

# Reference Document

“What the May 2026 JW Broadcast Is Actually Doing”

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. Claims that are clearly personal opinion, analysis, or editorial commentary in the video are not listed here — only externally-verifiable factual claims are catalogued.

### Verification levels

**PRIMARY** — Sourced from court rulings, official Watchtower publications (jw.org, wol.jw.org), government records (State Department reports, court filings, business registrations), or other official institutional records. Primary sources stand on their own.

**SECONDARY** — Sourced from established advocacy or legal-resource sites (HRWF, AvoidJW, JWSurvey, Bitter Winter), reputable investigative journalism (Religion News Service, CBS News, AP, SBS, The New Daily), or academic and legal commentary. Secondary sources support claims and are most defensible when paired with a primary or another independent secondary.

## SECTION 1: Cold Open — Jedele, the Rolex, and the Vow of Poverty

**Claim: Jody Jedele is a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses, appointed October 2024.**

- Source: *Two New Members of the Governing Body*, jw.org official Watchtower article
- URL: <https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/watchtower-study-october-2025/Two-New-Members-of-the-Governing-Body/>
- Verification: PRIMARY — Watchtower’s own publication announcing the appointment.
- Key quote: “On October 5, 2024, a special announcement was made at the annual meeting: Brothers Jody Jedele and Jacob Rumph had been appointed as members of the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses.”

**Claim: Jody Jedele is listed as an officer of Tierra Bella Realty, Inc., a real estate brokerage firm in Charlotte, North Carolina.**

- Source: Better Business Bureau business profile for Tierra Bella Realty, Inc.
- URL: <https://www.bbb.org/us/nc/charlotte/profile/real-estate/tierra-bella-realty-inc-0473-202296>
- Verification: PRIMARY — Independent business directory profile drawing on NC Real Estate Commission licensing records (license number C17210).
- Note: The same firm is referenced in LinkedIn, Zillow, and multiple independent industry directories listing Jody Jedele as Owner/Broker. The BBB profile lists him as Chief Administrative Officer.

**Claim: Members of the Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah’s Witnesses (including Governing Body and Bethel staff) are bound by a “Vow of Obedience and Poverty” and agree to abstain from secular employment without permission.**

- Source: *What You Vow, Pay*, The Watchtower (Study Edition), Watchtower Online Library
- URL: <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/2017365>
- Verification: PRIMARY — Watchtower’s own published explanation of the vow.
- Key quote: “They are all bound by a ‘Vow of Obedience and Poverty,’ with which they agree to do whatever is assigned to them in the advancement of Kingdom interests, to live a simple lifestyle, and to abstain from

secular employment without permission.”

## SECTION 2: The Broadcast — JW Broadcasting, May 2026

**Claim: JW Broadcasting Episode 137, theme “What kind of father is Jehovah?”, released May 2026.**

- Source: JW Broadcasting — May 2026 episode, official jw.org video library
- URL: [https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/?item=pub-jwb-137\\_1\\_VIDEO&appLanguage=E](https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/?item=pub-jwb-137_1_VIDEO&appLanguage=E)
- Verification: PRIMARY — The broadcast itself on Watchtower’s official website.

## SECTION 3: The Bailén Bus Crash (1996)

**Claim: In February 1996, twenty-six Jehovah’s Witnesses died in a bus crash near Bailén, Spain, three miles from home, returning from a day trip to the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The dead included four full-time ministers and several children — nearly a quarter of the Bailén Congregation.**

- Source: *Overcoming Tragedy in Jehovah’s Strength, Awake!*, August 22, 1996, pages 26–27
- URL: <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/101996610>
- Verification: PRIMARY — Watchtower’s own reporting on the tragedy.
- Key quote: “In all, 26 Witnesses lost their lives, including four full-time ministers and several children — nearly a quarter of the Bailén Congregation.”

**Claim: Watchtower’s own publication explained the deaths as “time and unforeseen occurrence.”**

- Source: *Overcoming Tragedy in Jehovah’s Strength, Awake!*, August 22, 1996, pages 26–27
- URL: <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/101996610>
- Verification: PRIMARY — Same article, verbatim quotation from Watchtower’s own explanation.
- Key quote: “Clearly, accidents caused by ‘time and unforeseen occurrence’ can affect Jehovah’s people the same as everyone else.”

## SECTION 4: Sister Bethel Rodish

**Claim: Sister Bethel Rodish’s life story originally appeared in *Awake!*, April 22, 1990.**

- Source: The May 2026 JW Broadcasting program itself cites this date and publication on-screen
- URL: [https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/?item=pub-jwb-137\\_1\\_VIDEO&appLanguage=E](https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/?item=pub-jwb-137_1_VIDEO&appLanguage=E)
- Verification: PRIMARY — The broadcast cites this date directly as its source for her story.

## SECTION 5: Troy Snyder’s Morning Worship Talk

**Claim: Troy Snyder is a Helper to the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses, serving on the Coordinators’ Committee.**

- Source: *What Is the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses?*, jw.org, citing the list of Helpers and their committee assignments
- URL: <https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/faq/governing-body-jw-helpers/>
- Verification: PRIMARY — Watchtower’s own published page identifying the Governing Body Helpers, cross-referenced with AvoidJW’s 2024 committee breakdown.

**Claim: The Watchtower February 2017 study edition stated: “The Governing Body is neither inspired nor infallible. Therefore, it can err in doctrinal matters or in organizational direction.”**

- Source: *Who Is Leading God’s People Today?*, The Watchtower Study Edition, February 2017, paragraph 12
- URL: <https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/watchtower-study-february-2017/who-is-leading-gods-people-today/>
- Verification: PRIMARY — The official Watchtower study article on jw.org.
- Key quote: “The Governing Body is neither inspired nor infallible. Therefore, it can err in doctrinal matters or in organizational direction.”

## **SECTION 6: The Norway Case**

**Claim: On March 4, 2024, the Oslo District Court ruled against Watchtower in Norway, upholding the government’s decision to revoke Jehovah’s Witnesses’ registration as a religious community. The ruling cut off approximately \$1.5 million in annual state funding and revoked the authority of Witness elders to perform legally-recognized marriages.**

- Source: *Jehovah’s Witnesses to Appeal Unconstitutional Ruling in Norway* (official jw.org announcement, March 2024); U.S. State Department, 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom (Norway); Religion News Service
- URL (jw.org): <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/norway/Jehovahs-Witnesses-to-Appeal-Unconstitutional-Ruling-in-Norway/>
- URL (State Department): <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/norway/>
- URL (RNS): <https://religionnews.com/2024/01/16/jehovahs-witnesses-go-to-trial-against-norway-after-state-registration-is-revoked/>
- Verification: PRIMARY — Watchtower’s own statement confirms the ruling date and content; the State Department report independently confirms the \$1.5 million figure (\$16.2 million NOK).
- Key quote (jw.org): “On March 4, 2024, the Oslo District Court upheld the Norwegian government’s decision to revoke the legal registration of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Norway.”

**Claim: The Oslo District Court ruling rested specifically on Watchtower’s practice of shunning, including the treatment of minors baptized as young teenagers who later wanted to leave the religion.**

- Source: U.S. State Department, 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom (Norway)
- URL: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/norway/>
- Verification: PRIMARY — U.S. government official report.
- Key quote: “The decision leading to the deregistration was based on the group’s practice of ‘shunning,’ a collective action taken when a member deviates from certain beliefs or requirements.”

**Claim: Eleven days after the Oslo District Court ruling, on March 15, 2024, Governing Body member Mark Sanderson released Governing Body Update Number 2 of 2024, announcing changes to the language and procedures around disfellowshipping, including a change in terminology from “disfellowshipped” to “removed from the congregation,” and procedural adjustments for baptized minors and returning members.**

- Source: Governing Body Update #2 (2024) — the original video on jw.org; AvoidJW’s coverage of the announcement
- URL (jw.org): [https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/#en/mediaitems/StudioMonthlyPrograms/pub-jwb-gbu\\_202402\\_1\\_VIDEO](https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/#en/mediaitems/StudioMonthlyPrograms/pub-jwb-gbu_202402_1_VIDEO)
- Verification: PRIMARY — Watchtower’s own video update announcing the policy adjustments.

**Claim: On March 14, 2025, the Borgarting Court of Appeal in Norway unanimously reversed the Oslo District Court ruling, finding in favor of Jehovah’s Witnesses.**

- Source: *Court of Appeal Unanimously Overturns Unconstitutional Ruling in Norway* (jw.org official statement, March 2025)
- URL: <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/norway/Court-of-Appeal-Unanimously-Overturns-Unconstitutional-Ruling-in-Norway/>
- Verification: PRIMARY — Watchtower’s own statement.

**Claim: On April 29, 2026, the Norwegian Supreme Court issued a final ruling (case HR-2026-1009-A) in favor of Jehovah’s Witnesses, with two judges dissenting on a key question. The ruling is final and cannot be appealed.**

- Source: *Norwegian Supreme Court Issues Significant Ruling in Favor of Jehovah’s Witnesses* (jw.org); *The Supreme Court Dismisses All Accusations Against Jehovah’s Witnesses* (Human Rights Without Frontiers)
- URL (jw.org): <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/norway/Norwegian-Supreme-Court-Issues-Significant-Ruling-in-Favor-of-Jehovahs-Witnesses/>
- URL (HRWF): <https://hrwf.eu/norway-the-supreme-court-dismisses-all-accusations-against-jehovahs-witnesses/>
- Verification: PRIMARY (jw.org statement) and SECONDARY (HRWF reporting on the ruling, including the 3–2 split and the dissenting opinions).
- Key quote (HRWF): “Two judges dissented on the question of whether Jehovah’s Witnesses subject their members to undue pressure to leave the organisation, thereby infringing on members’ right to freely withdraw.”

## **SECTION 7: Chile, Malawi, and the Neutrality Doctrine**

**Claim: In 1977, The Watchtower magazine stated that Jehovah’s Witnesses do not share in flag ceremonies.**

- Source: *Questions From Readers*, The Watchtower, January 15, 1977, pages 63–64
- URL: <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1977053>
- Verification: PRIMARY — Watchtower’s own publication.
- Key quote: “While respecting the rights of others to do what they want, Jehovah’s Witnesses do not share in flag ceremonies.”

**Claim: In 2014, at least two Kingdom Halls of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Chile were photographed prominently displaying the Chilean national flag at the front of the building during Fiestas Patrias (September 18–19).**

- Source: JW Watch, *Kingdom Halls in Chile Display the National Flag* (September 25, 2014)
- URL: <https://jwsurvey.org/cedars-blog/kingdom-halls-in-chile-display-the-national-flag>
- Verification: SECONDARY — Established ex-Witness research site. Photo and video evidence published; one specific Kingdom Hall identified at Sebastopol 378, comuna de San Joaquín, Provincia de Santiago.

**Claim: Chilean law requires public buildings to display the national flag on September 18 and 19 (Fiestas Patrias), or face a fine.**

- Source: Travel Coach Chile reference to Chile’s Decreto Supremo n°1534 governing flag display; *Fiestas Patrias (Chile)*, Wikipedia
- URL: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiestas\\_Patrias\\_\(Chile\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiestas_Patrias_(Chile))
- Verification: SECONDARY — Public encyclopedia summary of Chilean flag-display law. The underlying decree (Decreto Supremo n°1534) is a public-record Chilean statute.

**Claim: In Malawi during the 1960s and 1970s, Jehovah’s Witnesses were beaten, raped, tortured, and killed for refusing to purchase a Malawi Congress Party membership card (priced at approximately 25 cents / 22 tambala).**

- Source: Awake! magazine reporting from the 1970s (Watchtower’s own documentation of the Malawi persecution), including the price-conversion to U.S. cents within Watchtower’s own articles
- URL: <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/101975003>
- Verification: PRIMARY — Watchtower’s own contemporary reporting on the persecution of its members in Malawi.

## **SECTION 8: Brazil and Australia — Institutional Patterns**

**Claim: In March 2026, a Brazilian court ordered Jehovah’s Witnesses to publicly retract a public shunning announcement.**

- Source: *Court Orders Jehovah’s Witnesses to Retract Shunning Announcement In Public* (EXJW Analyzer YouTube reporting on the court order)
- URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VlifoHAI2gQ>
- Verification: SECONDARY — Investigative video coverage of the Brazilian court order. The underlying court case was brought by Dr. Juliano, a Brazilian attorney.

**Claim: Watchtower refused to join Australia’s National Redress Scheme for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse before the June 30, 2020 deadline, and only signed on in March 2021 after the Australian federal government changed the charity rules to strip the tax-exempt status of holdouts.**

- Source: *Jehovah’s Witnesses to Join Redress Scheme for Sexual Abuse Survivors*, The New Daily / AAP
- URL: <https://www.thenewdaily.com.au/news/2021/03/03/jehovahs-witnesses-redress-scheme>
- Verification: SECONDARY — Established Australian news outlet, citing Watchtower’s own statement.
- Key quote: “The organisation says it will sign up because of new rules introduced by the federal government, which mean it would lose its charity status — and subsequent tax exemptions — for continuing to hold out. ‘Now that the law requires charities to join the scheme, Jehovah’s Witnesses will comply,’ it said in a statement to AAP.”

## **SECTION 9: Worldwide Membership Statistics**

**Claim: Jehovah’s Witnesses report approximately 9.2 million members worldwide, but independent demographic studies find that the number of people who self-identify as Jehovah’s Witnesses is substantially larger — possibly close to double the reported figure.**

- Source: Jehovah’s Witnesses official annual reports; *How Many of Jehovah’s Witnesses Are There in the World?* on jw.org
- URL: <https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/faq/how-many-jw/>
- Verification: PRIMARY — Watchtower’s own FAQ explicitly distinguishes its counting method (active publishers who report preaching activity) from independent demographic survey methods (anyone who self-identifies as a Jehovah’s Witness), and acknowledges the two yield different numbers.
- Key quote: “We count as Jehovah’s Witnesses only those who preach to others and who report that activity, not those who merely identify themselves as Witnesses.”

## SECTION 10: Gabon

**Claim: In April 1970, the government of Gabon banned the preaching work of Jehovah's Witnesses, expelled the missionaries, and prohibited meetings. Brothers and sisters continued to hold meetings and convention programs in secret.**

- Source: The May 2026 JW Broadcasting program (Gabon postcard segment); 1972 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses
- URL: [https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/?item=pub-jwb-137\\_1\\_VIDEO&appLanguage=E](https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/?item=pub-jwb-137_1_VIDEO&appLanguage=E)
- Verification: PRIMARY — Watchtower's own reporting in the broadcast itself.

## SECTION 11: The 2015–2017 Bethel Layoffs and Brooklyn Move

**Claim: Watchtower laid off Bethel staff in 2015–2017 in conjunction with the closure and sale of its longtime Brooklyn headquarters and relocation to Warwick, NY. The total real estate sale was valued at approximately \$1 billion. Some long-serving Bethelites who were sent home received minimal severance.**

- Source: CBS News, *Jehovah's Witnesses Could Make \$1 Billion from NYC Properties* (citing the Associated Press, December 2015); Brooklyn Eagle and additional mainstream press coverage of the Warwick move
- URL: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/jehovahs-witnesses-could-make-1-billion-from-nyc-properties/>
- Verification: SECONDARY — Mainstream news reporting on the Brooklyn-to-Warwick move and the \$1 billion real estate sale. Specific layoff details are also covered extensively at JWSurvey (*Frustration Grows at Bethel*).

## SECTION 12: Additional Supporting Sources

### AvoidJW Norway coverage

- Source: AvoidJW, ongoing news coverage of the Norway case (2024–2026)
- URL: <https://avoidjw.org/news/breaking-jw-vs-norway-norway-state-loses/>
- Verification: SECONDARY — Established ex-Witness research and advocacy site.
- Contains: Day-by-day coverage of the 2024 trial, 2025 appellate hearings, and 2026 Supreme Court arguments and ruling; translated court transcripts; survivor testimony documentation.

### Bitter Winter — Norway Supreme Court analysis

- Source: Massimo Introvigne, *Jehovah's Witnesses Win Landmark Case at the Norwegian Supreme Court, Bitter Winter*
- URL: <https://bitterwinter.org/jehovahs-witnesses-win-landmark-case-at-the-norwegian-supreme-court/>
- Verification: SECONDARY — Italian sociologist of religion writing on religious-liberty case law. Note that Introvigne is sympathetic to Watchtower's legal position; cited here as legal analysis of the ruling itself, not for advocacy interpretation.
- Contains: Detailed legal analysis of the Supreme Court ruling, including direct quotations from the judgment text and discussion of the 3–2 split on shunning's effect on adults' right to leave.

### Pioneiro Oficial — Brazilian ex-Witness commentary referenced in the video

- Source: Pioneiro Oficial YouTube channel — Portuguese-language ex-Witness investigative commentary
- Channel URL: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeE4S7s7BVFtsENcr-27yTA>
- Specific video referenced: *JW Broadcasting - Maio 2026* (streamed live May 4, 2026)
- Video URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqQfR5cmbTs>
- Verification: SECONDARY — Established Portuguese-language ex-Witness analytical channel.

- Contains: The “Watchtower Trinity” framing referenced in the video, in which Jehovah, the organization, and the Governing Body are treated as functionally interchangeable inside the religion’s discourse. The host also explicitly argues that Witnesses, if they want to thank anyone for the post-2024 shunning policy adjustments, should be thanking the dissidents and Norway — the analytical framing that the video’s Norway-reframing section is built on.

### **El rincón de Emma — Spanish ex-Witness commentary referenced in the video**

- Source: El rincón de Emma YouTube channel — Spanish-language ex-Witness investigative commentary
- Channel URL: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYn9E0OZxM4L-MY3nV-FBNQ>
- Specific video referenced: *Analizando JW Broadcasting Mayo | Esto fue polémico* (streamed live May 5, 2026)
- Video URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6clzeRauHw>
- Verification: SECONDARY — Established Spanish-language ex-Witness analytical channel.
- Contains: The linguistic distinction between “subjection” and “neutrality” in Snyder’s reading of 1 Peter 2:13–14 referenced in the video, observing that the Greek text supports subjection (obedience to authority) rather than neutrality (staying out of conflicts between authorities). The host also flags the Jedele watch and the Chile flag selectivity contrast in the same broadcast.