

The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of several blue street signs. The most prominent sign at the top reads "CHURCH ST" with a white arrow pointing left and the number "100" below it. Below that, another sign partially shows the word "STATE" and the number "700". The signs are slightly out of focus, creating a sense of depth and a textured background.

Susanne Kuipers

Loyal to Jehovah's Good News

Religious motivation among Jehovah's Witnesses

Loyal to Jehovah's Good News

Religious motivation among Jehovah's Witnesses

Author : Susanne Kuipers
Student number: s1017799
E-mail address: susanne.j.kuipers@gmail.com
Master: 'Religion, Culture, and Society' at Leiden University

Mentor: Prof. Dr. E.G.E. Van der Wall
Second reader: Dr. J.W. Buisman
Word Count: 21.855 (excluding bibliography, including references)
Date: 17 December 2014

Preface

On 31 October 2013 602 male Jehovah's Witnesses were imprisoned in South Korea (2014: Jaarboek van Jehovah's Getuigen 2014, 30). Counting from 1950 onwards, 17.605 male Witnesses were sent to prison because they refused army service based on their conscience. Other examples of present-day violence towards Witnesses occur in Russia where the Russian Orthodox Church and some Government officials continue their campaign against the Witnesses, or in Ukraine where Witnesses are physically abused and where their properties are vandalized because of their beliefs. There are countless examples of imprisonment and abuse from the founding of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society¹ until today. In spite of being persecuted, Witnesses continue their door-to-door evangelizing; they believe that loyalty to Jehovah God is more important than their own lives. Also, Jehovah's Witnesses believe that persecution is a fulfilment of prophecy as for example predicted in Matthew 24:9 (How Precious Is the Truth to You? 2002):

Then people will hand you over to tribulation and will kill you, and you will be hated by all the nations on account of my name.

I witnessed this loyalty to Jehovah God up close. I know Witnesses who do not have contact with their own children because their children are shunned due to their disloyalty to the Congregation's rules. It hurts the parents, they often cry when you ask them, but God is the most important thing in the entire universe and for Him they will do everything. This is an interesting matter. Witnesses prefer to be persecuted or receive a death penalty over making the same mistake as Peter when during Jesus' persecution Peter denied he knew Jesus and was therefore disloyal to him (Matthew 26: 69-75). In this master thesis I research the concept of loyalty among Jehovah's Witnesses in an attempt to understand what motivates Witnesses to give their own life to Jehovah God. I seek to understand what 'loyalty' means to Jehovah's Witnesses, to understand in which context it functions, how it is interpreted by Witnesses, and what arguments they use.

When a research topic is formulated it is always important to question the significance of your research (Booth, Colomb and Williams 2008, 45-48). I believe the concept of 'loyalty' is important to study because not much has been written on it although it seems to be a motivator for religious behaviour, as will hopefully become clear from my master thesis. Maybe the concept of loyalty could explain why people leave their safe haven to fight for their faith in another country: research on the concept of 'loyalty' could give insights into the decisions made by foreign rebel fighters in the Syrian Civil War (Lund 2013). If we could come to a closer understanding of the concept of loyalty, we are

¹ The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society might be referred to as the 'Society'.

very likely to come to a better understanding of religious behaviour in general. Jehovah's Witnesses are the case-study by which I intend to come to a closer understanding of the concept of 'loyalty'.

Let me make it clear from the outset that I am close to the Dutch Jehovah's Witnesses movement because my husband and his entire family are members: objective research might therefore be at stake. Good scientific research is written when the right balance between distance and involvement is found (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 90). Since I am not involved in the movement myself I believe there is enough distance between me and the movement. During the research process I will continuously reflect upon the questions whether I am still aware of my position as a scientific researcher.

My familiarity with the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses resulted into some disagreements with Dr. M. James Penton who is most commonly known for his work on Jehovah's Witnesses. In chapter 1.3 on my resources I will extensively discuss the problems I have with Penton's work, nonetheless it is important to briefly point out that I am aware of these discrepancies because I am close to Jehovah's Witnesses' movement. I have found three reasons into why he and I have such different experiences with the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. Firstly, Penton substantiate his findings with Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society's publications that are much older than the ones I use; 1995 is the publication year of the newest publication he refers to (Penton 1997, 416, 421). Since much has changed since, and because I intend to give an account of the current belief of the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, I will base my findings on more recent publications (preferably from 2000 or newer) of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. Secondly, through e-mail contact with Penton I realized that there might also be geographical differences within the congregation. However, my research is not based on fieldwork and therefore I will not use my personal findings unless I find literature that confirms my ideas. Thirdly, as will be made clear in chapter 1.3 on resources, Penton sometimes lacks scientific objectivity (Garbe 2008, xix, xx). Despite these disagreements, I use Penton's work because of his importance to this research field: later publications on Jehovah's Witnesses always refer to him. Also, "historians have paid very little attention to the Witnesses" and Penton's works are the most important source there is (Knox 2011, 157).

Before I start with elaborating on my research, I want to acknowledge that this master thesis could not have been written without the help of a handful of people. First and foremost I would like to thank my husband, Sidney Kuipers, who has introduced me to the world of Jehovah's Witnesses and has helped me with explaining belief aspects and with gathering all information necessary. I also want to thank my mentor, Prof. Dr. Ernestine van der Wall, who came up with the idea of researching the concept of loyalty and who has been a great help with all the support and commentary she has given. I have learned much. My next tribute goes to my best friend, Sandra van der Lee, who has proofread parts of this thesis for spelling errors and who has helped me with brainstorming when necessary. I also want to thank Dr. M. James Penton for his lengthy and honest responds to my e-mails. And last but not least, I want to show my sincere gratitude to Anthon de Bont who is a beloved elder from a nearby Jehovah's Witnesses congregation. He has helped me extensively with answering all my questions about the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses and with proofreading my thesis to check for theological mistakes.

Contents

Preface.....	v
Contents	xi
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Research questions.....	2
1.2 Theoretical perspective and methodology	3
1.3 Resources	5
1.4 Drawing boundaries	7
2 The history of the Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses	8
2.1 Charles Taze Russell.....	8
2.2 The years after Russell’s death.....	10
3 The Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses today	12
3.1 God has a name.....	13
3.2 “What is God’s Purpose for the Earth?”	14
3.3 The last days.....	16
3.4 Aspects by which outsiders recognize the Witnesses.....	16
3.6 The Faithful and Discreet Slave	17
3.5 The internal structure of the Organization of Jehovah’s Witnesses	18
4 Loyalty – a theoretical approach.....	21
4.1 “God demands loyalty”	22
4.2 ‘New Light’	25
4.3 What loyalty includes	26
4.4 Disloyalty and disobedience.....	29
4.5 Loyalty to persevere	30
4.6 Psychological benefits	31
5 Loyalty – a variety of manifestations	35
5.1 The doorstep ministry	36

5.2	Neutral until the end	38
5.3	Refusal of blood transfusions	41
6	It is all about interpretation	43
6.1	Loyalty as motivator	45
6.2	An attempt to categorize	48
7	Conclusion	50
7.1	A personal note	50
	Bibliography.....	52

1 Introduction²

The founder of the Associated Bible Students, the name by which Jehovah's Witnesses were known prior to 1931, is Charles Taze Russell³. Though raised in a religious fashion by his parents he lost his faith in the Bible during his teens. During this period of his life he asked himself the question how an all loving God could punish sinners with the infinite torments of hellfire. Russell's faith was renewed after a sermon by Jonas Wendell in 1869 which led to Russell's formation of an alliance of believers that studied the Scriptures. This Bible-study class gradually evolved into the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, the official name of the legal instrument for the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses. Jehovah's Witnesses are mostly known for their door-to-door evangelism, their refusal of blood transfusion, and their refusal to participate in annual events such as Christmas and birthdays. Witnesses believe the Bible is the inspired word of God and should therefore be taken literal; according to them it contains the complete truth because texts in the Bible say it does: in John 17: 17 Jesus says "Thy Word is truth" and in 2 Timothy 3:16 Paul says "All Scripture is inspired of God".

Jehovah's Witnesses believe the Second Coming of Christ can happen any moment. Dates have been set for 1874, 1878, 1881, 1910, 1914, 1918, 1920, 1925, 1931 and 1975 (Penton 1997, 3) (Holden 2002, 82-83). The disappointment which occurred when the Second Coming of Christ did not happen in the way and manner Jehovah's Witnesses expected did not prevent the Society to grow from 44.080 members in 1928 to 6.035.564 in 2000. According to Holden, members of the organization are recipients of an absolutist message (Holden 2002, 22). The Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses teaches that the Governing Body, which is the group of authoritarian leaders of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, is a prophesized board. Jehovah's Witnesses believe the Governing Body is the "faithful and discreet slave" written about in Matthew 24: 45-47 (Penton 1997, 33, 165):

Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on coming finds him doing so! Truly I say to you, he will appoint him over all his belongings.

² Because I will concentrate on the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses during my entire master, I have written several introductions to the organization and that is why similarities between all of them can be found.

³ Important works on the general understanding of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society are written by Andrew Holden and M. James Penton.

Attending meetings and obeying what the Governing Body claims to be God's law is demanded of each member, because only than members are faithful servants of God (United in Worship of the Only True God 1983, 170-171). The obedience to the Congregation but also to God seems to be interconnected with the loyalty of believers.

Loyalty is, according to the Congregation, a capacity necessary for servants to have (Inzicht in de Schrift: Deel 2 2009, 222-223). This loyalty can lead Witnesses to death if for example the death penalty is given by governments in case the Witnesses persevere with their practices. But why? And what drives Witnesses to establish the importance of God above their own interest? In this master thesis I will research the concept of loyalty in the Jehovah's Witnesses movement. To do so I will first name the research questions that will be discussed in this thesis, after which I will devote some attention to the theoretical perspective and methodology I will use.

1.1 Research questions

As mentioned, this master thesis tries to comprehend the concept of loyalty within the Jehovah's Witnesses movement. Therefore the following research question can be formulated:

- What does 'loyalty' mean to Jehovah's Witnesses?

To understand what loyalty means to Jehovah's Witnesses and to examine what types of loyalty can be found in the Jehovah's Witnesses communities one needs to investigate the various levels on which loyalty can function. Case-studies of events where the Witnesses loyalty was tested can be most helpful. This brings me to the following sub-questions:

- What does the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses teach its members about loyalty?
 - What types of loyalty are recognized by the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses?
 - What does their interpretation of the Bible teach Jehovah's Witnesses about loyalty?
 - In what ways is loyalty among Jehovah's Witnesses related to concepts like 'obedience' and 'fear'?
- How does the concept of loyalty manifest itself among Jehovah's Witnesses?
 - What are the most common manifestations of loyalty among Jehovah's Witnesses?
 - What happened when faith was tested among European Jehovah's Witnesses during World War II?

- What is currently happening in countries where Jehovah's Witnesses are forbidden to preach or forbidden in general?
- Do the Jehovah's Witnesses continue practicing their faith when they risk persecution and why?
- Is loyalty only shown by Jehovah's Witnesses when they are persecuted?
- To whom were the Jehovah's Witnesses loyal and how was this loyalty shown?
- What can be said about the concept of loyalty in a larger framework?

1.2 Theoretical perspective, methodology, and structure

Before I can start with the actual content of this thesis, let me say a few words about the theoretical perspective and the methodology employed in this thesis. First of all I will use the primary source material which is provided by the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. All publications of the Society with a publication date from the year 2000 onwards are published online at <http://wol.jw.org/>. Publications from 1970 onwards can be found on a CD-ROM distributed by the Society to its members.

In the next two chapters I will discuss the history of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society and explain what kind of religious movement the Jehovah's Witnesses movement is. I will answer questions like: "What does it mean to be a Jehovah's Witness today?" and "What is the influence of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses on members of its organization?" To do so, I will use secondary literature including the well-known studies by M. James Penton and Andrew Holden. I will also use the primary literature as provided by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, which is the legal instrument of Jehovah's Witnesses for their publishing and preaching activities.

In chapter 4 I will deal with the question: "What does the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses teach its members about loyalty?" I will approach the concept of loyalty theoretically by researching what the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses teaches about loyalty. I will discuss types of loyalty as recognized by the Governing Body and I will name internal arguments such as the biblical motivations, as well as external arguments. I will make use of the primary documents, Andrew Holden's book *Jehovah's Witnesses: Portrait of a Contemporary Religious Movement* (2002) as well as other secondary scientific literature.

In chapter 5 I will research a variety of manifestations of loyalty as shown by the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses and individual Jehovah's Witnesses. I will elaborate on the

consequences for Jehovah's Witnesses when they practice their doorstep ministry; I will discuss the present-day persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses and persecution in the past. When I discuss the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses during time of war, I will first elaborate on the events of World War II and the influence World War II had on Jehovah's Witnesses. To do so I will use the primary source material and I will use Tineke Piersma's book *Faithful to their Belief: The persecution of Dutch Jehovah's Witnesses during World War II*⁴ (2005) which extensively discusses the events of World War II and the persistence of the Jehovah's Witnesses to continue their door-to-door evangelizing. I will research this material to find an answer to the question: "To whom were the Jehovah's Witnesses loyal in World War II"? Secondly I will research in which countries Jehovah's Witnesses are currently forbidden and in which countries Jehovah's Witnesses have to undergo violence on a recurring basis because of their faith. I will try to find an answer to the question: "Do Jehovah's Witnesses continue practicing their faith if they undergo persecution and if so, why?" I will investigate whether continuing their faith is an act of loyalty and if so, to whom or what? To do so I will mainly lean on the primary documents as provided by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

In chapter 6 I intend to recapitulate my findings thus far and I plan on using Josiah Royce's book *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (1908) that discusses Royce's ideas on the concept of loyalty. I intend to compare his opinion with the opinion of the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, and I will try to use the comparison to come to a better understanding of the concept of loyalty in general. I am inclined to use Royce's book because he is the only professor inside the field of philosophy and religion who has dedicated his time to the concept of loyalty. The main goal of this chapter is to put my findings in a larger framework and discuss whether my findings can be relevant for the study of religion and religious behaviour in general.

In the last chapter I will conclude and summarize my findings and discuss what loyalty means to the Congregation and to the Jehovah's Witnesses as individuals.

⁴ Tineke Piersma's book is a Dutch publication, the original title is *Getrouw aan hun Geloof: De vervolging van de Nederlandse Jehovah's Getuigen in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*.

1.3 Resources

As mentioned in the previous paragraph I will use the primary source-material as provided by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. One has to always be careful when primary resources are used because the reliability should be questioned. However there are three distinct reasons why the data published by the Society about their own organization seems to be reliable (Stark and Iannaccone 1997, 138). Firstly, Jehovah's Witnesses also report bad news. They for example not only publish information that shows a growth in members, but they also show when a decrease has occurred in a specific area. Secondly, the reliability of information is also shown by the fact that ex-members also refer to the data published by the Society. Finally, the information about the organization as published by the Society stands up solidly next to data about the movement published by secular institutions. The member count as published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society is for example similar to the member count as found by the American National Survey of Religious Identification. It is however worth mentioning that the reliability of the resources was only checked when it involved the data published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. When someone wants to research the history of the organization it would be valuable to compare the Organization's story with scientific works written by mainly Penton and Holden. Concerning the teachings of the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, the publications of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society are very valuable and trustworthy. Jehovah's Witnesses all around the globe are expected to study from these publications. Holden even states that "studying is a more appropriate term for describing their (Jehovah's Witnesses) weekly activities than worship" (Holden 2002, 64). By studying the Organization's material Jehovah's Witnesses internalize the ideas taught by the Organization and therefore, since it is a totalitarian movement as I will later on explain, what the literature teaches is also believed and practiced by individual Jehovah's Witnesses. That is why the literature published by the Society can be used as a reference about what the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses teaches and what its members believe.

Dr. M. James Penton, currently professor emeritus of history at the University of Lethbridge, questions the information given by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society because he found inconsistencies inside their publications on their own history. Penton has specialized in the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses and has written several publications on the topic of which *Apocalypse Delayed: The Story of Jehovah's Witnesses* is his best known book. Criticism on Penton's work is however widespread. Detlef Garbe, historian at the University of Hamburg, writes that Penton's publications reflect a "deep-seated aversion" against the Governing Body and the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in general (Garbe 2008, xix, xx). Garbe also states that "from a

historiographical viewpoint Penton's writings perhaps show a lack of scientific objectivity". I agree with Garbe and although Penton's works are of great value concerning the history of the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, I wish to criticize Penton on two points⁵. My first point is that while reading works of Penton one cannot stop to notice that Penton seems to have a personal feud against the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses and especially against the Governing Body. This feud is probably rooted in his disappointment with the Congregation when he was still a Jehovah's Witness himself thus Penton says:

As I travelled [...] I became more and more aware of the severe chastisement to which individual Witnesses everywhere were being subjected by their leaders when they dissented in any way from official organizational doctrines or policies [...] (Penton 1997, xiv).

He tells us that he travelled to the world-wide headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York, to discuss his feelings of concern with Raymond Franz⁶, a member of the Governing Body at that time. Franz admitted he was aware of the serious problems but asked Penton to be patient, something the latter could not do. He expressed his concerns and criticism publicly and was charged with heresy and disfellowshipped soon after⁷ (Penton 1997, xv). His displeasure with the organization and the Society are easily recognizable when one reads his books. For example, Penton states that the Governing Body misbehaved towards Jehovah's Witnesses because they had given false information in the past and nonetheless they command all Witnesses to be obedient (Penton 1997, 162-163). He forgets however that according to Jehovah's Witnesses it is logical that accurate knowledge comes with time; they believe in an evolution of knowledge on which I will elaborate in chapter 4.2. Also, being patient in order to give Jehovah God the opportunity to resolve issues is a common practice among Jehovah's Witnesses. Their passive nature awaiting for God to resolve issues can be compared to Quietism (Volg Jehovah's geduld na 2006). It can therefore be assumed that although the Governing Body was aware of the problems, Penton was asked to be patient because the Governing Body believed a solution would come with time. Although Penton probably

⁵ In the preface I mention three points of critique. However, because my study is not based on fieldwork, I cannot proof whether there are geographical differences and that is why I do not mention those in this chapter.

⁶ Raymond Franz has later on left the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses because of a 'crisis of conscience' on which he elaborates in the equally named book *Crisis of Conscience* (2004).

⁷ Dr. M. James Penton's excommunication, as well as all troubles inside the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses at that time, is thoroughly discussed inside *Crisis of Allegiance: A Study of Dissent Among Jehovah's Witnesses* (1986) by James A. Beverley.

has good reasons to be critical, being critical to the extent it shows “deep-seated aversion” should have no place in objective scientific studies (Garbe 2008, xix, xx).

The second problem I have with Penton’s work is that while he substantiates his claims with literature published by the Society, he often refers to old publications. *Apocalypse Delayed: The Story of Jehovah’s Witnesses* was first published in 1985, so it is logical he uses older publications, nonetheless many things have changed since then and that is why it is important to study recent publication of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society if you want to come to a closer understanding of what is taught by the Governing Body today. Despite my criticism, Penton’s work is quite valuable for the research into the Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses because he is the only one, other than Jehovah’s Witnesses themselves, who has written a historical work on Jehovah’s Witnesses (Knox 2011, 157). Also he serves as a major source to other scholars who have written on the Society.

As previously mentioned, most of my research is based on publications written by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society from 1970 onwards because I am interested in present-day Jehovah’s Witnesses, and because these publications are easily accessible through the CD-ROM distributed by the Society. I also do not have access to publications older than 1970, like Penton did (Penton 1997, xvi). It is important to note that in this thesis I will use the title of a specific publication instead of the author when the publication is published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. I decided to use this reference system because the similar publishing years of publications published by the Society might otherwise lead to unclear references. It is also important to note that because Jehovah’s Witnesses strongly rely on the Scriptures for the formulation of their doctrine and belief, I will regularly refer to Bible verses in full. To do so I will use the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, the revised edition published in 2013 which is translated and published by the Society itself.

1.4 Drawing boundaries

This master thesis primarily concentrates on the concept of loyalty among Jehovah’s Witnesses. When studying the material, either primary or secondary, other interesting ideas and concepts will probably be found. Because I concentrate on the concept of loyalty, I will for example not discuss all the events prior and during World War II but I will concentrate on the events relevant to the Jehovah’s Witnesses and discuss them as such.

2 The history of the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses

Before delving into the notion of loyalty, let me first give a brief sketch of the history of the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. Over the years the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses has evolved into a movement with an estimated member count of 15.396.754 people worldwide (Stark and Iannaccone 1997, 136-140). It is an international religious movement with a set doctrine, practice, organization and community: the key aspects for any organization to function as a religion (Lincoln 2003, 5-7). Before I can elaborate on what it means to be a Jehovah's Witness today, and before we can come to an understanding of the role of loyalty within the movement, I will shortly introduce the movement paying attention to its history.

Jehovah's Witnesses have not always been known by the name 'Jehovah's Witnesses': they were originally known as 'Russelites', 'Rutherfordians', 'Watch Tower People', 'Bible Students', etcetera (Jehovah's Getuigen: Verkondigers van Gods Koninkrijk 1993, 150)⁸. Because members of the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses did not want to be known as followers of a human, and because according to them the name 'Christian' had been tainted by other Christian denominations which according to the movement do not practice the Christian faith correctly, the Governing Body decided on the title 'Jehovah's Witnesses' for their followers in 1935 (Jehovah's Getuigen: Verkondigers van Gods Koninkrijk 1993, 152).

The name change is not the only evolution the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses has had: many things have happened since their founding father started to study the Scriptures. In this chapter I will write about the history of the Jehovah's Witnesses starting with their founding father: Charles Russell.

2.1 Charles Taze Russell

Charles Taze Russell was born on 16 February 1852 in Allegheny, currently belonging to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Jehovah's Getuigen: Verkondigers van Gods Koninkrijk 1993, 42-44). He was the second son born to Joseph L. Russell and Ann Eliza Russell-Birney, both Presbyterians. Charles Russell however joined the Congregational Church because he preferred their teachings over the Presbyterian teachings. Russell did well on a pragmatic level; he became associate partner in his

⁸ For a detailed recollection on the history of the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, including the changes of authority and doctrine that have been made, I highly recommend *Jehovah's Witnesses: Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* (1993) published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York Inc. It is a nice reference work which could be read besides secondary sources from for example M. James Penton.

father's business at age eleven. However, according to his biography named *Charles Taze Russell: His Life and Times, The Man, the Millennium and the Message* (2010) written by Fredrick Zydek, Russell felt deeply troubled on a spiritual level. His parents truly believed in the Christian teachings preached by their church; however Russell felt sickened by the idea that although God is love he created humans who were predestined to suffer in the infinite torments of hellfire. Russell knew that under the, as he called it, 'heathen aspects' of the Churches there is a truth. Russell's faith was renewed after he heard a sermon of Jonas Wendell, an Adventist. After this sermon Russell started his lifetime's search to the truth which, according to him, can be found in the Holy Scriptures. From 1870 onwards, when Russell was only 18, he and some acquaintances got together on a regular basis to study the Scriptures.

Studying the Bible closely convinced Russell that the mainstream Christian churches obscured God's Word and the Christian belief with heathen convictions (Knox 2011, 159-160). Russell started his mission: he wanted to seek the truth and teach the truth to all humans preferably by using the written word. Russell's study of the Scriptures was, according to himself, influenced by four individuals. The first person Russell named was Jonas Wendell who he thanked for renewing his faith. The second was George W. Stetson, a preacher of the Advent Christian Church in Edinburg, Pennsylvania (Jehovah's Getuigen: Verkondigers van Gods Koninkrijk 1993, 45-47). He had helped Russell studying the Scriptures and was therefore highly respected by Russell. Another major influence was George Storrs who preached that the soul is not immortal and that immortality is only for the ones who walk with God. According to Storrs the ungodly would not be punished in hell. The last important influence on the early ideas of Russell is Nelson H. Barbour who stated that the events leading to the second coming of Christ started in 1874.

In Russell's early days his plan to teach the truth through the written word led him to writing Scripture in chalk in public places. Later on this mission developed into the funding of pamphlets and periodicals. The first pamphlet Russell published was *The Object and Manner of Our Lord's Return* (1877) which primarily spoke about the events leading to Armageddon. Russell's study of the Scriptures continued and he published *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence* in 1879 (Jehovah's Getuigen: Verkondigers van Gods Koninkrijk 1993, 48). Though he had published before, primarily together with Barbour, this publication was the first major publication fully in Russell's control. Russell continued with publishing 'Biblical Truths' and millions of tracts were published which aimed at showing the truth about the established churches and which explained what the Bible really taught (Jehovah's Getuigen: Verkondigers van Gods Koninkrijk 1993, 50-51). Russell's mission was to seek the truth in Scripture and advertise this message to everybody. Already in 1880

Bible Students' Tracts were published and given to readers of the *Watch Tower* in order to distribute them to the public for free. Readers of the *Watch Tower* were asked whether they preached and they were told that preaching should be their main activity. One of the early preaching methods was *The Photo-Drama of Creation*: the first non-silent movie. It was an eight-hour movie that explained creation, told Bible stories, and explained history using the Bible until present-time. The movie was first shown in January 1914; the same year the early Witnesses believed Armageddon would begin. Armageddon did however not occur, Russell's expectations were wrong, but he persevered. In 1915 Russell had written that he was glad God did not change His plans in accordance with Russell's wrong expectation and that he was happy that he had come to a closer understanding of God's Will (Jehovah's Getuigen: Verkondigers van Gods Koninkrijk 1993, 62-63). Russell's faith was again renewed and he was even more determined to preach the truth about the Scriptures and God. This perseverance was rooted in his loyalty to the Bible and God.

Russell's perseverance was successful. In 1916, the year he passed away, the annual report showed that 22.158.000 copies of the *Bible Student Monthly* had been sold, the *Photo Drama of Creation* had had 12.000.000 viewers and 16.000.000 copies of the *Studies in the Scriptures* were in circulation (Knox 2011, 161). Russell's mission had been successful so far, and his successors would continue his work.

2.2 The years after Russell's death

On 15 January 1917, three months after Russell's death, Joseph Franklin Rutherford was chosen to be the new president of the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses (Jehovah's Getuigen: Verkondigers van Gods Koninkrijk 1993, 65-69). The history of Jehovah's Witnesses teaches us that not all members of the movement were happy with Rutherford's appointment. This disagreement led to struggles within the Governing Body and resulted into the dismissal of four board members. Rutherford continued his work and wanted to modernize the movement (Knox 2011, 162). One of the major changes he put forward was the name change: on 26 July 1931 he asked attendees of an annual international convention whether they agreed with changing the name into 'Jehovah's Witnesses' (Jehovah's Getuigen: Verkondigers van Gods Koninkrijk 1993, 79, 82). All attendees agreed and from that day onwards the Bible Students were known as Jehovah's Witnesses. Besides a new name, Rutherford also introduced door-step ministry: the act by which Jehovah's Witnesses are most commonly known today. At first the Biblical message was delivered by a phonograph and later on pamphlets and periodicals were used, similar to the ones still used today.

Nathan H. Knorr was Rutherford's successor after the latter's death in 1942. Knorr introduced the idea that Witnesses should not only be schooled in Biblical texts, but should also be taught how to bring the message across. In 1943 a missionary academy was opened, the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, and in 1945 the first guide for ministry was printed. Under Knorr's leadership the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses became an international phenomenon. Before Knorr, Jehovah's Witnesses were already active throughout the entire Western world; however under Knorr's supervision branches were opened in Africa, South East Asia, the Pacific and the Indian subcontinent. Later successors witnessed the steady growth of the organization worldwide: the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses evolved into a worldwide movement that currently has a monthly average of 7.698.377 'publishers' (2014: *Jaarboek van Jehovah's Getuigen 2014*, 176). It is important to note that membership quota as published by the Society only includes publishers; publishers are Witnesses who actively distribute the Society's literature door-to-door (Stark and Iannaccone 1997, 136-137). To make a proper comparison with other religious groups and to include nominal members including the Witnesses' children and advanced affiliates, researchers have estimated that the membership count should be doubled (Stark and Iannaccone 1997, 139-140). This means that in 2013 there were on average 15.396.754 people worldwide who identified as a Jehovah's Witnesses.

History is always a significant factor for a movement, and that is why the history of the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses has been very important to the members of the movement today. They know Russell and his direct successors did not understand the complete truth, and present-day Witnesses believe they currently still do not understand the Bible completely; they nonetheless follow Russell's methodology of Bible study. Still today Witnesses research the Bible thoroughly in order to try to come to a greater understanding of Jehovah's will. Charles Taze Russell had shaped the fundamentals of the movement of Jehovah's Witnesses today. In order to understand why the Organization teaches certain aspects, and to understand why Witnesses believe certain principles, the origin of this ideology and hermeneutical methodology has to be known.

3 The Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses today

To understand the concept of loyalty, and to understand what Jehovah's Witnesses are loyal to, it is important for us to have an understanding of what Jehovah's Witnesses believe, what the Governing Body teaches, and what the practices inside the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses are. We have to realize what it means to be a Jehovah's Witnesses today to come to a closer understanding of why they are willing to die, or why they are willing to undergo persecution, for their faith. That is why I will elaborate on the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses today in this chapter.

Like their predecessors, present-day Jehovah's Witnesses study the Bible closely. They believe the Bible holds all the answers and that almost all Bible texts should be interpreted literally. Studying the Scriptures is one of the key aspects of Jehovah's Witnesses: the Bible is used by Jehovah's Witnesses as a constant frame of reference (Holden 2002, 24). Continuing what Russell had started, the Society has also published an enormous amount of literature. At the latest annual convention from 25 to 27 July 2014 in The Netherlands, a convention which I attended, one of their latest book publications was distributed: *God's Kingdom Rules!*⁹ The publications of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society are used by the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses and by individual Jehovah's Witnesses as a constant reminder of the teachings of their faith. The two-weekly organized study of the material ensures that the, according to some, absolutist message of the governing body is adopted by the Jehovah's Witnesses. To come to a closer understanding of the concept of loyalty among Jehovah's Witnesses, and to understand what they are loyal to, I shall shortly introduce the teachings of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses in the following paragraphs and I shall lay out the organizational structure of the movement.

As already mentioned in the introduction, Jehovah's Witnesses are mostly known for their door-to-door evangelism, their refusal of blood transfusion, and their refusal to participate in annual events such as Christmas and birthdays. However, instead of concentrating on the most commonly known characteristics of Jehovah's Witnesses, I shall concentrate on the aspects of their doctrine and teachings they find the most important by studying the material they study with newcomers.

⁹ I have received *Gods Koninkrijk regeert!* which is the Dutch translation of the English publication *God's Kingdom Rules!*

3.1 God has a name

Whenever an individual starts to study with a Witness commonly the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* is used. This book was first published in 2005 and is comparable to all other study material published by the Society. It contains texts subdivided into chapters and paragraphs. In the footnotes questions are written down which will be discussed by the student and teachers during the Bible study. At the beginning of a chapter the main questions which will be discussed in that chapter are written down and at the end of the chapter answers to those questions, together with the most important Bible texts, are shown. The first chapter covers the Society's teachings about God, that he is a loving God but also that His name is Jehovah (Wat Leert de Bijbel Echt? 2005, 12-15). To substantiate this belief Witnesses use Psalm 83:18:

May people know that you, whose name is Jehovah, You alone are the Most High over all the earth.

The New World Translation is one of the few Bibles that uses the word 'Jehovah'; most Bibles employ similar words but replace 'Jehovah' with 'Lord' or 'Eternal'. According to the Governing Body, and according to all Jehovah's Witnesses, Psalm 83: 18 speaks of a name and not of a title (Wat Leert de Bijbel Echt? 2005, 195). Witnesses believe that a unique personal name exists in the original Hebrew Scriptures which is spelled יהוה (YHWH), which is commonly pronounced as Jehovah. According to the Witnesses' calculation the name YHWH appears over 7000 times in the original Scriptures but was left out by most translations. In order to substantiate their opinion, Jehovah's Witnesses also refer to Matthew 6:9 ("Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified") and John 12:28 ("Father, glorify your name. Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have glorified it and will glorify it again"). That is the reason why, to their mind, they restored the original texts and use God's name in their own Bible translation the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

Jehovah's Witnesses also have other aspects on which they differ of opinion with more mainstream Christianity. As previously mentioned, another important teaching of Russell are his ideas on the concept of a Hell.

3.2 “What is God’s Purpose for the Earth?”

As mentioned in the second chapter, Russell’s main concern with official Christian teachings is the concept of hell: Russell did not understand how an all loving God could punish sinners with the infinite torments of hellfire. Jehovah’s Witnesses believe, and the Governing Body teaches, that hell exists as merely the place of the dead and not as a place of infinite torment: they do however believe that Satan is an existing adversary. According to the understanding of the Governing Body, Satan, originally created by God as an immaculate angel, became jealous of God and wanted to be worshipped by humans himself (Wat Leert de Bijbel Echt? 2005, 28-31). Satan tricked Adam and Eve into disobeying God and by doing so, according to the Bible explanation of the movement, Satan questioned God’s capacity to rule over earth. God could have resolved this problem by destroying Satan, which He easily could have done, but according to the movement’s doctrine, destroying Satan would give no answer to Satan’s accusation. God decided that time would proof that He is the best ruler; God decided He would give humans the possibility to rule themselves to show that they are incapable of doing so. Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that the earth is currently controlled by Satan. To substantiate this thought they refer to Matthew 4: 8-9 (or Luke 4: 5-6):

Again the Devil took him (Jesus) along to an unusually high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him: “All these things I will give you if you fall down and do an act of worship to me”.

According to Jehovah’s Witnesses Satan is in full control over this world because otherwise he would not be capable of giving Jesus Christ full control. In Matthew, and also in Luke, Jesus rejects Satan’s proposal because “it is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service” (Luke 4: 8). Witnesses believe that the end of the reign of Satan is near: Satan will be defeated in Armageddon. The renewed world with God as ruler will exist on this planet (Wat Leert de Bijbel Echt? 2005, 34). Earth will be paradise because, according to the Witnesses, God did not change his original plan: Jehovah God created a perfect earth and He wants humans to live on this planet because it was and soon will be paradise.

The Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses teaches the righteous will inhabit earth after Armageddon. This however raises an important question: what happens when an individual dies? According to Jehovah’s Witnesses the dead are in some sort of sleeping state in which they are conscious of nothing at all (Wat Leert de Bijbel Echt? 2005, 58-59).

For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing at all, nor do they have any more reward, because all memory of them is forgotten. Also, their love and their hate and their jealousy have already perished, and they no longer have any share in what is done under the sun (Ecclesiastes 9: 5-6).

Witnesses believe that people who have died are in a resting state, like King Solomon explained in Ecclesiastes but also like Jesus explained the death of Lazarus (John 11: 11-14). The Governing Body teaches that after Armageddon all the righteous and unrighteous will be resurrected: "And I have hope toward God, which hope these men also look forward to, that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous" (Acts 24: 15) (Wat Leert de Bijbel Echt? 2005, 72-73). The righteous are considered to be those who have served Jehovah. This does not necessarily mean they have to be a Jehovah's Witness because many righteous (like Noah and Moses) have lived before the Society even existed; emphasis is placed upon being a worshipper of God in the way the Bible teaches. It also does not mean that all Witnesses are righteous; no one knows who is, because humans cannot look into other people's hearts and know if they truly serve Jehovah God. The unrighteous are those people who did not know Jehovah God during their lifetime and they will be given time to get to know him in the 1000 year Kingdom that will follow after Armageddon. The Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses teaches that it is up to Jehovah God to judge individuals and therefore they teach they do not know whether someone will be among the righteous or unrighteous, or if he/she is even resurrected. Not everyone will live in Paradise on earth: some will not be resurrected because they were wicked or unwilling to change. Those people will be unaware of everything, forever. According to the movement's teachings God will not punish sinners in a burning hell, this would be in contrast with his loving nature, but He will annihilate them into a state of non-existence in Armageddon.

Besides an earthly resurrection, there will also be a heavenly resurrection. According to the movement's interpretation of the Bible a total of 144.000 humans will be sent to Heaven to join Jesus Christ and help him rule the earth (Wat Leert de Bijbel Echt? 2005, 73-74). One of the verses that validate this teaching for Witnesses is Revelation 14:1:

Then I saw, and look! The Lamb (Jesus according to the Witnesses) standing on mount Zion, and with him 144.000 who have his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads.

3.3 The last days

From the above it is clear that the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses is a millenarian movement: they teach that Jesus spoke about a Kingdom of God "which will bring an end to wickedness and make the earth a Paradise" believing that the arrival of this Kingdom is near (Wat Leert de Bijbel Echt? 2005, 86). Though various calculations about the end time have been made in the past, Jehovah's Witnesses currently realize after a closer study of the Scriptures that only Jehovah God knows when this will happen: "Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matthew 24: 36).

According to Jehovah's Witnesses it is important that God's Word is preached. Witnesses believe, and the Governing Body teaches, that the Bible reads that believers should preach as Jesus Christ did. One of the texts employed to emphasize this notion is Matthew 28: 18-19.

Jesus approached and spoke to them, saying: "All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit."

For Jehovah's Witnesses preaching is not only important because by doing so they obey Jesus Christ, but also because they believe Christ will come and Armageddon will happen after God's Word is ministered to all ends of the world (Knox 2011, 161).

And this good news of the Kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come (Matthew 24: 14).

The preaching as practiced by Jehovah's Witnesses is the most important aspect by which outsiders recognize Jehovah's Witnesses, it is however not the only aspect. In the next paragraph I will shortly introduce the most familiar aspects of the Society and its adherents.

3.4 Aspects by which outsiders recognize the Witnesses

Besides their door-to-door evangelism, Jehovah's Witnesses are most commonly known for their refusal of blood transfusion and their refusal to participate in annual events such as birthdays and Christmas. Witnesses refuse blood-transfusions because they believe that Jehovah links someone's blood with someone's life (Wat Leert de Bijbel Echt? 2005, 128-133). A Bible verse given to substantiate this believe is Genesis 9: 3-4:

Every moving animal that is alive may serve as food for you. Just as I gave you the green vegetation, I give them all to you. Only flesh with its life – its blood – you must not eat.

Because 'life' is equal to 'blood' in this verse, Witnesses believe that by not eating blood they show respect to life. This respect is also shown by not injecting blood into one's veins because, in their eyes, this is in essence the same as eating blood. According to the Governing Body this commandment still counts today because Paul has repeated it in Acts 21: 25:

As for the believers from among the nations, we have sent them our decision in writing that they should keep away from what is sacrificed to idols as well as from blood, from what is strangled, and from sexual immorality.

Paul also told the Christians in this verse that they should keep away from anything that had been sacrificed to idols: Jehovah God wants someone to "quit touching the unclean things" (2 Corinthians 6: 17). According to the Governing Body, early Christians did not celebrate birthdays because it was a pagan custom and that is why birthday celebrations were connected with superstition (Wat Leert de Bijbel Echt? 2005, 157-159). This is the major reason why Witnesses do not celebrate their birthday but also why they do not celebrate Christmas: that is the celebration of Christ's birthday after all. All celebrations linked with a heathen past are not celebrated by Jehovah's Witnesses, which quite frankly means all common celebrations: for example also the Easter egg-hunt has a pagan past. Witnesses believe, and the Society teaches, that they should stay away from anything that worships another deity than Jehovah God, even if it is only the origin.

Turn away, turn away, get out of there, touch nothing unclean! Get out of the midst of her, keep yourselves clean, you who are carrying the utensils of Jehovah (Isaiah 52:11).

3.5 The Faithful and Discreet Slave

As said in the introduction, Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the Governing Body fulfils the function of the Faithful and Discreet Slave as written about in Matthew 24: 45-47:

Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on coming finds him doing so! Truly I say to you, he will appoint him over all his belongings.

It was Russell's wife, Maria Russell, who first believed her husband fulfilled this prophetic role (Penton 1997, 33). Russell himself never confirmed he believed he was the faithful and wise servant: when he was asked he said "Some say I am; while others say the Society is" (Penton 1997, 161). Rutherford states that both statements could be considered as true: according to Rutherford Russell was the Society when he was still alive (Rutherford 1923). Russell determined the course and directed the policy. Though Russell asked advice from others he acted according to his own judgment. After he passed away, the Society fulfilled the role of the 'Faithful and Discreet Slave'. In 1954 Knorr confirmed that the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society "is the means by which the Will of God is worked out on earth" (Penton 1997, 163). The Society also teaches its members that the Bible cannot be understood without the use of Jehovah's visible organization because Jehovah employs the organization to help humans to come to a closer understanding of His means.

As will be obvious by now the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses takes the Bible quite literally and uses it as a guide to their entire life. Every decision the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses makes about its teachings is built upon their interpretation of Bible verses. A society as large as the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, and as wide-spread over the globe, needs organization. In the next paragraph I shall elaborate on the internal structure of the movement.

3.6 The internal structure of the Organization of Jehovah's Witnesses

Besides the regular door-to-door evangelizing, Jehovah's Witnesses meet twice a week in their Church buildings which they have named Kingdom Hall's and where they study the same material as studied in all other Kingdom Halls worldwide (U bent van harte welkom 2009). Besides these weekly meetings there are three annual gatherings which are attended by several congregations at the same time (Jehovah's Getuigen: Verkondigers van Gods Koninkrijk 1993, 254-282). A congregation is led by local overseers, also called elders, who are supported by ministerial servants. The elders and ministerial servants are selected from within the congregation and are always male. Though women are seen as an integral part of mankind, Witnesses believe God completed men with the creation of women; women cannot fulfil a leadership role. This is made impossible because, according to the Witnesses' interpretation of the Bible, women are subjected to the leadership of men (Redeneren aan de hand van de Schrift 2006, 414-415). Jesus Christ is seen as the head of every man and "in turn, the head of a woman is the man; in turn, the head of the Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11: 3). Men are supposed to lead and women are subjected to their leadership, and that is why all leadership roles in

the organization are fulfilled by men. Another reason is that Paul taught that women should be silent during Biblical meetings:

Let the women keep silent in the congregations, for it is not permitted for them to speak. Rather, let them be in subjection, as the Law also says (1 Corinthians 14: 34).

Congregations are kept small. To my estimation on average a congregation has around 90 members and is led by at least 3 elders. Congregations are organized into circuits and a number of circuits make up a district (Georganiseerd om Jehovah's Wil te Doen 2005, 26-27). The districts are again organized in a branch that overlooks the work in the country or countries in its jurisdiction. The size of each circuit and branch varies depending on the language variation and also takes geographies into consideration. The Governing Body considers Witnesses all over the world as one family. That is why subdivision into branches and circuits can cross national borders. Each congregation is bi-annually visited by the circuit overseer; an elder who travels with his wife from congregation to congregation. Some elders are appointed to oversee the work in branches, districts, circuits and congregations. The organizational structure finally leads to Brooklyn where the Governing Body and the main office are located. Currently the Governing Body has the following seven members: Samuel Herd, Geoffrey Jackson, M. Stephen Lett, Gerrit Lösch, Anthony Morris III, Mark Sanderson and David H. Splane.

All functions fulfilled in the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society are fulfilled voluntarily: no salary is awarded to anyone who is given a leadership role (Jehovah's Getuigen: Verkondigers van Gods Koninkrijk 1993, 351). Full-time overseers are given housing, often located above a Kingdom Hall, and receive clothing and other aid from the branch organization. The Society does collect a voluntary contribution (Jehovah's Getuigen: Verkondigers van Gods Koninkrijk 1993, 340-343). Members contribute by bank transfer (if they want) or can donate using the donate box in the Kingdom Hall. The Society and the Witnesses take great pride in the concept of voluntary contribution: no one is asked to give nor does one speak about the amount one has given. Every month one of the elders announces during one of the weekly meetings how much money was given by members that month and how much was spent on bills, subdividing the amount on categories like 'rent' or 'electricity'. All reading material, also for door-to-door evangelizing, are distributed without any costs. Costs are kept as low as possible with for example the use of their own printers and because the organization is run by volunteers.

The Governing Body determines the teachings and doctrine for all Jehovah's Witnesses (Aanbid God 2007, 128-135). They consider this to be analogous to the work of the 12 apostles during the first century of the Early Church. The Governing Body uses a registered legal instrument, namely the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, to assist with the publishing activities, the real estate management, legal matters, or any other matter necessary for their worldwide activities. All teachings and publications from the Society are under the control of the Governing Body. Because the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society is not the full organization of Jehovah's Witnesses, I prefer to refer to the complete organization as the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses; Jehovah's Witnesses seem to prefer that name as well.

Given this organizational structure and given the various teachings of the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, one starts to wonder how Jehovah's Witnesses deal with loyalty. With the knowledge given in this chapter it is obvious the movement requires its members to be strictly loyal to the Congregation, and subsequently to Jehovah God. The goal of this master thesis is to come to a closer understanding of the concept of loyalty among Jehovah's Witnesses. To reach this understanding, the concept of loyalty firstly has to be introduced on a theoretical level before I can examine practical examples. That is why in the next chapter I will use a theoretical approach to the concept of loyalty inside the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses.

4 Loyalty – a theoretical approach

As we have read in chapter 3.6, Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that the Governing Body is the ‘Faithful and Discreet Slave’ Jesus referred to in Matthew 24: 45-47. The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society believes to be the prophesied organization, preaching that it is best for every individual to follow their lead. The statements made by the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses do sound authoritarian. Nonetheless, the Governing Body is aware of mistakes they have made in the past: they teach they have been wrong and probably continue to make mistakes today. This is explicitly said by Frederick Franz¹⁰ during a court case in 1954 (Penton 1997, 162-163). At that time he was vice president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. In court Franz testified the following:

When Franz was asked explicitly: “So that what is published as truth today by the Society may have to be admitted as wrong in a few years?” He (Franz) answered: “We will have to wait and see.” He was then asked: “And in the meantime the body of Jehovah’s Witnesses have been following error?” At first he replied: “No. they have been following misconstructions of Scripture.” But when the crown counsellor asked again: “Error?” Franz replied reluctantly: “Well, error.” (Penton 1997, 369)¹¹.

From an outsider’s perspective this seems interesting: the Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses seems to be an authoritarian movement which also teaches that their leaders are humans, not divine deities, and make mistakes. Nonetheless they continue to teach that every member should be loyal to the movement and its organization¹². In this chapter I will try answer the question: “What does the Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses teach its members about loyalty?” I will discuss the types of loyalty as recognized by the Governing Body and I will investigate which concepts they use to preach loyalty. While doing so I will elaborate on the Bible verses the Governing Body uses to substantiate their teachings since, as will be clear by now, according to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society the Bible is the greatest authority and the Governing Body therefore underpins all its teachings with Biblical references. But before I can elaborate on what the Christian

¹⁰ Frederick Franz was the uncle of the earlier mentioned Raymond Franz. They were both members of the Governing Body until Raymond Franz decided to withhold his affiliation with the organization.

¹¹ Quoted from Penton’s *Apocalypse Delayed*. The original source is the manuscript of the Walsh trial from 1954 during which the Scottish court tried to determine whether the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society should be considered as a religious denomination in Scotland (Court of Sessions Scotland 1954, 105-114).

¹² My personal experience is that the Governing Body is never questioned, the Witnesses I know blindly follow their lead, and when you make comments like “it might be that the Governing Body did not study that yet” Witnesses feel offended; it is not allowed to criticize the Governing Body in any way.

Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses teaches its members about loyalty, let me first explain how the Governing Body defines loyalty.

4.1 “God demands loyalty”

The Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses teaches that it is very important for individuals to be loyal. Members of the movement are expected to adhere to its teachings and they are taught that in that way they are subjecting themselves to the theocratic rule of God (Holden 2002, 33). Staying loyal to Jehovah God is taught to be similar to staying loyal to the Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses. These two authorities seem to intertwine because the Congregation, but more specifically the Governing Body, is seen as an organization that was predicted by biblical prophecy. Obeying God’s theocratic rule and the characteristics of loyalty are important to Jehovah’s Witnesses; the Congregation has dedicated articles and book chapters to this topic. In a recent publication the Society gives the following definition of loyalty:

‘Loyalty’ as used in the Hebrew Scriptures is kindness that lovingly attaches itself to an object and does not let go until its purpose in connection with that object is realized. More is involved than faithfulness. After all, a person might be faithful merely out of a sense of duty. In contrast, loyalty is rooted in love. [...] loyalty is an expression of love—something that inanimate things cannot display (Close to Jehovah 2014, 280-289).

The Governing Body teaches that loyalty has everything to do with love. Because God is the very personification of love, He has always been loyal and He has always kept the promises He made. God is also referred to as the “loyal One” in Revelation 16: 5. Because Jehovah God has always been loyal to His Covenants, it only seems logical to Jehovah’s Witnesses to be loyal to Him. Literature by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society is very clear on this issue: God demands loyalty of all His servants (Inzicht in de Schrift: Deel 2 2009, 222). To substantiate this teaching they use several Bible verses including Ephesians 4: 23-24:

And you should continue to be made new in your dominant mental attitude, and should put on the new personality that was created according to God’s will in true righteousness and loyalty¹³.

¹³ As written in chapter 1.3, I use the 2013 revised edition of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* which is translated and published by the Society itself.

Loyalty is seen as an expression of love and Jehovah's Witnesses believe that when you love God, you want to be loyal to Him and do what God wants you to do. The Governing Body teaches that it is the best source for information about what God wants from an individual: after all, it is the 'Faithful and Discreet Slave'. Holden observes that "Watch Tower theology is the Society's most crucial resource, and devotees are expected to adhere to all doctrines established by the Governing Body" (Holden 2002, 22). According to Holden "this means that Jehovah's Witnesses around the world are recipients of an absolutist message rather than free-thinking agents who are actively involved in the formulation of religious ideas". He also notes that devotees nonetheless consider themselves to be free because they believe they subject themselves directly to the theocratic rule of God (Holden 2002, 157). By subjecting oneself to His rule, devotees believe they are free of fear of what might happen when one breaks God's laws, and they are free of immorality which occurs in the outside world. Although I agree with Holden that Jehovah's Witnesses are recipients of an absolutist message, I feel that he ignores one crucial aspect of Jehovah's Witnesses: because Jehovah's Witnesses devote hours a week to study the Scriptures and the publication of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, it would be impossible for the Governing Body to proclaim anything that is in stark contrast with the Holy Scriptures. Though Jehovah's Witnesses prefer to use their own *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, many Witnesses who study the Congregation's theology closely also use other Bible translations to confirm the Governing Body's teachings. However, reading is often done to confirm the statements of the Governing Body, and not to refute their claims. The congregation's organization makes it impossible to disagree with anything the Governing Body has said. As made clear in *Crisis of Conscience* written by Raymond Franz, former member of the Governing Body, the judicial committees are sometimes run like small inquisitions (Franz 2004). People who disagree with the Governing Body and who make their disagreement publically, are often excommunicated¹⁴ (Beverley 1986). Because of the authority granted to the Governing Body one could assume members of the Governing Body can be egoistic power hungry individuals. However in contrast one could argue that there is no financial gain for members of the Governing Body, or for any other member of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, and that the Governing Body first ruled in anonymity; so these incentives play no role.

It is true that the Governing Body proclaims that they preach the truth, their teachings and religion is also called 'The Truth' by its adherents. It therefore only seems logical that followers are asked to be loyal to the teachings because why should one not be loyal and obedient to the Truth taught about

¹⁴ Dr. M. James Penton is probably the best known example of excommunication after disagreeing with the Governing Body. His story is written down in James A. Beverley's book *Crisis of Allegiance: A Study of Dissent Among Jehovah's Witnesses* (1986).

God? Jehovah's Witnesses believe all teaching of the Governing Body are true because all their teachings are scripturally supported (Holden 2002, 23). Witnesses believe, as do the members of the Governing Body, that the doctrines are as close as possible to the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. Therefore they believe that being loyal to the Congregation's teachings does actually mean that they are loyal to Jehovah God. This belief is displayed very well in an interview Andrew Holden had with one of his local elders. The elder "is worth quoting at length" (Holden 2002, 23-24):

The Bible is the fundamental foundation of doctrine and I would say to someone interested in our faith, "Are you willing to adjust to it in order to be pleasing God whom you have faith in?" So we would have a Bible study. For instance, I would say to you, "Do you believe that God is a single person?", and, depending on how you answered, I would go to reference in the Bible that would show you what our beliefs are. [...] So the main fundamentals are, "Do you believe the Bible is the inspired word of God?" and "Do you believe in the truth of its doctrines?" [...] and then we'd turn to the Bible and give you the biblical answer, and if the Bible is the foundation of doctrine and action and way of life, are you willing to adjust to it in order to be pleasing God? The Bible can be likened to a rule. The rule is a measurement which is internationally accepted, so the Bible becomes the measure of faith and therefore if you measure your conduct by the Bible's measure, then you're doing what Jesus said, you're in the truth. We're convinced we have the truth because the Bible says it's the truth. [...] We try to see things from the biblical viewpoint, which is God's viewpoint.

This quote clearly demonstrates the absolute authority granted to the Bible. Because the Governing Body bases its teachings on the Bible, it is only logical to Jehovah's Witnesses that the teachings as taught by the Governing Body are also reliable and absolute. Jehovah's Witnesses are taught that to be truly faithful, they have to be loyal to both Jehovah God and the Governing Body. This is in accordance with James Fowler, Professor of Theology and Human Development at Emory University, who has defined faith as "trust in and loyalty to images and realities of power" (Fowler 1991, 32). Fowler believes that for an individual to have faith he or she has to align him- or herself to their religious power, he or she has to internalize the religious values given, and he or she has to master the stories (Hood Jr., Hill and Spilka 2009, 83). From Fowler's research can be concluded that to be truly faithful, individuals also have to be loyal to their religious authoritarian figure; or to Jehovah God and the Governing Body in the case of Jehovah's Witnesses. However, as mentioned above, the Governing Body does not claim to be infallible. Before I can further elaborate on what the Society teaches its members about loyalty, I will explain how the Governing Body condones the mistakes it has made.

4.2 'New Light'

Jonas Wendell's sermon which had renewed Russell's faith took place 145 years ago and many things have changed since. The movement has grown, a strict hierarchical system was implemented, and many adjustments of the original doctrine have been made. The Society teaches those doctrinal adjustments took place after authoritarian individuals, currently the Governing Body, received 'new lights' or 'new truths' (Penton 1997, 171). This means that the leadership figures came to a better understanding of the Bible. From an outsider's perspective this may seem strange: how could a person continue to firmly believe an organization preaches and teaches the Truth when the upcoming Apocalypse did not occur at the date given by the organization? Of course psychological theories such as cognitive dissonance theory, on which I will elaborate in chapter 4.6, could provide us with an answer; but to Jehovah's Witnesses it is completely logical their authoritarian leaders make mistakes¹⁵. Witnesses believe and are taught that the Faithful and Discreet Slave comes to a closer and better understanding of the Bible because it is the fulfilling of prophecy:

As for you, Daniel, keep the words secret, and seal up the book until the time of the end. Many will rove about, and the true knowledge will become abundant (Daniel 12: 4).

According to the Congregation, accurate knowledge will become abundant during the end of times when the Bible is examined thoroughly by God's people ("Ik ben met u" 2012). Though the Governing Body preaches it fulfils the prophetic role of the Faithful and Discreet Slave, leaders of the movement have stated from the very beginning that God's organization is currently not in the hands of men who are inspired by God but in the hands of imperfect men who nonetheless do the best they can (Penton 1997, 168). The organization follows Russell's lead when its members say they consider themselves to be students of prophecy and not prophets themselves (Penton 1997, 166). Research into the Scriptures is necessary to find the Truth and when the end of times comes nearer, 'new light' will help the Governing Body to come to a better understanding of God's message.

The love for Jehovah God and the belief that the Governing Body preaches the Truth leads to obedient followers. "The structure of the movement and the intense loyalty demanded of each individual at every level demonstrates the characteristics of totalitarianism" Holden rightfully notices

¹⁵ Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken, and Stanley Schachter have done research into what happens when a prophecy fails. Their research has been written down in *When Prophecy Fails* (1956). Although their work has been criticized, I highly recommend reading their work if one wants to come to a closer understanding of why people stay within a movement although the realization of prophecies did not occur.

(Holden 2002, 32-33). A totalitarian movement is a movement in which the organization has total authority of the members of the movement and in which the organization seeks to control all aspects of the life of its members (Conquest 2000, 74). "Totalitarianism extends a promise of plenitude, of a harmonious life and of happiness" (Todorov 2001, 28). This surely seems to be the case concerning the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses; the Governing Body decides what has to be believed, what behaviour is wished for and what behaviour is forbidden. The Governing Body teaches that as the result of an individual's obedience to the Congregation's rule, he or she will receive a harmonious life and happiness, already in this life but especially in paradise. But when the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses is envisioned as just another totalitarian movement, an ambiguity immediately emerges: as previously mentioned devotees regard themselves as completely free. Though devotees must adhere to the teachings of the Congregation; members believe they are subjecting themselves to the theocratic rule of God Himself and not to the rule of humans. That is why they are not oppressed (Holden 2002, 157). Because the authority of the Governing Body and Jehovah God intertwine, from the perspective of Jehovah's Witnesses it might not be the Society that is a totalitarian movement but God who is a totalitarian authority. It is also important to note that being loyal to the movement's teachings, and therefore being loyal to Jehovah God, is not seen as a heavy burden Witnesses must carry but as an act of love. They try to follow the lead of the Apostle John who has written:

For this is what the love of God means, that we observe His commandments; and yet His commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5: 3).

4.3 What loyalty includes

As may be clear by now, loyalty is very important to Jehovah's Witnesses. Consequently another important question should be asked: what kind of loyalty is expected from Jehovah's Witnesses? How are members supposed to act and what happens when they refuse. In this paragraph I will elaborate on what is expected of individual Jehovah's Witnesses.

The concept of loyalty to Jehovah God is according to the Governing Body closely linked to obedience: how can an individual be loyal to God when he is disobedient to His Teachings? The Governing Body has written the following in a publication about loyalty: "as Christians, however, we know that Jehovah God deserves our heartfelt obedience because He is our Creator, the Sustainer of our life, the loving Sovereign, and our Deliverer" (Jehovah Values Your Obedience 2007). According to the movement's teachings, we should thank Jehovah God by showing we are obedient to Him.

Consequently, we disprove Satan's point that humans will not remain loyal to Jehovah God. Disproving Satan is very important to Jehovah's Witnesses. The Governing Body teaches that God asks His followers to be obedient because He wants them to side with Him and thereby to disprove Satan's point that God is not the best ruler for this earth. To substantiate these teachings, the following Bible verse is used:

Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, so that I can make a reply to him who taunts me (Proverbs 27: 11).

Being obedient to God is thus very important to individual Jehovah's Witnesses. The Society even teaches that when an individual is a real Christian he cannot act any other way out of love for Jehovah God, and according to the Congregation's definition it was also out of love for God an individual should be loyal.

The Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses teaches that obedience is a "precious opportunity" to show love for Jehovah God (God's love 2014, 9-11). Loyal servants of God are obedient. But what does it mean for an individual Jehovah's Witness to be obedient? And to whom should he be obedient? Because the Governing Body is believed to be the Faithful and Discreet Slave used by Jehovah God to make his wishes and commands known to this world, being obedient and loyal to Jehovah God also means that an individual should be obedient and loyal to the Governing Body and the Congregation. The Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses is known to be a totalitarian movement; it expects all members to obey to all the rules given by the Society. Members are denied "freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and freedom of conscience" (Holden 2002, 33). All members are expected to implement all teachings in their lives and to follow all rules as given by the Society. Loyalty should, according to the Society, be guided by accurate knowledge which is given by Jehovah God through his Word the Bible (Aan wie moet u loyaal zijn? 2002). A Jehovah's Witness would argue that as inhabitants of this world one is never free. They believe the concept of freedom is arbitrary because non Jehovah's Witnesses have to conform to rules given to them by their government or society. Witnesses say they have chosen voluntarily to obey these rules, a decision one does not have concerning secular laws.

Being loyal to God's commandments, and therefore to the teachings of the Society, is more important than being loyal to one's country's rule. The Jehovah's Witnesses relation to the church is more valuable to them than their relationship to their state. For example, Jehovah's Witnesses refuse military service which could lead to imprisonment or they refuse to take part in any ceremony that

glorifies the state like saluting a flag¹⁶. Nonetheless, Jehovah's Witnesses are known to be law-abiding citizens; they obey Jesus' words in Matthew 22: 21:

Pay back, therefore, Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God.

The Governing Body teaches its followers that they should live separate from the world: in the world but not of this world (Blijf in Gods Liefde 2008, 50). Jesus himself did not involve himself with political affairs of his time. He was only involved with the "future heavenly government"; the government of which Jesus will be king according to the Society (Blijf in Gods Liefde 2008, 51). Because no present-day government is ruled by God, nor is any country, Jehovah's Witnesses do not vote or join the army because if they would, they would break their neutrality; they would side with an earthly government instead of a heavenly one. Jehovah's Witnesses also believe that they are part of an international brotherhood. They cannot take part in any war which could mean they have to fight against their own brothers and sisters from another country (Blijf in Gods Liefde 2008, 53). When one would ask a Jehovah's Witness what would be his strongest tie in the world, they would reply that the worship of Jehovah is the strongest tie (Cole 1956, 133-134). According to Jehovah's Witnesses, "when two people are joined in that religion, nothing will split them apart. Nothing will set them fighting and killing each other" (Cole 1956, 134). Jehovah's Witnesses regard themselves as conscientious objectors and not as pacifists (Cole 1956, 136). Witnesses do object war, they do tell authorities they cannot get away with warfare and Witnesses continue their ministry work to warn people for the consequences of their participation in war and to point out that the kingdom of God will make an end to all wars in time. However, Jehovah's Witnesses do not restrain people to partake in wars.

I do not request that you take them out of the world, but that you watch over them because of the wicked one. They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world. [...] If you were part of the world, the world would be fond of what is its own. Now because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, for this reason the world hates you (John 17: 15-16, 19).

Jehovah's Witnesses are taught to stay loyal to Jehovah God and the organization and this has led them to persecution. Loyalty and obedience are clearly expected of individual Jehovah's Witnesses. Humans are however considered to be imperfect: they make mistakes. Making mistakes that show

¹⁶ In chapter 5 I will elaborate on the relationship between the Church and the state and the Jehovah's Witnesses refusal of military service.

disloyalty or disobedience towards Jehovah God and therefor also towards the Governing Body can have severe consequences. Because the Society actively keeps its members in check, I will elaborate on the consequences of disloyalty in the next paragraph.

4.4 Disloyalty and disobedience

The Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Governing Body, and their teachings are seen as sacred by Jehovah’s Witnesses. Émile Durkheim has stated that “the sacred is worth protecting from the profane” (Holden 2002, 77) (Durkheim 1912). In order to keep their organization ‘clean’ of according to them non-Biblical teachings or practices, the Governing Body has created an effective system to deal with offenders¹⁷. When an individual transgresses from the teachings of the organization, counselling might take place (Holden 2002, 78-79). This means that elders of the individual’s congregation talk to the individual to help him or her with following, or obeying, the Congregation’s teachings. When transgression perseveres the consequence will be disfellowship: individuals who continue to disobey the movement’s teachings will be placed outside the community in accordance with 1 Corinthians 5: 11-13:

But now I am writing to you to stop keeping company with anyone called a brother who is sexually immoral, or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man. For what do I have to do with judging those outside? Do you not judge those inside, while God judges those outside? “Remove the wicked person from among yourselves.”

Jehovah’s Witnesses can be disfellowshipped when they are guilty of severe sins and when they show no remorse (Aanvaard altijd het strenge onderricht van Jehovah 2006). Examples of severe sins are given in 1 Corinthians 6: 9-10: sexual immorality, idolatry, adultery, homosexual activities, stealing, greed, drunkenness, blaspheming or slandering, and extorting. When an individual commits sins he or she will first receive council from the local elders. “Counselling is primarily a preventative strategy” which is used by congregational elders “as a means of rebuking unacceptable conduct before it reaches a level which cannot be readdressed other than by disfellowship” (Holden 2002, 78). People are disfellowshipped to preserve the congregation’s dogma and purity (Inzicht in de Schrift: Deel 2 2009, 1058-1060). It serves to protect the community against pernicious influences like immorality (Toon christelijke loyaliteit wanneer een familielid is uitgesloten 2002). Besides protecting the congregation and the community, the Governing Body says that another goal of

¹⁷ In *Crisis of Allegiance: A Study of Dissent Among Jehovah’s Witnesses* (1986) James A. Beverley thoroughly discusses dissent, but also excommunication, inside the Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

disfellowshipping is to give the wrongdoer a chance to take advantage of the discipline he or she has received. The Governing Body teaches that when all other Jehovah's Witnesses withhold themselves from contact, the desire to return as a loyal servant of Jehovah God will grow inside the excluded member (Als een familielid uitgesloten wordt 2011). "Disfellowshipping is the ultimate sanction against those who wound the collective sentiments of the congregation and is therefore one of the most effective means by which the Governing Body of the Society is able to reinforce sectarian boundaries" (Holden 2002, 79).

Disfellowshipping does not mean that an individual is excluded permanently (Holden 2002, 79). If an individual wants to re-join the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, he or she has to contact the elders and if they consider the penitent as truly repentant, they will advise him or her to start visiting the two weekly meetings on a regular basis. Another important aspect for the disfellowshipped individual is to repent (Aanvaard altijd het strenge onderricht van Jehovah 2006). A sinner has to apprehend the severity of his sins and realize he or she has brought reproach on Jehovah and the congregation. Before an excluded member can ask the elders if he or she can re-join the organization he or she will have to "repent and turn to God by doing works that befit repentance" (Acts 16: 20).

Placing an individual outside their community because he or she no longer obeys the internal rules also means that the hope to see him or her in Paradise is fading. When the decision of disfellowship is made, the elders and the congregation mourn. They all firmly believe they have lost a brother or sister. That is probably why disfellowshipping is not common and why it is a disciplinary method elders prefer not to use. Holden states an elder told him that on an annual average there are in total 40.000 disfellowshipped members worldwide (Holden 2002, 79). This seems to be a large number but when one realizes there were around 80.000 congregations worldwide at the time of the interview and an estimated member count of 15.396.754, one can conclude this disciplinary method is indeed not used often (Stark and Iannaccone 1997, 136-140) (2014: Jaarboek van Jehovah's Getuigen 2014, 176).

4.5 Loyalty to persevere

Jehovah's Witnesses believe there is hope for disfellowshipped individuals; Witnesses believe those individuals were incapable of persevering at the moment of their excommunication and hope they may be repentant later and return to the Congregation. Perseverance is very important to Jehovah's Witnesses. With persevering they show to Jehovah God, and to the Governing Body and the

Congregation, that they want to disprove Satan's point that humans will not continue to obey God by Free Will and that God is not the best ruler for this earth. The Society teaches that perseverance is necessary for an individual to have success (Success Through Perseverance 2000). According to Jehovah's Witnesses, the Bible highlights the importance of perseverance.

So I say to you, keep on asking, and it will be given to you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you (Luke 11: 9).

The Governing Body defines perseverance as "to 'hold firmly and steadily to some purpose, state, or undertaking despite obstacles or setbacks.' It (perseverance) implies continuing resolutely in the face of adversity, being tenacious, not giving up" (Success Through Perseverance 2000, 4). According to the Society "an important part of perseverance is coping with the inevitable setbacks". Jehovah's Witnesses are aware life will be filled with setbacks because they live, according to them, during the end of times. For example, Witnesses know they will be persecuted as was predicted in Matthew 24:9: "Then People will hand you over to tribulation and will kill you, and you will be hated by all the nations on account of my name". Jehovah's Witnesses believe they need to persevere; they need to stay loyal to their faith and be an obedient follower of Jehovah God and the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. But why? Because according to their beliefs only the individuals God approves of will be resurrected from death to live in paradise on earth. And they believe God does not approve of individuals who knowingly broke His rules. In order to secure their eternal life in paradise, they need to persevere although they are persecuted; that is why loyalty to Jehovah God is an important characteristic for a Jehovah's Witness to have.

Besides the theological explanation of why someone ought to be loyal and why an individual would like to join the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, there are also external arguments within the field of the psychology and sociology of religion that explain these decisions.

4.6 Psychological benefits

According to research, religious people are happier, are less fearful, are mentally and physically healthier, and have a lower mortality rate (Park, Edmondson and Hale-Smith 2013, 159). Within the field of the psychology of religion multiple reasons for the beneficial effects of a religious affiliation have been found. According to Irvin Yalom, religious people are happier because religion can function as a defence mechanism (Yalom 1980, 10). Religion could be a method by which people cope with existential questions. This is affirmed by for example Terror Management Theory (TMT), a theory from the field of existential psychology. According to TMT religious people live longer and are

mentally better equipped because religion provides an answer to the inevitable death (Vail, et al. 2010, 88). Another reason why religious people are happier is because religion can be the answer to our need to belong (Baumeister and Leary 1995, 499). Research has shown that humans have a “strong desire to form and maintain enduring personal attachments”; we need others to live a happy and satisfying life (Baumeister and Leary 1995, 522). Research has also shown that a strong social identity, one often given by religious affiliation, can be associated with positive psychological health (Ysseldyk, Matheson and Anisman 2010, 62). Also, religious identification contributes to a better self-esteem, maybe because “religious identification offers a distinctive sacred worldview and eternal group membership” which cannot be matched by other social groups (Tseung-Wong and Verkuyten 2013, 855-856) (Ysseldyk, Matheson and Anisman 2010, 67).

Although generally a religious affiliation would lead to better mental health, research by Havor Montague has shown “that the mental illness rate among Jehovah’s Witnesses far surpasses that of the population as a whole” (Montague 1977, 146)¹⁸. Reasons given are that Jehovah’s Witnesses tend to recruit individuals with emotional problems but more importantly: “there is a great deal of pressure to conform within the congregation, and there is a belief structure which clearly causes emotional turmoil” (Montague 1977, 146). According to Montague the elders tend to give advice in a threat format, “if you do not do ... you will not survive Armageddon”, and that certainly does not help the Witnesses’ mental health. But if the above were true, why do people stay within the Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses or even join in the first place: why would an individual choose for a high-demanding organization like the Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses? Church-Sect theory might be able to provide us with an answer because it teaches us that when individuals are “dissatisfied with the commonness and permissiveness of Churches as they successfully appeal to the masses”, individuals seek religious groups with “more demanding criteria for membership” (Hood Jr., Hill and Spilka 2009, 246). According to Dean Kelley¹⁹, conservative movements are more successful because they demand “complete loyalty, unwavering belief, and rigid adherence to a distinctive lifestyle” (Iannaccone 1994, 1180-1181). Strictness of a movement also leads to a greater religious commitment, and that greater religious commitment leads to loyalty (Hood Jr., Hill and Spilka 2009, 279-280). Another explanation of loyalty to Jehovah God and the Congregation is Rational Choice Theory that teaches that people make decisions on how to act by

¹⁸ Havor Montague’s research was first published in 1977, around the same time M. James Penton was excommunicated. One of the problems Penton had with the Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses was the abuse of power by authoritarian figures. It could be that the abuse was also the cause of emotional turmoil, but this is merely speculation. It is important to note that the power structure within the Congregation has changed since. It would be valuable to research the mental health of present-day Jehovah’s Witnesses.

¹⁹ The original research is: Dean M. Kelley. *Why Conservative Churches are Growing: A Study in the Sociology of Religion*. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1972.

comparing the costs and benefits of different courses of action (Allingham 2002). According to this theory, if each individual is free to act “his or her own self-interest will be led [...] by an ‘invisible hand’ to actions that produce the maximum wealth (efficiency) for a society of individuals” (Wolff and Resnick 1987, 89). Jehovah’s Witnesses believe, and are taught to believe, that only their faith is the absolute truth and that only by acting as is commanded of them they act as Jehovah God wants them to act. Consequently, only then they reach paradise.

Nonetheless, individuals are not necessarily loyal to a subject or object that is beneficial for them. Psychological research on family structure has shown that women from patriarchal environments “whose intimate partners have sexually abused their children may experience intense value conflict over the need to preserve the family, as well as their loyalty to both their abusive partners and their victimized children” (Hood Jr., Hill and Spilka 2009, 401)²⁰. Even though those women were disappointed and hurt, they often stay loyal and faithful to the cause of their pain. This is also proven by the number of women and men who stay with their abusive partner (Domestic Abuse Shelter sd). However, the above does not answer a fundamental question: why do those individuals stay loyal? It could be that individuals stay loyal to causes that do not necessarily contribute positively to their life because of what they have already invested into the cause or relationship (Iannaccone 1994). The theory of cognitive dissonance teaches, among other things, that when belief is sincere, when an individual is committed to this belief and has invested a lot of his or her time/love/devotion, even disproving the truth of their faith does not necessarily result into leaving their religion (Festinger, Riecken and Schachter 2008). From these various theories I feel Iannaccone’s theory, which is a modified version of cognitive dissonance theory, best explains the immense loyalty from Jehovah’s Witnesses to the Congregation because it explains why individuals stay loyal to causes although the cause is not directly beneficial for them. From an outsider’s perspective this is the case for Jehovah’s Witnesses: they suffer in this life, in order to reach their next life in paradise.

As we have seen: loyalty is an important aspect for Jehovah’s Witnesses to have. Being loyal might lead to persecution and disloyalty can lead to exclusion. Especially during times of war, as we will see in the next chapter, Jehovah’s Witnesses have to make the decision whether they want to be seen as a loyal Christian by Jehovah God and the Society, or if they want to be accepted as a loyal individual inside their own country. The consequence of the last option could be that they are turned down by the Congregation and subsequently, because that is what the Governing Body believes and teaches,

²⁰ The original research is: Alaggia, R. “Cultural and Religious influences in maternal response to interfamilial child sexual abuse: Charting new territory for research and treatment.” *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 2001: 41-60.

also by Jehovah God. This decision has led individual Jehovah's Witnesses to acts we as outsiders find astonishing: Witnesses have shown they are willing to die for their faith. In this chapter I have also elaborated on what is appealing about a strict authoritarian movement like the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. In the next chapter I will write about practical examples of loyalty as shown by the organization and individual members. With doing so I hope to come to a closer understanding of this immense loyalty Jehovah's Witnesses have to their organization and consequently to Jehovah God.

5 Loyalty – a variety of manifestations

Loyalty is important to Jehovah’s Witnesses and seems to be the reason behind most of the decisions the Governing Body and members make. Loyalty to Jehovah’s good news, and therefore loyalty to the Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses, is necessary to persevere. The need for perseverance has also been highlighted by Jesus: “But the one who has endured to the end will be saved” (Matthew 24: 13). It is necessary to ensure one’s place in paradise. That loyalty to the organization and Jehovah God is important is also shown by a variety of manifestations. In this chapter I will elaborate on events that show the loyalty of individual members to the organization and, according to their beliefs, to Jehovah God. Because there are numerous examples of Jehovah’s Witnesses’ loyalty to God and the Society, I have to make a selection of manifestations. I based the selection on easily noticeable characteristics of Jehovah’s Witnesses which are in stark contrast with the characteristics of non-Jehovah’s Witnesses. Those manifestations are often also the manifestations that challenge their perseverance and obedience towards God and the Governing Body. The selection is for example based upon the display of loyalty in cases which are not accepted by inhabitants of the country of residence of the specific Jehovah’s Witnesses. To decide whether a specific manifestation is a display of loyalty I intend to use the definition of loyalty formulated by the Governing Body as given in chapter 4.1. Let me, for the sake of convenience, repeat it here:

‘Loyalty’ as used in the Hebrew Scriptures is kindness that lovingly attaches itself to an object and does not let go until its purpose in connection with that object is realized. More is involved than faithfulness. After all, a person might be faithful merely out of a sense of duty. In contrast, loyalty is rooted in love. [...] loyalty is an expression of love—something that inanimate things cannot display (Close to Jehovah 2014, 280-289).

In this definition ‘loyalty’ is seen as a characteristic of kindness which is attached to a specific object until the purpose of that object is realized. Manifestations of loyalty which both cover the given definition of loyalty and are not always accepted by their country of residence are: the door-to-door evangelizing, their neutrality, and their refusal of blood transfusions. That is why I will here elaborate on those three telling manifestations of loyalty among Jehovah’s Witnesses.

5.1 The doorstep ministry

A friend of mine who is keen to travel once told me that there are two things he can find all over the world: Coca Cola and Jehovah's Witnesses. The most recent Jehovah's Witnesses yearbook confirms his joke: Jehovah's Witnesses are active in almost all countries of the world (2014: Jaarboek van Jehovah's Getuigen 2014, 176). The reason why Jehovah's Witnesses are so widespread is because they believe it is the fulfilling of a commandment given in Matthew 28: 19-20:

Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.

From 1919 onwards, the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses teaches that God wants all his followers to bring His message all across the world (Gods Koninkrijk regeert! 2014, 62). According to Watch Tower literature they practice doorstep ministry out of love for God; they describe their ministry as a duty rooted in love. That is why, using their own definition of loyalty, the doorstep ministry could be defined as a practice out of loyalty. The doorstep ministry is currently seen as a privilege, as proof of Jesus' presence and as the most important thing the Kingdom has reached in these last days (Gods Koninkrijk regeert! 2014, 67). Jehovah's Witnesses are taught to believe that the meaning of life is to preach the divine message to the world and that by preaching they are actively involved with the search of God's Kingdom (Gods Koninkrijk regeert! 2014, 62, 65).

The practice of doorstep ministry has tested the loyalty of Jehovah's Witnesses; their practices can lead and have led to persecution. An example is the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada during the 1940s²¹ (Penton 1997, 133). According to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, during that time there were at first 800 charges against Jehovah's Witnesses in Great-Montreal because Witnesses did not have freedom of worship (Gods Koninkrijk regeert! 2014, 138-139). According to witness statements, Jehovah's Witnesses were treated violently by police and clergy. In an attempt to make their mistreatment known, they published a treatise named *Quebec's Burning Hate for God and Christ and Freedom Is the Shame of All Canada*. When Jehovah's Witnesses were caught while spreading the treatise, they were charged with the accusations of 'seditious libel' and the judicial processes soon doubled to 1600.

²¹ For further information on the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada, I highly recommend M. James Penton's book *Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada: Champions of Freedom of Speech and Worship* (1976) that extensively discusses these events.

In 1947 the Boucher family was the first family who went to trial (Gods Koninkrijk regeert! 2014, 139). At first the Jehovah's Witnesses lost and were sent to prison. They appealed their sentence and on 18 December 1950 the Supreme Court ruled in favour of Jehovah's Witnesses. The Court decided that evangelizing Jehovah's Witnesses' belief was allowed because it fell under the laws concerning freedom of speech. Because the Boucher family won trial, all other accusations against Jehovah's Witnesses were dropped and from that day onwards the doorstep ministry was allowed in Canada.

Although in most countries Jehovah's Witnesses are allowed to go door-to-door, they are still persecuted in some countries like Russia (Andrew and Mitrokhin 1999, 503). The Russian Orthodox Church and some Government officials still continue their campaign to stop the evangelization of Jehovah's Witnesses but also to stop all other activities of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society (2014: Jaarboek van Jehovah's Getuigen 2014, 27-29). The Government officials have threatened to sue Jehovah's Witnesses on account of terrorism and Russian courts have ruled that some publications contain extremist expressions. As a result some literature of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society has been put on the national list of forbidden books. Local authorities have also raided Kingdom Halls and private houses of Jehovah's Witnesses in search for the forbidden literature and Witnesses have been arrested during their ministry work. Several Jehovah's Witnesses have been tried because they organized Kingdom Hall meetings, participated in them, or because of their evangelization.

Jehovah's Witnesses are also persecuted for their evangelization in several other countries. One example is China. Because the Jehovah's Witnesses practices are officially forbidden in China, information about the organization's activities in those countries are not made known in fear of prosecution which in those countries can lead to death sentences. As said above, Witnesses believe they live during the end of times in which Satan will do everything to stop their work. They believe that the more the time comes near, the harder it will be to persevere and to stay loyal to Jehovah's Rule. As Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society has it:

As Christians, we are exhorted to be faithful until death, not necessarily to die for our faith. This means that while we are willing to suffer—and, if necessary, to die—for our faith, we do not relish the thought of doing so. We take no delight in suffering and derive no pleasure from pain or humiliation. Since trials and persecution are to be expected, however, we need to consider carefully how we might act when such do come upon us (Endurance Under Trials Brings Praise to Jehovah 2003).

The same publication reads that “some of His (God’s) servants are facing trials and persecution today; others may do so later. All will be tested in one way or another, and no one should expect to be an exempt” (Endurance Under Trials Brings Praise to Jehovah 2003). Jehovah’s Witnesses are taught to persevere even when this leads to suffering and are made aware that suffering will come to every individual’s Witness. Jehovah’s Witness should be willing to suffer in order to stay loyal to their faith. By demanding this intense loyalty, free-riding is made impossible²². By doing so, members will devote more time and money to the Congregation’s causes and they are “more likely to describe themselves as strong members of their faith” (Iannaccone 1994, 1205). Research has shown that congregations with “strong members” are more successful in maintaining membership counts, which will subsequently lead to more satisfied members.

5.2 Neutral until the end

As we have seen in chapter 4.3, the Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses teaches its members that although they are citizens of this world, they are united in a truly global brotherhood and that they have to stay strictly neutral concerning the politics of this world (Gods Koninkrijk regeert! 2014, 148). Jehovah’s Witnesses try to follow in Jesus’ footsteps and Jesus did not want to be any part of the politics of this world; Jesus refused kingship when it was offered to him (John 6: 15) and he refused power over all kingdoms of the world (Matthew 4: 8-10) (Jehovah’s Getuigen: Verkondigers van Gods Koninkrijk 1993, 188-190). The Governing Body stated that “out of loyalty to the Kingdom, God’s people try to be no part of this world²³” (Gods Koninkrijk regeert! 2014, 148). It is especially the refusal of military service which has led and still leads to persecution of Jehovah’s Witnesses all over the globe, which is why refusing military service is another manifestation I will elaborate on.

The loyalty to Jehovah God already led several Jehovah’s Witnesses to prison during World War I (Piersma 2005, 17). This persecution continued during the preceding years of World War II and during World War II. Jehovah’s Witnesses were prosecuted because of their evangelizing, because they refused military service, because they refused to say “Heil Hitler”, because they refused any work that supported the war industry, and because they refused to become members of the NSDAP or other National Socialist organizations (Holden 2002, 86-91). In short: Jehovah’s Witnesses were persecuted because they wanted to stay neutral. From 1935 onwards Jehovah’s Witnesses were sent

²² To learn more about the concept of free-riding within religious movement, I highly recommend Laurence R. Iannaccone “Why Strict Churches are Strong” in *American Journal of Sociology*, 1994: 1180-1211. I would also like to refer to chapter 4.6 and chapter 6 of this thesis.

²³ The original quote reads: “Uit loyaliteit aan het Koninkrijk doet Gods volk moeite om geen deel van de wereld te zijn”.

to concentration camps on a large scale. In the years preceding World War II, between 5-10% of all prisoners in concentration camps were Jehovah's Witnesses (Piersma 2005, 22). However, after World War II started, other groups of people were also sent to concentration camps (like the Jews) and Jehovah's Witnesses became a very small minority²⁴.

Though the percentage of Jehovah's Witnesses inside concentration camps dropped, it is certain Jehovah's Witnesses were persecuted during World War II for their loyalty to their own faith. They were the only individuals that were able to leave the concentration camps at any given moment, as long as they signed the "Erklärung" (Piersma 2005, 65-69). With signing this declaration the individual promised he or she would detach himself from the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses after which he or she would be allowed to go home. Though this possibility was given to imprisoned Jehovah's Witnesses, the majority decided to stay loyal to their faith. Tineke Piersma, a scholar who did extensive research on the persecution of Dutch Jehovah's Witnesses during World War II, believes it to be uncertain whether Jehovah's Witnesses truly stayed imprisoned out of loyalty to the Congregation or whether they stayed because of peer pressure from the social order of Jehovah's Witnesses (Piersma 2005). Piersma argues that if a Jehovah's Witnesses would sign the declaration, he or she would have betrayed their faith by being disloyal and disobedient. That decision would at first have led to their excommunication and they would have had no one to go home to because they would be excommunicated. According to Piersma this could mean that an act of loyalty was in some way enforced by peer pressure. A critical side-note to Piersma's elaboration is that she forgets to mention that with signing the declaration, the Witness promised he or she would detach him- or herself from the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. Again, since their families and friends were probably also Witnesses, he or she had no one to go home to because of the signing itself. That is why it was not necessarily fear of excommunication that led to loyal Jehovah's Witnesses. As Piersma mentions, the fear of excommunication was also taken away when the Governing Body asked in a letter from June 1942 Jehovah's Witnesses to be understanding and forgiving to fellow believers who felt the need to sign the declaration. Many Witnesses nonetheless stayed imprisoned, and it is probable they made this decision out of loyalty²⁵.

²⁴ For further information on the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses during World War II, I highly recommend M. James Penton's book *Jehovah's Witnesses and the Third Reich: Sectarian Politics under Persecution* (2004) that extensively discusses these events. Or Tineke Piersma's book *Getrouw Aan Hun Geloof: De vervolging van de Nederlandse Jehovah's Getuigen in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (2005), which elaborates on the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in The Netherlands.

²⁵ 44% of the detainees (~205 individuals) have been released at one point of their imprisonment, but Piersma does not write in which year they were released nor what the reason of their release was (Piersma 2005, 64). She does write that the majority stayed imprisoned until the end of WWII. Piersma statistics say that 27% (126 individuals) of the captive Jehovah's Witnesses died in prison, and of 25% (117 individuals) of the imprisoned Jehovah's Witnesses it is certain they were not released until the end of WWII.

Another reason why one may wonder whether it was disloyalty that led to the signing of the declaration is that according to Piersma, 95% of Jehovah's Witnesses who left the concentration camps after signing the declaration continued their activities for the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses (Piersma 2005, 67-69). The continuation of the ministry work by Jehovah's Witnesses who signed the declaration is a sign of their loyalty to their faith. They were aware that their practices could lead to their re-imprisonment and they were fully aware of the poor living conditions within the camps, after all they had seen it before. Nonetheless, 95% of all ex-prisoners continued their ministry work.

Since World War II the neutrality of Jehovah's Witnesses is accepted in most countries around the world. They are for example often allowed to refuse military service because of their faith and they are no longer required to salute the flag (Bergman 1997). However, this is not the case in all countries. The Jehovah's Witnesses yearbook of 2014 reads that 52 members of the movement (male and female) are imprisoned in Eritrea because they refuse military service (2014: Jaarboek van Jehovah's Getuigen 2014, 29). The organization also reports that 2 brothers from Eritrea have recently passed away due to the poor living conditions in prison. Other examples are the imprisonment of 602 brothers (conscription is only for men) in South-Korea because they refused military service, and the expelling of 5 students and the suspending of another 122 because they refused to sing the national anthem (2014: Jaarboek van Jehovah's Getuigen 2014, 30-31). These cases are just examples of the problems Jehovah's Witnesses can face because of their neutrality. It also should be noted that most severe cases are not reported because the Governing Body fears that this would lead to aggravation of violence towards Jehovah's Witnesses in those countries. An earlier given example of a country where persecution is common is China.

It are not always the earthly rulers who are the cause of death when Jehovah's Witnesses persevere in their loyalty towards Jehovah God; they can also call it upon themselves when they refuse potential life-saving treatments. In the next paragraph I will elaborate on the Jehovah's Witnesses refusal of blood-transfusions to show their desire to stay loyal to Jehovah God.

5.3 Refusal of blood transfusions²⁶

As already mentioned in chapter 3.4, Jehovah's Witnesses refuse possible life-saving blood-transfusion when needed because they believe blood-transfusions are against God's Will. To substantiate their teaching that blood-transfusions are prohibited by God, the Governing Body uses Paul among others:

[...] they should keep away from what is sacrificed to idols as well as from blood [...] (Acts 21:25).

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that because they respect life, and because they want to obey God's Rule, they cannot eat blood (Redeneren aan de hand van de Schrift 2006, 79-80). According to the Governing Body's interpretation of the Bible, God has never approved of any use of blood other than sacrifice. Those sacrifices are according to the Society no longer necessary because Jesus has given his life as ransom for the mistake that Adam made.

Most of the literature written about Jehovah's Witnesses is about their refusal of blood transfusions (Holden 2002, 28). Also novels are written on this subject, the most recent example is Ian McEwan's book *The Children Act* (McEwan 2014). The fact that Jehovah's Witnesses refuse blood-transfusions resulted into extensive research on alternative therapies. As a result most modern surgery can also be performed without the use of blood. The Governing Body writes that it is not always easy to restrain yourself from blood because, like everyone else, Jehovah's Witnesses also do not seek martyrdom (Wat Leert de Bijbel Echt? 2005, 130-131). The key to understanding why Jehovah's Witnesses stay faithful to this rule, although no other Christian denomination interprets the Bible in this specific way, is the promise of paradise and their loyalty towards the Society and Jehovah God. Again and again it is the eschatological perspective which is of major importance; Jehovah God promises people eternal life however, according to Jehovah's Witnesses, this eternal life is only obtainable for people God approves of. They believe that He will not approve of individuals who knowingly broke His rules. This means that if a Jehovah's Witness would accept a blood transfusion although he is aware of the fact that God disapproves, he could lose his chance on eternal life. And what is this transitory life worth in contrast to an eternal life without pain and suffering?

²⁶ I want to acknowledge that the contents of this paragraph might be similar to another publication of mine: Susanne J. Kuipers. "Is Religious Extremism really extreme?". *Goden, Geesten, Geleerden*, 2014: 21-22.

In this chapter I have given several reasons why Jehovah's Witnesses stay loyal to the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses and consequently to Jehovah God. To summarize, the Governing Body teaches that loyalty is rooted in love and that Jehovah's Witnesses have to stay loyal to Jehovah God out of love for Him. Jehovah's Witnesses also want to stay loyal to Jehovah God to disprove Satan's point that humans will not willingly worship Jehovah. I have also shown that only when an individual stays loyal to God, and only when the individual is obedient to God's Rule, God will approve of him. Only then a Jehovah's Witness has a shot on eternal life in paradise. That is why one could conclude that loyalty towards Jehovah God can be an egoistic deed; being loyal to God will lead to the best result for an individual Jehovah's Witness (Success Through Perseverance 2000). Loyalty could also be caused out of fear and peer pressure: one has to stay loyal to reach paradise or to not be excommunicated. With demanding absolute loyalty, the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses emphasizes their strictness. It is that strictness that also leads to an increasing member count and more satisfied and devoted members (Iannaccone 1994). Now an important question emerges: what can we learn from our current knowledge on the concept of loyalty among Jehovah's Witnesses? In the next chapter I will interpret my findings so far and I will elaborate on why loyalty could be seen as a motivator for religious behaviour.

6 It is all about interpretation

Loyalty as taught by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society and as shown by individual Jehovah's Witnesses is according to them a value rooted in love. Jehovah's Witnesses are loyal to Jehovah God and consequently, as shown in the previous chapters, they are loyal to the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. Their loyalty is shown by their willingness to die for their faith; with this willingness they believe they follow the example of Christians of the Early Church in the Roman Empire (Meijering 2004, 130-131)²⁷. Loyalty to Jehovah God is for Jehovah's Witnesses a motivator of their religious behaviour. It seems to be the reason why they practice doorstep ministry, it seems to be the reason why they prefer a neutral position in worldly affairs, and it seems to be the reason why they refuse blood transfusions. These three manifestations have the possibility to lead to persecution or death and nonetheless Jehovah's Witnesses stay loyal to persevere.

Several reasons have been given for the loyalty of Jehovah's Witnesses. Though the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society teaches its members they have to stay loyal out of love for God, the main reason given by the Society inside their literature is that otherwise an individual loses his or her salvation. The importance of salvation is certainly in line with previous mentioned research of Montague that said that elders enforce certain actions with saying that else the individual will not survive Armageddon (Montague 1977, 146). It is quite interesting that the Society's literature concentrates on the individual's chances on eternal life, it is often the first reason given for certain actions and behaviour, but that it also teaches that loyal behaviour or any good behaviour should be shown out of love for Jehovah God and not out of love to yourself. But then why do they concentrate on the beneficial effects for the individual? With concentrating on the beneficial effects for the individual in their literature, loyalty and obedience can be seen as an egoistic act; after all, it is best for the individual to act as is commanded of him.

To study whether individuals are truly loyal to their faith or whether they are loyal to themselves or to their peers is an impossible task. Not only would it be hard to figure out what the true reason behind decisions made by individuals is, I believe these causes of loyalty are intertwined. Do people ever act truly out of loyalty towards anything but themselves or does it always need to affect an individual in a positive way, whether it is on the short or long term? To give a simple comparison: when people donate money to a good cause, do they do so out of love to the subject of the cause or

²⁷ For more information about the persecution of Christians of the Early Church I highly recommend Eginhard Meijering's book *Geschiedenis van het vroege Christendom: Van de jood Jezus van Nazareth tot de Romeinse Keizer Constantijn* (2004).

out of love for themselves (Bekkers 2010)²⁸? Would people donate if it would not give them a good feeling? According to Jehovah's Witnesses doing what Jehovah God wants you to do is also the best for yourself: it secures your place in paradise. The egoistic act and the act out of love to Jehovah cannot be separated. As we have seen, another reason for loyal behaviour is fear and peer pressure. Jehovah's Witnesses can show loyal behaviour out of fear of ex-communication, out of fear of not reaching paradise, and because they feel pressured by their peers. That Witnesses can act out of fear and peer pressure is confirmed by Montague who has written "there is a great deal of pressure to conform within the congregation, and there is a belief structure which clearly causes emotional turmoil" (Montague 1977, 146).

All of the arguments given above are internal arguments; arguments derived from the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses why an individual should be loyal. However, external arguments can be given also. As already briefly touched upon it is also the strictness of a movement that can be appealing to individuals. "Strict churches proclaim an exclusive truth – a closed, comprehensive, and eternal doctrine. They demand adherence to a distinctive faith, morality, and lifestyle. They condemn deviance, shun dissenters, and repudiate the outside world. They frequently embrace 'eccentric traits' [...] that invite ridicule, isolation, and persecution" (Iannaccone 1994, 1182)²⁹. This is exactly the type of movement the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses is. There are three main reasons why strict churches are more successful: "they raise overall levels of commitment, they increase average rates of participation, and they enhance the net benefits of membership" (Iannaccone 1994, 1183). According to Iannaccone, it is strictness that makes "perfectly rational members [...] embrace stigma, self-sacrifice, and bizarre behavioural standards" (Iannaccone 1994, 1183). Iannaccone's church-sect theory teaches that a high-cost group is successful because it limits participation in activities other than the group's activities; this leads to a higher attendance rate and contributions, and closer ties to the group because it reduces free-riding (Iannaccone 1994, 1197, 1204). The benefits of the group outweigh the high costs. Other theories have shown that when an individual has invested greatly into a movement, he or she will not leave even when prophecies fail (Festinger, Riecken and Schachter 2008). That is why the fact that the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses is totalitarian, and high-demanding, is also the reason why individuals stay loyal to it.

²⁸ The article by René Bekkers, Head of Research and Assistant Professor at the Department of Philanthropic Studies at VU University Amsterdam, to which I refer is one of many articles on philanthropy.

²⁹ I highly recommend Laurence R. Iannaccone's article "Why Strict Churches Are Strong" in *American Journal of Sociology* (1994) for a better and completer understanding of why strict churches are appealing.

In this master thesis I have thus far shown that loyalty is the reason why Jehovah's Witnesses make (possible) life-ending decisions and continue their religious behaviour regardless of the consequences. Loyalty seems to be a motivator of religious behaviour, and therefore it is an interesting topic to research. Extensive research has been done into motives of religious behaviour³⁰, also among Jehovah's Witnesses, but research into motives of religious behaviour seem to never touch upon loyalty. This is odd because as I hope to have shown, loyalty seems to be the key motivator for religious behaviour among Jehovah's Witnesses.

6.1 Loyalty as motivator

One of the few philosophers who has written about the concept of loyalty is Josiah Royce, a former professor of the history of philosophy at Harvard University. Royce acknowledges that loyalty is very important for humans and believes that loyalty is at "the heart of all the virtues", that it is "the central duty amongst all duties" (Royce 1908, vii). He defines loyalty as "the willing and practical and thoroughgoing devotion of a person to a cause" (Royce 1908, 51-52). According to Royce, loyalty is necessary for an individual to function. The causes we can devote ourselves to have to be bigger than ourselves and have to be external to our purely individual will. Those causes also have to unite the individual with other persons with some form of social tie to form a higher social unity, the social unity that is to Jehovah's Witnesses formed by their membership of the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. In Royce words:

The cause, therefore, to which the loyal man is devoted, it something that appears to him to be at once personal (since it concerns both himself and other people), and impersonal, or rather, if regarded from a purely human point of view, superpersonal, because it links several human selves, perhaps a vast number of selves, into some higher social unity (Royce 1908, 52).

Loyalty is important because it can be the personal solution to "the hardest of human practical problems"; the problems concerning the meaning of life (Royce 1908, 57). It is the meaning of life that answers the questions: "For what do I live? Why am I here? For what am I good? Why am I needed?" Answers to these questions are very important to an individual's happiness and they can

³⁰ Among the publications which discuss several reasons of religious behaviour is *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach* (2009) by Ralph W. Hood Jr., Peter C. Hill and Bernard Spilka.

be given by a community or society that defines the purpose of life³¹ (Royce 1908, 58). Royce concludes:

Only a cause, then, and absorbing and fascinating social cause, which by his own will and consent comes to take possession of his life, [...] only a cause, dignified by the social unity that it gives to many human live, but rendered also vital for the loyal man by the personal affection which it awakens in his heart, only such a cause can unify his outer and inner world. When such unity comes, it takes in him the form of an active loyalty. Whatever cause thus appeals to a man meets therefore one of his deepest personal needs, and in fact the very deepest of his moral need; namely, the need of a life task that is at once voluntarily and to his mind worthy (Royce 1908, 58-59).

With Royce's views on loyalty in mind, let us turn to the Jehovah's Witnesses. The Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses gives its members answers to all life questions. It also provides its members with a life task; the task to evangelize the Truth, a task they believe has its origin in the Bible. The movement also gives its members social unity. The organization is believed to be a universal brotherhood that falls under the reign of Jehovah God. The chapter on the variety of manifestations has shown that what the Congregation provides its members, leads to active loyalty among Jehovah's Witnesses. The extent of the loyalty among Jehovah's Witnesses to Jehovah God and subsequently to their community is profound; Witnesses have proven to be willing to die for their cause. Jehovah's Witnesses have shown that they are truly devoted to the teachings of their Congregation. Therefore it can be concluded that, following Josiah Royce's definition of loyalty, Jehovah's Witnesses are very loyal people.

Royce's definition is linked with duty. It is linked with the need from individuals to find answers to the question of the meaning of life. The Governing Body however defines loyalty as an expression of love. The Society says that loyalty "is kindness that lovingly attaches itself to an object and does not let go until its purpose in connection with that object is realized" (Close to Jehovah 2014, 280-289). According to them it is out of love that Jehovah's Witnesses stay loyal to Jehovah God. From their standpoint, making that decision is logical. They believe that this life is temporal and that if Jehovah God approves of you, he will resurrect you when earthly paradise has come. To them it seems much worse to die forever, than to die now and have eternal life later.

³¹ One exemplary article which shows the beneficial effects of having the answer to life-questions is Rystal L. Park, Donald Edmondson, and Amy Hale-Smith's article "Why Religion? Meaning as Motivation" published in *APA Handbook of Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality: Vol. 1. Context, Theory, and Research*, by K.I. Pargament (Ed.), 157-167. Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2013.

As we have seen while studying manifestations of loyalty within the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, loyalty can also be caused out of fear and peer pressure. You can love the subject you fear or feel suppressed by, but an act out of fear or peer pressure cannot be an act out of love. For example, victims who suffer Stockholm syndrome show loyalty to an individual they at the same time fear and are suppressed by (Mckenzie 2004). Though these victims are loyal, their actions are not guided by love. And as we have previously seen, a strict group that is high-demanding has more loyal and devoted members, and an individual can remain loyal to a cause when the cause is not beneficial for the individual or when the cause is not real because the individual has already invested greatly (Iannaccone 1994). If we follow the definition of loyalty given by the Governing Body, namely loyalty is "kindness that lovingly attaches itself to an object", people who act because of fear and peer pressure might according to the Governing Body not be loyal but faithful; according to them the difference between being faithful and loyal is that "a person might be faithful merely out of a sense of duty" while "loyalty is rooted in love" (Close to Jehovah 2014, 280-289). However, the Oxford Dictionary reads that 'faithful' is 'remaining loyal', the distinction the Governing Body makes is only made by them (Oxford Dictionaries sd). Josiah Royce does not define loyalty as a duty rooted in love but as "the willing and practical and thoroughgoing devotion of a person to a cause" (Royce 1908, 51-52). So following that definition, also individuals who act because of fear and peer pressure are loyal individuals; they are still willing to devote themselves to the cause and show thoroughgoing devotion. Royce believes an individual is loyal to a cause "because it links several human selves, perhaps a vast number of selves, into some higher social unity", just like the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses has done with creating a universal brotherhood and with being a strict and high-demanding organization (Royce 1908, 52). Also, the congregation provides Witnesses a "life task that is at once voluntarily" and "worthy" (Royce 1908, 58-59). It seems to be particularly those features which create an organization to which individuals want to be loyal. I think, using Jehovah's Witnesses as a case-study, we can formulate a more comprehensive definition of what religious loyalty is:

Loyalty is a duty "that lovingly attaches itself to an object until its purpose in connection with that object is realized" (Close to Jehovah 2014, 280-289). Loyalty is about "the willing and practical and thoroughgoing devotion of a person to a cause", it is about not letting go "until its purpose in connection with that object is realized", and loyalty is capable of linking "several human selves [...] into some higher social unity (Royce 1908, 51-52) (Close to Jehovah 2014, 280-289). Loyalty also creates "life tasks" that are both "voluntarily" and "worthy" (Royce 1908, 58-59).

6.2 An attempt to categorize

As previously mentioned, the concept of loyalty seems to be a motivator for religious behaviour among Jehovah's Witnesses. Royce has written that loyalty can provide individuals with answers to life questions, I agree. And, because Royce believes that loyalty is the central duty among all duties, it is very plausible loyalty is a motivator of behaviour among religious people from other religious groups as well. Loyalty might even be a very important motivator of behaviour in general. However, I believe loyalty cannot be the only motivation behind religious behaviour. Though I have only briefly introduced other closely linked concepts, I believe extensive research on other categories like obedience, sincerity, and fear should be done because the lack of research done on these religious motivations is a major gap inside our understanding of religions and religious behaviour, as previously mentioned. As a final result of my research on the concept of loyalty among Jehovah's Witnesses, I want to introduce a preliminary categorization model for religious behaviour. While writing my master thesis I have come across four motivators of religious behaviour: religious behaviour among Jehovah's Witnesses can take place out of loyalty, out of sincerity, out of obedience, and out of fear. Peer pressure can be found inside the concept of obedience, but also under the concept of fear. In this paragraph I will introduce this preliminary categorization model.

In this master thesis I have concentrated on loyalty and we have seen that loyalty is a motivator for religious behaviour among Jehovah's Witnesses. I have shown that the Governing Body defines loyalty as an act of love, which is expected of all members of the Congregation. I however argued that loyalty is not necessarily rooted in love but that it is an individual's devotion to a cause. I have also shown that despite the life-risks, Jehovah's Witnesses have stayed loyal using three examples: their door-step ministry, their neutrality, and their refusal of blood transfusions. I have elaborated on why a strict religious organization, like the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, is successful; I have explained that the benefits outweigh the costs. Besides loyalty I have touched upon other motivators of the behaviour of Jehovah's Witnesses of which one is sincerity. Sincerity is closely linked with honesty; sincerity is about being honest about what you believe and saying it out loud. Sincerity is being "free from pretence and deceit; proceeding from genuine feelings" (Oxford Dictionaries sd). This does remind me of Jehovah's Witnesses who in World War II were both loyal and sincere: they stayed loyal to their congregation but were also sincere about their affiliation. They did not lie when they were asked whether they were Witnesses. It was therefore not only their loyalty that led to their persecution, but also their sincerity.

Also, as I have previously written, according to the Governing Body loyal Witnesses are obedient Witnesses. That is why, inside the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, the concept of obedience intertwines with loyalty. Out of obedience to the Governing Body, and out of obedience towards Jehovah God, Jehovah's Witnesses show religious behaviour, loyalty, and follow the rules given. Jehovah's Witnesses are taught to obey these authorities. Fear seems to be another motivator for behaviour among Jehovah's Witnesses. Witnesses can persevere out of fear for excommunication, and possibly even out of fear for Jehovah God. Fear might be the reason why Jehovah's Witnesses did not sign the declaration during World War II although, as I have also shown, this is a complex case.

Also sincerity, obedience, and fear seem to be religious motivators among Jehovah's Witnesses. It is possible that there are more motivators; it could be that people from other religions have other reasons for their affiliation and behaviour than Jehovah's Witnesses. Nonetheless I will not further elaborate on these motivators for religious behaviour because the aim of this thesis was to come to a closer understanding of the concept of loyalty inside the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. We have seen that loyalty motivates Jehovah's Witnesses, and we have come to a better understanding of what religious loyalty is, as formulated above.

I have also shown that this loyalty has multiple levels; Witnesses are loyal to Jehovah God, to the Congregation, but also to themselves. Causes of their loyalty are love for Jehovah God, love for themselves, fear, and peer pressure.

7 Conclusion

In this thesis I made an attempt to come to a closer understanding of the concept of loyalty within the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, and I tried to answer the question "what does 'loyalty' mean to Jehovah's Witnesses?" Being loyal seems to mean everything to individual Witnesses; I have shown that loyalty has led to persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses, and that they apparently prefer death over disloyalty. There seem to be three profound reasons for the immense loyalty shown by Jehovah's Witnesses. First of all, loyalty of Witnesses is an act out of love for Jehovah God; secondly, loyalty can be an act out of love for oneself; and finally loyalty can be caused by fear and peer pressure. As appears to be, loyalty in religion is a very under-researched topic and that is why this research may open up a highly interesting avenue of research. With my analysis of the concept of loyalty I hope to have shown that loyalty is of great importance to Jehovah's Witnesses and the Governing Body, and I have shown what causes their loyalty. With that in mind it is highly plausible loyalty is of great importance for other religious movements as well. I have also tried to come to a better understanding of what loyalty is, namely:

Loyalty is a duty "that lovingly attaches itself to an object until its purpose in connection with that object is realized" (Close to Jehovah 2014, 280-289). Loyalty is about "the willing and practical and thoroughgoing devotion of a person to a cause", it is about not letting go "until its purpose in connection with that object is realized", and loyalty is capable of linking "several human selves [...] into some higher social unity (Royce 1908, 51-52) (Close to Jehovah 2014, 280-289). Loyalty also creates "life tasks" that are both "voluntarily" and "worthy" (Royce 1908, 58-59).

I have argued that besides loyalty there might be three other motivators for religious behaviour among Jehovah's Witnesses: sincerity, obedience, and fear. These motivators deserve fuller investigation since they might result into a closer understanding of religious behaviour and religion in general; a goal shared by all scholars of religion. It is plausible there are more motives for religious behaviour which possibly can be found inside other religions.

7.1 A personal note

Researching the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses has not been an easy task. Sometimes I felt like I was caught between two fires: on one hand there were the Jehovah's Witnesses themselves who I personally know as loving, caring and friendly individuals, and on the other hand there were the critics of the movement who seem to believe the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses is a dangerous religious movement. The critique can easily be found on the

internet that is full of websites by old members of the Congregation and people who have obviously been hurt in the past³². The critique can also be found in scientific research that criticizes the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses because it is an authoritarian movement that has complete control over its members. It has been hard to find a balance between the two. On the one hand it could not be that the movement is all that bad like some critics would like you to believe because that would mean all authoritarian figures inside the Congregation are power hungry. Since it requires a tremendous amount of self-sacrifice to get so far up the hierarchical system, it requires absolute loyalty, obedience, and a horrific amount of hours of ministry work; I personally doubt many power hungry individuals take that route. It would be easier to become a politician or successful entrepreneur. On the other hand, there has to be some truth into what the critics are saying because there are so many that all had similar bad experiences. With that knowledge, I had to find a balance between understanding where the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Society are coming from, while I still had to look critically to the Governing Body's teachings and the events from the past. At any rate I tried to elucidate why Jehovah's Witnesses make certain decisions and I have shown that the Society has complete control over the decisions that have to be made.

³² Examples are Raymond Franz's book *Crisis of Conscience* (2002), or Barbara Anderson's blog (<http://converser2.blogspot.nl/>) and website (<http://www.watchtowerdocuments.com/>).

Bibliography

- Allingham, Michael. *Choice Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford paperbacks, 2002.
- Andrew, Christopher, and Vasili Mitrokhin. *The Sword and the Shield*. New York: Basic Books, 1999.
- Baumeister, Roy F., and Mark R. Leary. "The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation." *Psychological Bulletin*, 1995: 497-529.
- Bekkers, René. "Who gives what and when? A scenario study of intentions to give time and money." *Social Science Research*, 2010: 369-381.
- Bergman, Jerry. "The Modern Religious Objection to Mandatory Flag Salute in America : A History and Evaluation." *Journal of Church and State*, 1997: 215-236.
- Beverley, James A. *Crisis of Allegiance: A Study of Dissent Among Jehovah's Witnesses*. Burlington: Welch Publishing Company Inc. , 1986.
- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Cole, Marley. *Jehovah's Witnesses: The new world society*. London: Unwin Brothers Ltd., 1956.
- Conquest, Robert. *Reflections on a Ravaged Century*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000.
- Court of Sessions Scotland. "Internet Archive." 23 November 1954. <https://archive.org/details/WalshTrial> (accessed October 15, 2014).
- Crooker, Joseph Henry. *A Plea for Sincerity in Religious Thought*. Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1899.
- Domestic Abuse Shelter. *Domestic Abuse Shelter of The Florida Keys*. n.d. <http://www.domesticabuseshelter.org/infodomesticviolence.htm#statistics> (accessed December 8, 2014).
- Durkheim, Émile. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. London: Allen and Unwin (translated by Joseph Swain in 1954), 1912.
- Festinger, Leon, Henry W. Riecken, and Stanley Schachter. *When Prophecy Fails*. London: Pinter & Martin Ltd, 2008.
- Fowler, James W. "Stages in faith consciousness." In *Religious development in childhood and adolescence*, by F. K. Oser (Eds.) and W. G. Scarlett, 24-45. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991.
- Franz, Raymond. *Crisis of Conscience*. Atlanta: Commentary Press, 2004.
- Garbe, Detlef. *Between Resistance and Martyrdom: Jehovah's Witnesses in the Third Reich*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008.
- Hammersley, Martyn, and Paul Atkinson. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

- Holden, Andrew. *Jehovah's Witnesses: Portrait of a Contemporary Religious Movement*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Hood Jr., Ralph W., Peter C. Hill, and Bernard Spilka. *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2009.
- Iannaccone, Laurence R. "Why Strict Churches Are Strong." *American Journal of Sociology*, 1994: 1180-1211.
- Knox, Zoe. "Writing Witness History: The Historiography of the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania." *Journal of Religious History*, 2011: 157-180.
- Lincoln, Bruce. *Holy Terrors: Talking about Religion after September 11*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Lund, Aron. *The Global Think Tank*. 5 December 2013. <http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=53811> (accessed December 1, 2014).
- McEwan, Ian. *The Children Act*. New York: Nan A. Talese, 2014.
- Mckenzie, Ian K. "The Stockholm Syndrome Revisited: Hostages, Relationships, Prediction, Control and Psychological Science." *Journal of Police Crisis Negotiations*, 2004: 5-21.
- Meijering, Eginhard. *Geschiedenis van het vroege Christendom: Van de jood Jezus van Nazareth tot de Romeinse keizer Constantijn*. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Balans, 2004.
- Montague, Havor. "The Pessimistic Sect's Influence on the Mental Health of its Members: The case of Jehovah's Witnesses." *Social Compass*, 1977: 135-147.
- Oxford Dictionaries. *Oxford Dictionaries: Language matters*. n.d. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/sincere> (accessed November 19, 2014).
- . *Oxford Dictionaries: Language matters*. n.d. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/faithful?searchDictCode=all> (accessed December 11, 2014).
- Park, Crystal L., Donald Edmondson, and Amy Hale-Smith. "Why Religion? Meaning as Motivation." In *APA Handbook of Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality: Vol. 1. Context, Theory, and Research*, by K. I. Pargament (Ed.), 157-167. Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2013.
- Penton, M. James. *Apocalypse Delayed: The Story of Jehovah's Witnesses*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.
- . *Jehovah's Witnesses and the Third Reich: Sectarian Politics under Persecution*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.
- . *Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada: Champions of freedom of speech and worship*. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976.
- Piersma, Tineke. *Getrouw Aan Hun Geloof: De vervolging van de Nederlandse Jehovah's Getuigen in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*. Westervoort: Uitgeverij Van Gruting, 2005.

- Royce, Josiah. *The Philosophy of Loyalty*. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1908.
- Rutherford, Joseph F. In *Watchtower*, by The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. 1923.
- Stark, Rodney, and Laurence R. Iannaccone. "Why the Jehovah's Witnesses Grow so Rapidly: A Theoretical Application." *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 1997: 133-157.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. "Totalitarianism: Between Religion and Science." *Totalitarian Movements & Political Religions*, 2001: 28-42.
- Tseung-Wong, Caroline Ng, and Maykel Verkuyten. "Religious and National Group Identification in Adolescence: A Study Among Three Religious Groups in Mauritius." *International Journal of Psychology*, 2013: 846-857.
- Vail, Kenneth E. , Zachery K. Rotschild, Dave R. Weise, Sheldon Solomon, Tom Pyszczynski, and Jeff Greenberg. "A Terror Management Analysis of the Psychological Functions of Religion." *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 2010: 84-94.
- Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. 2014: *Jaarboek van Jehovah's Getuigen*. Selters: Wachtturm-Gesellschaft, 2014.
- *Aanbid God*. New York: The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 2007.
 - *Blijf in Gods Liefde*. New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. , 2008.
 - *Close to Jehovah*. New York: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 2014.
 - "'Ik ben met u'." *De Wachttorenen*, 15 August 2012: 3-7.
 - "Aan wie moet u loyaal zijn?" *De Wachttorenen*, 15 August 2002: 4-7.
 - "Aanvaard altijd het strenge onderricht van Jehovah." *De Wachttorenen*, 15 November 2006: 26-30.
 - "Als een familielid uitgesloten wordt." *De Wachttorenen*, 15 July 2011: 28-32.
 - "U bent van harte welkom." *De Wachttorenen*, 1 February 2009: 20-23.
 - "Volg Jehovah's geduld na." *De Wachttorenen*, February 1 2006: 17-21.
 - *Georganiseerd om Jehovah's Wil te Doen*. New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York Inc. , 2005.
 - *God Spreekt tot Ons via Jeremia*. Selters/Taunus: Wachtturm-Gesellschaft, 2010.
 - *Gods Koninkrijk regeert!* Selters/Taunus: Wachtturm-Gesellschaft, 2014.
 - *God's love*. New York: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. , 2014.
 - "How Precious Is the Truth to You?" *The Watchtower*. New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, 1 March 2002.
 - *Inzicht in de Schrift: Deel 2*. New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York Inc., 2009.
 - *Jehovah's Getuigen: Verkondigers van Gods Koninkrijk*. New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 1993.

- . “Toon christelijke loyaliteit wanneer een familielid is uitgesloten.” *Koninkrijksdienst*, 8 February 2002.
 - . *Redeneren aan de hand van de Schrift*. New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 2006.
 - . “Endurance Under Trials Brings Praise to Jehovah.” *The Watchtower*, 1 October 2003: 14-19.
 - . “Jehovah Values Your Obedience.” *The Watchtower*, 15 June 2007: 26-30.
 - . “Success Through Perseverance.” *The Watchtower*, 2 February 2000: 4-6.
 - . *United in Worship of the Only True God*. New York: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 1983.
 - . *Wat Leert de Bijbel Echt?* Selters: Wachtturm-Gesellschaft, 2005.
- Wolff, Richard D., and Stephen A. Resnick. *Economics: Marxian versus Neoclassical*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.
- Yalom, Irvin D. *Existential Psychotherapy*. New York: BasicBooks, 1980.
- Ysseldyk, Renate, Kimberly Matheson, and Hymie Anisman. "Religiosity as Identity: Toward an Understanding of Religion From a Social Identity Perspective." *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 2010: 60-71.