

*The following is a letter sent to the Watchtower's Governing Body in 1981 as a letter of resignation/rebuke regarding the way other Bethel family members were treated during the "Franz Incident" of 1979-1980 at the Brooklyn headquarters. At the time of writing this letter, Randall was an elder in the Airport Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in El Segundo, California (Los Angeles). Randall declined a meeting called by the local elders after they received a copy of this letter, and was subsequently viewed as "disassociated." This was one of the very first printed responses delivered to the Watchtower's Governing Body regarding the events that occurred at Bethel in 1979-1980. For more information, read [The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society - The Critical Years](#).*

**January 22, 1981**

**Dear Members of the Governing Body,**

This is not an easy letter to write, considering that I had recently spent almost six years at Bethel working with you, serving as a Bethel elder and a factory overseer. I gave my work the best of my ability, as many of you are aware.

Last July I left Bethel. I explained that I had family situations that needed to be cleared up. This was most assuredly true; but I also did not mention that I had come to realize a lot of things in the last year of my Bethel service, enough to cause me to want to leave, as have many other faithful ones in the last few months.

As does most everyone who comes to Bethel to stay, I stood in awe of the men in responsible positions, especially N.H.Knorr and later the members of the governing body. Of course, in time, I saw that you were human, too; and that all of us have shortcomings. But in the last couple of years, it seems to me that the personality of Christ has not been reflected in your dealings with others.

Having been a table head, I was always down in the morning for the text discussion. In time I began to detect a subtle campaign on your part aimed at discrediting a fellow member of the body as well as others whose beliefs on certain organizational doctrines differed from the majority.

I guess you could say that I knew quite a bit more about the situation than others did. I began to see how Ray Franz had been a 'thorn' in your weekly meetings, due to the fact that he always sought the Biblical approach, rather than by tradition or popular opinion. You actually began to ignore him often, and this undoubtedly contributed to his having to take an extended leave of absence last year.

Not a few know how, back in the early sixties, Ray, Ed Dunlap and Reinhard Lengtat were commissioned to assemble the AID book and how Fred Franz had told them to really examine the Bible to make sure we had the correct understanding on certain things; and that if we needed to make some changes, that we would. We gained a more accurate understanding of many matters, including elders in the 1st century congregations. In time, however, some of the 'proofs' that support our doctrines on chronology and the last days, as well as the 'other sheep' class distinction were revealed to be quite shaky; not to speak of Paul's words in Romans and Galatians that show Christians as living by faith and not by works of law. But you repeatedly refused to consider these things.

It was unfortunate that some of the Spanish elders in a local congregation spoke to their congregation as they did last March 31. But instead of handling this in a calm way, you called in Chris and Norma Sanchez and Nestor Kuilan, who had nothing directly to do with that, and you disfellowshipped them all, despite the fact that they had spent many years in faithful service in responsible positions. When I read the appeal letter that Chris wrote afterwards, it was heartbreaking to see how cold they were treated and how they were called names such as 'suckers' and 'liars' by those who claim to be Christian, even a member of the governing body.

Then you formed another committee in order to frame Ray by taping confessions extracted from close friends of his of things he had said in private to them, I was shocked. Two weeks were spent making tapes, and then you proceed to call him back from his leave of absence and sit him down in a room and play them all back to him in front of everyone. I could have cried. Then you all but disfellowship him and he leaves, but this was just the beginning. Ed Dunlap was extensively questioned, and when he would not back down on what he felt about all of this, he was disfellowshipped. Then I saw how you began to interrogate everyone in the writing department, not on their loyalty to

God and Christ, but to the Watchtower Society. Brother Lingtadt was put through over 20 hours of intensive interrogation and subjected to the 3rd degree. Others, I was shocked to find, had their personal phone calls re-directed through the service department in order to spy on them and 'catch' them. Some who gathered in their rooms to study the Bible together were called in and told to quit. A series of 'special questions' were made up and many had to take the 'loyalty' test if they were suspected of knowing about these things.

When Albert Schroeder gave his warning on 'apostasy' to the family, I expected some clarifying information for the family. Instead, the hatred gleamed from his eyes as he proceeded to belittle anyone who would entertain doubts about the Society's interpretations, saying that such persons were weak in faith or proud and presumptuous. Then in his later talk to the Bethel elders, Schroeder stopped at nothing in wrenching the word 'organization' out of the scriptures. He called the organization our 'mother' and said, "She has the right to make rules and regulations for us," and then holds up the *Branch Organization Procedure* book and pointed out it's 1,177 rules and regulations, knowing full well what Romans 7:6 says about Christians following sets of 'spiritual rules'. Then he actually admits that the beliefs of those dismissed were not an apostasy from the Bible, but from the organization. There is a difference, isn't there?

I managed to find some words of C.T. Russell himself that you would have done well to heed: "The endeavor to compel all men to think alike on all subjects, culminated in the great apostasy and the development of the papal system, and thereby the gospel, the one faith that Paul and the other apostles set forth, was lost- buried under the mass of uninspired decrees of popes and councils. The unity of the early church, based upon the simple gospel and bound only by love, gave way to the bondage of the church of Rome...Each new reform movement has made the failure of attempting to make a creed just large enough for its prime movers." p.1572 9/1893 WT

Soon after the disfellowshippings and the talks, each one of you got your turn at the table to heap insults at these individuals and others, not even flinching at twisting the meaning of the scriptures you used. Persons who did not fully accept all that the WT teaches were denounced as 'spiritual fornicators,' 'mentally diseased' and 'insane.' I know that even to this day such is still continuing, much to the disgust of many in the family.

We strive to impress others with the thought that we do not have a clergy-laity class distinction. But we do seem to have a mediator between Christ and man, and that is the governing body. Remember when brother Klein said in private that Franz (Fred) has "been our oracle for the last 67 years"? Few people know who the man is who was the ghost-writer for Rutherford's books and who dreamed up all of the 'types and antitypes' that we still hold to. Those 'types' supposedly identify 'class distinctions' and add support to the distinction between those who interpret the scriptures and those who accept that interpretation as being from God. In the last few months, I remember brother Klein encouraging us not to study the Bible 'too seriously' but to 'Develop hobbies to keep our minds off of doubts.'

It is one thing to claim that the Bible is God's Word and it is incomplete; it is another thing to say we need someone to interpret it for us. The same feeling exists today as it did in Russell's day, and I quote him: "'We find that people cannot see the divine plan in studying the Bible by itself, but we see, also, that if anyone lays the "Scripture Studies" aside, even after he has used them...after he has read them for ten years, and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness.'" p.298 Sept.15,1910 WT

The same attitude is displayed today about the Watchtower and other books; and we end up reading and studying them instead of God's Word. This doesn't show much faith in the power of the scriptures and the holy spirit.

Let's face it, brothers, this organization has made a lot of mistakes; many that the friends never realized. Jesus did not say he would be the head of any man-made organization with rules. He is the head of the Christian congregation, and he gives his spirit to those who pursue the truth. Being the member of an organization has little to do with whether you are approved by Jehovah; it is our hearts that tell the story. The greatest insult to Jesus Christ comes from your telling millions that they cannot receive God's spirit to become his spiritual sons. You know very well that this undeserved kindness is offered to all who read the Word of God; and just because you thought that the number that could fit into heaven was filled, first in 1881, then 1918 and later 1935, you tell others that they will live on the earth and that it will take 1000 years to make them perfect. Newcomers are intimidated from partaking in the Lord's memorial. You do not

believe that the 'other sheep' are technically Christians, as you used to admit years ago (p.249 August 1934 WT). The whole basis for the 'Jonadab class' has it's roots in your chronology; saying that you came up with this idea because it was time to reveal it, even though no one else has ever drawn such a conclusion from reading the Bible.

Well, I know that this is not a very encouraging letter. But it seems that few have the courage to say these things, because of the unreasonable way they are subsequently treated. I do not think you have been very 'discreet' in the last year. Faithful, yes, but not to Jesus Christ; only to the organization.

I do not expect nor wish to make tidal waves among you. Not all of you have the above spirit; you know who you are. I and hundreds of others close to you would wish that you show the spirit of Christ in the days ahead; and work, not for the glories of men, but for the glory of our great God Jehovah.

Sincerely,

**RANDALL WATTERS**

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