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Attention: Research Department

Dear Brothers,

Vivian and I are writing to present issues that have become major stumbling blocks to both of us. These issues arose gradually in the course of researching for several calls and studies going back about 5 years. We were quite confident, brothers, at the beginning, that most of the problems would disappear if we just applied ourselves to research in the publications.

An this we did. Over the past 2 years we have consulted every publication available to us, including older volumes in the Kingdom Hall library, in order to deal with the issues fairly and comprehensively. The devastating discoveries this research led to have also occasioned countless hours of close Bible study, meditation and prayer. We say devastating because the most important and challenging questions remain unresolved. As a result several once interested calls and studies have moved away from the organization. And because our research upturned more problems than it eliminated, we too found our faith in the organization faltering.

It has reached the point where neither Vivian nor I feel we can in good conscience attend meetings, but we certainly wish to present you brothers the opportunity to refute the charges that have been made against the organization. It is possible we have overlooked some relevant material in the literature. Therefore, brothers, we bring these issues before you, confident that you will do your best to shed what light you can.

Here, in substance, are the claims that caused this stumbling. We have included explanatory material which will help you to understand why we have been unable to deal successfully with each claim and related accusations. The bracketed numbers refer to the corresponding pages of documentation that follow the body of this letter. Also, where appropriate, we have inserted the Scriptural principles that seem to us (and the aforementioned interested individuals) crucial to the issues under discussion.

The claims and charges raised:

(1) THAT WE ARE GUILTY OF FALSE PROPHESYING, SMEARING GOD'S NAME RATHER THAN VINDICATING IT.

Since the organization claims to be a prophet (21-22, 31), Jehovah will judge it by the standards of a prophet He sets out in Deut. 13:1-5, 18:20-22 and 1 Sam. 3:19,20. And because virtually all of its predictions have failed, even to the repeated setting of dates for God's action e.g. 1914, 1915, 1918, 1920, 1925, 1975 (4-13, 16-19, 28-36, 50-51) in violation of Christ's words at Acts 1:7, we who lend our support to this "prophet" can expect the severest judgment. This due to the reproach that inevitably falls on Jehovah and His Word when those who claim to be "his mouthpieces" (31, 195, 206) attribute their predictions to "light" from Him (3, 5-7, 25-28, 35, 151). We are accused, too, of criticizing those whose hopes were disappointed by these failures, as if these publishers, not the Society, set up the dates (13, 19, 38-39). And too that by continually maintaining the illusion of urgency (9, 13,17, 18, 75-81) we not only go on unrepentantly promoting false prophecy, but keep brothers too busy to investigate for themselves these important matters.

(2) THAT WE BUILD OUR ENTIRE PROPHETIC PICTURE ON A SINGLE CRUMBLING FOUNDATION - THE YEAR 1914. BY OUR OWN DEFINITIONS, THEREFORE, WE CONTINUE TO BE GUILTY OF BLASPHEMY AND SLANDER AGAINST JEHOVAH.

Charles T. Russell himself admitted that if **one** part of his chronology failed the **whole** of it, including 1914, would be an "irreparable wreck" (8). The Society maintained and publicized this same thought for years after Russell's death (34-35). Even so, while the organization has abandoned all the "prophetically marked" dates (1799, 1829, 1844, 1846, 1872, 1874, 1878, 1881, 1908, 1910-12, 1915, 1918, 1920, 1925) we continue to hang on to 1914, ignoring the fact that all the Society's predictions respecting that date failed (4-7), and that even the date itself was the result of a miscalculation (33, 36, 38). Therefore, it is claimed, we are guilty of double deception: 1. Insinuating in modern literature that Russell was accurate in his predictions of the heavenly Kingdom being set up in 1914 (92, 95, 100-103); 2. Quietly later adjusting the erroneous chronology to "prove" Russell predicted that date, whereas if he had calculated correctly the Times of the Gentiles would have ended in 1915.

Additionally, it has been alleged that the Society has resorted to journalistic fraud in order to create the impression that 607 B.C.E. is a biblically and chronologically sound date for the beginning of the Gentile Times. For example: using quotes from Edwin Thiele's **The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings** and Josephus's **Against Apion** to substantiate our point of view, without even pointing out that both sources actually contradict our position when read in context (**Awake** May 8, 1972, p.27-28; **"Let Your Kingdom Come"**, Appendix). Vivian and I have investigated both sources and many others because we were challenged to find some - ANY - support for the date 607. We have failed to find any so far. A list of the references we have already checked is included (42-46). It is usually emphasized in the Society's publications that 607 B.C.E., while not accepted by **secular** historians who place little weight on the Bible's statements, will readily be accepted as the date of Jerusalem's fall by those who rely on God's Word. Therefore in our research we have put heavy emphasis on gathering references representing ALL points of view respecting the Bible's authority. Yet even among conservative Bible scholars - those holding a position virtually identical to ours respecting the Bible's inerrancy - we found absolutely no support for any date prior to 588 B.C.E. (44-45). These conservative writers seem to have no problem at all reconciling the Bible's data (e.g. Jeremiah chapters 25 and 29, 2 Chronicles 36, Daniel 9, Zechariah 1 and 7) with information from secular history.

(3) THAT OUR CHANGES IN DOCTRINE, RATHER THAN EXHIBITING 'PROGRESSIVE LIGHT', SHOW INSTEAD A PATTERN OF RANDOM FLIP-FLOPS AND DOUBLE REVERSALS. WHERE THAT IS NOT THE CASE, MANY PRESENT TEACHINGS ARE COMPLETELY OPPOSITE TO THOSE OF RUSSELL'S DAY, EVEN BEING REJECTED BY HIM AS 'BABYLONISH' IDEAS.

Vivian and I have spent hundreds of hours of research on this subject alone, and to fully document the results would take vast amounts of paper as well as time. Instead, we have broken down the findings into several charts (50-57) which, to the best of our present knowledge, accurately display the positions adopted by the organization on questions of doctrine and prophetic interpretation during the periods of the Society's four presidents. Teachings are grouped into convenient categories and the selection of teachings is determined by the material in C.T. Russell's **STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES** ("Millennial Dawn"), which for 40 years served as the basic study and preaching tools used by the Society. A star (\*) following the doctrinal statement marks positions taken by the society in repudiation of "Babylonish" teachings of Christendom, which "Babylonish" doctrines we

have later adopted as “progressive light.” (This aspect is particularly embarrassing and distressing, as it means we must admit to opposers that Christendom had better “light” than the Society on many occasions.) Abbreviated references are included on the charts, with a list of sources following (57). For reasons of space only STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES and TABERNACLE SHADOWS are listed. Later publications, however, are utilized throughout the other documentation. The 1930-85 index will also prove helpful, as it has to us, in locating more recent references.

(4) THAT WE ARE NOT PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE APOSTLES, NOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD, BUT INSTEAD A “PHANTOM KINGDOM” OF OUR OWN IMAGINATION.

It is alleged that despite our continued stress on how MUCH preaching the organization is doing, all such “preaching” work amounts to “more to unlearn” if the “Kingdom” we are publicizing is counterfeit, unreal (54). That instead of preaching after “the pattern of healthful words” found in the Apostles’ message (2 Tim. 1:13, Acts chapters 2 and 3, 1 Cor. 1:17-24), we instead centre our message on illusion – an invisible government, a ‘presence of Christ’ and a ‘present generation’ – all 100 years old and still counting (29-33, 35-37, 50-51). In addition it is claimed that this illusion of urgency, of salvation always “just ahead” (75-81), is a blasphemous substitute for the TRUE good news – eternal salvation that can be accepted now as the free gift of Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:4-10, 1 John 5:9-13). Whereas, our “sky is falling” message will always bring deceiving **temporary** gains, both in zeal and numbers, the long term result will inevitably be crushed hopes and shattered faith, as history records was the case in 1881, 1910, 1914, 1918, 1925, World War II and 1975. Yet worse, so goes the claim, while this “good news” continues to blind our eyes, the TRUE gospel of Christ’s cross, death and resurrection must suffer neglect, even resulting in our everlasting loss (69).

(5) THAT WE ARE GUILTY OF DISHONESTY, OR AT LEAST SELF-DECEPTION, IN THE WAY WE PRESENT THE ORGANIZATION’S PAST. E.G.: CONCEALING THE SOCIETY’S PROMOTION OF CREATURE WORSHIP BY PROMOTING C.T. RUSSELL AS THE “FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE”.

This has been a particular disillusionment for Vivian and myself, as there seems to us no possible justification for how the history of the Society

is coloured in recent literature. How could it be said of Russell that he “never did claim to be “the faithful and discreet slave” (88) when the 1916 WatchTower, among many other publications, says the opposite? (84-93) How could the fantastic claims made for Russell in **The Finished Mystery** be so blithely passed over in **God’s Kingdom of 1000 Years Has Approached** (p. 346-7) and the poor reader of today be left to assume that “creature worship” was the fault of the People’s Pulpit Association and “many of his associates”, when in actuality President J.F. Rutherford personally supervised the publishing of the seventh volume of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, it being subtitled “posthumous work of Pastor Russell, His Last Legacy to the Dear Israel of God” (107). The continued promotion of **The Finished Mystery** and published insistence that Russell WAS “without a doubt” the “faithful and discreet slave” certainly wasn’t calculated to squash creature worship (91-93). Is it any wonder that so many “old timers”, as Rutherford later so contemptuously referred to them, left the organization when the “faithful and discreet slave” was deposed and replaced in 1927?

The sudden about face as to the identity of the “faithful and discreet slave” arrived hand in hand with the disappointment over 1925. Again, brothers, why do the present publications give the unmistakeable impression that the friends were at fault here and expected too much (121-22)? Why can we not just admit that it was President Rutherford who bore the blame for what he wrote in **Millions Now Living Will Never Die** (10-11)?

Another stinging disillusionment: One call showed me photocopies of several editions of Russell’s books in which wording had been changed to cover up prophetic failures. Not wanting to accept this evidence, Vivian and I checked the original sources and found, to our extreme disappointment, that they had been changed (a few of many examples 114-18). What explanation can there be for this, brothers? If the Society of 1914-1927 was capable of whitewashing its own history and changing the very writings of its recently deceased founder (need we add without his permission?), what credibility could its message possibly have with those alive during this period who had known the original writings (54, 70-71)?

Considering the chain of prophetic misses, considering the subsequent cover up, considering the 1925 fiasco, and considering finally the wild claims about Russell still being circulated by the millions in **The Finished Mystery** and other publications (51, 54, 70-1, 96-98) is it any wonder Christendom totally ignored the dire warnings and 7 “bowls of the anger of God” (Rev. 16:1) being dispensed by the Society from 1922-28 (see **“Babylon the Great Has Fallen!” God’s Kingdom Rules!** (p. 530-75)? And is it any less a wonder that those today outside the organization who have a knowledge of this history, and who observe the organization’s present distortion of history and shifting of blame, judge our Kingdom message as unworthy of serious consideration? Brothers, the great heart of God certainly

can forgive these errors, but will even Jehovah forgive an attitude that reminds more of the Pharisee than the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14)? Perhaps you will understand why Vivian and I find it impossible to publicly recommend the organization – what credibility do we have with those who are aware of these facts? We have met many already who have such information at their fingertips – photocopies of the prophecies, contradictions, reversals etc. – and it seems that this awareness is growing rapidly. Additionally, what confidence can we impart to others that the organization has ‘The Truth’ about Jehovah, when it either doesn’t know – or doesn’t care to know – the truth about its own past? Brothers, all these issues are grievous, but this one hurts most deeply. We can see no explanation, but await your comments.

(6) THAT BECAUSE WE INCREASINGLY EXALT AN ORGANIZATION WE DEGRADE CHRIST, THEREFORE WE ARE GUILTY OF IDOLATRY.

It is claimed that whereas the apostles’ writings are full of Christ, the Society’s publications (since J.F. Rutherford’s ascendancy) are full of “The Organization” (131-48). And that this present emphasis is even a betrayal of the Society’s original stated purpose. We were challenged to explain why the official goal of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, as decreed in its Charter, has been misrepresented in recent literature. We have been unable to find an original copy or facsimile of that document. We **did** notice, however, that the 1969 Yearbook (p.50) quotes from it, ending abruptly after the phrase “worship of Almighty God”, leaving out all mention of Jesus, whereas the Dec. 15, 1971 Watchtower (p.760) is altered by a bracket at exactly the spot where the name of Jesus is introduced. Could you please clarify this matter, perhaps by sending along a photocopy of the original Charter. The reason this assumes importance is that it is claimed that the stated purpose of the Society is worship of Almighty God AND Christ Jesus.

The “Organization” emphasis, it is charged, is also a betrayal of a cardinal teaching of the Watch Tower Society’s founder, for C.T. Russell spent considerable space denouncing “religious organizations” and everything that resembled control by a central authority (98-100, 133-142). He urged instead that the only unifying bond Christians needed was love, and that any attempt to replace this divinely inspired unity with organizational controls would rob Christians of their freedom in Christ, which freedom would be manifest in “fullest liberty” of doctrine except for a few “fundamentals” (140). For similar reasons, Russell upheld the local congregation’s full right to choose its own elders and to act as a court for serious wrongdoers, as well

as its right to decide on agendas for meetings (108-9, **New Creation** p. 289-93, 301, 303, 320-325).

Therefore, it is charged that the Society's present policy of "projecting" an organizational viewpoint into the Scriptures and its own early history is a travesty of truth, and that the whole spirit of Russell's opposition to Christendom's methods is against it. If C.T. Russell was so mistaken about "Babylonish" stress on organization, how can we explain Christendom (even the Papacy, which Russell held to be the "Man of Sin") having more light on this subject than the Society's President?

(7) THAT BY TAKING PROMISES MADE TO FLESHLY ISRAEL, WE CANCEL FOR OURSELVES THE HOPE OF CHRISTIANS IN THE GREEK SCRIPTURES.

Of all the issues dealt with here, this one caused the most frequent problems. For years, going back to the early 1970's. I have been steadily challenged by studies and calls regarding our position (after 1929) regarding the promises to fleshly Israel. Try as we might to make the hundreds of Biblical prophecies referring to "Israel", "Jerusalem", "Zion" etc. mean something other than literal realities, Vivian and I have found this method of interpreting prophecy completely self-defeating in witnessing to those who really know Scripture. Calls only need to ask by what authority we assign the "spiritualized" definitions in our books. What normally follows is the accusation that by attaching such wholly arbitrary meanings to clearcut terms we are guilty of "rejecting the very word of Jehovah." (Jer.8:9) I have tried to use prophetic explanations such as are presented in the books **Preparation, Your Will Be Done on Earth, The Nations Shall Know That I Am Jehovah - How?** and **The Finished Mystery** (157-168) with no success. Calls would simply reply we were inserting men's ideas into the Bible - twisting Scriptures to our own destruction. (2 Per. 3:16) I must admit I didn't feel comfortable even while presenting such interpretations. Vivian confesses she would simply hand over to others calls who challenged our teachings on difficult passages of prophecy.

Scriptures such as the selection under the heading "Jews" in the **Reasoning from the Scriptures** book were also of little help. Inevitably it would be pointed out that we were omitting significant verses in the context. Some examples: Matthew 21:42,43 is cited in the **Reasoning** book, but verse 45 is not dealt with. If Jesus was indeed denouncing the chief priests and Pharisees, not the Jewish people as a whole, as verse 46 indicates, the parable actually would teach the opposite of what we claim - that Christ's sympathy was still very much with the people, if not their leaders. (Matt.

9:36)

Matthew 23:37, 38 is also cited. But how do we deal with verse 39? Opposers use this as a prime example of our “devious” selectivity in using the Bible, pointing out that the whole of Matthew 23 is an exposure of that generation of religious leaders (v.1, 34), not the whole Jewish nation. Verses like 23:4, 13, 37, it is asserted, show that empathy for the abused “lost sheep” of Israel was one of the chief reasons for Jesus’ vehement denunciations of their leaders. (Matt. 15:24)

Similarly, we are accused of wrenching Romans 11:25,26, 9:6 and Galatians 3:27-29 out of their original contexts. What indeed can we answer to Romans 3:1-4, 9:1-5, 11:27-32 and finally (and fatally) 15:8? If, as Paul here asserts, “Christ actually became a minister of those circumcised in behalf of God’s truthfulness, so as to VERIFY THE PROMISES He made to their forefathers”, our whole case is lost, for many of those promises plainly state Jehovah will atone for and forgive ALL Israel’s sin. (Micah 7:18-20; Zech. 10:6-8; 12:10-13:2; Ezek. 16:59-63; Isa. 44:21-23; 45:17; 54:8; Matt. 1:21) The most famous of all Messianic prophecies, Isaiah 53, is offered as proof that Christ died first for the very ones who rejected Him (v. 3-8,12, see also 54:1-8), thereby **guaranteeing**, rather than annulling, the covenants with Israel.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 is brought up in the **Reasoning** book and the statement is made that the “new covenant was made, not with the nation of natural Israel, but with the loyal followers of Jesus Christ to whom hope of heavenly life was being extended.” (p.225) But here once again we have the whole theory exploded by omitted verses, Where is verse 32, “not one like the covenant that I concluded with THEIR forefathers ...”? That seems to make the promise impossible of fulfillment on anyone BUT fleshly Israel! And by what leap of imagination can we make verses 35-40 apply to anything but literal Israel and literal Jerusalem? (According to the 1930-85 Index, verses 37-39 are not even once referred to in the publications.) In conformity with this, it is pointed out, the application of Jer. 31:31-34 in the Greek Scriptures is to Jewish Christians only. (Heb. 8:8-12)

[NEXT – the OBSTACLE with which Vivian & I had the MOST difficulty – what does this HUMPTY method do to God's FAITHFULNESS?]

The obstacle Vivian and I have **most** difficulty with is this, brothers. If Jehovah gave these promises to Israel (after all, that is why we term them **Hebrew** Scripture), and if the Jews accepted them as the unbreakable promises of God “who cannot lie” (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:17,18), as they did and still do, then Jehovah is actually guilty of misleading his ancient people. For (in saying that Jehovah foreknew Israel’s rejection of Christ) we acknowledge He **never** intended to fulfill these promises literally. If these hundreds of



verses really apply to Christians, was not Jehovah perversely cruel to give them to Israel? If God could so deal with his ancient people (so many of whom had true faith), how do we know he will keep his promises to faithful Christians? That these promises won't be voided, cancelled or re-interpreted because of the deeds of those who are unfaithful?

Along the same line, calls would ask me what can Jehovah's Witnesses do with a text like Jeremiah 31:3? Jehovah says to Israel "I have loved you with an everlasting love." (NIV, JPS, JB, RSV, ASV, AT, MLB, AV, NASV) This type of vow, they affirm, only underlines the relationship that the Hebrew prophets declare exists between Jehovah and Israel. For Jehovah could no more abandon Israel for her sins against him than he could a wife or a son. (Deut. 14:1,2; Hosea 3; Jer. 31:20; Isa. 54:1-15)

Many other passages we have found similarly impossible to deal with without redefining virtually every word. Many of them we looked up in the 1930-85 index, but quite often the references we checked did not deal with the difficult verses or terms at all. A sampling of such texts is found on pages 168-83. One example we might mention: Joel 3:20,21 (NIV) says "Judah will be inhabited forever and Jerusalem throughout all generations. Their bloodguilt, which I have not pardoned, I will pardon." Even if we try to spiritualize "Judah" and "Jerusalem", who in **spiritual** "Judah" and "Jerusalem" is bloodguilty? And what do we do with verse 19? - "But Egypt will be desolate, Edom a desert waste, because of the violence done to the people of Judah, in whose land they shed innocent blood." Literal Edom IS a desolation today, and their violent end was foretold repeatedly by Jehovah (Obad. 8,17; Mal. 1:3,4), the reason stressed being the love of Jehovah for Israel - even an **unrepentant** Israel. (Obad. 10-14; Mal. 1:2,6; 2:8) Egypt too has fallen from her former glory, and this great nation, once "the world's breadbasket", IS now mostly desert, exactly as foretold in Ezekiel 29:8-10. If Jehovah has fulfilled these verses in the same context literally, how can we legitimately say he will **not** fulfill Joel 3:20,21 literally?

One of the discomfiting facts that our research for the studies underscored is that many of the prophets' declarations concerning Israel's neighbour nations have been fulfilled SINCE Christ's death, as acknowledged in articles the Society has recently published (g80 May 8, p. 16; g84 Aug 22, p. 22). Prophecies regarding Babylon, Edom, Egypt, Tyre, Sidon, Jerusalem and many others have been completely fulfilled during the Christian era. The stated reason for judgment was usually animosity to fleshly Israel - again, an often **unfaithful** Israel at that. (Isa. 14; Jer. 45:26-28)

The point we find impossible to reconcile with the "spiritualizing" method of interpretation is that if God has been literally fulfilling prophecy during the Christian era, at what historical moment did he CEASE doing so? If not at Israel's rejection of Messiah, then when? The interpretation of last

days prophecies like Matthew 24:3-22, Zechariah 12-14, Ezekiel 34-39 and Daniel 11:40-12:2, it is alleged, depends completely upon the resolution of this question! [>>> miracle of ISRAEL'S CONTINUED EXISTENCE]

Again we stress that literalists challenge us to explain why Israel is still in existence **at all** if God is through with her totally. What other example can we find of a people retaining nationhood and language for 2000 years while in exile, then being restored to their ancient land? Can we deny that Leviticus 26:33-45 has been fulfilled? Or Hosea 3:1-5? Yet both these prophecies, like hundreds of others in the prophets and psalms, express confidence that Israel's land and kingdom are not permanently lost to her. Literalists also insist it is futile to object that the restored Israeli nation we see in Palestine today does not accept Christ, for that is the whole **purpose** of their being brought back - that Christ's return in power may accomplish what his lowly first coming did not. (Zech. 12:9-14; Joel 3:11-17; Isa. 31:4,5; Matt. 23:39; Mark 14:62) And they also query why Jehovah has been so meticulous in fulfilling the threatened punishment of all the nations that harmed Israel, if not because his promise to Abraham has not and **cannot** be rescinded? (Gen. 12:2,3) Certainly, literalists admit, God's determination to fulfill his promises is not due to any righteousness on Israel's part. (Deut. 7:7-9; 9:4-6; 10:15-16; Ezek. 36:22-28)

All the space here devoted to the Israel question is not due to mere speculative interest on our part. Nor do Vivian and I desire to become dogmatic about just what **we** feel these scriptures really mean. The whole reason our research took this direction is that some of our calls maintained that the Christian hope cannot **possibly** be understood apart from God's Kingdom purpose regarding Israel. They flatly accuse US of robbing Israel of HER promises in order to justify a "split level" corruption of Christianity, claiming that Jehovah's Witnesses divide the body of Christ by means of a caste system more spiritually destructive than any clergy-laity distinction could ever be. By this they mean the "great crowd" doctrine. This 1935 innovation, so it is claimed, creates an ever expanding "servant caste" completely dependent upon their "priesthood" - the 144,000. And this "slavery" has already robbed Jehovah's Witnesses of the REAL hope of Christians, as set forth in John 14:1-4, 1 John 5:13, 2 Peter 1:4 and Philippians 3:11.

In response to this charge, Vivian and I have taken time to review the texts commonly used to buttress the doctrine of a "spiritual paradise" today, and future literal paradise earth. And in so doing we discovered that virtually all of them contain references we never really paid attention to before, references that involve a restoration of the land of Israel. Such passages include Psalm 72, Isaiah chapters 2,11,25,35 and 65, Micah 4 and many others quoted on pages 183-90.

Researching the works of C.T. Russell and J.F. Rutherford, one cannot help but be struck by their insistence (till 1929) that the prophets' promises CANNOT be interpreted other than literally (151-6). Cynical observers suggest that the only reason Rutherford changed his mind on this matter was that his innovative "two-tier" Christianity needed scriptural support, which support could only be had by stealing Israel's promises and handing them to the "great crowd."

At any rate, Vivian and I were distressed once again to discover that the re-application of all these prophecies to "spiritual" Israel in the early 1930's meant another indirect admission that much of Christendom had better light than the Society for decades (52-3). Russell had even gone so far as to blast the Papacy for appropriating Israel's promises to herself:

Not only does Papacy claim to be the glorified kingdom of Christ promised by the Lord, the apostles and the prophets, but it applies to itself and its successive heads (the popes, who, it claims, take the place of Christ, as Pontiff, Chief, or King of this kingdom) all those passages of the prophets which describe the Millennial glory of the Christ ... it has entirely set aside the real hope of the Church, and the Lord's provision for the blessing of the world during the Millennial reign of Christ - which it represents as fulfilled in its own reign.

C.T. Russell, THE TIME IS AT HAND, p.299, 301

(8) THAT WE ARE GUILTY OF SLANDER IN MISREPRESENTING "CHRISTENDOM'S" TEACHINGS IN ORDER TO EXALT OURSELVES BY CONTRAST. EVEN MORE SERIOUS, DESPITE OUR POOR TRACK RECORD WE HAVE THE UNHAPPY HABIT OF JUDGING OTHER RELIGIONS.

We are charged with slandering millions of Christians by suggesting that Jehovah's Witnesses are uniquely loyal to God in several outstanding ways. These include: (a) using Jehovah's name; (b) championing God's Word as inspired; (c) holding firmly to the Genesis account of creation, the flood etc. as opposed to modern scientific theories (i.e. evolution); (d) preaching the good news to the entire world; (e) being persecuted for our faith.

Into all these areas, we've heard it affirmed, groups or individuals within what we would term "Christendom" have led, we have followed. In response to the above claims (a-e), here are the rebuttals and counter-claims presented to us: (a) GOD'S NAME - The **American Standard Version** and Rotherham's **Emphasized Bible**, Protestant translations, restored the Divine Name to the Bible a half century before the **New World Translation**. Too,

many of Protestantism's most respected teachers have held The name of God forward boldly (210); (b) CHAMPIONING GOD'S WORD - Many works by Protestant writers have championed the inerrancy of Scripture with greater thoroughness than has the Watch Tower (211-12); ©) EVOLUTION/PSEUDO-SCIENCE - Since the arrival of Darwin's **Origin of Species** in 1859, there has been a steady stream of books (usually Protestant) upholding the Bible's scientific accuracy (212); (d) MISSIONARY WORK - Every missionary field was opened up by Protestant pioneers, even to the point where C.T. Russell claimed Matt. 24:14 had already been fulfilled by Christendom's Bible Societies (60,63); (e) PERSECUTION - It is charged that Jehovah's Witnesses have the audacity to claim that THEIR suffering is the real fulfillment of Matt. 24:9, Dan. 11:33 etc., when in reality the worldwide harvest we count as Jehovah's blessing was sown by Protestant missionaries and often watered by the blood of "Babylon"'s martyrs (213-14).

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All of these issues, as you will readily see, involve very important Biblical principles. The reason they have had such a serious effect on the faith of both of us is that they reflect upon the very **faithfulness** and **discretion** of the "faithful and discreet slave. For if we claim that all the now abandoned doctrines of the society were "light" from Jehovah (as Russell did), we defame God's reputation. If, on the other hand, we take the position that the doctrinal errors and wrong predictions were unfortunate "rash theories" of individuals, we then allow room for the critic to charge that the "faithful and discreet slave" was neither "faithful" to God and His Word, nor certainly "discreet" in his utterances, and this for many decades. Even if we insist that all these matters are ancient history and irrelevant to the KEY issue - where God's truths are found TODAY - we are wide open to at least two broadsides: 1. The charge of **hypocrisy and double standard**, for we definitely judge Christendom by her "former" deeds (e.g. the endorsement of the League of Nations); 2. The charge of **self-delusion**, for most of the teachings we presently hold to be essential "truths" (i.e. no Trinity, no soul, no hellfire, heaven for only 144,000) are "leftover light" from Charles Taze Russell, and, critics insist, will eventually go the same way his "testable" teachings have gone - to oblivion.

Beyond all this, and even more important to PRESENT faith, is the matter of **credibility**. For the contradictions cited in the documentation, especially the fifth section (Deception), must be explained somehow. Vivian and I have wracked our brains for possibilities and have come up with but three: 1. The errors and omissions in the modern accounts of our earlier history are the result of careless research. 2. They are the result of selective amnesia, a "wishful thinking" approach to the past which all of us indulge in to some extent. 3. They are deliberately dishonest attempts to conform the past to a pattern that fits our claim to be "the one true religion."

Opponents, and some of our calls, have claimed the last is the true explanation. While so far being unable to reject their evidence, we reject their conclusion. We cannot believe the brothers of the Governing Body (or writing staff) are purposely distorting history. However, to assume the contradictions and omissions are the result of careless research is ultimately just as destructive to faith in the organization. For some of these false impressions have been left unnoticed (or unchanged) for many years, contributing to the impression of deliberate deception outsiders hold. Vivian and I prefer to believe that something akin to wishful thinking is nearer to the truth.

Even so, self-delusion is still delusion. It doesn't change the present reality - that we cannot support an organization that is, according to the evidence so far collected, capable of deceit - even if we accept the deceit is not exactly dishonesty but merely self-deception. The result is just the same - Vivian has only recently come out from a lengthy depression caused by the devastation, disillusionment and sense of loss these discoveries led to.

Brothers, please accept our thanks for giving attention to this letter. Please believe all of our personal turmoil has not affected the feelings we hold for those in the organization, or the respect we have for the sincerity and hard work of you brothers at headquarters. The facts we've gathered thus far lead to the optimistic conclusion that perhaps we've all been captive to a concept - a sort of "theocratic evolution" theory ("progressive light"), into which (because Jehovah must always be assumed to be in control) the facts of history either fit or are forgotten. In the absence of other information, we'd like to assume that is the answer to the present dilemma, and await what information and insights you can supply.

Warm regards,