000	194
2015	67,600	353	116,000	206
2019	68,600	372	118,300	216

2019

Whether the increase of JW's worldwide will continue to slow down until decline sets in remains to be seen.

JW's used to predict that Armageddon followed by paradise on Earth would occur in the generation of 1914. They called this the "Creator's promise" but the Creator's promise turned out false. Another prediction, that Armageddon would occur "within our twentieth century", also turned out false. People who know such facts wonder "In what else are they wrong?" and hesitate to join.

Perhaps future political and environmental crises will convince people that Armageddon is real and produce a human landslide toward JW's. Some commentators, however, believe the Internet will eventually stop the JW's' increase by educating the public about the sect.

Another influence on JW growth will be the extent to which the sect is prohibited. The official JW statistical chart of their proselytising in 2019 mentions "33 Other Lands" where their work is restricted. One of these lands is Russia where JW's were increasing steadily until 2015:

Peak publishers and Memorial attendance in Russia and their ratio to the total population:

Year	Peak	Ratio 1 to	Memorial	Ratio 1 to
2000	114,300	1,289	267,600	550
2005	142,400	1,019	267,400	543
2010	162,200	875	278,800	509
2015	175,600	832	294,200	491
2016	171,800	850	293,900	487

In 1951 JW's were rounded up in the Soviet Union and 9,000 deported to Siberia under a plan called Operation North. The break-up of the Soviet Union in the 1990s resulted in relative freedom but in the 21st century restrictions returned.

JW's were banned in the Russian city of Taganrog in 2009 after a local court ruled the organization guilty of inciting religious hatred by "propagating the exclusivity and supremacy" of their religious beliefs. In 2015 the Ministry of Justice added the official JW's Russian website to the Federal List of Extremist Materials thereby making it a criminal offense to promote the website in Russia. In 2017 Russia's Supreme Court upheld the Justice Ministry's claim that JW's violated laws on "extremism" and liquidated the JW headquarters in St. Petersburg.

[<https://www2.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/00currentchoices.shtml>]

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