

# ENGLISH TRANSLATION

00.10

We all have been visited on some day or another by Jehovah's Witnesses. Tireless lobbyists of God, armed with a broad smile, they come announcing the imminent end of the world and promise us the coming of heaven upon earth. In Switzerland, there are 18,000 followers. We went out to meet those who believe, those who are lost and those who report a huge scandal. In this report, all of our Witnesses have in common that they grew up with Jehovah. //

01.30

Fulvio and Amanda are a brother and sister. They were born to Jehovah's Witnesses. As adults, they have distanced themselves from the religion ... Today they maintain a cynical glance at their youth spent going from door to door. //

Amanda di Stefano  
Ex Jehovah's Witnesses

Fulvio di Stefano  
Ex Jehovah's Witnesses

03.09

School at Geneva, Amanda keeps in mind all the festivals she missed. Pagan roots of Christmas for the Jehovah's Witnesses. Pagan, thus prohibited. //

Amanda di Stefano  
Ex Jehovah's Witnesses

04.46

Among Jehovah's Witnesses, everything is immutable, as their only reference is to the Bible. So it was for Amanda from childhood, and still yet nothing has changed //

04.58

In Valais, the Udry family is considered a role model. Spiritual fulfillment is advocated by Jehovah's Witnesses. The Romande hierarchy moreover has carefully organized our visit home. The father holds the office of Elder, the equivalent of a pastor. It's Saturday, Claude-Alain Udry is one of the speakers at the rostrum of the Kingdom Hall. //

Claude-Alain Udry  
Elder, Jehovah's Witnesses, Vétroz, Valais

07.07

The eldest son of the family Udry every day saw the requirement for purity. For example, going camping with friends, boys and girls is prohibited. //

Claude-Alain Udry  
Elder, Jehovah's Witnesses, Vétroz, VS

09.29

Relations must be perfectly pure in the sight of God. This image runs from page to page in the publications of Jehovah's Witnesses.

09.39

From adolescence subject to a teenage vow of perfection that their parents had wanted for them, Amanda and Fulvio have kept the bitter taste of confinement, an adolescence that came then flew away. //

**Fulvio di Stefano**  
**Ex-follower of the Jehovah's Witnesses**

**11.11**

**The way to happiness is drawn from the Bible, or rather from the interpretation that Jehovah's Witnesses have of it. This pathway is paved with prohibition. No sports competitions are allowed, not even soccer. All political activity is banned. Also prohibited are being a juror in a trial, playing chess or even wearing a jewel-shaped cross. There are also prohibitions besides the more famous ones, such as blood transfusions or tobacco. Alongside these prohibitions, there are rules of conduct. //**

**12.06**

**The father is responsible for strict compliance, even when the children have gone well past adolescence. //**

**Fulvio di Stefano**  
**Ex-Jehovah's Witnesses**

**12.12**

**Fulvio's father has since left the congregation. But previously he would not tolerate any transgressions. //**

**Fulvio di Stefano**  
**Ex-Jehovah's Witnesses**

**Roberto di Stefano**  
**Longtime Ex-Jehovah's Witness**

**13.45**

**Roberto, the father of Amanda and Fulvio, was also born into Jehovah's Witnesses. Now in his 60s, he had a sense for organizational talent. Noted for his zeal as an Elder, he rose in the hierarchy. //**

**Roberto di Stefano**  
**Ex-old Jehovah's Witness**

**14.17**

**Roberto is at this time an executive with Dupont de Nemours in Geneva. Between his work with the multinational and his service time spent for Jehovah, the days were long. //**

**Roberto di Stefano**  
**Ex-elder Jehovah's Witness**

**15.06**

**On top of this quasi-military organization stands the Watchtower, ... The Vatican of the 7 million Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, adjoining New York City ... Jehovah's Witnesses are a young religion, sparked into existence in 1881 by Charles Russell an American who at that time was age 30.**

**His reinterpretation of the Bible convinced him that Christ was already back with us, although unseen, and that Armageddon, the end of the world, was near. //**

**Roberto di Stefano**  
**Longtime Ex-Jehovah's Witness**

**16.35**

**On several occasions, the Jehovah's Witnesses even announced a date for the end of the world //**

**Roberto di Stefano**  
**Ex-old Jehovah's Witness**

**17.00**

**Thus, children who grow up with Jehovah are filled with thoughts about the imminent end of the world. This prophecy gradually builds an invisible wall that separates them from non-believers ...**

**To address our issues, Jehovah's Witnesses in the Suisse Romande have appointed an elder. He greets us in a oom in the kingdom. //**

**Georges-Philippe Mayor**  
**Public Relations for Western Switzerland's Jehovah's Witnesses**

**18.55**

**The horror of Armageddon will be followed by paradise on earth. Only those who will be chosen by God can enter. All others will die. Being a Jehovah's Witness, is to be serving a God who will operate soon to enact that final sorting. It is the hope of earning a place in paradise. //**

**Georges-Philippe Mayor**  
**Public Relations for Western Switzerland's Jehovah's Witnesses**

**19.39**

**The true life of this man is a hellacious nightmare. For 8 months, his 12 year old son, Anthony has refused to see him. //**

**He attributes this estrangement to the religion of his mother, a Jehovah's Witness. //**

**20.55**

**Before Anthony's birth, his mom said became estranged from Jehovah's Witnesses. But once pregnant, she decided to return to practicing the religion of her family.**

**Anne-Marie Grimaldi**  
**Estavayer-le-Lac, Fribourg**

**23.22**

**The father now requires anonymity. He feared reprisals from Witnesses at his work. //**

**21.59**

**Anthony's mother said she had done everything to encourage the sharing of custody. //**

**Anne-Marie Grimaldi**  
**Estavayer-le-Lac, Fribourg**

**23.44**

**But as of the end of last year, shared custody was broken off. //**

**24.31**

**Dad, however, continues to enjoy the right to see his son, and he will be consulting his lawyer. Involving as it does a decision regarding a child, this is a tricky case. //**

**25.05**

**Faced with a religion that imposes a world view and strict precepts about life, the parents are torn, the**

**child himself is torn. //**

**Mr Laurent Schneuwly  
Advocate, Freiburg**

**26.58**

**To avoid such situations, Jehovah's Witnesses have much clearer precepts than exist with Swiss law: precepts that, of course, are drawn from the Bible. //**

**Georges-Philippe Mayor  
Public Relations for Western Switzerland Jehovah's Witnesses**

**27.52**

**The word Christian here is used in regard to Jehovah's Witnesses ... Amanda, who grew up with Jehovah, had no illusions about it.**

**Amanda di Stefano  
Ex-Jehovah's Witnesses**

**29.16**

**Thus, the future of such Jehovah's Witness children is drawn up for them. Instead of childhood friends spent in discoveries of innocent love, you are invited to build relationships with elect ones of the promised paradise. //**

**Amanda di Stefano  
Ex-Jehovah's Witnesses**

**29.28**

**Take the case of this man we'll call Eric. He is still a Jehovah's Witnesses as is his entire family. He knows that giving us this interview is prohibited. //**

**30.07**

**For 10 years, Eric has had his doubts, felt his faith waver. But doubting has no place within his congregation. //.**

**30.44**

**All the same, doubts were still reinforced the day his child, a very sick child, had to undergo a blood transfusion, one of the major things banned among the Jehovah's Witnesses. //**

**31.32**

**Eric never said if his child had finally got a transfusion; he isn't ready to face the possibility of drinking from the cup of excommunication. //**

**32.37**

**Suffering from mental confinement, constant group pressure group, this terror of excommunication, which leads to social death, is far from being a paradise. And yet there is worse to come. //**

**32.49**

**Since 2002, victims of pedophilia within the Jehovah's Witnesses have been daring to post their stories on the Internet. We are in Tennessee, near Nashville, with Charlie Jones. He was 8 years old when his mother confided something to a another member of his congregation. //**

**33.11**

**Charlie Jones**

**Knoxville, Tennessee**

**"My parents left me with somebody, another member of the congregation, because they had something to do. This man would be allowed to take care of me. Once at his home, he abused me, and it happened twice. "**

**"When my mother returned, he was in the process of abusing me. He washed me and quickly took me to my mother, I was in tears. To explain why I was crying, he told her that I had behaved badly, and suddenly my mother punished me. "**

**33.49**

**William**

**"Why do you think did that happens between members of the congregation? Is there a particular reason? "**

**33.57**

**Charlie Jones**

**Knoxville, Tennessee**

**"Yes, in regard to my case, because my parents did not know he was a pedophile. And it happens that very often, people move, move from one congregation to another, and we never tell anyone in the new congregation what happened before. "**

**34.17**

**William**

**"Even if the abuser is known to be such by the elders? "**

**34.24**

**Charlie Jones**

**"Yes, nobody can know because the congregation is instructed to maintain secrecy. "**

**34.30**

**He was 36 years old when he read other testimonies of victims on the Internet. He decided to go public with his secret. His parents then cut all their ties with him. //**

**34.44**

**Charlie Jones**

**Knoxville, Tennessee**

**"My mother died three weeks ago. When I went to Texas for the funeral, I walked past my father, I asked him if I could come see him. He said no. //**

**"Jehovah's Witnesses consider themselves to be a perfect organization in an imperfect world, if they let filter out any information about what's really happening inside, they can not give the image of being a perfect organization. "**

**35.19**

**Along with his wife, Charlie Jones visits his friend Bill Bowen. If so many testimonials are posted on the Internet, it is thanks to this man. //**

**35.29**

**Bill Bowen**

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Ex-elder Jehovah's Witness**

**"I have used the term "pedophile paradise. " I believe while it may be in other religions, there are many**

**pedophiles among Jehovah's Witnesses. "**

**35.37**

**Bill Bowen was also born into Jehovah's Witnesses. He was carrying the responsibility of being an elder when he discovered that a pedophile was abusing children in his congregation. He asked his superiors for the right to report it to the police. //**

**35.54**

**Bill Bowen**

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**"They told me to ask him about it and if he denied it to leave it in Jehovah's hands. I felt myself facing a moral and ethically impassable wall. I realized that if I followed the orders of the Legal Department of Jehovah's Witnesses, I would be allowing an abuser to have continued access to children. "**

**36.23**

**Bill Bowen left the Jehovah's Witnesses. In 2001, he created the Internet site "Silentlamb." For the first time victims were given a voice. But that's not all. It also made known to the public secret information obtained from the top of the hierarchy. An overwhelming database. //**

**36.47**

**Bill Bowen**

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**"Information about the database that I obtained and published online in April 2002 showed that there were 23 720 cases admitted by the abusers."**

**37.00**

**Bill Bowen says that three different people, all three active in the Watchtower, told him the same number over 23,000 cases of child sexual abuse.**

**37.16**

**Bill Bowen**

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**"I invited the leadership of Jehovah's Witnesses to correct me if I was wrong and to give me the exact number. Even if it might have been much lower. Everything had to do with give accurate information. The only official response given to me was that it was not meaningful to reveal the actual number. "**

**37.40**

**William**

**"You've never been sued by the Watchtower? "**

**37.44**

**Bill Bowen**

**"Never once. They never approached; they never sued."**

**Immediately**

**37.51**

**Since 2001, Bill Bowen says he has steadily receive testimony from victims of sexual abuse from within the Jehovah's Witnesses. //**

**38.01**

**Bill Bowen**

**Nashville, Tennessee**

**"Every week we receive testimonies from victims who find the site for the first time, I think we have been contacted by over 7,000 victims.**

**38.16**

**William**

**Which country?**

**Bill Bowen**

**Currently it has to come from 40 to 50 countries. "**

**Raindrops**

**38.35**

**Here in Tennessee, competition is fierce among Baptists, Evangelicals and the countless variations of Christian fundamentalism. We are in what Americans call the Bible Belt. To compete, Jehovah's Witnesses have their most fervent preachers ... This is the case for Barbara and Joe Anderson. In the 90's they build this Kingdom Hall near Nashville. //**

**39.10**

**Barbara Anderson**

**Former archivist at the Watchtower world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses**

**"When we came here it was definitely to convert people to the Jehovah's Witnesses religion. "**

**39.19**

**Joe Anderson**

**Longtime Ex-Jehovah's Witness**

**"I was an Elder for nearly 40 years."**

**39.23**

**At the time, their faith was unwavering. They considered it a privilege to have spent the twenty years in Brooklyn, the holy of holies in the Watchtower. //**

**Barbara was dedicated to shine forth the word of Jehovah. //**

**39.48**

**Barbara Anderson, Former archivist at the Watchtower world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses**

**"I was archivist for the publications department and it was a great project. I helped write a history book about Jehovah's Witnesses. "**

**40.02**

**In 92, Barbara and Joe were even among the chosen few whom Jehovah's Witnesses used as an example. /**

**40.14**

**Barbara Anderson, Former archivist at the Watchtower world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses**

**"My husband and I in 1992, were on cover of the Awake!, to be precise the one of July 1992 ... I'm here ... and here is my husband. "**

**40.30**

**William**

**"At that time, did you have 100% confidence in the Watchtower? "**

**40.35**

**Barbara Anderson, Former archivist at the Watchtower world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses**

**"Yes, absolutely. I could go freely anywhere in the library and everywhere there were historical records. They made me really confident. "**

**40.51**

**The scandal of pedophilia, Barbara Anderson was going to become aware of a pedophile scandal at the highest level. Her superior invited her to sort letters on the subject that had been sent to the Watchtower Society. She remembers her amazement at the number of cases //.**

**41.10**

**Barbara Anderson**

**Former archivist at the Watchtower world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses**

**"There were these men, abusers, who treated the kids like dirt, but when they were charged unlike in other situations, a different view arose: a Watchtower precept is taken as a commandment from the Bible. For a matter to be established, another eyewitness, in addition to the victim, must be present, and of course for sexual abuse that never happens, as a result the accusations never come to anything. "**

**41.48**

**As a former elder, Joe recalls the formal guidelines of the Watchtower on this point. //**

**41.57**

**Joe Anderson**

**Longtime Ex-Jehovah's Witness**

**"At an Elders School where I went, they informed us whenever there was an allegation of sexual abuse against children; there was to be an immediate call made to Watchtower. "**

**42.14**

**So Watchtower is kept well informed. Barbara Anderson expressed herself to her superiors on this matter of conscience. How could we be tolerating not going public about the abusers? //**

**42.29**

**"I told them that I thought members of the congregations should be warned. "**

**42.38**

**Barbara Anderson was never to succeed. She followed the example of Bill Bowen. She alerted the media. She mentioned the letters she had seen. //**

**Channel 4 WSMV TV Nashville**

**42.44**

**"Many of the letters complained of sexual abuse and some abusers were even leaders in the congregations."**

**"If the victims could not prove their accusations, they were threatened with excommunication; that's why the secret was kept for so many years. "**

**43.18**

**Bill Bowen was excommunicated for speaking out, Barbara continued to investigate, this time from the outside. She learned that the Watchtower had secretly paid millions of dollars to some victims of sexual abuse to avoid a public trial. Being a professional archivist, Barbara began to research the court records. She fell upon a confidential document obtained from a U.S. prosecutor of the Watchtower. //**

**43.45**

**Barbara Anderson, Former archivist at the Watchtower world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses**

**"I was absolutely amazed, it was a form that only concerned the sexual abuse of children with blanks to be filled in by the elders; it proved that there were already many cases to be dealt with. "**

**44.02**

**The form is an internal document to the Watchtower that is to be filled in for every known case of sexual abuse. It contains a question that reflects the mindset of its authors. //**

**44.15**

**Sentence to be posed:**

**"How many elders felt that the victim is in one way or another at fault or willingly participated in the acts? "**

**44.21**

**Barbara Anderson, Former archivist at the Watchtower world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses**

**"Anyone who has properly studied the subject of the sexual abuse of children will tell you this is never, ever, an issue that could arise. "**

**44.34**

**Another element of concern comes up at the very outset. In the United States, law differs from state to state. In some states the clergy have no right to professional secrecy. In this case, the form instructs the elders to go to a phone booth to anonymously report the sexual abuse.**

**In other states, the Watchtower elders are reminded that they can maintain secrecy. //**

**44.59**

**Barbara**

**"I thought, but how can Christians do that? "**

**Georges-Philippe Mayor**

**Public Relations for Western Switzerland's Jehovah's Witnesses**

**45.49**

**Elsewhere in Switzerland, a longtime Jehovah's Witness is living a different reality. He burns to testify, but he is afraid of the strong reprisals that would come upon him and his family. He has decided to write out the text of his testimony. We have authenticated it word for word with a notary. We can ask for an actor to read it though. //**

**Text read by an actor**

**Written testimony authenticated before a notary**

**Georges-Philippe Mayor**

**Public Relations for Western Switzerland Jehovah's Witnesses**

**50.20**

**In Switzerland, the law states that child abuse must be reported to the police by anyone who has knowledge of it. Everyone, except those covered in cases of professional secrecy. We consulted a lawyer who is an expert in the field of such beliefs. //**

**François Bellanger  
Advocate, PSDT Board of Trustees  
Information Center intercantonal (between-Swiss-states) on Beliefs**

**50.53**

**But then, Switzerland does not keep an official list of religions. This belongs to the court on a case by case basis as to assessing the ecclesiastical character of the office of Jehovah's Witness elder. More broadly-speaking, Mr. Bellanger is convinced that our legislation has a major loophole in it. //**

**François Bellanger  
Advocate, PSDT Board of Trustees  
Information Center intercantonal on Beliefs**

**51.35**

**The faith of Jehovah's Witnesses, insofar as it may seem go against non-believers, can not be discussed. However, gaps in the Swiss legislation are worthy of consideration. No elected Swiss has dared to take on these within recent years.**

## **Another partial translation**

I will try to recount what they were saying in French, starting with "Eric".

That is not his real name. Since he is still a JW, he didn't want to be recognized, hence the covered head and synthesized voice. The narrator says Eric wanted to give the interview incognito.

Eric starts by saying that just giving this interview and saying anything that goes against the Watchtower would result in excommunication. He would be shunned and no one among his family or friends would speak to him. For ten years, Eric has been having doubts. But inside the congregation those doubts must not be cited. They have made it clear that if anyone has any doubts in God's organization then you doubt God, doubt the Christ, doubt your family who believe in this organization, and therefore the final result is excommunication.

Excommunication is a sword that is always hanging above your head, Eric said. These doubts were enforced even more the day his very sick child had to have a blood transfusion, one of the major interdictions of the JWs. Eric's view is that his child did not choose to be a JW. Although Eric himself is one, his child did not choose to be one. He won't impose his religion on his child. He told the doctors to do what ever necessary, and if his child needs blood, then give it to him.

Since his child was hospitalized, he got constant visits from elders, citing scriptures to encourage Eric not to have his child transfused. He did not want to tell the elders that his child had already been transfused. He does not feel ready yet to be disfellowshipped. He says that the day he will be disfellowshipped, he would be ostracized by his friends and family; they would not be able to see nor speak nor even ask how he is, even to respond to an SMS or an email. If he is trying not to be disfellowshipped, the only reason is so as not to distress his parents. He is actually waiting for them to pass away so that he would be finally free of the JWs. If he was disfellowshipped, for his parents it would be like he was dead-impossible to see him again.

After Andersons' interview, the JW elder who was interviewed said: "We as Jehovah's Witnesses warn our children to be careful and watch out for inappropriate behavior from

adults in this respect. He then showed magazines saying that the JW's have published articles years before the Catholic priests scandals warning not only JW children but children from all over the world the dangers of pedophilia.

Then there is the part of the program where the guy is writing furiously and the words appear on a computer screen. Somewhere in Switzerland, another elder says he has lived a different reality. He is burning to tell his story, but is afraid of strong reprisals for him and his family. He has decided to write down in text his experiences. His writings are then officially authenticated by a notary public, then read out loud by an actor:

"One of the members in our congregation, a brother, had come forward to tell us elders, that he had committed a serious sin, that he had been sexually abusing two of his children. I thought the world was falling apart. How could something like this be even possible in the midst of Jehovah's house? In this type of situation, all the elders must keep this in absolute secret. The procedure is as follows: a committee is comprised of three elders capable of judging the case, a kind of closed court within the JW's. The decision of the closed court, with the agreement of the leadership in Thun, was excommunication.

"But even more serious, is the fact then none of the leaders or elders denounced this man, either locally or nationally, to the police for violating the law against incest. None of the leaders took any action to protect the young victims. This man committed a crime, and nobody lifted a finger to deliver this man to justice. I personally gave my opinion on this matter to the JW authorities in Switzerland, and even higher up, but in vain. So I ended up leaving the JW's."

Now the same elder who was interviewed before comes on. He says "Well, I read half of the text", and the journalist cuts in and says "I invite you to read the entire text, it's important." And he replies, "No, well, this text is written by one person, one-sided, doesn't give his identity; doesn't give a date... I'm not capable to react to this type of anonymous message."

The journalist then asks, "Is it true that in a case like this you demand two witnesses, as the bible demands two witnesses?"

The elder replies: "In the majority of cases, yes. But in pedophilia cases, it is too serious to ask for two witnesses. You have a hard time imagining finding two witnesses in a case where an uncle or someone else is molesting a child in his room while the parents are away."

Journalist asks, "Is the person denounced immediately and without discussion to the police?"

Elder: "In a case like this, it is up to the parents to go to the police, according to Swiss legislation."

Journalist: "And if it is a case of incest which has become known to you?"

Now the elder feels uneasy and fumbles.

"Well...uh...so.... in that case.... uh... well, I never experienced this case personally, so I can't answer that, but anyway, I know of two cases, one was proven and one was not, but in the proven case, the police were immediately called."

Then Roberto explains about what is highlighted in the elder's manual. He then says as an elder he knew of several serious cases which were not denounced. He knows of others which were. It depends on the case. In most cases the organization demands secrecy. If the person is already disfellowshipped and no longer a JW, then it's easy to denounce him, and would be a show that they were "doing something about it" but when the person is not disfellowshipped, then they don't go to the police.

Then they interview a lawyer who is an expert on this subject. The journalist explains that in Switzerland the law makes mandatory every citizen who comes to know of a case of child sexual abuse to denounce them to the police, every citizen except those who are covered under the law of professional

confidentiality. The lawyer who is interviewed is an expert on religious beliefs. He says, "A clergyman benefits from the laws of confidentiality, protected by the same penal codes as a doctor, for example. In consequence, he is not under obligation to tell the authorities, but he does have the ability to do it."

The journalist then explains that in Switzerland, there is no list of official religions. It is up to the courts on case by case basis to determine the ecclesiastical functions of the title of "elder."

The lawyer admits that the Swiss legislation on this matter has a large loop-hole. He says, "Personally, I think because of the fragility of the minors involved and often their impossibility to express themselves, or sometimes doing so very late in life or sometimes too late in life, I think there should be a clear obligation to denounce these facts by anyone as soon as they become known."

Journalist: "So they should change the laws on this matter?" Lawyer: "The laws must evolve accordingly in this domain, absolutely."

The journalist concludes: "The faith of the JW's, no matter how backwards they look from the outside, is not up for discussion. However, the gaps in Swiss legislation are worth thinking about. During these past few years, no Swiss legislator has dared to take on this dossier."