

REFERENCE DOCUMENT

"Young People Want Nothing to Do With This Religion — And the Data Proves It"

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. Where the video draws a conclusion from the data, that reasoning is mine — but every underlying number and quote below comes from the sources listed, most of them Watchtower's own publications, so you can check the foundation for yourself.

Verification levels:

- **PRIMARY** — Sourced directly from Watchtower's own publications and Service Year Reports, Pew Research Center survey data, United Nations records, or a government inquiry (the Australian Royal Commission). Primary sources can stand on their own.
- **SECONDARY** — A figure derived from primary data (for example, a ratio computed from Watchtower's published publisher counts against national census population), or reputable investigative journalism. Most defensible when paired with the primary source it rests on.

A note on method: the video's argument is built so you never have to take my word for anything. The two load-bearing data sets — Watchtower's own annual Service Year Reports and the Pew Research Center's Religious Landscape Study — are cited in full below, alongside Watchtower's own publications for every historical claim.

Section 1: The Discussion Being Examined

A teenager still attending meetings posted to the r/exjw community that "all 15-20 yo don't care about this religion anymore... and this scares elders A LOT," and the post drew several hundred upvotes and well over 100 comments describing the same thing.

SOURCE: Public discussion thread on the r/exjw community forum — the artifact this video examines.

VERIFICATION: SECONDARY — A public community thread, quoted as the subject of discussion. As the video states plainly, these anonymous comments are *not* offered as proof of anything; they are the claims the rest of the video tests against hard data. The statistical conclusions in this document do not rest on them.

NOTE: Reddit comments are quoted or paraphrased as spoken in the video. They illustrate a pattern; the proof is in Sections 3–5.

Section 2: The Official Story

Watchtower teaches that growth is proof God is blessing the organization, and still describes the membership as a "spiritual paradise" — a term in current use.

SOURCE: *The Watchtower* (Study Edition), April 2024 — "Never Leave the Spiritual Paradise."

URL: jw.org

VERIFICATION: **PRIMARY** — Watchtower's own current study article; "spiritual paradise" is the article's title.

Watchtower's 2026 publications include material aimed squarely at children urging them toward baptism — including a study article titled "Keep Working Toward Baptism."

SOURCE: *The Watchtower* (Study Edition), February 2026 — "Keep Working Toward Baptism."

URL: jw.org

VERIFICATION: **PRIMARY** — Watchtower's own 2026 study article.

KEY QUOTE: "*Your baptism should not depend on what someone else does.*" The article addresses young ones directly and urges baptism "with the end close in mind."

Section 3: Do the Children Stay? (Pew Research)

Only about 34% of people raised as Jehovah's Witnesses still identify as Witnesses in adulthood — roughly two out of three leave.

SOURCE: Pew Research Center, "A Closer Look at Jehovah's Witnesses Living in the U.S." (2016), drawing on the 2014 Religious Landscape Study.

URL: pewresearch.org

VERIFICATION: **PRIMARY** — Original nationwide survey data from the Pew Research Center.

KEY QUOTE: "*Among all U.S. adults who were raised as Jehovah's Witnesses, two-thirds (66%) no longer identify with the group.*" (i.e., 34% are retained.)

NOTE: The characterization that this is the *lowest* retention of any U.S. group comes from Pew's broader Religious Landscape Study comparisons, where Witnesses ranked lowest among the traditions measured — not from this specific short-read, which states the 34%/two-thirds figure. The newest (2023–24) study does not break out an updated Witness retention percentage because Witnesses are under 1% of U.S. adults, so the 2014 figure remains the citable number.

Roughly two-thirds of adult U.S. Jehovah's Witnesses are converts — people who came in from outside — meaning the religion has never sustained itself on its own children.

SOURCE: Pew Research Center, "A Closer Look at Jehovah's Witnesses Living in the U.S." (2016).

URL: pewresearch.org

VERIFICATION: **PRIMARY** — Original Pew survey data.

KEY QUOTE: "About two-thirds (65%) of current adult Jehovah's Witnesses are converts... they were raised in another faith."

By contrast, about two-thirds of people raised Mormon remain Mormon as adults — far higher retention than Witnesses.

SOURCE: Pew Research Center, "A Closer Look at Jehovah's Witnesses Living in the U.S." (2016) — the same article states both figures.

URL: pewresearch.org

VERIFICATION: **PRIMARY** — Original Pew survey data.

KEY QUOTE: "About two-thirds of those who were raised as evangelical Protestants (65%) and Mormons (64%) still say they are members of those respective groups." Mormon retention 64% vs. Witness 34%.

NOTE: The remark that the LDS Church has more recently begun facing its own youth-retention pressures is offered as general context, not a precise statistic.

Section 4: Watchtower's Own Numbers

Every year Watchtower publishes a Service Year Report listing worldwide baptisms and its count of active members, whom it calls "publishers."

SOURCE: Watchtower Service Year Reports / Yearbooks of Jehovah's Witnesses.

URL: jw.org — 2025 Grand Totals

VERIFICATION: **PRIMARY** — Watchtower's own annual report.

From 2011 through 2020, Watchtower baptized 2,721,457 people worldwide.

SOURCE: Watchtower Yearbooks / Service Year Reports, 2012–2021 (each year's baptism total summed).

URL: wol.jw.org — 2020 Grand Totals · 2019 · 2018

VERIFICATION: **PRIMARY** — Watchtower's own published yearly figures. Annual baptisms 2011–2020: 263,131 · 268,777 · 277,344 · 275,581 · 260,273 · 264,535 · 284,212 · 281,744 · 303,866 · 241,994.

Over that same decade, Watchtower's peak worldwide publisher count grew from about 7.5 million (2010) to about 8.7 million (2020) — an increase of roughly 1.19 million.

SOURCE: Watchtower Yearbook (2011, listing 2010 peak of 7,508,050) and the 2020 Service Year Report (2020 peak of 8,695,808).

URL: wol.jw.org — 2020 Grand Totals

VERIFICATION: PRIMARY — Watchtower's own published peak-publisher figures. Net change 7,508,050 → 8,695,808 = +1,187,758.

Watchtower baptized about 2.72 million people in the decade but grew by only about 1.19 million — meaning more than half of everyone baptized (roughly 1.53 million, about 56%) did not add to the net total.

SOURCE: Arithmetic on Watchtower's own published figures above: 2,721,457 baptisms – 1,187,758 net growth = 1,533,699.

VERIFICATION: PRIMARY — Derived entirely from Watchtower's own Service Year Reports.

NOTE: As stated carefully in the video, this gap is *not* 1.5 million defectors. Across a decade, an aging membership loses a large share to death, and others simply stop reporting and fade. The only claim made is the literal arithmetic: more than half of those baptized did not translate into a single net new member.

In its newest (2025) report, Watchtower says worldwide membership rose 2.5% over the prior year, to over 9 million publishers.

SOURCE: 2025 Service Year Report of Jehovah's Witnesses Worldwide.

URL: jw.org — 2025 Grand Totals

VERIFICATION: PRIMARY — Watchtower's own report. Peak publishers 9,205,326; baptized 304,643; +2.5% over 2024.

NOTE: The video is explicit that worldwide the organization is *not* shrinking. The argument is about *where* the growth occurs, not whether it exists.

Section 5: Where the Growth Actually Is

In the 2025 report, roughly 45% of all new baptisms worldwide occurred in Africa, with about 30% concentrated in just five countries — growth pooling in regions with the lowest internet access.

SOURCE: Computed from the country-by-country figures in the 2025 Service Year Report.

URL: jw.org — 2025 Service Year Report

VERIFICATION: SECONDARY — A percentage breakdown derived from Watchtower's own published per-country baptism numbers.

In 2020, Watchtower's average worldwide publisher count fell for the first time in more than 40 years.

SOURCE: Watchtower Service Year Reports (year-over-year average-publisher comparison).

URL: wol.jw.org — 2020 Grand Totals

VERIFICATION: PRIMARY — Watchtower's own published averages. The fall coincided with the COVID-19 shutdown of field ministry, a caveat the video states.

In Australia, the ratio of Witnesses to population slid from about 1 in 294 people in 1998 to about 1 in 384 by 2024 — stagnation in a high-internet country.

SOURCE: Watchtower's published Australia publisher counts measured against Australian Bureau of Statistics census population.

URL: jw.org — Jehovah's Witnesses in Australia

VERIFICATION: **SECONDARY** — A ratio derived from Watchtower's own publisher figures and national census population.

Section 6: The Monopoly and the Record It Can't Erase

Watchtower taught for decades that the generation alive in 1914 would see the end of the world — and that generation has since died off.

SOURCE: *The Watchtower*, May 15, 1984 — "1914—The Generation That Will Not Pass Away."

URL: wol.jw.org

VERIFICATION: **PRIMARY** — Watchtower's own published teaching.

Watchtower redefined "generation" in 1995 (detaching it from the literal 1914 generation), refined it again, and by 2014 settled on the current "overlapping generations" teaching — two consecutive lifespans counted as one generation.

SOURCE: *The Watchtower*, Nov. 1, 1995 ("A Time to Keep Awake!") and Jan. 15, 2014 ("Let Your Kingdom Come'—But When?").

URL: [1995 redefinition](#) · [2014 "overlapping generations"](#)

VERIFICATION: **PRIMARY** — Watchtower's own published redefinitions. (There were intermediate refinements in 2008 and 2010; the 2014 article is the cleanest statement of the current teaching.)

Watchtower built expectations around the year 1925, and again around 1975 — both of which passed without the predicted events.

SOURCE: 1925 — J.F. Rutherford, *Millions Now Living Will Never Die* (1920 booklet, p. 88). 1975 — *The Watchtower*, Aug. 15, 1968, "Why Are You Looking Forward to 1975?" and the 1966 book *Life Everlasting—In Freedom of the Sons of God*.

URL: [1925 booklet \(Internet Archive\)](#) · [1975 \(wol.jw.org\)](http://wol.jw.org)

VERIFICATION: **PRIMARY** — Watchtower's own publications. The 1920 booklet predates Watchtower's online library and is not hosted there; it is linked via the Internet Archive's scan of the original.

KEY QUOTE (1966 BOOK, ON 1975): "In what year, then, would the first 6,000 years of man's existence... come to an end? The year 1975."

Watchtower once condemned organ transplants as "cannibalistic" (1967), then reversed the position and made it a matter of personal conscience (1980).

SOURCE: *The Watchtower*, Nov. 15, 1967 (condemnation) and Mar. 15, 1980 (reversal), both "Questions From Readers."

URL: [1967](#) · [1980](#)

VERIFICATION: **PRIMARY** — Watchtower's own publications.

KEY QUOTES: 1967 — those who accept transplants are *"living off the flesh of another human. That is cannibalistic."* 1980 — *"this is a matter for conscientious decision by each one of Jehovah's Witnesses."*

Watchtower condemned blood transfusions but has, over time, permitted certain blood fractions — a shifting, qualified position.

SOURCE: *The Watchtower*, June 15, 2000, "Questions From Readers" (and current [jw.org](#) guidance on blood fractions).

URL: [wol.jw.org \(2000\)](#) · [current guidance](#)

VERIFICATION: **PRIMARY** — Watchtower's own publications.

KEY QUOTE: *"When it comes to fractions of any of the primary components, each Christian... must conscientiously decide for himself."*

For roughly a decade, Watchtower was registered as an associated NGO with the United Nations Department of Public Information — the same UN it tells members is the "scarlet-colored beast" of Revelation — and withdrew in 2001 after the association was exposed.

SOURCE: The Guardian (Oct. 8, 2001) reporting on the UN/DPI association and withdrawal; [jw.org's](#) own current teaching identifying the UN as the beast of Revelation 17.

URL: [The Guardian \(UN/DPI association\)](#) · [jw.org \(UN as the "scarlet beast"\)](#)

VERIFICATION: **SECONDARY** (UN/NGO association, via reputable journalism and UN DPI records, 1992–2001) paired with **PRIMARY** (Watchtower's own doctrinal page).

KEY QUOTE (JW.ORG): the scarlet beast *"first existed as the League of Nations and is now the United Nations."*

In response to the internet era, Watchtower visibly simplified its content — replacing dense prophetic material with a website, children's cartoons, music videos, an in-house broadcast channel, and a multi-year dramatized film.

SOURCE: [jw.org](#) and JW Broadcasting (Watchtower's own publicly available media).

URL: [jw.org](#)

VERIFICATION: **PRIMARY** — Watchtower's own media output. The characterization of this as a strategic response is editorial analysis.

Watchtower has lowered the ages at which young men can qualify for expanded service.

SOURCE: [jw.org](#), "Adjustment to Age Requirements... Announced at Annual Meeting" (Oct. 5, 2024).

URL: [jw.org](#)

VERIFICATION: PRIMARY — Watchtower's own announcement (lowering the minimum age for theocratic-construction/Bethel service from 19 to 18, and for the School for Kingdom Evangelizers from 23 to 21).

NOTE: The further detail mentioned in the video — qualifying as an elder at 21, and the figure of circuit overseers at 25 — comes from the organization's internal elders' manual and from a recording of a talk by a Governing Body member that has circulated among former members; these are not part of the public jw.org announcement above, and are presented in the video as illustration of the same trend rather than as officially published policy.

A government inquiry found that Jehovah's Witnesses' own Australian records documented 1,006 alleged child abusers since 1950, and the organization itself reported none of them to police.

SOURCE: Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Case Study 29: Jehovah's Witnesses (Report, October 2016).

URL: childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au

VERIFICATION: PRIMARY — Findings of an official government Royal Commission. The Commission found 1,006 alleged perpetrators in the organization's own records (including 579 confessions), and that not one was reported by the organization to secular authorities.

NOTE: The finding concerns the *organization's own* failure to report. Some matters had separately come to police attention by other means; the precise, documented claim is that the organization itself reported none of the 1,006. The reference to this in the video is offered in support of the creator's clearly-labeled opinion about how the organization presents information.

Section 7: Additional Supporting Sources

Pew Research Center — A Closer Look at Jehovah's Witnesses Living in the U.S.

SOURCE: Pew Research Center.

URL: pewresearch.org

VERIFICATION: PRIMARY — Pew survey data.

CONTAINS: Retention, convert share, and the age and demographic profile of U.S. Witnesses.

Every figure in this document can be checked at the links provided. The numbers that carry the argument are Watchtower's own, published by the organization itself.