

GENESIS AFTER THE EXODUS



RYAN AYIN

Introduction

Some authors write seeking fame and fortune. This book may bring me shame and poverty. My actions will be perceived as the ultimate betrayal, causing pain and embarrassment to my believing family and friends. I will be labeled a “mentally diseased apostate” for daring to speak out against “God’s Organization.” This spiritual death sentence will sever me from nearly everyone I have known and loved, as the “loyal” are compelled to shun the “disloyal.” Financial loss will follow, as clients from my former religious community boycott my business. And yet, despite these unpleasant prospects, a fire fuels me to share my story - and that fire is love.

For nearly 18 years, I volunteered at Bethel, the world headquarters of Jehovah’s Witnesses in New York, as a member of their special religious order. I lived a life of self-sacrifice under vows of poverty and obedience. As demanding as that may sound, I mostly found it rewarding. I have many fond memories of the beautiful people I met there. As I share my experience, I will strive to be honest and fair, opening a window into a world that even very few Witnesses understand. The names of my believing family and friends have been changed out of respect for their privacy.

To any Witnesses who may read this foreword, please know that I am not some angry, bitter, or hateful “apostate.” I do not embrace that label, nor do I view myself as an Ex-JW. I am a human being who loves people and cares deeply for their well-being. Because I have witnessed firsthand how certain *Watch Tower* doctrines and policies harm good people, I feel compelled to speak out for truth and justice. My sincere hope is that the *Watch Tower* Organization will make positive changes to align with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

In this memoir, I will explain the factors that led to my unlikely awakening from a lifetime of religious indoctrination after serving for 15 years at Bethel; why it took nearly seven agonizing years to break free from religious fear; and how I finally began to build a new life. If my experience encourages others who are awakening and exiting a high-control religion, then sharing it will be worth the risk. I agree wholeheartedly with this statement from the July 2009 *Awake!* “*No one should be forced to worship in a way that he finds unacceptable or to be made to choose between his beliefs and his family.*” Indeed, everyone should be free to leave their religion without fear of losing the people they love.

Finally, I believe survivors of high-control religions must stand united to champion the fundamental human rights of a self-determined life, liberty, and justice. Thousands awakening from cult mind control need community, support, and solidarity. Many feel isolated, trapped, and hopeless, as I once did. They need emotional, and sometimes material assistance. To this end, some friends and I founded *The Liberati*, a nonprofit dedicated to empowering survivors of high-control religion to break free and build their best life after!

Thank you for being part of my journey. Many of you have had a direct, positive impact on my life and I am forever indebted. You are etched on my heart and I wish you the very best always.