

# Reference Document

"Why the Governing Body Keeps Making Changes They Know Will Backfire"  
Every Claim, Source, and Verification Status

## How to Use This Document

Each entry identifies a specific factual claim made in the video, the source it is based on, where to verify it, and any notes on confidence level. Claims are organized in the order they appear in the video.

### Verification levels:

- **PRIMARY** — Sourced from court rulings, legislation, official Watchtower/JW.org publications, government records, or peer-reviewed research
- **SECONDARY** — Sourced from academic researchers, established advocacy/legal resource sites, reputable journalism, or corporate filings analyzed by third parties

## SECTION 1: The March 2026 Blood Doctrine Reversal

**Claim:** On March 20, 2026, Governing Body member Gerrit Lösch announced that the use of a patient's own stored blood is now a matter of personal conscience.

- **Source:** JW.org — 2026 Governing Body Update #2
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/global/2026-Governing-Body-Update-2/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower publication
- **Key quote / Direct text:** "Each Christian must decide for himself how his own blood will be used in all medical and surgical care. This includes whether to allow his own blood to be removed, stored, and then given back to him."

**Claim:** Lösch stated: 'The Bible does not comment on the use of a person's own blood in medical and surgical care.'

- **Source:** JW.org — 2026 Governing Body Update #2
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/global/2026-Governing-Body-Update-2/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower publication

**Claim:** As recently as 2021, official JW literature stated that autologous blood storage was 'not acceptable for Christians.'

- **Source:** AJWRB.org — 'The 2026 Autologous Pivot'
- **URL:** <https://www.ajwrp.org/the-2026-autologous-pivot-a-victory-for-conscience-a-failure-of-accountability>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Advocacy research organization citing official JW medical library content
- **Note:** AJWRB references the prior JW.org medical directives which explicitly listed preoperative autologous blood deposit (PAD) as not acceptable.

**Claim:** The doctrine enforced since the blood ban became a disfellowshipping offense in 1961 has now been downgraded to a conscience matter.

- **Source:** Wikipedia — 'Jehovah's Witnesses and blood transfusions'
- **URL:** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehovah%27s\\_Witnesses\\_and\\_blood\\_transfusions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehovah%27s_Witnesses_and_blood_transfusions)
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Encyclopedia article with extensive primary source citations
- **Note:** 1961 is the year that accepting a blood transfusion became a disfellowshipping (expulsion) offense per Watchtower policy.

**Claim:** In 1994, Awake! magazine featured photographs of 26 children on its cover with the headline 'Youths Who Put God First,' celebrating their faithfulness in refusing blood.

- **Source:** Awake!, May 22, 1994, published by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/101994360>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower publication
- **Key quote / Direct text:** "In former times thousands of youths died for putting God first. They are still doing it, only today the drama is played out in hospitals and courtrooms, with blood transfusions the issue."

**Claim:** Advocacy researchers at AJWRB have estimated that over 33,000 Witnesses may have died since 1961 as a consequence of the blood prohibition.

- **Source:** AJWRB.org — 'Jehovah's Witnesses and Blood — Tens of Thousands Dead in Hidden Tragedy'
- **URL:** <https://www.ajwr.org/jehovahs-witnesses-and-blood-tens-of-thousands-dead-in-hidden-tragedy>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Advocacy estimate based on extrapolation from medical studies
- **Note:** The script explicitly labels this as an advocacy estimate, not an audited figure. AJWRB's methodology is based on a 1993 medical study (Kitchens CS, American Journal of Medicine) and subsequent peer-reviewed research.

**Claim:** Blood fractions derived from other people's donated blood have been permitted as a conscience matter since the year 2000.

- **Source:** JW.org — 'How Do I View Blood Fractions and Medical Procedures Involving My Own Blood?'
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/faq/jehovahs-witnesses-why-no-blood-transfusions/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official JW.org FAQ and Watchtower June 15, 2000 article

**Claim:** A transfusion medicine physician noted that 'conscience operates inside a community' and that moving something to the 'personal decision' category is not the same as removing the social weight attached to that decision.

- **Source:** Blood Bytes & Beyond (transfusion medicine blog) — 'Jehovah's Witnesses and Blood: The Guidance Changed. The Complexity Didn't.'
- **URL:** <https://www.bloodbytesbeyond.com/post/jehovah-s-witnesses-and-blood-the-guidance-changed-the-complexity-didn-t>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Analysis by a transfusion medicine physician

**Claim:** Associated Press reported the change, confirming that Jehovah's Witnesses reported a U.S. membership of 1.3 million in 2025, with worldwide membership of 9.2 million.

- **Source:** Associated Press via Religion News — 'Jehovah's Witnesses ease policy on transfusions'
- **URL:** <https://religionnews.com/2026/03/23/jehovahs-witnesses-ease-policy-on-transfusions-allowing-storage-and-use-of-ones-own-blood/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Major wire service reporting

## SECTION 2: The Historical Pattern — 1975 and 1995

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**Claim:** Watchtower publications strongly implied Armageddon would arrive around the autumn of 1975.

- **Source:** Wikipedia — 'Unfulfilled Watch Tower Society predictions'
- **URL:** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unfulfilled\\_Watch\\_Tower\\_Society\\_predictions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unfulfilled_Watch_Tower_Society_predictions)
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Encyclopedia article citing primary Watchtower publications
- **Note:** The 1966 book *Life Everlasting* — In Freedom of the Sons of God stated that 6,000 years of human existence would end in 1975.

**Claim:** After 1975, the organization blamed the members. A 1976 Watchtower said the disappointment came from 'wrong premises.'

- **Source:** *The Watchtower*, July 15, 1976, p. 441
- **URL:** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unfulfilled\\_Watch\\_Tower\\_Society\\_predictions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unfulfilled_Watch_Tower_Society_predictions)
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower publication
- **Key quote / Direct text:** "It was not the word of God that failed or deceived him and brought disappointment, but his own understanding was based on wrong premises."

**Claim:** In almost every country the annual growth rate dropped sharply after 1975. In the US, from 6% to 2%. In South Korea, from 28% to 7%.

- **Source:** Wikipedia — 'Unfulfilled Watch Tower Society predictions,' citing academic sources
- **URL:** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unfulfilled\\_Watch\\_Tower\\_Society\\_predictions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unfulfilled_Watch_Tower_Society_predictions)
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Encyclopedia article citing sociological research on JW membership trends

**Claim:** The number of full-time publishers dropped by nearly 40%. Nearly 30,000 Witnesses were disfellowshipped in 1978.

- **Source:** Ruth Tucker, *Another Gospel* (historical analysis); researcher Mathew N. Schmalz
- **URL:** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unfulfilled\\_Watch\\_Tower\\_Society\\_predictions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unfulfilled_Watch_Tower_Society_predictions)
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Academic and historical sources cited in encyclopedia article

**Claim:** In November 1995, the 'generation' teaching was changed — 'this generation' was redefined to no longer refer to people alive in 1914.

- **Source:** *The Watchtower*, November 1, 1995, pp. 17-20
- **URL:** <https://jwfacts.com/watchtower/generation.php>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower publication
- **Note:** The change was also reflected in the removal of the 1914 reference from the *Awake!* magazine masthead.

**Claim:** Using Watchtower's own published annual totals, researchers have calculated that the average growth rate dropped from over 5% before 1995 to roughly 2% after.

- **Source:** JWFACTS.com — 'Detailed analysis of Watchtower Statistics'
- **URL:** <https://www.jwfacts.com/watchtower/statistics.php>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Independent analysis using Watchtower's published Service Year Reports
- **Note:** The 5.63% and 2.09% averages are calculated from Watchtower's own annual publisher figures by external researchers.

**Claim:** Between 2011 and 2020, there were over 2.7 million baptisms, but the net increase in publishers was only about 1.2 million — suggesting roughly 1.5 million stopped reporting.

- **Source:** JWfacts.com — 'Detailed analysis of Watchtower Statistics,' compiled from Watchtower Service Year Reports
- **URL:** <https://www.jwfacts.com/watchtower/statistics.php>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Calculation derived from officially published Watchtower annual totals

**Claim:** The Pew Research Center has identified Witnesses as having the highest turnover of any mainstream religion in the United States.

- **Source:** Pew Research Center — 'U.S. Religious Landscape Study' (2014/2015)
- **URL:** <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Peer-reviewed demographic research
- **Note:** Pew found that about two-thirds of people raised as Jehovah's Witnesses no longer identify as such.

## SECTION 3: The 2024 Shunning Policy Changes

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**Claim:** Norway revoked Watchtower's registration as a religious community and denied state subsidies, citing the shunning of baptized minors as psychological violence.

- **Source:** Norwegian government decision (2022); Oslo District Court (March 2024); multiple news sources
- **URL:** <https://avoidjw.org/court/norway-supreme-court-shunning-childrens-rights-appeal/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Government administrative decision and court proceedings
- **Note:** The case has moved through district court, appellate court, and the Supreme Court authorized an appeal in August 2025.

**Claim:** The Governing Body announced that disfellowshipped individuals can now receive a 'simple greeting' and the term changed from 'disfellowshipping' to 'removal from the congregation.'

- **Source:** JW.org — 2024 Governing Body Update #2, presented by Mark Sanderson
- **URL:** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development\\_of\\_Jehovah%27s\\_Witnesses\\_doctrine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development_of_Jehovah%27s_Witnesses_doctrine)
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Governing Body announcement (March 15, 2024)

**Claim:** Watchtower quietly removed shunning videos from jw.org during the Norway legal proceedings.

- **Source:** AvoidJW.org — 'Watchtower's Desperation In Norway — Chasing State Grants'
- **URL:** <https://avoidjw.org/news/watchtowers-desperation-in-norway-chasing-state-grants/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Advocacy site documenting the removal of specific videos from jw.org

**Claim:** The requirement to report field service hours was eliminated in late 2023.

- **Source:** JW.org — October 2023 Annual Meeting announcement
- **URL:** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehovah%27s\\_Witnesses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehovah%27s_Witnesses)
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official organizational announcement
- **Note:** Wikipedia confirms: 'Until 2023, every active Jehovah's Witness was expected to submit the number of hours they spent preaching in their monthly field service report. In November 2023, this requirement was modified.'

## SECTION 4: The Ireland Corporations and Financial Restructuring

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**Claim:** In August 2024, Jehovah's Witnesses established three new companies in Ireland: Mina Asset Management, Mina Treasury Services, and Lepta Payment Solutions, all registered at Watch Tower House in County Wicklow.

- **Source:** Irish Companies Registration Office records; Irish Independent reporting (August 28, 2024); AvoidJW.org
- **URL:** <https://avoidjw.org/news/jehovahs-witnesses-ireland-financial-assets/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Corporate registration records and national newspaper reporting
- **Note:** Mina Treasury Services was registered July 24, 2024 (Company No. 768376). Mina Asset Management (Company No. 769563) was registered in August 2024.

**Claim:** Philip Lofts, a director of Mina Asset Management, worked for UBS for three decades, served as Group Chief Risk Officer (2009-10, 2012-15), and was CEO of UBS Americas (2011).

- **Source:** EFG International — Board of Directors biography; Irish Independent (August 28, 2024)
- **URL:** <https://www.efginternational.com/us/about/organization/board-of-directors/Philip-J.-Lofts.html>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Corporate biography on EFG International website

**Claim:** Vassilios Pappas is co-founder and managing director of Assenagon Asset Management, which manages approximately €57 billion in assets.

- **Source:** Irish Independent (August 28, 2024); Assenagon company records
- **URL:** <https://avoidjw.org/news/jehovahs-witnesses-ireland-financial-assets/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Major newspaper reporting citing corporate records

**Claim:** Tobias Broweleit lists his address at Jehovah's Witnesses' World Headquarters in New York.

- **Source:** Irish corporate filings; AvoidJW.org analysis
- **URL:** <https://avoidjw.org/news/jehovahs-witnesses-ireland-financial-assets/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Corporate registration address on file

**Claim:** Nolan Vengethasamy is a former bond trader with ABN Amro and Standard Bank, and is listed as CEO and CIO of Mina Asset Management.

- **Source:** LinkedIn profile; Mina AM website
- **URL:** <https://mina-am.com/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Corporate website and professional profile

**Claim:** Mina Asset Management is authorized and regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. Mina Funds ICAV was authorized in January 2026.

- **Source:** Central Bank of Ireland register; Mina AM website
- **URL:** <https://mina-am.com/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Regulatory authorization records

**Claim:** Mina Treasury Services is linked to Watch Tower entities in the US, UK, Canada, Denmark, Japan, Norway, Sweden, and more.

- **Source:** AvoidJW.org — document review of corporate filings
- **URL:** <https://avoidjw.org/news/jehovahs-witnesses-ireland-financial-assets/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Advocacy researchers reviewing corporate registration documents

**Claim:** The Candace Conti child abuse case in California resulted in a court-ordered \$300 million assurance bond that contributed to the forced sale of Brooklyn properties.

- **Source:** Medium — Matthew C. Woodruff, 'Church Sex Scandal Led to the Sale of the Brooklyn Watchtower Building to Jared Kushner'
- **URL:** <https://medium.com/@matthewcwoodruff/church-sex-scandal-led-to-the-sale-of-the-brooklyn-watchtower-building-to-jared-kushner-63ecff43b29b>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Investigative article citing court records
- **Note:** The Lopez case (related litigation involving discovery sanctions) is the specific case that produced the bond order.

**Claim:** Watchtower sold over \$1 billion in Brooklyn real estate — the former world headquarters for \$340 million, the DUMBO complex for \$375 million, and 85 Jay Street for \$345 million.

- **Source:** Brooklyn Eagle; Business Wire; JW.org news release
- **URL:** <https://brooklyneagle.com/articles/2013/11/20/show-me-the-money-a-tally-of-the-watchtowers-brooklyn-property-sales/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Real estate transaction records and press releases
- **Note:** The \$340M headquarters sale was confirmed by NYC Finance Department records. The \$375M DUMBO deal was announced via Business Wire (July 8, 2013). The 85 Jay St. sale was reported by JW.org (Dec 20, 2016).

**Claim:** When Menlo Park elders resisted selling their Kingdom Hall, Watchtower removed them from their positions and disfellowshipped them. Watchtower's attorney told the court they are 'structured just like the Catholic Church.'

- **Source:** AvoidJW.org — 'Legally Establishing Watchtower Assets,' citing court transcript
- **URL:** <https://avoidjw.org/news/legally-establishing-watchtower-assets/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Court transcript (Watchtower attorney Mr. Rouse, quoted on record)
- **Key quote / Direct text:** "I am general counsel for the National Organization of Jehovah's Witnesses out of Brooklyn, New York... We are a hierarchal religion structured just like the Catholic Church."

**Claim:** Mina Asset Management's website describes its directors as being 'committed to safeguarding our clients' assets.'

- **Source:** Mina Asset Management website
- **URL:** <https://mina-am.com/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Corporate website, directly accessible

## SECTION 5: Personal Accounts and Community Reactions

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**Claim:** Reddit testimonials from exJW community members reacting to the March 2026 blood update, including accounts of family members who died under the prior blood rule.

- **Source:** r/exjw — Reddit thread: 'Thank you GB for this Update, turning PIMI to PIMQ'
- **URL:** [https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/comments/1s7n7yr/thank\\_you\\_gb\\_for\\_this\\_update\\_turning\\_pimi\\_to\\_pimq/](https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/comments/1s7n7yr/thank_you_gb_for_this_update_turning_pimi_to_pimq/)
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Public user-generated content on social media platform
- **Note:** Individual testimonials are self-reported and unverified. They are presented in the script as personal accounts, not as independently confirmed facts.

**Claim:** A former Witness in the UK described losing his wife after a liaison committee urged her not to accept a transfusion.

- **Source:** AvoidJW.org — 'NEWS: Jehovah's Witnesses Change Blood Doctrine — What About the Losses?'
- **URL:** <https://avoidjw.org/news/news-blood-doctrine-governing-body-update-deaths/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Published testimony on advocacy site
- **Note:** Individual account shared publicly. Presented as a personal story, not an independently verified case.

## SECTION 6: Additional Supporting Sources

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**Claim:** Comprehensive analysis of Watchtower doctrine changes from 1879 to present

- **Source:** Wikipedia — 'Development of Jehovah's Witnesses doctrine'
- **URL:** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development\\_of\\_Jehovah%27s\\_Witnesses\\_doctrine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development_of_Jehovah%27s_Witnesses_doctrine)
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Encyclopedia article with extensive primary source citations
- **Note:** Contains: Timeline of every major doctrinal change, sourced to specific Watchtower publications.

**Claim:** Comprehensive analysis of Watchtower corporate structure

- **Source:** Wikipedia — 'Corporations of Jehovah's Witnesses'
- **URL:** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporations\\_of\\_Jehovah%27s\\_Witnesses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporations_of_Jehovah%27s_Witnesses)
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Encyclopedia article
- **Note:** Contains: Full listing of Watchtower-associated corporate entities worldwide, governance structure, and reorganization history.

**Claim:** Australian census data showing JW demographic decline

- **Source:** JWfacts.com — 'Australian Jehovah's Witness Publisher Statistics'
- **URL:** <https://jwfacts.com/watchtower/statistics-australia-jehovahs-witnesses.php>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Independent analysis using official Australian census data and Watchtower annual reports
- **Note:** Contains: JW-to-population ratio declining from 1 in 293 (1998) to 1 in 379 (2023) in Australia.

**Claim:** Detailed history of the Watchtower blood transfusion policy and its changes over time

- **Source:** JWfacts.com — 'Jehovah's Witnesses and the Watchtower's changing stance on blood transfusions'
- **URL:** <https://jwfacts.com/watchtower/blood-transfusions.php>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Independent analysis citing official Watchtower publications
- **Note:** Contains: Full timeline of blood policy changes, scriptural analysis, and documentation of policy inconsistencies.

**Claim:** Detailed medical and ethical analysis of the March 2026 autologous blood policy change

- **Source:** AJWRB.org — 'The 2026 Autologous Pivot: A Victory for Conscience, a Failure of Accountability'
- **URL:** <https://www.ajwrp.org/the-2026-autologous-pivot-a-victory-for-conscience-a-failure-of-accountability>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Advocacy organization staffed by medical professionals
- **Note:** Contains: Medical analysis of PAD logistics, geographic disparities, ethical implications, and historical comparison of Watchtower blood policy positions.