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War with Jehovah's Witnesses on the Internet!



over their..

Secret Elders' Manual!

<http://www.pnc.com.au/~mandate/page13.htm>

Edited by Fred Grigg

Introduction: Friday, 30th August 1996. Religion, censorship and the Internet form a potent combination that is at the heart of a David and Goliath struggle which broke out this week. In the Goliath corner is the huge multi-national corporation, the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Inc with sales of over a billion dollars a year through their vast door-to-door distribution system by gullible Jehovah's Witnesses, and on the other side, the Watchtower Observer, a Website run as a personal crusade by Norwegian small business-man, Kent Steinhaug. The content of Kent's site contains similar information listed at this site. Last year, a campaign by Internet-enabled Jehovah's Witnesses, attempted to close down the site. Nano, the Norwegian Internet provider, stood by its crusader; and likewise unmoved was the other focus of the campaign, the famous anon.penet.fi anonymous electronic mail site in Finland.

This year, it is corporate lawyers sending paper threats, rather than sect members making email strikes. The focus of this attack is a secret book, "Pay Attention to Yourselves and the Needs of the Flock" published by the Watchtower Society, and distributed only amongst the sect's senior ministers ("elders"), with strict instructions not to reveal its contents to ordinary members. Kent was able to acquire a copy and made it available, in part, on-line to the world - and to the rank and file sect members! The temptation was too great for two Swedish JW's, who were summarily disfellowshipped from the organisation, with full shunning by all JW's, after it was discovered that they had read the secret book! The Watchtower Society is acting to have removed the embarrassing information from the Internet. The Watchtower Society, like the Church of Scientology before it, is learning that in the Internet age, control of information is a bygone dream! Let's see what Kent and the "book" has to say...

Note: Current, or former Jehovah's Witnesses who read this, please ask yourselves the question, "Did (or do) the elders that I relate/d to, deal with me as they were instructed to in the Elders Manual?"

THE SECRET BOOK by [Kent Steinhaug, Watchtower Observer, Norway](#)

INTRODUCTION

There is something intrinsically fascinating about a secret book, especially when it is a 'book of rules' for a minor cult. So it was with a sense of delicious excitement that I learned that the Elders Manual of Jehovah's Witnesses was available on the Web. So secret is this book, that even when I was a Witness (thankfully, many years ago) I was blissfully unaware of its existence.

Alas, my mouth watering anticipation of delving into it was quickly dissolved as I started to wade through its tortuous prose. Simply put, most of it is BORING! To put it into perspective, it's marginally more interesting than a

telephone book, and less fascinating than a dictionary.

THE SILLY STUFF

Of course, one of the first things young children do with a dictionary is to look up the purportedly 'rude' words. Equally, the most titillating part of this mind-numbing tome was its quaint approach to the matter of sexual misconduct within the ranks of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Readers (especially Witnesses, I imagine) will be relieved to learn that 'minor uncleanness', such as 'an intentional momentary touching of sexual parts or caressing of breasts' ... 'can be handled at the discretion of an elder or two; it does not require a judicial hearing.' The logical outcome of this counsel seems to be that if an elder or two use their discretion to momentarily touch the breasts of an unsuspecting female, then that's OK!

However, there is a clear (?) distinction between 'uncleanness' and 'loose conduct', defined as 'shocking, flagrant disregard for Jehovah's moral standards.' Here, the water gets a bit muddy, as the concentration still seems to be on breasts, but now it includes 'the willful practice of heavy petting or the fondling of breasts.' Whatever, this time it is clear that judicial action is required!

So, the message to Witnesses is clear: momentary touching is in, fondling is out. Of course, all this does is raise all sorts of further questions: touching with what? How long is momentary? Is unwillful practice acceptable?

What next?

Well, now we're moving into 'por.nei'a' territory, which 'involves immoral use of the genitals of at least one human (whether in a natural or a perverted way), and there must have been another party to the immorality a human of either sex or a beast; willing participation incurs guilt and requires judicial action. It is not a casual touching of the sex organs between persons but involves the manipulation of the genitals.'

Wow! Now we've moved from touching, through fondling and on to full blown 'manipulation'. Not a very arousing term, that one. In an attempt to answer the multitude of questions that arise from such statements, the manual goes on to say that 'It includes oral and anal sex or mutual masturbation between persons not married to each other, homosexuality, lesbianism, fornication, adultery, incest, and bestiality.' Interestingly, breasts now seem of no import once we get into the meaty stuff. However, there's clearly quite a list to get through, even for the most dedicated fornicator.

Now, the naive reader may wish to argue that surely it's OK if penetration does not occur, and may even wish to stretch the point by claiming that orgasm is the really naughty bit. Well, the Elders Manual is right onto such mindless ruses, and clearly states that 'copulation (as in penetration) is not necessary to constitute por.nei'a, and neither is sexual climax.'

However, readers will be relieved to learn that 'self-abuse, or masturbation, is not pornei'a'. The conclusion is then, that to avoid judicial action, the keen lovers are at liberty to indulge in some momentary touching, then admire each other's self-abuse (while being scrupulous to avoid abusing each other), and all is acceptable (so it seems that erotic, climactic telephone/Email conversations are also in). Incidentally, be sure never to smoke after such an encounter - smoking is clearly an offense worthy of a judicial hearing.

THE SERIOUS STUFF

Of course, the above seems a bit silly, and it does provide ample fodder for the kind of critical jesting that I've attempted to provide. However, the erstwhile manual does include other more serious, and even sinister, material.

A particular example is the blood issue. Witnesses are well known for their distaste for the use of blood, even for medical conditions. But what role do the Elders play? The manual clearly spells it out. First, it should be noted that 'Failure to abstain from blood' is listed along with such dastardly deeds as 'The practice of spiritism', 'Idolatry', 'Drunkenness', 'Stealing, thievery, fraud', 'Obscene speech', 'Greed, gambling, extortion.' 'Misuse of tobacco' is there too. All are given as examples of activities that the Bible condemns.

At first glance, most of the section dealing with how elders assist congregational members who face the blood issue is fairly innocuous. It starts: 'Individuals with medical problems who are facing the blood issue need special assistance. Even before they enter the hospital, some may need help in making sure that medical and legal papers

are fitting and that the necessary medical personnel have been spoken to in order to avoid a transfusion.'

'Visit the patient in the hospital.'

'Pray with, strengthen, and comfort the patient, also relatives, such as the parents of a sick child.'

Now we get to the crux of the matter:

'If the patient is faced with the blood issue, elders can do much to keep the situation calm and to reason with doctors and unbelieving relatives.'

OK, but what if things aren't going all smoothly? What if the doctors are applying pressure, or if the distressed Witness begins to waver in their resolve? Then comes the chilling statement:

'On rare occasions a situation requires a 24-hour watch.'

Move over, George Orwell. And who does all this watching?

'The Hospital Liaison Committee should be called only when the patient needs a cooperative doctor, when a confrontation develops, or when a threat to force blood on the patient is unresolved.

All elders should have a copy of the list showing names and telephone numbers of committee members. Keep it in an accessible file with appropriate references, such as "Questions From Readers" in The Watchtower, June 1, 1990, pages 30-1, and March 1, 1989, pages 30-1; the brochure How Can Blood Save Your Life?; the booklet Jehovah's Witnesses and the Question of Blood; and Our Kingdom Ministry, November 1990, pages 3-6.'

The above speaks for itself.

CONCLUSION

So, despite its overall crushingly boring prose, the Elders Manual of Jehovah's Witnesses does provide its light moments and its moments of madness. A couple of concluding minor points. In these times of political correctness, it is interesting to note that the Witnesses haven't bent to the pressure of writing in gender neutral expressions. And finally, the Witnesses are at pains to avoid leaving them selves open to legal action. Let's leave the last (sexist) word to them:

'Do not send an individual any kind of correspondence that directly accuses him of specific wrongdoing.'

The following are excerpts from the Elder Manual:

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Imitate Jehovah, the Shepherd and Overseer of Our Souls

Jehovah is the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls (1 Pet. 2: 25) How it instills confidence and courage in us to have him rule over us! Since we are commanded to "become imitators of God," we should imitate him in all areas of life. (Eph. 5:1) Consider the following four ways in which Jehovah, as the Supreme Overseer, sets the example for all overseers to imitate. (1) He is a God of love. (2) He is Our Grand Instructor. (3) He is the Great Evangelizer, sponsoring the preaching of the good news worldwide. (4) He is the Perfect Judge, being just at all times and in all of his ways.

How can you imitate Jehovah? In your efforts to be like him, you must continually develop your skills as teachers. You need to take the lead in Kingdom preaching and disciple making. As judges, you must render just, yet merciful, decisions among Jehovah's people. And in all matters, your exercising oversight in a loving way for the whole brotherhood is vital.

Our Loving Overseer

How many are the expressions of love that Jehovah has

showered down on us!

awe love, because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19)

Each day, we are indebted to him for the life and the measure of health we enjoy.

By Jehovah's undeserved kindness, we have our family, brothers and sisters in the congregation, home, food, clothing, and innumerable other blessings.

We are obligated to him because he has given us the knowledge of the truth and the privilege of being members of his united international organization and servants in his royal service.

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Jehovah has been a Guardian and Protector of his people both physically and spiritually. (Ps. 145:20; Prov. 18: 10)

Elders should also be guardians and protectors of His people. The basic idea inherent in the Greek word for overseer (epi`skopos) is protective care. Elders strive to be alert to the needs of the individual publishers and families, willingly stepping forward to assist when there is a need. (Isa. 32:1, 2) Step-families, single parents, and widows may have special need for advice and guidance. Teenagers or young adults who take a false step need help too. (Gal. 6:1)

Do not evade their problems. Give them constant attention and guidance, being careful not to condemn them. God gives us the direction we need in order to look after is people. (Compare Exodus 24:12.) His Word directs us and his spirit assists us beyond our natural abilities in caring for responsibilities. (2 Cor. 4:7) When we make mistakes or fail to handle situations adequately, Jehovah is patient with us.

Many opportunities arise for you, as overseers, to imitate the Supreme Overseer in showing love for others.

Watch for opportunities to help others, even physically. How may love and patience be shown in the following situations?

A ministerial servant does not handle a matter to completion. Someone comes to you seeking information but does not readily understand your explanation of the matter.

A young person shies away from you and other adults.

A young person whose parents are not in the truth begins to associate.

A single parent regularly seeks advice and encouragement. (w80 9/15 pp. 21-5)

A brother or a sister appears to be discouraged or suffers from depression. (w90 3/15 pp. 26-30)

A pioneer has car trouble.

***** Inserted Comment *****

From the "Brooklyn Heights Journal", June of 95. Headline: "Taxes Not Paid by Witnesses Cost City \$10 Million a Year" b0y Werner Cohn:

The map of thirty-six properties listed in the name of the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society in the Heights derives from city records, which I was told may be incomplete. The city estimates the current total market value of the Witness properties that are shown here at over **190 million dollars**. A very small proportion of this property is taxed but most of it is wholly exempt because its use is considered to be religious. If all of this property were on

the tax rolls, the city would receive an additional \$9,427,051 per year. But this figure is based on current assessments, which, in the case of buildings, are generally out of date. For that reason one can estimate that the city loses well over ten million dollars a year as a result of Witness real estate holdings in Brooklyn Heights. This sum amounts to an indirect subsidy paid to the Witnesses by the tax payers of the city.

What else is interesting is the fact that the Watchtower does not pay taxes on any of the 'donations' generated with the literature that is 'placed' at a door while they are out preaching. Keep this mind as you read the next line regarding helping elderly ones 'fill out applications for "social services"'. You will see more references in this manual about getting aid from 'Caesar', yet as the above article points out, the Watchtower has no desire to pay 'Caesar' his taxes!

***** End of Inserted Comment *****

An elderly widow needs help applying for social services.

A single parent or a widow has a leaking roof.

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The Grand Instructor

Jehovah is the Grand Instructor of his people. (Job 6:22; Isa. 30:20, 21)

Jehovah instructed his only-begotten Son so well that he could be described as "a master worker" beside his Father. (Prov. 8:30) As a perfect reflection of his Father, God's Son was a Master Teacher. The Scriptures relate that those who heard him were astounded at his way of teaching." (Matt. 7:28)

It is noteworthy that Jesus himself said: "What I teach is not mine." "I do nothing of my own initiative; but just as the Father taught me I speak these things." (John 7:16; 8:28)

Jehovah has lovingly provided divine instruction and guidance for man.

He created man with the mental capacity to be taught and to teach others.

He gave Adam divine instruction in the way of everlasting life.

Through his prophets and priests, he continued to instruct his people, Israel.

"Pay Attention to Yourselves and to All the Flock"

The Levites, for example, were to be teachers of the Law. Nehemiah described their activity on one occasion, saying that they were explaining the Law to the people, reading aloud from the book, putting meaning into it, and giving understanding in the reading. (Neh. 8:7, 8)

God provided teachers for the growth and health of the early Christian congregation. (Eph. 4:11-13) Christian overseers today also need to teach God's Word.

Today, Jehovah provides instruction by means of "the faithful steward." (Luke 12:42)

In loyal submission to Christ as Head and Master, "the faithful and discreet slave" is diligent in attending to the spiritual needs of Jehovah's people everywhere. (Matt. 24:45)

***** Inserted Comment *****

For those of you that dont know: Faithful Steward" = "The Faithful and Discreet Slave" = "Governing Body" of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Anyway. The Governing Body, is a group of old men that claim they are guided by Christ, and this group of old men say that they have spiritual authority to set the rules and regulations that run the Watchtower Society. And as you can see in the above section, they say that Jehovah (God) Himself provides **them, and them alone**, the "instructions" to 'dispense' to all Jehovah Witness's.

Is this, or is this not, "veneration of human leaders"? I'm sure David Koresh and Jim Jones claimed to Speak for God as well!

***** End of Inserted Comment *****

Appointed overseers serve as teachers in the congregation. (Titus I :5, 9)

They must be careful not to give their own opinions but, rather, to teach God's Word exclusively.(1 Cor. 4:6;2 Tim. 4:2)

Five weekly congregation meetings, two larger assemblies within the circuit each year, and an annual district convention furnish progressive instruction and training in true worship for the entire household of God. Gilead School, Ministerial Training School, Pioneer Service School, and Kingdom Ministry School give specialized education to equip ministers for particular fields of service.

Schools or training sessions organized periodically as the need arises equip brothers progressively to care for their assignments in the organization. Help the brothers in your congregation to take full advantage of the schooling provided by our Grand Instructor. Encourage enrollment in the Theocratic Ministry School.

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Encourage those persons who qualify to reach out for the privilege of receiving specialized training provided through other schooling arranged by the organization. In addition to handling parts on the meetings, you have opportunities to feed your brothers spiritually and in a loving manner before and after the meetings, in shepherding work, in field service, and in other ways.

How can love be shown when:

A brother is not prepared for his meeting part?

A shy or inexperienced person needs assistance in preparing talks for the Theocratic Ministry School?

Someone needs help in getting to the Kingdom Hall or to an assembly?

A child does not behave well in the Kingdom Hall?

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The Great Evangelizer, Who Sponsors the Preaching of the Good News Worldwide

Jehovah provided good news of deliverance when uttering the first prophecy in Eden. (Gen. 3:15)

Through His angel, He declared good news to Abraham. (Gal. 3:8) It was foretold that the Messiah, Jesus, would "tell good news to the meek ones," and he did that, sharing whole-heartedly in the work. (Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:18)

Jesus foretold that during this time of the end, the good news (evangel) of the Kingdom would be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness.

In fact, he said: "The good news has to be preached." (Mark 13:10) This is the good news that God wants people to hear. Since overseers of the flock of God are responsible for taking the lead in this evangelizing work, individual self-examination in this regard is appropriate.

(2 Tim. 4:5)

"Pay Attention to Yourselves and to All the Flock"

There is need for you to be present and to participate in the field service when the rest of the congregation is sharing in this activity. Elders need to make definite arrangements to take the lead in the field and work with the publishers and pioneers. By such active involvement of the elders, the brothers are encouraged and the activity of the congregation increases.

Be alert to discern when publishers need help in developing their field service skills. Give specific instruction. Demonstrate how they can improve. Make sure that the congregation has adequate arrangements for field service for the benefit and convenience of the publishers and pioneers. Good support will result. By the example you set, the congregation should learn that field service is not a burdensome chore but, rather, can be a pleasurable privilege.

How can love be shown when: A publisher forgets to turn in his field service report? Someone stays too long on a call, causing others to wait? An elderly publisher has become irregular in field service? (w87 6/1 pp. 10-12)

A Lover of Justice and a God of Mercy

Jehovah's justice and mercy became evident in the way he handled the case of the rebellion in Eden.

Justice prevailed in the judgment he pronounced upon those two unrepentant rebels against his sovereignty. Yet mercy tempered his judgment, as he foretold a deliverer for the then unborn offspring of Adam and Eve. (Gen. 3:15)

In justice Jehovah has allowed mankind to suffer the due recompense for sin. (Deut. 32:4, 5) But in mercy he has made provision for their redemption and has given them hope of everlasting life.

The ransom provision itself satisfies justiceÆa perfect life for a perfect life. (I Tim. 2:6)

Indeed, what mercy that provision reflects! It is undeserved kindness to those in desperate need. (John 1:17; Eph. 1:7)

Jehovah shows himself to be just and merciful with groups of people as well as with individuals.

Jehovah extended to natural Israel the opportunity to supply the members of the bride of Christ. But when an insufficient number responded, Jehovah mercifully extended the invitation to the Samaritans and then to the nations, the Gentile people. (Acts 8:14; 10:45; 15:14; Rom. 11:25)

David was worthy of death because of his sin with Bathsheba, but he was extended great mercy because of the Kingdom covenant, the mercy he himself showed to others, and his own sincere repentance. However, he did not escape Punishment: The son of his adultery died soon after birth, and David reaped repeated domestic difficulties.

Elders must be both just and merciful in their dealings with others.

In giving counsel and in judging, you should hold to God's standard with everyone. What Jehovah expects of you is revealed at Deuteronomy 6:16, 17; Micah 6:8; and Matthew 5:7. How may your love for impartiality, justice and mercy be tested in situations involving the following? Those you may consider more prominent in the Christian congregation and those you may not consider so. (Jas. 2: 1-4)

Younger members of the congregation as well as adults. (I Tim. 5:1,2)

Wrongdoers who are sincerely repentant. (2 Cor. 2:5-8)

Members of your own family who have engaged in serious wrongdoing and are not repentant.
(I Cor. 5:11)

The example you set in displaying justice and mercy will be reflected by the congregation.

How may you imitate Jehovah, our Loving Overseer, when:

Someone who has been a victim of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse seeks your help? (w90 2/15 pp. 21-3; w83 10/1 pp. 27-31)

A person who has a disfellowshipped family member believes she is being avoided by others in the congregation? (w91 4/15 pp. 23-5; w83 1/1 pp. 30-1)

A teenager is going through a phase of immodest grooming and dress?

You are dealing with a wrongdoer who does not appear to appreciate your efforts to help him?

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