

## **“THE FIELD IS THE WORLD”**

By An Associate Writer of [www.AnointedJW.org](http://www.AnointedJW.org)

Late last year, I put to the test what had been a long standing prejudice that exist among Jehovah’s Witnesses and certain other religious groups. It is the belief that outside of their fellowships, there is no thriving religious or spiritual life to be had.

The prevailing view that is vigorously advocated by the Watchtower organization is that all churches and religious groups outside of themselves are rife with immorality, are people who perform their worship to God as a mere public display of false piety and are not true Christians. In short, outside their religion, everything else is a desolate wasteland.

Many Jehovah’s Witnesses advocate this view even though they have never stepped foot in a religious building other than a Kingdom Hall or associated with any other Christians other than Jehovah’s Witnesses. They have appropriated the Apostle Peter’s words to Jesus when he said: “Lord whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life.” (**John 6:68**) This verse is used to teach that outside of the Watchtower organization there is nowhere else to go.

To experience firsthand how other Christians practice their faith, and to find out factually if there is somewhere else to go, I began regularly attending three different churches in my area of Boston, Massachusetts. They are the Church of the Covenant, which is associated with the United Church of Christ, The Refuge Temple Apostolic Church, and the Twelfth Baptist Church. After getting familiar with their Sunday services, I began attending each of their Bible study classes held during weekday evenings or Sunday mornings.

As I introduced myself upon entering each of these associations of Christians, I decided not to bring any hidden agenda, only an open heart with the sincere desire to get to know other believers of Christ Jesus. I made the conscious determination that I would leave my former Jehovah’s Witness belief system out of the picture and start with a clean slate. My starting point is best expressed by the apostle Paul when he told the Corinthians:

“For I decided not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and him executed on the stake. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and with much trembling.”

– **1 Corinthians 2:2-3**

Recently, due to time constraints, I have restricted myself to attending the Bible study classes which all offer open discussion on various Bible topics. And I must tell you, I have never had such stimulating discussions and exchanges with these dear brothers and sisters in all my years as a publisher, ministerial servant and congregation elder. Even my training at the School for Congregation Elders at Patterson did not provide this level of iron sharpening and critical thinking.

In each of these associations, there is an openness to freely express ones ideas and beliefs. Sometimes we challenge each other's viewpoints, but always with the intent "to thoroughly comprehend fully what is the breadth and length and height and depth" of the subject under consideration. Whatever direction the discussion takes, we all leave the study spiritually stimulated, sharpened and encouraged. There is no fear that an authoritarian hammer from a congregation leader will clobber you over the head for having an individual or original thought that differs from someone else. Love truly prevails in these discussions.

This experience has been quite a revelation for me! These brothers and sisters are no different from Jehovah's Witnesses who read the Bible and sincerely want to please God and Christ. This kind of free flowing exchange of ideas is totally absent from the Watchtower Society's authoritarian grip on the faith of our friends. They would never allow such a Berean examination of beliefs and doctrine that prevails in these three diverse fellowships of believers. Unless Jehovah's Witnesses have taken the time to visit other churches and truly get to know the people, they have no justification to comment on the spiritual status of that group of believers. To do so only fosters the worst kind of religious prejudice and alienates, as opposed to drawing others in the uniting bond of love.

Recently due to other responsibilities, I was absent for a couple of weeks. When I returned, both the friends at the 12th Baptist Church and the Refuge Temple Apostolic Church greeted me with a wonderful outflow of love and affection. These new friends had sincerely missed my being there. We exchanged hugs and they wanted to know that I was alright. It nearly brought tears to my eyes as I never had any indication my presence had any impact upon them. They did not view me as just a stranger off the street.

I have grown to love these dear brothers and sisters as much as I love my brothers and sisters among Jehovah's Witnesses. The difference is that many of my brothers and sisters among Jehovah's Witnesses at present have not grown to the extent they are able to broaden their viewpoint to match those of Christ Jesus who said he would draw all sorts of men to himself. (**John 12:32**) These fellowships I have become associated with over the past year welcome anyone who accepts Christ Jesus and desires to imitate him.

Before closing, I would like to relate a profound experience and the insights I gained from it. The first time I attended the Refuge Apostolic Church was a jarring experience. After their song, they opened with what they call a congregational Pentecostal prayer. Everyone prays out loud all at the same time. For some individuals, it is an emotionally charged experience. It took a great deal of control for me to stand in the midst of this form of worship having grown up in a Watchtower-type of environment where there is zero show of emotion in worship. In order to surmount my discomfort and prejudiced views, I made the conscious effort to focus my attention on individual prayers that were being uttered rather than listening to the clamor of voices. To my complete amazement, what I heard was nothing unlike the public prayers said at the Kingdom Hall before and after meetings. These friends were asking the Father to give the Pastor his spirit so that what he said would benefit the congregation and help those who could not be there due to sickness or other reasons. They were praying for the gospel to be spread throughout the earth.

They were asking God to help them remain faithful to him. They were praying for help to overcome their weakness and requesting forgiveness where they had fallen short. It occurred to me that our heavenly Father's ears are just as much open to the voices of these children of his as it would be for any other group of believers who pray to him.

Dropping my prejudicial and arrogant views, which had been cultivated and fostered by years of Watchtower conditioning, opened my heart wide to a family of fellow believers I have neglected all of my life. Through this outreach ministry, I am now learning what it means to capture the beautiful mind of the Christ.

It always thrills me when I read the experiences posted to this website of many of my brothers and sisters who were formerly pioneers, Circuit and District Overseers, Bethelites and long-time congregation publishers, many whom are old-timers who have dropped the Watchtower "chosen people mentality" and have taken up the true Good News of the Kingdom and are experiencing the joy the Master promised.

I have learned that when our actions are wholly spiritual in motive, it makes life more worthwhile, filling it with high purposes, dignifying it with transcendent values and inspiring it with superb motives, all the while comforting our soul with a sublime and sustaining hope. There is nothing that can replace our own firsthand experience.

My own preconceived notions had become a frozen form of worship. This reaching out to others – **Into His Harvest** – has thawed out this frozen way of thinking into the liquid liberty of enlightened sonship which this website so nobly fosters.

I continually pray for the success of this kind of ministry to the whole world – the field under cultivation – as it will have a positive, profound and long lasting effect on the spread of the Good News of the Kingdom as Jesus taught it.

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