



Our Plans for AAWA.co

by John Hoyle

Sometimes I think I am in a time warp. It seems like a year or more has passed since AAWA announced that our Facebook groups and website were online. The reality is that was only April, barely six months ago. Yes! Six months!

Do you remember that our website began as **JWActivists.org**? Or that someone snatched our header image and put it up on another Facebook group's main page? Everyone on the Advisory Board must have aged ten years in those first four weeks. That was just the beginning! AAWA's founders soon found themselves accused of all kinds of gross crimes and misdemeanors as opposers and critics made themselves known over the next two months. They were every bit as determined to kill us off as we were to survive.

We did survive! And we grew stronger. Within days we came back with a new name, a new website (AAWA.co), and new focus on AAWA's goals and direction.

Even then the announcement of the new version of our website was not universally welcomed. AAWA's critics quickly asked if we had forgotten how to spell "dot com" or "dot org." AAWA "dot co"? What were we thinking? While we are proud of what we've accomplished so far, we know that to increase website readership and gain supporters we need to expand AAWA's reach by utilizing our website to its full potential. My assignment is to take the lead in achieving that goal.

In the blog article "AAWA - the Next Six Months" (Oct. 3, 2013) the first item states: "Maintaining a dynamic AAWA.co website: We plan to post new stories, videos and related information every two to three days. Visitors to our site should find it easier to access our videos, article archives and helpful information about harmful Watchtower policies."

We are already working on that objective:

- (1) We set up a new AAWA.co video page. Another page with the foreign language versions will be online by mid-November;
- (2) We will restyle the site and improve archiving and search functions;
- (3) Directory pages will include links to other non-sectarian religion-neutral websites and YouTube videos that we feel offer helpful information, support, and educational resources;
- (4) Reviews: videos, periodicals, meetup groups, and books that offer factual and educational information that should be beneficial to our readers; and,
- (5) A more regular publishing schedule of new articles, personal stories, advice and counsel, and general news relating to Jehovah's Witnesses and AAWA's mission statement.



Please feel free to send your suggestions or comments to me at <mailto:WEBMASTER@AAWA.CO>. If you stumble across a news story or know someone willing to share their personal experiences with AAWA, please let us know. We welcome any input suggesting ways for AAWA.co to achieve its goals.

In this Issue

- *Plans for AAWA.co*
- *Making up for Lost Time*
- *Truth Be Told*
- *Pagan Origins...of ...everything*
- *Readers Ask*
- *JWs Overlapping Their Way Out of Business*
- *Speaking Out: Marc & Cora Latham*

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Pagan Origins...of...Everything

by Isabella Boticelli

I find it mystifying that high-control religions like Jehovah's Witnesses are obsessed with avoiding any event or object that gives the slightest hint of having "pagan" (non-Christian) origins. The truth is it's pretty hard to escape ancient influence since humans have been on the earth for eons before Christianity appeared. So naturally, many traditions find their origins in bygone history.

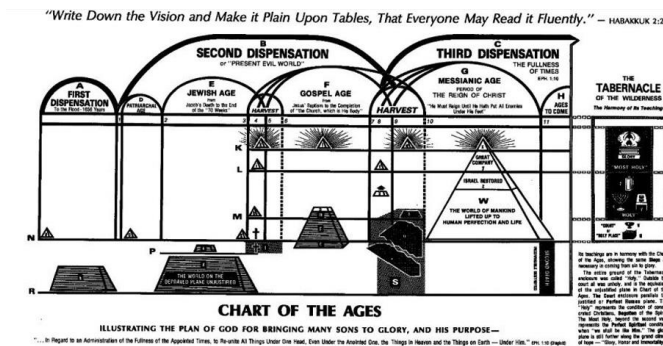


Now the necktie has got to be a modern invention, right? Wrong. We can thank Qin Shih Huang, who became the first emperor of a unified China in 221 BC. He didn't want to die alone and created a terra cotta army to be buried alongside him. If you look closely, you will see that the majority of warriors are wearing, yes, a tie.

Even our friend, the French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte wore a white cravat (forerunner of the modern tie) during the battle of Waterloo. So, the neck-strangulating symbol of corporate America - and of Jehovah's Witnesses - is military in origin.

Weddings are full of pagan embellishments. The ring symbolizing the "circle of life" is a gift from the Egyptians. For the honeymoon, we can thank the ancient Babylonians; most marriages occurred during a full moon and following the ceremony, the new couple would enjoy an alcoholic drink of fermented honey and water. The Greeks picked the "ring finger." To them the left ring finger was closer to the heart, the "seat of emotion" (where have we heard that before?) and the god Apollo ruled this realm.

Oh, one more thing, we don't want to forget the illustrious founder of JWs, Charles Russell. He was the king of divination, traveling to Egypt and using the interior passageways of the pyramids to divine his prophecy that the world would end in 1914. You've got to see it to believe it (*The Divine Plan of the Ages, Studies in the Scriptures, Series I, 1886*).



The point is, there are so many things that are pagan in origin but are part of all our lives (wind chimes, piñatas, kites) that it's nearly impossible to separate these things from traditions that don't have some ancient influence. Wouldn't it just be better to leave people alone and let them decide which celebrations or traditions they would like to observe? That would be better than forcing people to observe/not observe a tradition based not on research, but merely as a means to control.

Now you will have to excuse me, I have a Halloween party to attend.



OUR READERS ASK . . .

Question: Are you planning on doing interviews with the survivors of molestation who have successfully sued and won? For those who are on the fence of a lawsuit against the Society, will you list the names of the attorney's and firms who represent clients who were molested as children?

Answer: We cannot interview survivors of child molestation who have successfully sued and won because every survivor, except for Candace Conti, has settled out-of-court, with part of the agreement being gag orders on the survivors.

Candace has been interviewed and those interviews can be found on JWSurvey.org.

AWA is currently working on creating a list of attorneys who are taking child molestation cases. Three of the firms are:

- The Zalkin Law Firm at 1-800-724-3235
- Love & Norris at 1-817-732-7100
- Kosnoff Fasy at 1-855-LAW-4-CSA

Jehovah's Witnesses: Overlapping their way out of Business?

Editorial by John Plummer

As ex-Jehovah's Witnesses, we all have scars from the mental abuse inflicted on us by that insidious religion. But let's not waste whatever time we have left to live by feeling sorry for ourselves and nursing grievances about past injustices - let's channel that energy and insider knowledge to help make this world a better place - *by doing whatever we can to help put the Watchtower Society out of business!*

In the past, when Jehovah's Witnesses knocked on our doors, they've been the predators and we, the "lost sheep," have been the prey. But this doesn't have to be. Let's reverse the roles. As ex-Witnesses let's make it our mission to de-convert any Jehovah's Witnesses we meet. Of course, we're not going to make anyone leave after one short conversation but by following the scripted presentation below, we have a good chance of penetrating that theological firewall in their brains and sowing seeds of doubt!

"Ding dong" – they're here! But before you open the door, here's a couple of "don'ts": Don't disclose that you're an ex-Witness. If you do, the conversation you want may not happen. It is much better to say you've always been interested in religion but you've never found one that rings true. Next, don't get into a, well-what-about-this-scripture, exchange. If you cherry-pick carefully the Bible can say anything you want it to say, so that approach will be a waste of time. Given that you probably have only about ten minutes to do your sowing, it's best to go straight for the theological jugular; the issue most dear to all Jehovah's Witnesses' hearts: *the imminence of Armageddon!*

After they've given you their initial "Good news of the kingdom" sales pitch, tell them that over the years previous visiting Witnesses have left you several Watchtowers and, on a couple of them, you have some questions you'd like answered. On hearing this their eyes will light up, and you will have their full attention – guaranteed.



Then produce the relevant printed excerpts from the April 15, 2010 and the February 15, 2006 Watchtowers, plus the front cover of the May 15, 1984 Watchtower - all available at jwfacts.com.



Reading from the April 15, 2010 Watchtower, reach agreement with them that thanks to Jehovah's "increased light" we now know the truth about the timing of Armageddon – that it will arrive before the generation that overlaps the generation that witnessed the year 1914 passes away. Then point to the February 15, 2006 Watchtower article, "Walking in the path of increasing

light". This article gives a long list of issues which, over the past 100 years, Jehovah has provided "increasing light" to "refine" his people, "organizationally, doctrinally, and morally." Then ask them how *both* of these Watchtowers can be telling the truth?

If Jehovah really does keep his people doctrinally and morally refined, then why did He wait until 2010 to provide this overlapping generation "light?" Why didn't He give it to Charles Russell, 130 years ago when he was preaching that Armageddon would arrive before the end of 1914?

Then remind your visitors that for much of the 20th century, at least until November 1995, the Watchtower Society stated that Armageddon would arrive before the generation that witnessed the year 1914 passed away. During all that time the word "overlap" was never used, ever. Ask them, what is the morality of providing increased light on all the issues listed in the Feb 15, 2006 Watchtower (some of which are purely administrative in nature) *and at the very same time not* providing light to stop your people preaching completely untrue information about the timing of Armageddon!

Where was Jehovah's doctrinal and moral refinement when this May 15, 1984 Watchtower was published and distributed?

On hearing and seeing the above, your visitors may now be in a state of shock because it's quite likely that they are completely ignorant of their religion's many changes in doctrine regarding Armageddon. At this point, the most common response from them is, "We'll get back to you on this,"... which incidentally they *never* do – but no matter. Provided that when they leave, they take the relevant Watchtower information with them, your job is done. The seed of doubt will have been sown because *anyone* examining that information couldn't fail to conclude that the Watch Tower Society has no connection whatsoever with any perfect and loving God who keeps his people "doctrinally and morally refined!" Once that truth has sunk in, then another truth becomes apparent: the Watch Tower Society's continuous warnings of a permanently imminent Armageddon are nothing but a cynical and manipulative man-made carrot and stick waved over the membership to motivate them into knocking on doors and gaining new recruits.

In a few years' time when the 1914 overlapping generation begins to pass away and more "increased light" is needed to explain yet another postponement of Armageddon, I predict this religion will crumble like the old USSR. On the day that happens, all of mankind will celebrate, and the only lingering question will be: What happens to all the billions of dollars they have acquired from their hapless members?

When the Watch Tower Society is legally finished, I hope there is enough money left to compensate all the elderly and ex-Jehovah's Witnesses who are living out their last days in poverty – all because they were duped into giving the Society their life savings in the firm belief that they would live through Armageddon and be part of "the generation that will not pass away."



Speaking Out: Marc and Cora Latham

by Jeni Lundblom-Valdez

In the world of ex-JWs, there are many YouTube "celebrities." This month, we will be covering the undisputed Royal Couple: Marc and Cora Latham.

Cora comes from a long line of Witnesses. She like many born-in JW's grew up in the field ministry. To her devout family, education was not seen as a priority. With Armageddon on the horizon, Cora was home-schooled from age 11 until age 15. At that time, she left her academic career behind and opted to get baptized. She then went on to pursue a full-time role as a pioneer. To make ends meet, Cora started a part-time cleaning business and lived at home with her family. Eventually, she married another Witness and they had a child. Unfortunately, the relationship with her husband was not a happy one. When she found out that he had been with another woman, Cora divorced her husband and returned home.

Marc on the other hand took a different route. His parents found "the truth" when he was just a few months old, but they only attended meetings sporadically. About this Marc says, "Even though I had the indoctrinations in my head, I spent long periods without the meetings, and without birthdays or Christmas. It was a quasi-world I lived in growing up; one of waiting for Armageddon to come tomorrow, while I waited for my parents to make yet another comeback to the Kingdom Hall." When Marc finished school, he joined the Royal Marines. Even though he'd left his Witness life behind him, he says "I still had the indoctrinations in my head. They would never leave me." After a time, Marc returned to look after his mother and two younger sisters.

After getting married, Marc and his first wife decided to become Witnesses and they were baptized in 1988. For a time, he put everything he had into this new life. Working, caring for a family, and pioneering. All of this took a toll on him and he ended up hospitalized. At that point, he too became a sporadic Witness. And his marriage eventually failed.

But yet again, Marc decided to return to the Kingdom Hall. It was at this time that he met Cora. And, that's when "the real problems started," according to Marc. Though the two of them were legally divorced from their first spouses, since she didn't have proof of her first husband's infidelity, Cora had not been cleared by the elders to remarry. When she and Marc requested permission to do so, they were denied. Unwilling to deny their love for each other, they were married anyway. And the two of them were promptly disfellowshipped for refusing to obey counsel.

Marc and Cora spent three years attending the meetings while being shunned in order to get reinstated. During this time, Marc describes the animosity towards them as being "so tangible you could taste it." This mistreatment is what opened their eyes, now seeing the organization for what it really was. Eventually, they were allowed to come back, but by then it was too late. Cora adds "...the damage was done. We had witnessed too much."

When the Watchtower changed its stance on blood, they couldn't ignore their feelings. Cora says "We then realized that if they had this wrong then what other things were wrong? We started watching YouTube videos of other ex-JWs and we were amazed at the similarities. This helped us realize our instincts were not wrong and now we had the facts to prove it. Ultimate feelings of relief overwhelmed us. Our recovery had started."

Through their YouTube connections and online forums, the couple was able to find the support they needed and finally free themselves of Watchtower's grip. It is with this support, they are able to cope with the loss of friends and family still inside the Watchtower. In the hopes of being a comfort to others and possibly reaching out to the ones they've left behind, the couple began posting their own videos. These videos deal with a variety of topics that affect many Witnesses and ex-Witnesses around the world. These videos have become some of the most-watched of their kind.

They've joined forces with other like-minded ones who want to expose the Watchtower with them. About this Marc says, "We are preventing people from entering this high-control religion (and wrecking their lives), and we are helping people out of it. That, in my view is the most positive thing of all!"

About life after the Watchtower, Cora adds "As a family we have become stronger and free to express ourselves. Our children are now looking at careers as they further their education that they would never have looked at before." They now enjoy a life full of experiences, and look forward to travelling more. For them life is "open, loving, free, and WONDERFUL!"

You can learn more about Marc & Cora by visiting their YouTube channel at:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/Dreamseternalosas>