

Australia.

20.3.83

Dear Mr Herrmann,

I do hope that you do not mind me typing this letter to you. I was given your address by a former AC student John Wheeler. I guess you would be one of the few people around who would be able to answer a few minor questions regarding church history. I do hope that you can help.

I'm fascinated by the teachings and history of the JWs and Christadelphians and their possible connections with the True Church of God. Do you have much information on them? The Christadelphians are an interesting case. In an article given me in 1976 (although the article itself is much older) mention is made of a group in America called the Church of God which is very similar to themselves (so they say). They believe that the Waldenses, Albigenses as well as the Huguenots were true believers. I wrote to them once and they admitted to having a lot in common with the Church of God (but no mention was made about which Church of God that was). I received a booklet from the General Council of the Churches of God concerning their history: on p6 it said that "there seems to be some fraternal relationship between them [the 19th century Church of God] and Dr Thomas, founder of the Christadelphians!" Interestingly enough, Dr Thomas wrote a book in the late 1840s called the Hope of Israel. This is the same title as the paper published by the Sardis Church in 1863! Of course they have a mixture of truth and error in their teachings. They believe you do not go to heaven; mortal souls; evil to be burnt to ashes; true water baptism; millenium; believe that you are born again at the resurrection; believe that their history is traceable back to Christ (see The Protestors). Surprisingly some of them believe in the false 'Sacred Name' doctrine. They got that from Sardis groups or the JWs. The Hope of Israel is also similar in name to the paper called the Banner of Israel founded in the 1870s by E.Hines the founder of the BIWF. And also the paper of a certain elder Ziegler (an associate of Rupert) who named his The Torch of Israel (c 1910).

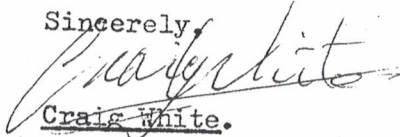
The JWs have a fascinating history as well. Undoubtedly they find their roots in the Sardis Era. They still have some doctrines which prove this (like the SDA they have become more corrupt over time) : healing; disfellowshipping (a term we use instead of excommunication); second advent; baptism by immersion; annihilation of wicked; Catholics are Babylon (the Christadelphians believe this too); believe that they can trace their history through the Waldenses and various Protestant leaders; have a belief that only the 144,000 will be born again at the resurrection and become spirit. Of course they have many false doctrines (eg that Christ is the first creation of the Father. In this the Christadelphians agree with them). I forgot to mention that the Christadelphians believe in Church Eras (hence their name!). Hoekema in his Four Major Cults states that Russell joined up with a disaffected Adventist group (p224). His paper started in 1879 was called Zion's Watchtower and Herald of Christ's Presence - this is similar in meaning to the name of the Sardis paper started in 1888 called Sabbath Advocate and Herald of the Advent. They (the JWs) published a newsletter in 1922 called The Bulletin - the same name HWA gave to a newsletter in the 1930s (I believe it was a forerunner to the GN - is this so?). Russell wrote a series in 1886 or rather published in that year called Millennial Dawn. This title may have been partially borrowed from the Millerite

paper of Edson called The Day Dawn. I know that the WCG used to use the JW work Equipped for every good work for Bible dates. Even the JW date of 1975 for Christ's return was used by some of us! The JWs even have a strong Church Government like ours (although they do not have the same structure nor balance that we have. Interestingly the Mormons have a Council of Elders (which we have too). The 1970s has shown an interesting parallel between the events in the WCG and JWs. Note : the growing belief that the JWs discipline was too severe (perhaps in their case rightly so); the end of the world did not occur in 1975 resulting in the massive loss of faith of the successor to their Church's leadership (although started long before 1972, [redacted] faith slipped badly then); Raymond Franz was the successor-to-be of his ailing uncle Frederick Franz (note they are closely related); Raymond was doubtful of many of the JWs teachings - as [redacted] was of ours; Frederick Franz was 88 at that time; HWA was 86 at his crisis of 1978; just as [redacted] took a leave of absence, so did Raymond; as [redacted] was first suspended and only afterwards was disfellowshipped, so was Raymond. Note the following : "Canons governing divorce, for example, have been changed twice since 1972 [similarly with us]. Witnesses who were divorced under the old set of rules now find they must return to their former mates or face ex-communication" (Newsweek 20.7.81). Is all this coincidence ? All they have done is adopt our old doctrine on D+R.

There is so much more I'd like to type about but I best end this here.

I do hope that you are able to find time to answer to this letter. I wish you all the best for the future.

Sincerely,



Craig White.