

– POSSIBILITIES PHASE THREE – THE AWAKENING!

In the drama **The Announcement!** we presented a scenario where the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses publicly admitted the errors of their teachings at the upcoming Annual General Meeting, and offered an apology for their slothfulness. We showed how two simple changes could completely turn the organization around – releasing the restriction on shunning disfellowshipped family members and allowing the development of a true Christian fellowship within the Kingdom Halls that would co-exist for a time until all of our brothers and sisters understand and accept the true Christian hope. We see such a development as the most successful method of rescuing the millions of lost children who are pursuing the fatal 'earthly hope,' turning their backs to the real hope that Jesus held out – eternal life in the heavens. We also see such a development as the quickest method and a meaningful step toward 'bringing heaven down,' leading to a fulfillment of the promise of peace on earth and good will toward all men.

Yes, it is a bold proposition, but it is wholly within the realm of possibilities. The only thing that could stand in its way is the mere disapproval of men. There is no legal, ethical, social, or religious reason why Jehovah's Witnesses cannot transition into a real brotherhood based solely on the plain and open teachings of Jesus where no man is their master, only the Son of God/Son of Man Christ Jesus.

As a plus, Jehovah's Witnesses have the unique distinction of being a very fluid people. They originated as a bold offshoot of an Adventist group; they survived a major schism after the death of their founder, Charles T. Russell; they endured the severe doctrinal changes instituted by his successor, Joseph Rutherford; and they kept going after many failed expectations and doctrinal flip-flops. They accepted these changes as 'the light that was getting lighter as the day is firmly established.' (***Proverbs 4:18***) Thus, they have demonstrated a willingness and the ability to adjust themselves to what they see as truth. So it would not be a monumental change of stripes for Jehovah's Witnesses to ***continue to evolve*** into a fellowship based on the plain and open teachings of Jesus.

If they could conform their views and their ministry to the plain and open teachings of Jesus, they will create a phenomenon that is so needed by this world – a phenomenon that will attract people all over the globe to the simple teachings of a carpenter's son that opens the floodgates to a glorious eternal career in the known and unknown universe. And as a direct effect of the spreading of that hope, our world will change.

So, what if Jehovah's Witnesses were presented with the opportunity to be real leaders in reintroducing and magnifying the plain and open teachings of Jesus? What if Jehovah's Witnesses were given the 'keys to the heavenly kingdom' as exemplars of the type of ambassadors spoken of by the Apostle Paul? (***2 Corinthians 5:18-20***) Who among them would refuse it? Who among them would choose servitude to men rather than a real ministry as sons of God and brothers to Christ Jesus?

We believe the vast majority of Jehovah's Witnesses would leap at the opportunity to be a part of something so unique and so powerful, rather than to go down in history as a short-lived

misguided cult that chose to obey men rather than God. And we believe a large number of the extended Christian community would join with them.

So, walk with us as we explore, as a possibility, the immediate reaction to an announcement for change to demonstrate the type of enthusiasm that can be generated among a God-oriented, Christ-following, Spirit-directed people who choose to follow the lamb wherever he goes. We call this fourth drama **The Awakening!**

THE AWAKENING!

The scene opens in very large crowded double Kingdom Hall shortly after noon on October 4, 2014. The entire assembly has just completed their viewing of the 130th Annual General Meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses streamed from the Jersey Assembly Hall. In the front row sits the entire bodies of Elders who serve the group of congregations that had gathered together, along with their Circuit Overseer. These men had received previous notice that this year's Annual General Meeting would be unprecedented, but they had not at all expected what occurred.

As they looked around, there were many shocked faces. Although they had seen the emotional response from the live audience, many were still unsure how to respond. Clearly, some were crying, texting and emailing. Others were hugging and laughing. But many were quiet, not knowing how to respond, apparently waiting to see how their Elders and the Circuit Servant would respond first.

After about a minute or two, three family groups and a few individuals stood up, shuffled themselves to the aisle and practically stormed out. The audience started to whisper and as the whispering got louder and louder, the Circuit Overseer, Brother Hopeful, who was already a partaker based on the plain and open teachings of Jesus, rushed to the platform:

[Brother Hopeful] "Brothers! Brothers! Let's calm down and not overreact. I know some of you are in shock, but storming out is not the answer. Let's talk about this. Let's take some questions. Does anyone have any questions?"

"Yes, I have a question," yelled out Sister Bold. "Pass her the mic, please," said Brother Hopeful. Immediately a young Ministerial Servant, Brother Young, hustled up the aisle and passed the microphone to Sister Bold who practically snatched the microphone and said: "I want to know if this is for real? Was this the real Annual Meeting or is this a drama?" Others hearing her question nodded in agreement. It just sounded too unreal to be true.

"Yes," replied Brother Hopeful, "It's the real deal. I, along with the local bodies of Elders, received a letter a few days ago and we were instructed to make sure as many in the congregations as possible attend this meeting for a special announcement. So yes, it's real."

"This is unbelievable!" yelled out Brother Excited, an elderly brother who had been partaking of the Memorial emblems for years. "Please," said Brother Hopeful, "Let's raise our

hands so we can get the microphones to you so all can be heard.” Then looking back to the servant body, he said: “Can we get another servant with a mic on this side of the Hall?” In response, another Ministerial Servant, Brother New, grabbed the other microphone and walked up the aisle to Brother Excited who eagerly grabbed the microphone and said:

“I just want to say, this is unbelievable! I have been in this organization for many, many years and this is the first time I have ever heard an apology from the Governing Body. And the Jubilee and the new fellowship! Amazing! This is a big deal! Jehovah’s hand is definitely behind this! I’m on board! Praise Jah!”

[*Brother Hopeful*] “Thank you, Brother Excited. That’s the feeling of the entire servant body. We know it must have taken a lot for the Governing Body to make such a bold confession and change of course. But I must also tell you that our first reaction was shock and confusion, so we know how you friends must be feeling right now. That’s why we want to open the floor to everyone who has questions and we’ll try to answer them. And if you’re not ready to ask your questions now, we will each make ourselves available after the meeting and throughout the week.” Then looking down at the Elder body sitting in the front row, he said: “Can a few of you brothers come up here and join me and help me respond to the friends’ questions?”

In response, about 5 Elders walked up to the platform. “Can we get a few chairs up here, too.” Two other ministerial servants and a couple of the Elders grabbed 5 chairs and brought them up to the platform. All 5 Elders sat down in a semi-circle behind Brother Hopeful, all ready to help answer whatever questions were asked to the best of their ability.

As Brother Hopeful looked out over the audience, he saw several hands. His attention was drawn to a sister whose hand was raised who seemed to have tears in her eyes. “*Sister Loving*,” said Brother Hopeful. Brother Young leaned over and handed the microphone to Sister Loving who said: “Does this mean that my daughter is not disfellowshipped anymore?”

[*Brother Hopeful*] “It means that there is no longer any requirement that you, or any of her family members, shun her. The Governing Body, and we also, encourage you to reach out to her and tell her what transpired at the Annual Meeting. And if she wants to be reinstated, she should approach the body of Elders in her congregation, who have been instructed to be as merciful as possible.”

[*Sister Loving*] “But I don’t know if she wants to be reinstated. She just misses us and we miss her.”

[*Brother Hopeful*] “That’s fine. We’re sure the Governing Body has considered that. We suspect there will be many disfellowshipped and disassociated ones who don’t want to rejoin the congregation, but who do want fellowship with their family. That’s what the Jubilee is all about. But let her know that the door is open to be reinstated. And after a reinstatement announcement is given, she is free to stay or go.”

A couple of the Elders on the platform looked surprised, especially Brother Unsure who stood up and said. “Are you sure about that, Brother Hopeful? I don’t mean to question you, but that seems a little odd.” “No problem,” said Brother Hopeful, “This question and answer session

is for all, including the Elders. And yes, the Circuit Overseers received some direction that we are now authorized to share with the bodies of Elders on how to deal with disfellowshipped ones. We were told that there would be many who simply want their names cleared and who may be too hurt or no longer interested in being one of Jehovah's Witnesses. This is not a barrier to reinstatement. And it frees such ones to be able to participate in the new fellowship without the disfellowshipping stigma."

[*Brother Unsure*] "Okay, okay. That makes sense. Okay, thank you."

[*Brother Hopeful*] "Let's take another question. Brother EagerSon."

Brother New rushed over and handed the microphone to Brother EagerSon. "So when does the new fellowship start?" he asked. "Very soon," said Brother Hopeful. "We expect to receive a letter from the representatives of the new fellowship real soon with further information."

Brother Insider, one of the Elders on the platform, stood up. "Brother Hopeful, can I address that question?" "Certainly," said Brother Hopeful, who stepped aside as Brother Insider stepped up to the podium.

[*Brother Insider*] "What I have been told by Brother AwakerSon, who is one of the founding members of the new fellowship, is that they will begin arranging meetings for their Sonship Schools shortly, first in the congregations where there are already a few 'Sons of the Kingdom' and then they will branch out. Elders who are able to travel are welcome to attend the early meetings so they can come back to their local congregations and start conducting Sonship Schools there. They will be setting up a website with information on how local brothers and sisters can arrange Sonship Schools. I think the website address will be provided within the next few days and we will post it on the Information Board at the back of the Hall."

"Thank you, Brother Insider," said Brother Hopeful, as he returned to the podium. "That's also what I heard from another Circuit Overseer who is also a founding member." Then looking out to the audience, he said "How many here would be interested in attending the new Schools?"

Immediately, practically every hand went up without hesitation. "Really?" said Brother Hopeful, almost in disbelief. "That's excellent news!" Then turning to the Elders sitting on the platform, "Why don't you brothers get together to find out what times your Halls are available for the Schools and by that time, you should have received some information by letter or from the website on how to move forward."

"Oo! Oo!" heard Brother Hopeful. As he turned back to the audience, he saw a young sister raising her hand as high as possible, practically jumping out of her seat.

Brother Hopeful smiled broadly and pointing out in the audience said, "Sister Diligent." She smiled still holding her hand high. "Wait for the mic," he said as the audience chuckled.

Brother Young rushed over and handed the microphone to the brother on the aisle. He passed it down person to person until it reached Sister Diligent who asked: "What about the

Watchtower Study and the Sunday Talks? Are we going to continue having our regular meetings?”

[*Brother Hopeful*] “Good question! It seems to me that each congregation will have to decide that. Since the Governing Body is encouraging as many as possible to participate in the Sonship Schools, it seems to me priority would be given to the new education program.” Then turning back to Brother Insider, he said: “Do you have any insight on that?”

Brother Insider joined Brother Hopeful at the podium and just leaned toward the microphone: “I haven’t heard anything specific. But it doesn’t look like anyone here is interested in keeping up with the old information. Seems like everyone here wants to move forward with the new education program.” In response, the audience applauded and nodded in agreement.

“Okay, then,” said Brother Hopeful, “Then you brothers better get busy finding out what to do next. May I suggest that you go ahead and meet together for the Book Study/Service Meeting as usual, but instead of covering the assigned material, perhaps you will have more information to share. And you can continue this question and answer session.” Again, the audience nodded and applauded in agreement.

“Wonderful!” said Brother Hopeful. “I was hoping you friends would respond this way. I’m personally so excited about the coming year. And how about our year’s text, *Galatians 3:26*:

“You are all, in fact, sons of God through your faith in Christ Jesus.”

Some in the audience mouthed the words along with Brother Hopeful and all applauded again. “Yes,” he continued, “We are ALL sons of God and brothers to one another. No more separation of the flock of God. No more challenging the faith and sanity of our brothers. The heavens are open to all! Paul’s words are becoming true for us:

“One body there is, and **one spirit**, just as you were called to the **one hope** of your calling; **one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all**, who is over all and through all and in all.”
– *Ephesians 4:4-6*

“And we would like to acknowledge the courage of the brothers and sisters in this audience who already openly accepted their sonship in spite of the misplaced opposition.” The few in the audience who had faithfully partaken at the last Memorial smiled and were especially encouraged by those words. He continued:

“Now we know some here are a little apprehensive about the heavenly hope, but, as Brother Hurt suggested, we want you to apply yourselves to the new education program. Give it a fair chance and you may be surprised that the Father has so much more in store for you.

“So now, let’s conclude this meeting with prayer. Brother Young, would you do the honors?” Brother Young was surprised at the invitation, especially with the Circuit Overseer present. But Brother Hopeful wanted Brother Young to know how much he appreciated his courage. Brother Young was one of those faithful brothers who confessed union with Christ in

spite of the opposition due to his youthfulness.

As Brother Young approached the podium, Brother Hopeful announced: “After the prayer, I’d like to ask the entire servant bodies that are present to remain behind for a brief meeting to make sure we are moving forward together.” As he looked at the servants, they all nodded in agreement.

Brother Young bowed his head and said a short but very heartfelt prayer. And he made sure to include a prayer of thanks for being in association with a congregation that was so ready to please the Christ. When he concluded, the audience applauded again. The brothers on the platform stepped down to shake hands with many of the brothers and sisters as they gathered their things to leave. Most were in a state of euphoria, truly excited about the future.

As Brother Hopeful made his way back to the library, he thought to himself “This is just the thing this organization needs. This will rejuvenate the spirit in our brothers and sisters and allow us to all move forward, reaching out for the true hope. I can hardly believe I’m alive to see this day. Father, thank you. Thank you for not abandoning us to our error. And thank you for those brothers who would not give up on us.”

Slowly the Hall emptied out and all the Elders and servants who had attended the meeting joined Brother Hopeful in the library. This group of brothers, along with many other groups around the world, were embarking on something new, something different, something exciting. Now that the organization had awakened to the true hope, and began unburdening the brothers from ‘old wine’ and harmful policies, they are free to move forward toward a new adventure into the plain and open teachings of Jesus.

This fictitious after-meeting demonstrates in a positive way how the local brothers and sisters might respond to an Annual General Meeting such as the one portrayed in the drama, **The Announcement!** It gives our awakened association some direction on how next to proceed.

All of these suggestions are possible and easily implemented by spirit led men and women who sincerely want to serve the Father according to the way Jesus demonstrated and taught. And if they do, we can expect phenomenal results!

Of course, not all responses will be as positive and upbuilding as we have portrayed here. So, next, we will examine the other side of the coin – how our brothers might handle possible negative fallout! In the meantime, we hope we have given many congregations food for thought.

And, as always, we welcome your comments.

“Elaia Luchnia”