

Włodzimierz Bednarski

ARMAGEDDON IN 1975

'Probability' or 'Possibility'?



Jehovah's Witnesses

Włodzimierz Bednarski

**ARMAGEDDON IN 1975
– ‘Probability’ or ‘Possibility’?**

Originally published in Polish under the title:

Armagedon w 1975 roku - "możliwy" czy "prawdopodobny"?

Copyright of English edition © 2011 Włodzimierz Bednarski

Author: Włodzimierz Bednarski

Translator: Szymon Piotr Matusiak

From the Translator

The following work was published in a book form and attracted great interest of Polish readers. That is why we deliver it also in English version. Because of that it was conformed to Jehovah's Witnesses' literature published in the United States. However, in several cases the author retained quotations from Polish publications of the Watch Tower Society (translated into English), when texts did not have their English counterparts (it applies to the newsletter *Kingdom Service*). It should be noted that the work was enriched with several issues and quotations which did not appear in Polish printed book.

Moreover, it is one of rare publications embracing thoroughly one of crucial issues connected with Jehovah's Witnesses. The material is a very wide archive of texts pertaining to the year 1975 and helpful discussion of the quotations. Włodzimierz Bednarski plans to publish similar works in a book form, concerning "generation 1914" and year 1925. He is the author of two books and about 200 articles concerning Jehovah's Witnesses. In his publications he presents changes of the Watchtower doctrines, confronts them with the Bible and with early Christian writings. (See Polish web-sites as www.piotrandryszczak.pl, www.brooklyn.org.pl, www.trinitarians.info). He is esteemed as the greatest Polish expert in the area of Jehovah's Witnesses' doctrine, history and practices.

The present translator was a Witness for 18 years and an elder in Jehovah's Witnesses congregation for 14 years. I am also involved in the ministry reaching Jehovah's Witnesses to Christ. Although I have some experience in that area, I was positively impressed by the work of Mr. Bednarski and I gained much understanding of the 1975 issue from the following pages. I do not know of any other work which is such a comprehensive and logically arranged presentation of the original sources applying to 1975 prediction. I am sure that English speaking readers will be benefited by reading this work.

Szymon Piotr Matusiak

Contents

Introduction

Watchtower Literature Concerning the Year 1975

Claim to Credibility

Famine – 1975! and Paddocks

Paul Ehrlich and Other Experts About 1975

Dean Acheson and 1975

World War III and 1975

“Few Years” and 1975

‘Generation 1914’ and 1975

Higher Education and 1975

Preaching Ministry and 1975

Other Chronologies and 1975

The Gospel of Matthew 24:36 and 1975

Autumn, Early Autumn, September, September 5 and 1975

Term “Must” and 1975

Creation of Adam and Eve and 1975

Adam’s Sin and 1975

God’s Rest and 1975

Disillusionment, Responsibility and 1975

Appendix 1: *Life Everlasting – In Freedom of the Sons of God* and 1975

Appendix 2: Photocopies of Key Watchtower Publications Concerning 1975

Appendix 3: “Individual Speculation”

Introduction

The title of our work refers to words used in one of Watchtower publications, which after a failure of 1975 stated as follows:

With the appearance of the book *Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God*, and its comments as to how appropriate it would be for the millennial reign of Christ to parallel the seventh millennium of man's existence, considerable expectation was aroused regarding the year 1975. There were statements made then, and thereafter, stressing that this was only a possibility. Unfortunately, however, along with such cautionary information, there were other statements published that implied that such realization of hopes by that year was more of a probability than a mere possibility. It is to be regretted that these latter statements apparently overshadowed the cautionary ones and contributed to a buildup of the expectation already initiated. (*The Watchtower* March 15, 1980, p. 17).

The same approach is presented in a well known handbook of Jehovah's Witnesses:

Brother Franz then referred to the many questions that had arisen as to whether the material in the new book meant that by 1975 Armageddon would be finished, and Satan would be bound. He stated, in essence: 'It could. But we are not saying. All things are possible with God. But we are not saying. And don't any of you be specific in saying anything that is going to happen between now and 1975. But the big point of it all is this, dear friends: Time is short. Time is running out, no question about that.' (...) However, other statements were published on this subject, and some were likely more definite than advisable. (*Jehovah's Witnesses - Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* 1993, p. 104);

This later led to the idea - sometimes stated as a possibility, sometimes more firmly - that since the seventh millennium of human history would begin in 1975, events associated with the beginning of Christ's Millennial Reign might start to take place then. (*Jehovah's Witnesses - Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* 1993, p. 633).

In our work we will try to point to the following issues: what the Watchtower Society taught about the year 1975, how many publications discussed the matter, and how variously 'probability' of the coming Armageddon was accented. We will investigate, if expectation of „such realization of hopes” concerning 1975 was more a 'probable' than a mere 'possible' scenario.

First chapter of the work contains a list of Watchtower literature in which year 1975 was discussed or mentioned. The remaining chapters contain a discussion of predicted events connected with that date and other issues relevant to the mid-seventies.

It is proper to sign that my personal contact with the 1975 problem was included in Polish edition of that work in an Appendix „Why I did not become a Jehovah's Witness?”.

A broad presentation of our topic was presented by Raymond Franz (1922-2010). As a former member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses (in 1971-1980) he wrote about it in his book *Crisis of Conscience* (2004), chapter “1975: ‘The Appropriate Time for God to Act’” (pp. 237-253; see also pp. 72-73, 97, 109).

A generation of Watchtower publishers waiting for year 1925 is almost extinct, but thousands of former and present Jehovah's Witnesses who remember hopes connected with year 1975 are still alive.

Although 36 years passed after that once important date for the Watchtower Society, even recalling it rouses emotions in many people.

After 1975 failure thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses left their organization, which in their eyes

became a corporal 'false prophet'.

Now, after over 40 years since 1966, in which "1975 campaign" was started, we can in non-emotional manner follow through some issues concerning the Watchtower Society's argumentation applying to the date expected by its followers.

And if Jehovah's Witnesses insist that they did not produce a single clear statement predicting with 100% certainty that Armageddon would come in 1975, the truth is that they directly stated in their publications that it will take place in the twentieth century (!):

But then it also speaks of a group of people preaching about the righteous kingdom of God, a war of God against all wickedness, followed by a paradise earth without death - all to be realized in the twentieth century. (*Awake!* February 22, 1961, p. 5, article *The 20th Century In Bible Prophecy*);

That now-operating kingdom in heaven will, within the twentieth century, cleanse the entire earth of wickedness. (*Awake!* February 22, 1961, p. 7);

What day was Jesus speaking of? The beginning of World War III? No, Zephaniah 2:3 identifies it as "the day of Jehovah's anger." Revelation 16:16 calls it the "war of the great day of God the Almighty," Armageddon. This war will come in the twentieth century. It will come right on schedule, as have the wars, food shortages, earthquakes and other events' fore told. This generation will see its fulfillment. (*Awake!* February 22, 1961, p. 8);

Shortly, within our twentieth century, the "battle in the day of Jehovah" will begin against the modern antitype of Jerusalem, Christendom. (...) Jehovah's "sword" of warfare will cut off from this position that Christendom's clergy claim for her all religionists who depend upon her having an acceptable standing with God. However, Jehovah's "sword" will not be applied merely to those adhering to Christendom. It will also be brandished against "all flesh from south [Christendom] to north." Religionists belonging to all the rest of the world empire of false religion will feel the cutting edge of Jehovah's "sword." Their being non-Christians will not cause them to be spared. (*The Nations Shall Know That I Am Jehovah* - *How?* 1971, pp. 216-217).

As we see from the quotations, no sophistry can change the meaning of these statements. The conclusion is unambiguous that Armageddon was expected in the twentieth century, and even precisely in the year 1975, as we will see after reading other publications.

Watchtower Literature Concerning the Year 1975

At the beginning of our discussion, due to chronicler's obligation, we will quote almost all publications of the Watchtower Society which were focused on the year 1975. The list includes not only publications containing wide presentation of the matter but also those which just mention the year 1975 on the background of foretold famine or World War III. Everybody who would like to honestly assess the issue of the year 1975 and responsibility of the Watchtower Society for the failed prophecy, should read that material. One should not come to his or her own conclusion on the basis of one or two articles.

The Watchtower

The Watchtower October 15, 1966, pp. 627-631; the article mentions the year 1975 altogether 10 times;
The Watchtower January 1, 1967, pp. 28-29;
The Watchtower February 1, 1967, pp. 73-79;
The Watchtower April 15, 1967, pp. 229-237;
The Watchtower May 1, 1967, pp. 259-262;
The Watchtower July 15, 1967, pp. 444-447;
The Watchtower April 15, 1968, pp. 227-230;
The Watchtower May 1, 1968, pp. 270-277;
The Watchtower August 15, 1968, pp. 488-494;
The Watchtower August 15, 1968, pp. 494-501; the article mentions the year 1975 altogether 10 times;
The Watchtower December 15, 1968, pp. 750-756;
The Watchtower February 1, 1969, pp. 68-71;
The Watchtower July 15, 1969, pp. 425-431;
The Watchtower September 1, 1969, pp. 517-524;
The Watchtower October 1, 1969, pp. 592-598;
The Watchtower October 15, 1969, pp. 612-625;
The Watchtower February 15, 1970, pp. 117-120;
The Watchtower May 1, 1970, pp. 265-271;
The Watchtower May 1, 1970, pp. 271-277;
The Watchtower September 1, 1970, p. 539;
The Watchtower September 15, 1971 pp. 559-564;
The Watchtower October 15, 1971, pp. 612-625;
The Watchtower December 15, 1973, pp. 739-742;
The Watchtower January 1, 1974, pp. 5-8;
The Watchtower April 1, 1974, pp. 195-197;
The Watchtower June 15, 1974, pp. 375-380;
The Watchtower July 1, 1974, pp. 397-400;
The Watchtower October 15, 1974, pp. 632-639;
The Watchtower December 15, 1974, pp. 759-766;
The Watchtower March 15, 1975, pp. 183-189;
The Watchtower May 1, 1975, p. 285;
The Watchtower July 15, 1975, p. 445.

Watchtower magazines published in 1975 and after that year; they mention that year or correct the teaching concerning that year:

The Watchtower October 1, 1975, pp. 579-581;
The Watchtower October 1, 1975, pp. 581-584;
The Watchtower October 1, 1975, pp. 584-588;
The Watchtower October 1, 1975, pp. 595-604;
The Watchtower January 1, 1976, p. 30;

The Watchtower November 15, 1976, p. 689;
The Watchtower July 15, 1976, pp. 436-438;
The Watchtower July 15, 1976, pp. 440-441;
The Watchtower August 1, 1976, p. 476;
The Watchtower March 15, 1980, pp. 17-18;
The Watchtower February 15, 1984, p. 25;
The Watchtower December 15, 1986, p. 20.

Awake!

In many cases in the period of 1966-1975 we just point to the exact page of a magazine (not the entire article); on such a page there is a topic of our interest.

Awake! October 8, 1966, pp. 17-20;
Awake! November 8, 1966, p. 26;
Awake! January 22, 1967, p. 26;
Awake! September 8, 1967, p. 29;
Awake! January 8, 1968, p. 19;
Awake! February 22, 1968, p. 31;
Awake! July 22, 1968, p. 30;
Awake! September 22, 1968, p. 29;
Awake! October 8, 1968, pp. 13-16; the article mentions the year 1975 altogether 10 times;
Awake! January 22, 1969, p. 15;
Awake! January 22, 1970, p. 6;
Awake! December 22, 1970, p. 10;
Awake! July 8, 1971, p. 7;
Awake! October 8, 1971, pp. 7, 27-28;
Awake! April 8, 1972, p. 16;
Awake! July 22, 1972, p. 12;
Awake! October 22, 1972, pp. 9-12;
Awake! June 22, 1973, pp. 3-6;
Awake! July 8, 1973, p. 29;
Awake! September 22, 1973, p. 29;
Awake! October 8, 1973, p. 5;
Awake! October 8, 1974, pp. 18-22;
Awake! November 8, 1974, p. 10;
Awake! December 22, 1974, p. 29;
Awake! February 22, 1975, p. 29;
Awake! April 22, 1975, p. 29.

There is also a recall of 1975 in:

Awake! June 22, 1995, p. 9.

Books, booklets, tract, Kingdom Ministry, Watchtower Library (CD-ROM)

Books:

Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God 1966, pp. 26-30, 35, 357;
The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life 1968, pp. 9, 88-89;
Is the Bible Really the Word of God? 1969, p. 125;
Aid to Bible Understanding 1971, p. 1100;
Paradise Restored to Mankind - By Theocracy! 1972, p. 282;
God's Kingdom of a Thousand Years Has Approached 1973, pp. 14, 44;
1975 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses, pp. 240, 256.

Books recalling 1975:

Jehovah's Witnesses - Proclaimers of God's Kingdom 1993, pp. 104, 633;

1980 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses, pp. 30-31;
1988 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses, p. 190.
1995 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses, p. 227;
1996 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses, pp. 158-159;
2000 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses, pp. 196-197;
2003 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses, pp. 162-163;
Watchtower Publications Index 1930-1985, 1986 (entry 1975);
Watchtower Publications Index 1986-2000, 2001 (entry 1975);
Watchtower Publications Index 2001-2005, 2006 (entry 1975).

Teachings about the year 4026 B.C.E. (which was a basis for counting the year 1975) in the pre-1975 publications:

"All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial" 1963, pp. 11, 285;
"Babylon the Great Has Fallen!" God's Kingdom Rules! 1963, pp. 634, 682;
"Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie" 1965, pp. 296-297;
Aid to Bible Understanding 1971, pp. 33, 333, 387, 642, 1100;
Is This Life All There Is? 1974, p. 30;
God's "Eternal Purpose" Now Triumphant for Man's Good 1974, pp. 51-53.

Booklets:

The Approaching Peace of a Thousand Years 1969, pp. 5, 25-27;
When All Nations Collide, Head On, With God 1971, p. 6.

Tract:

Is Time Running Out for Mankind? 1973.

Kingdom Ministry:

Kingdom Ministry No. 3, 1968, p. 4;
Kingdom Ministry No. 6, 1969, p. 3;

Polish Kingdom Ministry No. 4, 1970, p. 6;
Polish Kingdom Ministry No. 8, 1970, p. 6;
Polish Kingdom Ministry No. 9, 1970, p. 1;
Polish Kingdom Ministry No. 1, 1971, p. 12;
Polish Kingdom Ministry No. 8, 1971, p. 1;
Kingdom Ministry No. 5, 1974, p. 3;
Polish Kingdom Ministry No. 2, 1975 p. 3;
Polish Kingdom Ministry No. 7, 1975 p. 12.

Watchtower Library (CD-ROM):

Watchtower Library - 2005 Edition 2006.

Claim to Credibility

The quote below is a claim made by the Watchtower Society during the 1975 campaign. In the same magazine where the article *What Will the 1970's Bring?* appeared, we may find another article: *A Time to 'Lift Up Your Head' in Confident Hope*, in which Jehovah's Witnesses organization assures us that its explanation applying to the imminent end is credible. Let it speak for itself:

True, there have been those in times past who predicted an "end to the world," even announcing a specific date. Some have gathered groups of people with them and fled to the hills or withdrawn into their houses waiting for the end. Yet, nothing happened. The "end" did not come. They were guilty of false prophesying. Why? What was missing? Missing was the full measure of evidence required in fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Missing from such people were God's truths and the evidence that he was guiding and using them. But what about today? Today we have all of it. And it is the evidence required, overwhelming! All the many, many parts of the great sign of the "last days" are here, together with verifying Bible chronology. (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, p. 23).

Interestingly, after the year 1975 Watchtower Society was not so confident and admitted:

Some opposers claim that Jehovah's Witnesses are false prophets. These opponents say that dates have been set, but nothing has happened. (...) Yes, Jehovah's people have had to revise expectations from time to time. Because of our eagerness, we have hoped for the new system earlier than Jehovah's timetable has called for it. (*The Watchtower* March 15, 1986, p. 19);

Jehovah's Witnesses, in their eagerness for Jesus' second coming, have suggested dates that turned out to be incorrect. Because of this, some have called them false prophets. (*Awake!* March 22, 1993, p. 4).

Famine – 1975! and Paddocks

A tried-and-tested source quoted by the Watchtower Society to prove that life in 1975 will be terrible and even impossible, was a book *Famine - 1975!* We could be spared of incoming famine in 1975 only due to Armageddon and the dawn of a happy millennium. When the book was published in 1967, it coincided with the 1975 campaign started in 1966 among Jehovah’s Witnesses. And it is not clear if the Watchtower Society expected in 1975 the Armageddon or a foretold famine.

Raymond Franz (1922-2010) former member of Governing Body Jehovah’s Witnesses (1971-1980) also claims that before 1975 in the context of famine “The book *Famine—1975!*, published in 1967 by two food experts, was quoted repeatedly, particularly these statements, in many ways reminiscent of Russell’s predictions regarding 1914” (*Crisis of Conscience*, R. Franz, 2004, p. 243).

Let us directly quote words of former presidents of the Watchtower Society, to show what R. Franz meant by his reference C. T. Russell (who died in 1916).

1914	1975
<p>Words of Charles T. Russell (d 1916) of 1905:</p> <p>“Our cities are not now in that condition with great supplies laid up; we live from hand to mouth. When anarchy comes it will bring terrible conditions, and I do not see how it could possibly last long. Things, I think, will come to an abrupt end within a year. In those times, when people are laying their hands on everything they can get, the farmers are not going to raise wheat for others just to give it away” (<i>What Pastor Russell Said. His answer to hundreds of questions</i> 1917, p. 71).</p>	<p>Words of Frederick W. Franz (d 1992) of 1975:</p> <p>He stressed that, according to dependable Bible chronology, 6,000 years of human history will end this coming September according to the lunar calendar. This coincides with a time when “the human species [is] about to starve itself to death,” as well as its being faced with poisoning by pollution and destruction by nuclear weapons. (<i>The Watchtower</i> May 1, 1975, p. 285).</p>

In Watchtower magazines, in books and in *Awake!* magazines of 1967-1975 we found more than 15 references to the work *Famine - 1975!*

We quote several examples of such statements from those publications:

In the book *Famine - 1975!* food experts W. and P. Paddock state:

"By 1975 a disaster of unprecedented magnitude will face the world. Famines, greater than any in history, will ravage the undeveloped nations!"

"I forecast a specific date, 1975, when the new crisis will be upon us in all its awesome importance."

"By 1975 civil disorder, anarchy, military dictatorships, runaway inflation, transportation breakdowns and chaotic unrest will be the order of the day in many of the hungry nations." (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, p. 15);

In their new book, *Famine - 1975!*, two noted food experts, William and Paul Paddock, make this forecast for the future, on page 61: “By 1975 civil disorder, anarchy, military dictatorships, runaway inflation, transportation breakdowns and chaotic unrest will be the order of the day in many of the hungry nations - all because hunger will turn inexorably into starvation and starvation will become widespread famine.” (*The Watchtower* April 15, 1968, p. 227);

More recently, the book entitled “Famine - 1975!” by William and Paul Paddock said concerning today’s food shortages, on pages 52, 55 and 61: “Hunger is rampant throughout country after country, continent after continent around the undeveloped belt of the tropics and subtropics. Today’s crisis can

move in only one direction - toward catastrophe. Today hungry nations; tomorrow starving nations. . . . By 1975 civil disorder, anarchy, military dictatorships, runaway inflation, transportation breakdowns and chaotic unrest will be the order of the day in many of the hungry nations.” (*The Watchtower* February 1, 1969, p. 70).

Other magazines quoting *Famine – 1975!*:

The Watchtower May 1, 1970, p. 270;
Awake! September 8, 1967, p. 29;
Awake! September 22, 1968, p. 29;
Awake! January 22, 1970, p. 6;
Awake! July 22, 1972, p. 12;
Awake! June 22, 1973, p. 3;
Awake! July 8, 1973, p. 29;
Awake! September 22, 1973, p. 29;
Awake! October 8, 1973, p. 5;
Awake! December 22, 1974, p. 29;
Awake! February 22, 1975, p. 29.

And the book:

More recently, the book entitled ”Famine - 1975!” said concerning today’s food shortages: ”(...) Today’s crisis can move in only direction - toward catastrophe. Today hungry nations; tomorrow starving nations.”

”By 1975 civil disorder, anarchy, military dictatorships, runaway inflation, transportation breakdowns and chaotic unrest will be the order of the day in many of the hungry nations.” (*The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* 1968, pp. 88-89).

Interestingly, the newer, 1981 edition of the book completely omits the above words from the work *Famine - 1975!*

Besides, the Watchtower Society both quoted others and gave its own comments on the situation concerning famine:

World famine is predicted for the year 1975. (*The Watchtower* December 15, 1968, p. 753);

Warnings of world famine within a few years are not without valid foundation. (*The Watchtower* October 15, 1970, p. 618).

In another statement on 1975, Vice President of the Watchtower Society, Frederick W. Franz (died in 1992) referred to possibility of ‘starvation to death’:

He stressed that, according to dependable Bible chronology, 6,000 years of human history will end this coming September according to the lunar calendar. This coincides with a time when “the human species [is] about to starve itself to death,” as well as its being faced with poisoning by pollution and destruction by nuclear weapons. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1975, p. 285).

As a kind of curiosity we may quote a statement of the Watchtower Society of those days, about the disappearance of famine problem in God’s Kingdom:

Well, since the earth has over 36,000,000,000 acres, there would be more than an acre and a half of land for each person! But would an acre and a half be enough to produce the needed food? There is good reason to believe that only a fraction of that acre and a half per person would be needed for food, leaving room for recreation areas and sanctuaries for animal and plant life. (*Awake!* October 8, 1970, p. 19).

Later the Watchtower suggested even lesser allotment for everybody: “c. 0.37 ha” (*Reasoning from the Scriptures* 1989, p. 340).

Paul Ehrlich and Other Experts About 1975

Also another scientist, P. Ehrlich (and his statement of 1968), was repeatedly quoted by the Watchtower Society as a “proof” for their teaching on 1975:

Biologist Paul Ehrlich believes that actual worldwide famine is approaching. When? Back in 1970 he stated: “I think an estimate of 1975 is still as good as we can make, but it could be anywhere from 1972 to 1985, depending primarily on luck. I think the actual date is a quibble.” (*The Watchtower* April 1, 1974, p. 196);

“Massive Famine Hitting Millions. Earth’s ‘population explosion’ means that every day there are 200,000 more mouths to feed - 75,000,000 more each year. ‘It is already too late to avoid famines that will kill millions, possibly by 1975. . . . Already half a billion people are slowly starving, another billion are malnourished.’ - Biologist P. Ehrlich”. (Tract *Is Time Running Out for Mankind?* 1973);

“In the 1970’s the world will undergo famines - hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death in spite of any crash programs embarked upon now.” - “The Population Bomb,” by Dr. Paul Ehrlich. (*True Peace and Security - From What Source?* 1973, p. 82).

Interestingly, the newer version of the book *True Peace and Security - How Can You Find It?* (1986) does not contain the statement (see p. 78).

The similar statement of P. Ehrlich was included in a published book *Is the Bible Really the Word of God?* (1969, p. 125). Similarly the newer book on the Bible omits P. Ehrlich as its source (see *The Bible - God’s Word or Man’s?* 1989, pp. 139-141).

We list other publications referring to Ehrlich:

Awake! February 22, 1968, p. 31;

Awake! July 22, 1968, p. 30;

Awake! January 22, 1969, p. 15;

Awake! October 8, 1971, pp. 7, 28;

Awake! July 22, 1972, p. 12.

The other examples of statements pointing to famine in 1975:

With populations exploding all over the earth, many nations now stand at the brink of starvation, and disaster is predicted by experts for the mid-1970’s. (*The Watchtower* September 15, 1971, p. 561);

IN THESE days ominous warnings are being sounded of overpopulating the earth - population explosion! - and of world famine as early as the year 1975 C.E. (*Paradise Restored to Mankind - By Theocracy!* 1972, p. 282);

And the *Arizona Republic* said on June 2, 1968, that Professor R. Heilbroner of New York “predicted that in the early 1970’s, ‘the greatest catastrophe the world has ever known’ will occur when population far outstrips the available food supply.” (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, p. 15);

Science magazine of November 28, 1969, observed:

“In the continued absence of better ways of heading off these multiple crises, our half-life may no longer be 10 or 20 years, but more like 5 to 10 years, or less. We may have even less than a 50-50 chance of living until 1980. (*Awake!* October 22, 1972, p. 12);

The *Ithaca Journal* of March 22, 1974, observed: “Normally restrained experts on energy,

agriculture, population, and the global economy are starting to predict bankruptcy, social breakdown, and starvation for as many as one billion people by late this year or early 1975.” (...) World grain reserves are about exhausted... (*Awake!* November 8, 1974, pp. 10-11).

A book published in 1973, quotes the following statement of 1971:

As one prominent biologist expressed it:

“Some feel that the battle to feed the world population is now lost, and that it is a foregone conclusion that by 1985 we will have world-wide famines in which hundreds of millions of people will starve to death. I must admit that at this time I see no major crash program which would lead me to disagree with this conclusion.” (*True Peace and Security - From What Source?* 1973, p. 14).

Interestingly, the newer version of the book, *True Peace and Security - How Can You Find It?* (1986) does not include the statement (see pp. 14-15).

Besides, the Watchtower Society both quoted others and gave comments on the situation:

However, of this we can be sure: The 1970's will certainly see the most critical times mankind has yet known. (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, p. 14).

At the end let us quote one of statements on famine made by the Watchtower Society after 1975:

Note, though, what Jesus actually warned about. His words do not indicate that, as the “great tribulation” draws close, the world situation will get to be such that everybody, everywhere, will be in a state of near starvation. (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1976, p. 441).

Is this statement a departure from all the former statements?

Dean Acheson and 1975

In order to confirm 1975, the Watchtower Society decided to quote five times a politician (!), former U.S. Secretary of State (in years 1949-1953), Dean Acheson (1893-1971):

Concerning political instability, former U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson said in 1960: "I know enough of what is going on to assure you that, in 15 years from today [or, by 1975], this world is going to be too dangerous to live in." (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, p. 15).

As we can see, the Watchtower Society inserted in the quotation the words "or, by 1975", so that everybody could see that the politician meant the year 1975 (compare the other following statements).

Interestingly, Acheson's words were quoted for the first time immediately after they were expressed, namely in 1960, before the 1975 campaign:

Dean Acheson, former United States secretary of state, declared our time to be "a period of unequaled instability, unequaled violence and revolutionary change." He stated: "I know enough of what is going on to assure you that, in 15 years from today, this world is going to be too dangerous to live in." He also commented on public apathy in regard to such warnings, saying: "We can be told that all sorts of things are going to happen. We never believe it until it's happened. Then it's too late to deal with." (*The Watchtower* October 1, 1960, p. 582).

Later Acheson was referred to several times:

Also as reported back in 1960, a former United States Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, declared that our time is "a period of unequaled instability, unequaled violence." And he warned: "I know enough of what is going on to assure you that, in fifteen years from today, this world is going to be too dangerous to live in." (*The Watchtower* September 15, 1968, p. 552).

The above words were used also by *Awake!* in 1968. However, in that publication the Watchtower Society added the following comment:

Fifteen years from 1960 brings us to 1975. He predicted that by 1975 this world would be too dangerous! Interestingly, this date is also the one indicated by the most reliable Bible research as marking the end of 6,000 years of rebellion of men and demons against God. (*Awake!* January 8, 1968, p. 19).

A book contains the same words:

Also, as reported back in 1960, a former United States Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, declared that our time is "a period of unequaled instability, unequaled violence." And he warned: "I know enough of what is going on to assure you that, in fifteen years from today, this world is going to be too dangerous to live in." (*The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* 1968, p. 9).

Interestingly, a newer 1981 edition of the book partly changed (!) Acheson's statement deleting mention about 15 years and a suggested year 1975. It is worthwhile to compare it with the original text quoted above:

Also, as reported back in 1960, a former United States Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, declared that our time is "a period of unequaled instability, unequaled violence." Based on what he knew was then going on in the world, it was his conclusion that soon "this world is going to be too dangerous to live in." (*The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* 1981, p. 9).

It is quite interesting that the Watchtower Society also quoted Catholic priests as a proof of 1975. Here is a characteristic passage:

“Some priests forbade their parishioners to persecute Jehovah’s witnesses, to meow after them, etc. ‘If they come’ – said one of them – ‘listen and kindly excuse yourself, because it is yet *unknown* which religion is the true one’. In several places priests preached from pulpits that the end of the world will take place in the year 1975, and one even said: ‘Surely God send Jehovah’s witnesses as our comfort’. Obviously, it does not mean that all the priests changed their attitude”. (Polish *Kingdom Ministry* No. 8, 1970, p. 6).

World War III and 1975

During the 1975 campaign the Watchtower Society paid much attention to a possible World War III.

It seems so that the book *Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God* (1966) contains a “hidden suggestion” allowing to connect World War III with Armageddon. It is nothing strange, because during World War I and World War II it was expected that those conflicts will transform into expected „day of Jehovah”. The following are memories connected to such expectations and a new suggestion:

World War I	World War II	World War III
<p>During World War I dedicated Bible students were inclined to think that this world conflict would lead progressively into the battle of Armageddon foretold in Revelation 16:13-16. To them the truce and the halt of the war in November of 1918 came as quite a surprise! (<i>Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God</i> 1966, pp. 358-359).</p>	<p>It seemed to us then that the war would usher in the climactic battle of the great day of God the Almighty, Armageddon. - Revelation 16:14-16. I vividly recall our urgent expectations of the long-awaited event. (<i>The Watchtower</i> February 15, 1984, p. 24);</p> <p>In March 1945 we heard that the Scripture text for that year was Matthew 28:19: “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations.” (...) That filled us with joy and hope, since we had thought that World War II would climax in Armageddon.” (<i>The Watchtower</i> September 1, 2007, p. 11).</p>	<p>1966 (...) Threat of World War III grows more ominous as between “king of the north” and the “king of the south.” (Dan. 11:5-7, 40) (<i>Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God</i> 1966, p. 35);</p> <p>The sealing of the last of these, a mere remnant finally, would be accomplished before the thousand-year reign of the “Lamb of God,” Jesus Christ, begins. This would mean that the remnant of these (...) would be sealed (...) the end of six thousand year of humankind’s existence. We are near that point of time now! Bible time-scheduling indicates it. A world storm must therefore be shortly ahead. (as above p. 357);</p> <p>1975 (...) End of 6th 1,000-year day of man’s existence (in early autumn) (as above p. 35);</p> <p>So after an interruption or interim, in which the sealing of God’s “chosen ones” is completed, the “war of the great day of God the Almighty” will be started. (as above p. 360).</p>

Interestingly enough, Vice President of the Watchtower Society, Frederick W. Franz (1893-1992), who endured two world wars (it was similarly expected that those two wars would transform into Armageddon), wrote (in 1966) his book on 1975 during tensions between USSR and USA. Could that happen that a possible world war could transform into Armageddon?

By a strange coincidence the same statement about the threat of war (see the chart) was included in one of articles on 1975, *Making Wise Use of the Remaining Time* (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1968, pp. 270-277).

Besides, it is puzzling why the Watchtower Society states that „Threat of World War III grows” in 1966? After all, so called “Cuban Missile Crisis” took place in 1962, not in 1966. But Jehovah’s Witnesses’ book does not even mention it.

In the same chart, included in the said book the author skillfully measures tension concerning possible war:

1957 (...) (October) Russia sends up first satellite; **causes world to fear**;
1964 (...) (May) "Spy satellites" and astronauts **increase world tension**;
1966 (...) **Threat of World War III grows more ominous** as between "king of the north" and the "king of the south." (Dan. 11:5-7, 40) (...) Book *Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God* to be released Saturday, June 25, 1966 (*Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God* 1966, p. 35).

If we add a sentence from the book which applied to 1975 and Armageddon, we will get the whole picture:

This would mean that the remnant of these (...) would be sealed (...) the end of six thousand year of humankind's existence. We are near that point of time now! Bible time-scheduling indicates it. **A world storm must therefore be shortly ahead.** (*Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God* 1966, p. 357).

If according to the Watchtower Society a potential World War III could not be transformed into Armageddon, the above association of the two events in one passage or article was intended as stimulating for Jehovah's Witnesses minds, to fire their imagination, so that they could understand how horrible is Armageddon (many of them lived through one war or two wars).

Franz compared the year 1975 to the year 1914 and the outbreak of World War I, which indicates that there was possible association of war with "the day of Jehovah", as it was in the past:

'Does it mean that Armageddon is going to be finished, with Satan bound, by 1975? It could! It could! All things are possible with God. (...) And don't any of you be specific in saying anything that is going to happen between now and 1975. (...) 'When we were approaching the end of the Gentile Times in 1914, there was no sign that the Gentile Times were going to end. Conditions on earth gave us no hint of what was to come, even as late as June of that year. Then suddenly there was a murder. World War I broke out. You know the rest. (...) 'But what do we have today as we approach 1975? Conditions have not been peaceful. We've been having world wars, famines, earthquakes, pestilences and we have these conditions still as we approach 1975. (*The Watchtower* October 15, 1966, p. 631).

But maybe such elements as "World War III" and "famine" were added to 1975 "preventatively"? So that in case Armageddon would not come, the other event could be attached to 1975, as in 1914, when instead of "Jehovah's war" there was World War I.

Also other articles discuss World War III and Armageddon. Is it a coincidence? The following statements contain quotations used by the Watchtower Society:

On an international scale its growth caused United Nations Secretary-General U Thant to say that he feared "we are witnessing the initial phases of World War III." (*The Watchtower* September 1, 1967, p. 517);

A few months before, United Nations Secretary-General U Thant observed: "I'm afraid we are entering today the first phase of World War III." (*The Watchtower* April 15, 1968, p. 227);

And of the struggle between communism and capitalism, *Intelligence Digest* of August 1967 said: "The facts . . . show that the forces in the world struggle are grouping themselves for a decisive show-down." (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, p. 15);

For example, it has been publicly announced that, in the radical camp, the Russian leaders say that they expect to have the whole world communized by the year 1975. However, the bloc of nations in the capitalistic, democratic camp are determined that such a political development shall not be, by 1975 or any other year. Is our earth therefore destined for a divided domination forever? (*When All Nations Collide, Head On, With God* 1971, p. 6; see *The Watchtower* October 15, 1971, p. 614);

By continued success in the missile field and by beginning to stockpile her weapons in the year 1972, and then keeping this up, the Communist Chinese "should be in a position to deploy 15 or 20 Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles by about 1975." – New York Times, February 3, 1969. (*The Approaching Peace of a Thousand Years* 1969, p. 5; see also *The Watchtower* October 15, 1969, p. 614).

Aside from quoting others in the context of contemporary situation, the Watchtower Society gave its own comments. In his statement applying to 1975, Vice President of the Watchtower Society, F. Franz referred to potential “destruction by nuclear weapons”:

He stressed that, according to dependable Bible chronology, 6,000 years of human history will end this coming September according to the lunar calendar. This coincides with a time when “the human species [is] about to starve itself to death,” as well as its being faced with poisoning by pollution and destruction by nuclear weapons. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1975, p. 285).

Yes, after nearly 6,000 years of experience in self-rule and after reaching the ultimate in scientific “progress” mankind is on the brink of catastrophe! (*Awake!* October 22, 1972, p. 12).

Notice, that 27 years passed between years 1918 and 1945, marking the ends of two wars.

But we have also 27 years between 1939 (the outbreak of war) and 1966, when “Threat of World War III grows more ominous” (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1968, p. 272).

It does not seem that Jehovah’s Witnesses are motivated by some time periods, but this similarity of years is puzzling! If someone thinks that the Watchtower Society plans its purposes in advance in order to manipulate people, he may find an interesting hint to his theory.

Finally, one more statement of the Watchtower Society, published in 1973, but reaching beyond 1975:

And now, particularly, many serious students of government and of world conditions - statesmen, scientists and others - are saying that mankind will not even be able to survive to the year 2000 C.E. They base their outlook, not on the Bible, but on the hard facts of today and upon the now irreversible trend of things that involve all of us. The Bible tells of these hard times that we are experiencing as a sign of the nearness of the end of this system. (*The Watchtower* November 1, 1973, p. 646).

“Few Years” and 1975

Not only the Watchtower Society ‘counted’ the concrete year 1975, but in the late sixties and early seventies of the twentieth century it often used a term “few years” or even more positive “few short years”, which should end in the said year.

It is impossible to mention all such statements, but we present examples of different types. But we should add that it is not a new terminology of the Watchtower Society, because it was already in use in the twenties, thirties, forties and fifties of the twentieth century:

The proof cited herein shows that the old world (the Devil’s organization) ended and began to pass away in 1914, and that this will be completed in a few years and righteousness fully established. (*The Harp of God* 1928, p. 339, par. 565);

Those Jonadabs who now contemplate marriage, it would seem, would do better if they wait a few years, until the fiery storm of Armageddon is gone, and to then enter the marital relationship and enjoy the blessings of participating in filling the earth with righteous and perfect children. (*Face the Facts* 1938, p. 50);

Receiving the gift [book *Children*], the marching children clasped it to them, not a toy or plaything for idle pleasure, but the Lord’s provided instrument for most effective work in the remaining months before Armageddon. (*The Watchtower* September 15, 1941, p. 288);

This time can be called “Jehovah’s day” because it is the day when he fights for his name. Already forty years of this generation that is doomed to feel the wrath of Jehovah’s day have passed. Only a few years remain. In the most urgent sense, then, “the day of Jehovah is near upon all the nations.” (*The Watchtower* October 15, 1954, p. 615).

Few years, few short years

Jehovah’s “coming” for execution of judgment upon his foes is very quick in the sense that it is only a few short years ahead, and it will seem exceedingly short to those who are caught wandering off the way of righteousness as in the dark, as if they were asleep. (*The Watchtower* November 15, 1967, pp. 680-681);

It is to come within the generation that has already seen two world wars and it is only a few short years ahead of us. (*The Watchtower* April 15, 1967, p. 244);

Within a few years at most the final parts of Bible prophecy relative to these “last days” will undergo fulfillment, resulting in the liberation of surviving mankind into Christ’s glorious 1,000-year reign. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1968, p. 272);

What does the Bible show as to the meaning of all these world events? It shows that for this unrighteous world time is running out fast! It shows that within a few years at most there will take place a climax in human affairs so gigantic that it will affect every person on earth, every man, woman and child. It will, without fail, affect you. (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, p. 4);

It means that only a few years, at most, remain before the corrupt system of things dominating the earth is destroyed by God. (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, p. 13);

Yet the time that he has set for the accomplishment of his righteous purpose toward the earth is scheduled to run out within the coming few years of this generation. (*The Watchtower* January 15, 1969, p. 45);

Whether they recognize it or not the Gentile nations rule today only by God's toleration. Jehovah permits their continuance for a few years more so that sheeplike persons from all nations may come out of this system of things before its Armageddon end. (*The Watchtower* May 15, 1969, p. 302);

World events in fulfillment of Bible prophecy give sure indication that only a few years remain for this wicked arrangement of things. (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1969, p. 426);

They also spend evenings and weekends in engaging in the Christian ministry. What a fine way for young people to serve their Creator in the few remaining years of this present violent system of things! (*The Watchtower* March 1, 1970, p. 146);

Remember that not only the Bible but also world leaders have attested to the urgency of the times in which we live. The few remaining years of this generation do not give much time during which we can show Jehovah we truly want to be pleasing to him so that we will be privileged to enjoy life at his hand in the new system of things. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1970, pp. 276-277);

If you want to endure the end of the 'last days' of this system of things, you should not waste your time. Few years left for the present generation are not much time to prove Jehovah that you really want to please Him (Polish *Kingdom Ministry* No. 8, 1971, p. 1);

We are encouraged, then, to follow this good example of love for Jehovah and true worship rather than be too tied down to homes and jobs and material possessions, enjoying too much what this old system offers for a few more years. This matter is really urgent! Time is running out for those who allow themselves to be trapped by pursuit of material pleasures. (*The Watchtower* May 15, 1972, p. 307);

It is not our purpose to discuss chronology here, yet feel free to ask any of Jehovah's witnesses to show you from the Scriptures the evidence that we are just a few short years away from the completion of six thousand years of man's existence on earth, and ask them what they think this means in terms of real freedom and liberation from God's viewpoint. They will be happy to share this information with you. (*The Watchtower* August 1, 1972, pp. 462-463);

What about such ones in just a few short years from now? Will they be there? Then there will be no old system of things at all, but God's kingdom will be in full control over the earth and its affairs. (*The Watchtower* August 1, 1972, p. 468).

See also *Awake!* January 22, 1970, p. 8.

Nine, eight, seven, six years

It shows that 6,000 years of human experience will end in 1975, about nine years from now. What does that mean? Does it mean that God's rest day began 4026 B.C.E.? It could have. The *Life Everlasting* book does not say it did not. The book merely presents the chronology. You can accept it or reject it. (*The Watchtower* October 15, 1966, p. 631);

Thus, eight years remain to account for a full 6,000 years of the seventh day. Eight years from the autumn of 1967 would bring us to the autumn of 1975, fully 6,000 years into God's seventh day, his rest day. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1968, p. 271);

Well, for one thing, if 4,026 is added to 1,968 (allowing for the lack of a zero year between C.E. and B.C.E.) one gets a total of 5,993 years, come this autumn, since Adam's creation. That means, in the fall of the year 1975, a little over seven years from now (and not in 1997 as would be the case if Ussher's figures were correct), it will be 6,000 years since the creation of Adam, the father of all mankind! (*The Watchtower* August 15, 1968, p. 499);

However, Bible chronology which indicates that Adam was created in the fall of the year 4026 B.C.E. would bring us down to the year 1975 C.E. as the date marking 6,000 years of human history with yet 1,000 years to come for Christ's Kingdom rule. So whatever the date for the end of this system, it is clear that the time left is reduced, with only approximately six years left until the end of 6,000 years of human history. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1970, p. 273);

And today, with less than seven years remaining to the end of six thousand years of human history, and with all the prophetic evidence that Christendom is about to be shaken from her proud foundations, are we not fired with zeal to get round our territory seven times and more? Time is short, and the message must be sounded! (*The Watchtower* October 1, 1969, p. 597).

A brief period of years

But when a brief period of years at the most separates us from the great windup of this old system, the vital thing is to stay spiritually awake. (*Awake!* October 8, 1966, p. 20);

The years remaining before the end of this system of things are very few; the privileges now open will never be repeated; this is the time to take advantage of them. (*The Watchtower* November 15, 1966, p. 703);

It is much later for this world than you may think! Indeed, it has only a few more years of existence left! (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, p. 4);

This, of it self, tells us that the years left before the foretold end comes cannot be many. (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, p. 14).

Few years, few remaining years

Just as right association helped to keep the Jewish nation and early Christians close to Jehovah, so it will serve the same purpose for God's people today in these few and all-important years before Armageddon. (*The Watchtower* January 15, 1966, p. 42);

In the few remaining years of the old system of things... (*The Watchtower* March 1, 1970, p. 153).

Remaining years, final years

In such a theocratic atmosphere as exists at Bethel homes there is marvelous opportunity for spiritual growth. Grand privileges of service open up for willing servants. What a fine privilege to be serving in such a place during the remaining years of this old system of things! (*The Watchtower* February 1, 1967, p. 84);

Some have decided to remain single through the final troubled years of this old system until after Armageddon. Others have made the decision to remain single for a period of years so that they may enjoy the pioneer work, Bethel service or the missionary field. (*The Watchtower* March 15, 1969, pp. 177-178);

There is another way that helps confirm the fact that we are living in the final few years of this "time of the end." (Dan. 12:9) (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, p. 14).

Last days, closing days, last part of that last day

and that we are now living in the last days of the present wicked system of things... (*The Watchtower* February 1, 1971, p. 78);

What the future holds for us? It depends on this how we use the last days of "the year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah". Knowing the after that year inevitably comes "the day of vengeance on the part of our God", do not cease to support the preaching work, so far as Jehovah God wills (Polish *Kingdom Ministry* No. 7, 1975, p. 12);

On God's "timetable" we are in the closing days of a wicked system of things that will soon be gone forever. A glorious new order is immediately before us. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1967, p. 262);

When the many factors are put together, we find that *our* generation, *our* day is the one that is identified in the Bible as the "last days." In fact, in this year 1967 we are actually living in the final part of that time! This can be compared to, not just the last day of a week, but, rather, the last part of that last day. (*The Watchtower* April 1, 1967, p. 197).

Shortly ahead, very little time

This would mean that the remnant of these (...) would be sealed (...) the end of six thousand year of humankind's existence. We are near that point of time now! Bible time-scheduling indicates it. A world storm must therefore be shortly ahead. (*Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God* 1966, p. 357);

This world has very little time left! Any "future" this world offers is no future! (*The Watchtower* March 15, 1969, p. 171).

Other terms

The years remaining now before God arises against his enemies at Armageddon are critical years, making very advisable a right decision on the part of everyone. Rebukes will be administered at Armageddon, and for one to be rebuked there will mean one's destruction. (*The Watchtower* November 1, 1967, p. 661);

He loves the human family and wants us to have life, not just for a few short years with a good part of these years filled with troubles and suffering, but life forever under a condition where there will be no lack of constant happiness. (*The Watchtower* September 15, 1967, p. 566);

His desire is for us to live, not just a few short years, but forever. (*The Watchtower* September 1, 1971, p. 515);

They have not dedicated their lives to serve Jehovah only until 1975. (...) Those who will flee Babylon the Great and this Satanic system of things are now running for their lives, headed for God's kingdom, and they will not stop at 1975. O no! They will keep on in this glorious way that leads to everlasting life, praising and serving Jehovah for ever and ever! (*The Watchtower* August 15, 1968, p. 501).

Referring to words "few years" or "final years" we should note that the Watchtower Society fell into its own trap. By proclaiming such words from 1967-1972 it could not prolong their validity to "a dozen or so" or "several dozen". They referred plainly to the year 1975.

‘Generation 1914’ and 1975

Some people think that there was not any connection between expecting 1975 and an interpretation of generation 1914, but they are wrong. This last teaching was included in the Watchtower publications both before the 1975 campaign, started in 1966 and after its end, after the first half of the seventies of the twentieth century till the doctrinal change in November 1995. However, in years 1966-1975 both calculations were complementary, and even the teaching on 1975 was placed ‘inside’ the interpretation concerning generation of the year 1914. Moreover, the year 1975 specified a more general prediction focused on generation of the year 1914. Those teachings did not appear separately and did not contradict each other. Conversely, two calculations were presented in the publications as ‘two sisters’, and one ‘confirmed’ the other. In some cases the teaching on generation 1914 supported the truthfulness of 1975 interpretation, in other cases it was vice versa.

Besides, the same ‘signs’ of the end were understood as characteristic both for generation of the year 1914 and for the year 1975. The examples of such thinking are two articles published in the same issue of *Awake!* magazine. One of them presents a picture showing a train heading to a precipice called Armageddon. The train’s back cars are near the year 1914, the beginning of the ‘last days’, but its locomotive is right in front a precipice. The title of the article is *The Year 1914 a Turning Point (Awake! October 8, 1968, p. 5)*. But the second article has even an intriguing title: *What Will the 1970's Bring?* (p. 13). These articles are supplemented by texts: *How Do We Know We Are in the “Last Days”?* (p. 7), *The Sign of the “Last Days”* (p. 8), *A Time to ‘Lift Up Your Head’ in Confident Hope* (p. 23).

But it is not yet the whole story. In fact a content of each article shows that teaching of generation 1914 and a doctrine of 1975 overlap each other. The following quotations are examples of mutual confirmation of the two teachings:

The generation that saw the beginning of woes in 1914 would also see the end of Satan and his entire wicked system of things. Some who were alive then would still be alive when “the end” comes. (...) There is another chronological indication that we are rapidly nearing the closing time for this wicked system of things. It is the fact that shortly, according to reliable Bible chronology, 6,000 years of human history will come to an end. (*Awake!* October 8, 1966, pp. 18-19).

Jesus said that “this generation” that saw the beginning of this time period in 1914 would also see its end. The generation that was old enough to view those events with understanding in 1914 is no longer young. It no longer has many years to run. Already many of its members have died. But Jesus showed that there would still be members of “this generation” alive at the time of the passing away of this wicked system of things in both heaven and earth. (Luke 21:32, 33) How much longer will it be, then, before God takes action to destroy the wicked and usher in the blessings of his Kingdom rule? Interestingly, the autumn of the year 1975 marks the end of 6,000 years of human experience. This is ascertainable from reliable chronology preserved in the Bible itself. What will that year mean for humankind? Will it be the time when God executes the wicked and starts off the thousand-year reign of his Son Jesus Christ? It very well could, but we will have to wait to see. Yet of this we can be certain: the generation that Jesus said would witness those events is nearing its close. The time is close at hand. On God’s “timetable” we are in the closing days of a wicked system of things that will soon be gone forever. A glorious new order is immediately before us. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1967, p. 262);

And remember, Jesus said that the end of this wicked world would come *before* that generation passed away in death. This, of it self, tells us that the years left before the foretold end comes cannot be many. There is another way that helps confirm the fact that we are living in the final few years of this "time of the end." (Dan. 12:9) The Bible shows that we are nearing the end of a full 6,000 years of human history. What significance does this have? (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, p. 14);

However, Bible chronology which indicates that Adam was created in the fall of the year 4026 B.C.E. would bring us down to the year 1975 C.E. as the date marking 6,000 years of human history with yet 1,000 years to come for Christ's Kingdom rule. So whatever the date for the end of this system, it is clear that the time left is reduced, with only approximately six years left until the end of 6,000 years of human history. (1 Cor. 7:29) This corroborates the understanding of Jesus' words that the generation alive in 1914 with the outbreak of World War I would not pass away until the end comes. Only a short time, then, remains for persons who love righteousness to show God that they want to be in his "ark" of protection and live to see the blessings of the new system of things. - Matt. 24:34-42. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1970, p. 273);

But, he pointed out, "we should not think that this year of 1975 is of no significance to us," for the Bible proves that Jehovah is "the greatest chronologist" and "we have the anchor date, 1914, marking the end of the Gentile Times." So, he continued, "we are filled with anticipation for the near future, for our generation." - Matt. 24:34. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1975, p. 285).

The fact that the two concepts 'interpenetrate' is taught in such publications, as:

Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God 1966, pp. 29-30;
The Watchtower May 1, 1968, pp. 271-272;
The Watchtower August 15, 1968, pp. 500-501;
The Watchtower October 15, 1969, pp. 622-623.

Interesting comparison of the two interpretations was made by Jehovah's Witnesses in their internal newsletter published in Polish, in which they used very categorical words:

Jesus made his many miraculous works on earth, especially on the Sabbath. (...) Thus he pointed to a greater Day of the Sabbath – the Millennial Sabbath Day which will take place after 6,000 years of man's existence (Ps. 90:4; 1 Peter 3:8). Jesus thus illustrated that during the millennial Sabbath he will set free the humankind from imperfectness and death inherited from our first parents. Exact chronological calculations show that 6,000 years of man's existence will come to an end in the middle of the seventies, during life of generation which according to Jesus' words from Matthew 24:34 saw the end of the 'appointed times of the nations' in 1914. This peaceful reign of Jesus is very close, indeed! – Luke 21:24, NW. For that reason it is the high time to start appropriate preparations. (Polish *Kingdom Ministry* No. 9, 1970, p. 1).

Maybe someone will ask: How the year 1975 'specified' the teaching of generation 1914?
Let us follow the issue through.

Quite recently the Watchtower Society recalled their readers how they calculated the length of generation 1914. They mentioned 70 or 80 years:

With similar sincere intentions, God's servants in modern times have tried to derive from what Jesus said about "generation" some clear time element calculated from 1914. For instance, one line of reasoning has been that a generation can be 70 or 80 years, made up of people old enough to grasp the significance of the first world war and other developments; thus we can calculate more or less how near the end is. (*The Watchtower* June 1, 1997, p. 28).

As we see the Watchtower Society did not focused on people born in 1914, but on such people who could "grasp the significance of the first world war".

It taught that the issue of generation 1914 referred to people who in 1914 were 15 years of age:

Even if we presume that youngsters 15 years of age would be perceptive enough to realize the import of what happened in 1914, it would still make the youngest of "this generation" nearly 70 years old today. So the great majority of the generation to which Jesus was referring has already passed away in death. The remaining ones are approaching old age. And remember, Jesus said that the end of this wicked world would come *before* that generation passed away in death. This, of it self, tells us that the years left before the foretold end comes cannot be many. (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, pp. 13-14).

It seems that it referred to people born around 1899, who were 15 years old in the year 1914.

When Jehovah's Witnesses added 70 or 80 years to the year 1899, then they received years **1969-1979**. So the year **1975** was almost in the middle of the appointed period of generation 1914 and thus 'specified' the prophecy of the Watchtower Society and also confirmed the teaching on 'this generation'.

To make oneself sure that during the campaign of 1975 the Society used the period of 70-80 years as a part needed to calculate the length of generation 1914, let us follow through several examples from the literature of the Watchtower Society. But we may add that they referred to Psalm 90:10 ("In themselves the days of our years are seventy years; And if because of special mightiness they are eighty years..."):

However, the expression "this generation" was used by Jesus to mark a very limited period of time, the life-span of members of a generation of people living during the time that certain epoch-making events occurred. According to Psalm 90:10, that life-span could be of seventy years or even of eighty years. Into this comparatively short period of time must be crowded all the things that Jesus prophesied in answer to the request for a "sign when all these things are destined to come to a conclusion." (Mark 13:4) (*The Watchtower* December 15, 1967, p. 751);

Jesus say that this generation will not pass away until all things are fulfilled? A generation, according to Psalm 90:10, is from seventy to eighty years. The generation that witnessed the end of the Gentile Times in 1914 does not have many more years left. - Luke 21:24, 32-36. (*The Watchtower* December 1, 1968, p. 715);

Some of them will still be alive to see the end of this wicked system. This means that only a short time is left before the end comes! (Psalm 90:10 [89:10, Dy]) (*The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* 1968, p. 95).

At the end we may sign that life of contemporary teaching on 1975 was finished in that very year, and the interpretation on generation 1914 'were dying down' till November 1995 (earlier the Society prolonged the length of the generation, including people born in 1914).

Today both teachings of the Watchtower Society function in a very different form.

1975 remained only as a point in which 6,000 years passed since the birth of Adam (e.g. "*All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial*" 1990, pp. 286-287; *Insight on the Scriptures* 1988 vol. 1, p. 459).

But the teaching on generation 1914 was already corrected twice:

From November 1, 1995 till February 1, 2008 the Watchtower Society taught:

Thus, it was felt that in the modern-day fulfillment, Jesus was referring to the wicked "generation" of unbelievers who would see both the features that would characterize "the conclusion of the system of things" (*synteleia*) and the system's end (*telos*). (*The Watchtower* February 15, 2008, p. 23; see also *The Watchtower* November 1, 1995, pp. 11-20, 30-31; *The Watchtower* June 1, 1997, p. 28; *The Watchtower* May 1, 1999, p. 11).

From February 15, 2008 the Watchtower Society has been teaching:

Since Jesus did not use negative qualifiers when speaking to them about "this generation," the apostles would no doubt have understood that they and their fellow disciples were to be part of the "generation" that would not pass away "until all these things [would] occur." (*The Watchtower* February 15, 2008, p. 23).

For 'this generation' the year 1914 was and still is the year opening the end times, but a precise length of the generation was not determined:

Christ's parousia, or presence, started with Jesus' installation as King in heaven in 1914 and continues on to include the "great tribulation," during which he comes to destroy the wicked. (*The Watchtower* February 15, 2008, p. 21);

Can We Calculate the Length of "This Generation"? (...) So when the term "generation" is used with reference to people living at a particular time, the exact length of that time cannot be stated except that it does have an end and would not be excessively long. Therefore, by using the term "this generation," as

recorded at Matthew 24:34, Jesus did not give his disciples a formula to enable them to determine when “the last days” would end. Rather, Jesus went on to emphasize that they would not know “that day and hour.” - 2 Tim. 3:1; Matt. 24:36. (*The Watchtower* February 15, 2008, p. 25).

Recently the Watchtower Society again ‘updated’ its teaching on “this generation”, attempting to determine its length. It is a combination of generation 1914 period with life of today’s (younger) anointed ones among Jehovah’s Witnesses. The end is expected during this new period. Following are words of the organization published in April 15, 2010:

„How, then, are we to understand Jesus’ words about “this generation”? He evidently meant that the lives of the anointed who were on hand when the sign began to become evident in 1914 would overlap with the lives of other anointed ones who would see the start of the great tribulation. That generation had a beginning, and it surely will have an end. The fulfillment of the various features of the sign clearly indicate that the tribulation must be near” (*Watchtower* April 15, 2010, pp. 10-11).

Obviously the novelty of this interpretation is not a closeness of the “great tribulation”, but, as we already said, a kind of calculation concerning the length of „this generation”. Let us recall the former reassurance made with the same firmness by the Watchtower Society:

„This suggests that some who are Christ’s anointed brothers will still be alive on earth when the foretold great tribulation begins” (*The Watchtower* February 15, 2008, p. 24).

More on generation 1914: see also the chapter “Disillusionment, Responsibility and 1975”.

Higher Education and 1975

Even before the beginning of 1975 campaign the Watchtower Society did not allow young people to live till adulthood, so that higher education seemed unnecessary. The organization taught that Armageddon will interrupt the adolescent period of young people:

It is a calamitous fact that most of the boys and girls today will not have the opportunity to waste their youth and prime of life and get to the calamitous days of old age, where life has been a vain thing for them. According to God's timing the calamity of the universal war of Armageddon will strike them down while yet in their youth and prime of life because they are not remembering their grand Creator, serving him with worthwhile works. (*The Watchtower* November 15, 1957, p. 701).

Later, when the time was 'counted' to expected Armageddon, higher learning and higher education was sharply criticized, and intensive preaching, e.g. "pioneer service" was presented as an alternative to such activities. The following are several typical statements of the Watchtower Society:

As a result, they may set their hearts on the education that is offered by the world's institutions of "higher learning." (...) Rather than being content with "sustenance and covering," those who devote themselves to getting a "higher education" usually want to be able to enjoy "the rest of the things" that money can buy. (Mark 4:19) If they are going to succeed in the education they have set out to get, they have to work hard at it. Study of the Bible, association with the Christian congregation and participation in the Christian ministry are curtailed. Worldly associations predominate; worldly philosophy fills their minds. What happens? (...) Overtime secular work frequently crowds out attendance at the congregation meetings, because fear of displeasing their employer is stronger than their fear of displeasing God. They may have a token share in the field ministry because they know it is a Christian requirement, but their principal efforts are channeled into other interests. What will be their position when Armageddon strikes? Will Jehovah, who examines the heart, really find that they are persons who have loved him with all their heart and mind and soul and strength? (Luke 10:25-28) Will he preserve them into his new system of things? This is a matter for serious consideration. Not just next month or next year, but today, while we are yet alive and able to do things, is the time to prove that we want to be wholehearted praisers of Jehovah "from now on and to time indefinite." - Ps. 115:17, 18. (*The Watchtower* February 1, 1967, pp. 75-76);

Many schools now have student counselors who encourage one to pursue higher education after high school, to pursue a career with a future in this system of things. Do not be influenced by them. Do not let them "brainwash" you with the Devil's propaganda to get ahead, to make something of yourself in this world. This world has very little time left! Any "future" this world offers is no future! Wisely, then, let God's Word influence you in selecting a course that will result in your protection and blessing. Make pioneer service, the full-time ministry, with the possibility of Bethel or missionary service your goal. This is a life that offers an everlasting future! (*The Watchtower* March 15, 1969, p. 171);

True, the Watch Tower Society does not encourage spending time at worldly colleges or universities, the so-called "schools of higher learning." But that does not mean that we are to be narrow in our knowledge. (*The Watchtower* February 15, 1970, p. 115);

All worldly careers are soon to come to an end. So, why should today's youth get interested in 'higher education' for a future that will never eventuate? The colleges are falling into chaos, anyway. The essentials of education for a useful life can be obtained by studying well at high school, and beyond that there is also the 'highest education' that Jehovah provides through his organization, preparing for a satisfying career of full-time service that goes on forever. (Ps. 71:5, 17; 61:8) Let young people, and older people, too, avoid reading matter, TV and movies that highlight worldliness. (*The Watchtower* September 15, 1971, p. 563).

Higher education and colleges were also criticized by the Watchtower Society in the following publications:

The Watchtower July 15, 1969, p. 438;
The Watchtower July 15, 1970, p. 441;
The Watchtower October 1, 1970, p. 588;
The Watchtower July 15, 1975, p. 441.

In some Jehovah's Witnesses' publications the Watchtower Society mentions higher learning and higher education in quotation marks, because it speaks about "the 'highest education' that Jehovah provides through his organization".

It seems that after the year 1975 the above view on higher education was still maintained. The following are several statements to that point:

We will not be deceived if these systems seem to make an apparent 'comeback' from severe crises, as if that apparent recuperation would have a postponing effect on the arrival of God's day of judgment. We will not start 'rebuilding' with the world, as though this system will continue indefinitely. (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1976, p. 442);

IT HAS been said that by reading the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines, along with other publications of Jehovah's Witnesses, a person will receive, over a period of years, a considerable and broad education. (...) Would you like to grow in knowledge, obtaining an education of even much greater value than can be received in any college? You can do so by reading regularly this magazine and its companion, *Awake!* (*The Watchtower* June 15, 1983, p. 31);

For others, secular education as a means to attain financial success becomes a snare. Granted, a certain level of schooling may be useful to obtain employment. However, the truth is that in the time-consuming pursuit of obtaining advanced education, some have harmed themselves spiritually. What a dangerous situation to be in as the day of Jehovah nears! (*The Watchtower* December 15, 2003, pp. 23-24).

Preaching Ministry and 1975

In years prior to 1975 the Watchtower Society put great emphasis on preaching, in order to reach the biggest possible number of people who could be 'saved' from destruction in Armageddon. Publishers were 'asked' and 'threatened' to take up the pioneer service. The literature gave examples of publishers who sold their businesses, their houses and properties. Preaching Jehovah's Witnesses were promised to receive special blessings in the remaining years, "few years" or months. They were reminded that they "need to work out one's salvation!"

The following are typical statements to that point:

There are marvelous blessings for those who take up the full-time ministry as Jehovah's witnesses. You might serve at one of the Watch Tower Society's Bethel homes or as a special pioneer or in the missionary work, possibly as a circuit servant, visiting and serving congregations. The years remaining before the end of this system of things are very few; the privileges now open will never be repeated; this is the time to take advantage of them. (*The Watchtower* November 15, 1966, pp. 702-703);

Sufficient is it for God's servants to know for a certainty that, for this system under Satan, time is running out rapidly. How foolish a person would be not to be awake and alert to the limited time remaining, to the earthshaking events soon to take place, and to the need to work out one's salvation! (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1968, p. 273);

Even if one cannot see beyond 1975, is this any reason to be less active? The apostles could not see even this far; they knew nothing about 1975. All they could see was a short time ahead in which to finish the work assigned to them. (...) So too with Jehovah's faithful witnesses in this latter half of the twentieth century. (...) They have not dedicated their lives to serve Jehovah only until 1975. (*The Watchtower* August 15, 1968, p. 501);

This is the most serious time in human history, and you are living in this time of change. (...) Yes, there is a purpose behind this study; there is a future attached to it. (...) In view of the short time left in which to do their work, Jehovah's witnesses do not continue to study the Bible with any who fail to respond to its urgent message within six months. The nearness of this system's end compels them to use their time in the most effective way possible. So they feel obligated to spend their time calling on someone else who might respond by attending meetings at the Kingdom Hall and by speaking to others about the Bible truths learned. (*The Watchtower* May 15, 1969, p. 312);

And today, with less than seven years remaining to the end of six thousand years of human history, and with all the prophetic evidence that Christendom is about to be shaken from her proud foundations, are we not fired with zeal to get round our territory seven times and more? Time is short, and the message must be sounded! (*The Watchtower* October 1, 1969, p. 597);

They also spend evenings and weekends in engaging in the Christian ministry. What a fine way for young people to serve their Creator in the few remaining years of this present violent system of things! (*The Watchtower* March 1, 1970, p. 146);

The time is very short now for further preaching and teaching of God's kingdom among the political nations. (...) The few remaining years of this generation do not give much time during which we can show Jehovah we truly want to be pleasing to him so that we will be privileged to enjoy life at his hand in the new system of things. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1970, pp. 276-277);

In view of the short period of time left, we want to do this as often as circumstances permit. Just think, brothers, there are only about ninety months left before 6,000 years of man's existence on earth is

completed. (*Kingdom Ministry* No. 3, 1968, p. 4);

In view of the short time left, a decision to pursue a career in this system of things is not only unwise but extremely dangerous. (...) Many young brothers and sisters were offered scholarships or employment that promised fine pay. However, they turned them down and put spiritual interests first. (*Kingdom Ministry* No. 6, 1969, p. 3);

If you considered pioneer service, *do not hesitate*, but take up it *now! Do not put it aside* from winter to summer, and from summer to winter. *Trust Jehovah!* Make this service your goal of life! Although it is true that you would not spend in it 40, 20 or even 10 years, but undoubtedly you will find great joy and blessings in it, enjoyed by all who made fulltime service their life vocation (Polish *Kingdom Ministry* No. 4, 1970, p. 6);

Reports are heard of brothers selling their homes and property and planning to finish out the rest of their days in this old system in the pioneer service. Certainly this is a fine way to spend the short time remaining before the wicked world's end. - 1 John 2:17. (*Kingdom Ministry* No. 5, 1974, p. 3).

Such individual case of selling house and funds which were enough to live till 1975 was mentioned in a publication:

At our district convention in 1957 in Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., there was a talk on serving where the need for Kingdom proclaimers was greater. (...) In 1959 we sold our house, loaded up our belongings, and drove to Montreal, Canada. (...) Finally, we arrived in Mombasa, Kenya (...) In 1975, when our funds were depleted, we were sad to leave the friends we had come to love so dearly. (*Awake!* March 8, 2008, pp. 13-14).

Aware of our responsibility before our Creator, let us be alert, using every opportunity to give testimony to the truth, to lend the *Watchtowers* and to start new Bible studies. Let us do it not only because the 6,000 years from man's creation are coming to an end. Beware of telling about 1975 more than "slave" told us. We are not entitled to do this! Also we would not like terrify people by that date, but to prompt their hearts to serve Jehovah from their own free will (Polish *Kingdom Ministry* No. 1, 1971, p. 12).

There is only a little time for this perishing system of things. Being aware of solemnity of the situation we lead our personal matters in that way that we could buy as much time as possible to reach people with the life-giving truth. (...) He gathered his whole family and said: "I heard that the last year Jehovah's witnesses had a convention abroad and that there was a speech on 1975". After we explained the role of big conventions and the meaning of Bible chronology, we proclaimed the message (Polish *Kingdom Ministry* No. 2, 1975, p. 3);

Diligently busy in work on Jehovah's lea we had not noticed that we reached the last month of the service year. With what kind of results we will close that year? What the future holds for us? It depends on this how we use the last days of "the year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah". Knowing the after that year inevitably comes "the day of vengeance on the part of our God", do not cease to support the preaching work, so far as Jehovah God wills (Polish *Kingdom Ministry* No. 7, 1975, p. 12).

For other, similar quotations, see above, the chapter "Higher Education and 1975".

Other Chronologies and 1975

People are wrong if they think that the Watchtower Society in its short history had only one chronology determining the creation of Adam and 6,000 years of human existence. There were several such calculations. The Watchtower Society do not hide that fact, but states that it ‘corrected’ its calculations:

Bible chronology is an interesting study by which historic events are placed in their order of occurrence along the stream of time. The Watch Tower Society over the years has endeavored to keep its associates abreast with the latest scholarship that proves consistent with historic and prophetic events recorded in the Scriptures. (*The Watchtower* August 15, 1968, p. 500).

Here is the list of several different chronologies of the Watchtower Society, presented in the chart.

Topics	<i>The Time Is at Hand</i> 1917	<i>“The Truth Shall Make You Free”</i> 1943	<i>The Kingdom Is at Hand</i> 1944	<i>New Heavens and New Earth</i> 1953	<i>Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God</i> 1966
Date of Adam’s creation	4129 - Creation of Adam (see p. 53); “from creation to the beginning of the Christian era (A. D.) - in all, a period of four thousand one hundred and twenty-eight (4128) years” (p. 51); compare <i>The Watchtower</i> August 15, 1974, p. 507: “Man’s creation was placed in 4128 ”;	4028 - Creation of Adam (see p. 152);	4026 - Creation of Adam (see p. 171);	“ 4025 B.C. Adam's creation (in the fall)” (p. 364); compare <i>The Watchtower</i> May 15, 1958, p. 297: “from the creation of Adam to 1 B.C., whereas the <i>Watchtower</i> calendar gave 4,024 (from fall of 4025 B.C. to fall of 1 B.C.)”;	“ 4026 - Creation of Adam (in early autumn)” (p. 31);
The end of 6,000 years	“the year 1872 A. D. to be the year of the world 6000 (p. 54; see also pp. 33, 242); “from the creation of Adam to A. D. 1873 was six thousand years” (p. 39); “We are already living in the seventh millennium - since Oct. 1872 ”	5971 years ends in 1943 (see p. 152), so 6,000 years ended in 1972 .	According to the above 6,000 years ends in 1975 ; compare <i>The Watchtower</i> January 1, 1977, p. 14, quoting <i>The Watchtower</i> September 15, 1944 p. 280: “six thousand years of human history will end first in the coming seventies”;	According to <i>The Watchtower</i> February 1, 1955, p. 95, 6,000 years of human existence will end in 1976 ;	“ 1975 - 6000 - End of 6th 1,000-year day of man’s existence (in early autumn)” (p. 35);

	(p. 363);				
The end of Millennial Kingdom of Christ	Lack of data; compare <i>The Finished Mystery</i> (1917): “Fall 2875 A. D. - Restitution completed”; “Fall 2914 A. D. - Dominion restored to mankind” (p. 60).	Lack of data.	Lack of data.	Lack of data.	“2975 - 7000 - End of 7th 1,000-year day of man’s existence (in early autumn)” (p. 35).
Period when the teaching was in force	Teaching in force from the beginning of the Watchtower Society to 1935.	Teaching in force from 1935 (<i>The Golden Age</i> March 27, 1935, p. 413) to 1943.	Teaching in force from 1944 (<i>The Kingdom Is at Hand</i> 1944, p. 171) to 1951.	Teaching in force from 1951 (<i>The Watchtower</i> April 1, 1951 p. 221) to 1963. (compare <i>The Watchtower</i> September 1, 1962, p. 528).	Teaching in force from 1963 (“ <i>All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial</i> ” 1963, p. 285).

Let us add that in 1967 “year 1975” had an ‘alternative’ date, namely “year 1974”, what is mentioned by Raymond Franz, a former member of the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses. However, its originator, Vice President Frederick Franz did not succeed to force it through, because the President of the Watchtower Society Nathan H. Knorr (d 1977) opposed the change of date (see *Crisis of Conscience* R. Franz, 2004, p. 73-74).

In spite of that, a handbook (a Bible dictionary) contained as though ‘by compromise’ both key dates, namely 1974 and 1975, and two dates of Adam’s creation: 4027 and 4026 B.C.E.:

There are no actual records of ancient man, his writing, agriculture, and other pursuits, extending into the past before 4026 (or 4027) B.C.E., the date of Adam’s creation. According to Bible chronology, 6,000 years of man’s history will end about 1974 or 1975 C.E. (*Aid to Bible Understanding* 1971, p. 1100; compare p. 23 [on 4027 B.C.E.], p. 642 [on 4026 and 4027 B.C.E.]).

Strangely enough that dates 1974 and 4027 were not included in any magazine of Jehovah’s Witnesses, and they could be found only in the quoted dictionary (see unimportant mention about 1974 in *The Watchtower* November 1, 1969, p. 668).

However, in a newer Bible dictionary, published in 1988, the above statement was changed and shortened. Here it is:

There are no actual records of ancient man, his writing, agriculture, and other pursuits, extending into the past before 4026 B.C.E., the date of Adam’s creation. (*Insight on the Scriptures* 1988 vol. 2, p. 303; compare vol. 1, p. 29; vol. 1, p. 919 [the dates mentioned above are lacking]).

The first four changes of chronology, discussed in the chart, are mentioned in *The Watchtower* February 1, 1955, pp. 93-95. But later, in 1963 the correction was made, but to tell you the truth, it was a return to the concept of 1944-1951.

Moreover, it seems that Vice President F. Franz had also other ideas, reaching beyond 1975 and 1974. He also suggested “year 1976”, as R. Franz recalls his statement of 1975:

“he went on to talk about the possibility of a year or so difference due to some lapse of time between Adam’s creation and Eve’s creation” (*Crisis of Conscience* R. Franz, 2004, s. 249).

But such opinion was not a novelty at all (see the above chart).

The Gospel of Matthew 24:36 and 1975

It seems as though Jehovah's Witnesses were prepared for knowledge of 'that day and hour' in context of 1975 by one of better known publications, published in 1958. Here it is:

Those of the New World society are awake. They will know when Armageddon is to begin. (*From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained* 1958, p. 206).

I recall that when in my conversations with Jehovah's Witnesses I referred to Bible texts about 'that day and hour', they sometimes replied they did not have knowledge about 'that day and hour' indeed, but it was possible to know the 'year' and Matthew 24:36 did not contradict it. (see Acts 1:7).

They were assured in such belief by *The Watchtower* December 15, 1974, p. 764, which called the expected date "the critical year of 1975".

Because of that it is worth seeing, if we can segregate articles on 1975 into one group, which expressed 'conjecture' concerning a beginning of Kingdom of God on earth in that time, and the second group, pointing to 'certainty' of such event in the said year.

It seems that it is easier to show different conjectures and assurances inside such articles.

We may also treat different statements of Jehovah's Witnesses as standards helpful in determining, if something is a conjecture or assurance. However, a reliable criterion concerning statements on 1975 is a position made in separate articles by Watchtower Society on Jesus' words about 'that day and hour' from Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32. Let us review it.

So, *Watchtower Publications Index 1930-1985* (1986) under entries Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32 does not contain any (!) reference to Witness publications of 1966-1970 when the message about 1975 was preached in the most intensive way and when the biggest number of articles on that topic was published. Also there are no references to these Bible verses in the following years.

It is true that there are three references to year 1971 (*Aid to Bible Understanding* 1971, pp. 322, 715, 1346), but we should not consider quoted statements as a commentary to Matthew 24:36, especially in the context of 1975. That the referred excerpts are irrelevant is proved by the fact that a newer index (*Watchtower Publications Index 1986-1990* 1992) does not include them under entry Matthew 24:36, in a place when it contains a reference to a newer Witness lexicon, *Insight on the Scriptures* of 1988.

In year 1973 we find only one reference to Witness publication under entry Mark 13:32 (*Awake!* March 8, 1973, p. 28), but the referred article tries to substantiate that Jesus is lower than His Father. So there is no connection with 1975.

Only in 1974, when the leadership tried to dampen the overzealousness of publishers, we have two references under entry Matthew 24:36 (*The Watchtower* January 15, 1974, p. 56; *The Watchtower* June 15, 1974, p. 379) and one reference under entry Mark 13:32 (*The Watchtower* March 15, 1974, p. 163). But this last article does not consider 1975, only generation 1914.

In 1975 we find four references under entry Matthew 24:36 (*The Watchtower* January 1, 1975, p. 9; *The Watchtower* May 1, 1975, p. 277; *The Watchtower* December 15, 1975, p. 768; *Man's Salvation out of World Distress at Hand!* 1975, p. 292) and one reference under entry Mark 13:32, but the referred article tries to substantiate that Jesus is lower than His Father (*The Watchtower* June 15, 1975, p. 356).

Is that true that in this interesting period, namely the years 1966-1970, there were no references in the Watchtower Society's publications to Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32?

Although the said index does not contain such references, we may find such interesting Bible verses by insightful analysis.

By that reason we may divide articles on 1975 into two categories:

Articles omitting such Bible texts;

Articles 'arguing' against the words of 'that day and hour' or trying to 'neutralize' them.

Into the first category fall e.g.:

The book *Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God* (1966);
article *Where Are We According to God's Timetable?* (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1967, pp. 259-262);
article *What Will the 1970's Bring?* (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, pp. 13-16).

There are plenty such articles (see the list opening our work). Let us add that the aforementioned book states that its predicted events “must” happen, beyond the shadow of a doubt:

This would mean that the remnant of these (...) would be sealed (...) the end of six thousand year of humankind's existence. We are near that point of time now! Bible time-scheduling indicates it. A world storm must therefore be shortly ahead. (*Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God* 1966, p. 357).

It is true that Vice President F. Franz (in 1966, at Baltimore convention) referring to that book said that Armageddon in 1975 is not “sure”, only “possible”, but the publication did not contain such reservations, and both he and the handbook did not refer to discussed Bible verses (see *The Watchtower* October 15, 1966, p. 631).

So it seems that the Watchtower Society preferred not to quote such Bible texts, because they did not fit to knowledge of 1975. It was more comfortable to tell that the date is something “it could” be, and that “all things are possible with God”, etc. (see *The Watchtower* October 15, 1966, p. 631).

Also other books published during 1975 campaign omit Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32. Here are examples:

“Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie” 1965;
“Your Word Is a Lamp to My Foot” 1967;
Is the Bible Really the Word of God? 1969;
“The Nations Shall Know That I Am Jehovah” - How? 1971;
God's “Eternal Purpose” Now Triumphant for Man's Good 1974;
1975 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses.

But a book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* (1968) quotes Mark 13:32 to prove only that “When Jesus was on earth he certainly was *not* equal to his Father” (p. 22).

The following articles fall into the second category, ‘ignoring’ such verses:

- ‘arguing’ against Matthew 24:36, article *Why Are You Looking Forward to 1975?* (*The Watchtower* August 15, 1968, pp. 494-501);
- ‘neutralizing’ Mark 13:32, article *Making Wise Use of the Remaining Time* (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1968, pp. 270-277);
- ‘weakening’ Matthew 24:36, article *An Ingathering Affecting All Mankind* (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1970, pp. 271-277);
- ‘weakening’ Matthew 24:36, article *How Much Longer Will It Be?* (*Awake!* October 8, 1966, pp. 17-20).

Words of the same character were published in a book printed in 1973 *True Peace and Security - From What Source?* (p. 88) and in an article *Peace with God amid the “Great Tribulation”* (*The Watchtower* January 15, 1970, pp. 49-56), but those publications do not refer directly to 1975.

Statements of years 1966-1973

The following are interesting passages from the Watchtower Society's publications, trying to ‘neutralize’ Jesus' words about ‘that day and hour’ or even to argue against them:

One thing is absolutely certain, Bible chronology reinforced with fulfilled Bible prophecy shows that six thousand years of man's existence will soon be up, yes, within this generation! (Matt. 24:34) This is, therefore, no time to be indifferent and complacent. This is not the time to be toying with the words of Jesus that “concerning that day and hour *nobody* knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but

only the Father.” (Matt. 24:36) To the contrary, it is a time when one should be keenly aware that the end of this system of things is rapidly coming to its violent end. Make no mistake, it is sufficient that the Father himself knows both the “day and hour”! Even if one cannot see beyond 1975, is this any reason to be less active? The apostles could not see even this far; they knew nothing about 1975. All they could see was a short time ahead in which to finish the work assigned to them. (...) And rightly so. If they had delayed or dillydallied and had been complacent with the idea the end was some thousands of years off they would never have finished running the race set before them. (*The Watchtower* August 15, 1968, pp. 500-501);

Within a few years at most the final parts of Bible prophecy relative to these “last days” will undergo fulfillment, resulting in the liberation of surviving mankind into Christ’s glorious 1,000-year reign. What difficult days, but, at the same time, what grand days are just ahead! Does this mean that the year 1975 will bring the battle of Armageddon? No one can say with certainty what any particular year will bring. Jesus said: “Concerning that day or the hour nobody knows.” (Mark 13:32) Sufficient is it for God’s servants to know for a certainty that, for this system under Satan, time is running out rapidly. How foolish a person would be not to be awake and alert to the limited time remaining, to the earthshaking events soon to take place, and to the need to work out one’s salvation! (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1968, pp. 272-273);

How close we may exactly be to the end of the present divisive system of things cannot be predicted, as Jesus reported that even he did not know the day or the hour at the time of his earthly ministry. (Matt. 24:36) However, Bible chronology which indicates that Adam was created in the fall of the year 4026 B.C.E. would bring us down to the year 1975 C.E. as the date marking 6,000 years of human history with yet 1,000 years to come for Christ’s Kingdom rule. So whatever the date for the end of this system, it is clear that the time left is reduced, with only approximately six years left until the end of 6,000 years of human history. (1 Cor. 7:29) This corroborates the understanding of Jesus’ words that the generation alive in 1914 with the outbreak of World War I would not pass away until the end comes. Only a short time, then, remains for persons who love righteousness to show God that they want to be in his “ark” of protection and live to see the blessings of the new system of things. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1970, p. 273);

Of course, as to the precise day and hour of the end, Jesus noted that knowledge of this was in the province of his heavenly Father alone. (Matt. 24:36) But when a brief period of years at the most separates us from the great windup of this old system, the vital thing is to stay spiritually awake. (*Awake!* October 8, 1966, p. 20);

As to “that day and hour,” Jesus said, “nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.” (Matthew 24:36) But Jesus did give a helpful time indicator when he said: “This generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur.” (Matthew 24:34) All what things? All the various features of “the sign” about which he was speaking, as well as the “great tribulation,” which he had also mentioned. For these things to take place within a generation would mean that persons who were on hand to observe what happened in 1914 C.E. at the beginning of the “conclusion of the system of things,” would still have to be alive at the end of this period, when the “great tribulation” strikes. Those who remember the events of 1914 are getting up in years now. Many of their number have already died. But, Jesus assures us, within “this generation,” before they have all died, destruction of this wicked system of things will come. (*True Peace and Security - From What Source?* 1973, p. 88);

It is this coming “great tribulation” that must have its days “cut short” [Greek, *kolobo’o*], curtailed, lopped off at the extremity, not split in the middle. This is done on account of God’s “chosen ones” and in order that ‘some flesh’ may be saved. (Matt. 24:21, 22) God has a fixed “day and hour” for the start of that “great tribulation,” without any delay. (Matt. 24:36) (*The Watchtower* January 15, 1970, p. 53).

In the last passage the Watchtower Society seems to claim to dictate God, if He can change His purpose, or not. By telling that the date cannot be changed and that God will ‘cut short’ time heading to Armageddon, it suggested that it knew the date.

Let us turn to the Watchtower Society’s statements about ‘that day and hour’ published in 1974 and 1975, so “five minutes to twelve” before expected Armageddon. It seems that after stimulating emotions in years 1966-1973 only a few passages on Matthew 24:36 could not dampen them.

An interesting reminiscence of 1974 is presented by Raymond Franz, who discussed the issue with his uncle, Vice President of the Watchtower Society, Frederick Franz:

One Sunday evening in 1974, after my wife and I had returned from a speaking engagement in another part of the country, my uncle, then vice president, came over to our room. (...) My wife mentioned to him that in my talk that weekend I had cautioned the brothers about becoming unduly excited over 1975. His quick response was, "And why *shouldn't* they get excited? It's something to be excited about." There is no question in my mind that, of all the Governing Body members, the vice president was most convinced of the rightness of what he had written, and on which writing others had built. (*Crisis of Conscience*, R. Franz, 2004 p. 248).

The following are statements of the Watchtower Society made to dampen emotions of publishers who expected 1975 and Armageddon.

Statements of 1974

God reveals to us what we need to know so that we can take a wise course and help others by alerting them to the danger and to the imminence of Jehovah's "day." But he has not told us exactly what year or what day, even what hour, he will begin the "great tribulation" on this world. (Matt. 24:36) (*The Watchtower* January 15, 1974, p. 56).

This statement is far from being an extended commentary on Matthew 24:36. Earlier statements of the Watchtower Society suggested 1975 as the most appropriate time for Armageddon, though they did not point to 'that day and hour', indeed. There was a mention about autumn and September. We do not know why the Watchtower Society excuses itself by ignorance of that year, day and hour, although the Bible speaks of time in general way: "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority" (Acts 1:7).

The second statement published in 1974:

True, the most accurate Bible chronology available indicates that 6,000 years of human existence will end in the mid-1970's. So these Christians are intensely interested to see if that will coincide with the outbreak of the "great tribulation" of our day that will eliminate all wicked ones on earth. It could. But they are not even attempting to predict exactly when the destruction of Satan's wicked system of things will occur. They are content to wait and see, realizing that no human on earth knows the date. - Matt. 24:36. (*The Watchtower* June 15, 1974, p. 379).

Is it true that Jehovah's Witnesses were "not even attempting to predict exactly when the destruction of Satan's wicked system of things will occur"? Maybe the Watchtower Society did not predict it "exactly", indeed, but it made much speculation about it. Well, these are its own words on this subject:

If the 1970's should see intervention by Jehovah God to bring an end to a corrupt world drifting toward ultimate disintegration, that should surely not surprise us. If you feel that this is painting the picture too darkly, consider what warnings the hard facts have forced even men of this world to express. They sense that disaster is approaching, but, lacking the Bible's guidance, they do not know what to do about it. (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, p. 14);

Are we to assume from this study that the battle of Armageddon will be all over by the autumn of 1975, and the long-looked-for thousand-year reign of Christ will begin by then? Possibly, but we wait to see how closely the seventh thousand-year period of man's existence coincides with the sabbathlike thousand-year reign of Christ. If these two periods run parallel with each other as to the calendar year, it will not be by mere chance or accident but will be according to Jehovah's loving and timely purposes. (*The Watchtower* August 15, 1968, p. 499).

The following passage on 'that day and hour' was not included in the Watchtower publications index:

The publications of Jehovah's witnesses have shown that, according to Bible chronology, it appears that 6,000 years of man's existence will be completed in the mid-1970's. But these publications have never said that the world's end would come then. Nevertheless, there has been considerable individual speculation on the matter. So the assembly presentation "Why We Have Not Been Told 'That Day and

Hour” was very timely. It emphasized that we do not know the exact time when God will bring the end. All we know is that the end will come within the generation that sees fulfilled on it the sign that Jesus Christ said would then be in evidence. (See Matthew chapters 24, 25.) All indications are that the fulfillment of this sign began in 1914. So we can be confident that the end is near; we do not have the slightest doubt that God will bring it about, the speaker stressed. But we have to wait and see exactly when, in the meantime keeping busy in God’s service. (*The Watchtower* October 15, 1974, p. 635).

In this statement we find a repeated claim that the Witnesses did “not know the exact time”, but looking back we see that a ‘safeguard’ for 1975 simply failed. The ‘safeguard’ was a doctrine of generation which remembered the year 1914, but which passed away, and this teaching was rejected by the Watchtower Society in November 1995. The ‘end’ did not come, but there was an end for both Witness prophecies.

Eventually we quote a characteristic statement of the Watchtower Society, which appeared in the end of 1974:

Not one thing only, but many things now taking place concurrently prove that we are near the day and hour of that future appearance of the “sign of the Son of man” to all persons, even unbelievers. (*The Watchtower* December 15, 1974, p. 751).

We see from the above thoughts that close fulfillment of ‘that day and hour’ could still happen in 1975. So, Jehovah’s Witnesses could know ‘that day and hour’ long time ago. When the teaching on generation 1914 was rejected, a time for knowing ‘that day and hour’ became probably a matter of more distant future.

Statements of the year 1975

The following is a passage about ‘that day and hour’ referred to by index of the Watchtower Society, it comes from an article “Why We Have Not Been Told ‘That Day and Hour’”:

Did Jesus give more details than this, telling his disciples the precise time for this to happen? To the contrary, he told them that the “day and hour” was not known to any creature, and he emphasized the point by saying it again and again - yes, five times. “Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father,” he said. - Matt. 24:36–25:13. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1975, p. 277).

This passage seems to be in agreement with the Bible, but there is a certain reservation. The above words are prefaced by the teaching on generation 1914:

When will it be, then, that the Son of man comes with destructive power to cleanse this earth of all who love the way of unrighteousness? Jesus himself answers: “Truly I say to you that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur.” (Matt. 24:34; Mark 13:30) Which “generation” is that? The one that has witnessed the events in fulfillment of prophecy since 1914 C.E. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1975, pp. 276-277).

The Watchtower Society is not excused by the fact that it did not give ‘that day and hour’ for 1975, because it determined a borderline for the expected ‘end’, and the borderline were people who remembered events of 1914. Most of those who were 15 years old in the year 1914, already passed away. (compare chapter “‘Generation 1914’ and 1975”).

The next passage referred to by the index:

But nobody should get the idea that, simply by chronology, he can calculate the time of that “coming” of Christ for executing judgment. Christ himself told his apostles: “Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.” - Matt. 24:36. (...) How, then, could any human today possibly figure it out? (*The Watchtower* January 1, 1975, pp. 9-10).

These words of the Watchtower Society are strange. They are directed not to the Society, but to

others. Who in those times always referred to its “Bible chronology”, but the Watchtower Society? Who based evidence on the chronology? For example the *Watchtower* magazines published in 1968 used the word „chronology” 42 times, and in 1969 used it 39 times (see CD *Watchtower Library - 2005 Edition* 2006). Maybe „any human” mentioned by the *Watchtower* was the Vice President F. Franz, who presented the matter at the start of 1975 campaign at the convention in Baltimore. Was he criticized for this teaching now?

The last passage about ‘that day and hour’ published in 1975 and referred to by the Watchtower Society’s index, applies to Jesus, not to people. It is a question from a reader (“Does Jesus Christ know when the ‘great tribulation’ will begin?”):

He may, but we cannot say definitely that he does. (...) But if Jesus has not yet learned the “day and hour” to “complete his conquest,” he soon will learn it. (*The Watchtower* December 15, 1975, p. 768).

Maybe this statement of Jehovah’s Witnesses could not be considered as strange, if they would not change this view on Jesus’ knowledge, as they changed their position on ‘that day and hour’. The following are words of the Watchtower Society:

Does Jesus now know the timing of Armageddon? It seems quite reasonable to believe that he does. (...) Has he learned it since? (...) Since Jesus has now been empowered as the one to conquer in God’s name, it seems reasonable that his Father has told him when the end will come, when he will “complete his conquest.” (*The Watchtower* August 15, 1996, pp. 30-31).

We omit a commentary to Matthew 24:36 published in a book *Man’s Salvation out of World Distress at Hand!* (1975), because it does not teach about 1975. It was published especially for summer conventions in 1975. It is possible that the leaders of the Watchtower Society lost their faith in the significance of that year for the world. They mentioned the date in that book but only as the Holy Year in the Roman Catholic Church (see pp. 205-206, 240)!

The same situation took place in the summer 1995, a new handbook, *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life* was published, which did not contain a teaching on ‘generation 1914’, though the official rejection of that teaching took place in November 1995.

Although, as we see, the Watchtower Society tried to dampen formerly stimulated emotions of its publishers, it simultaneously warned them against postponing the expected ‘great tribulation’ in an article “Why We Have Not Been Told ‘That Day and Hour’”. Here are these words:

They may be inclined to think that, since God has not told us the “day and hour,” it probably will not be in our day. (...) If they persist in this attitude and God’s “day and hour” catch up with them, they will by no means escape calamity. Disregard of Jehovah’s coming “day and hour” for executing his judgment can infect even those associating with the true Christian congregation today. A person may know what the Bible says about the “great tribulation.” He may have heard about it for years, perhaps even from dedicated Christian parents. But, seeing nothing really dramatic taking place, in his own mind he may begin to put into the distant future the coming of God’s “day and hour.” (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1975, pp. 280-281).

It seems that also today the same logic prevails in the teaching of the Watchtower Society and who does not treat seriously its calculations of ‘the end’ is accused of lack of love to God:

If any do not really love Jehovah, they will be inclined to postpone his day in their minds and turn to secular pursuits. (*Worship the Only True God* 2002 p. 176; see also *United in Worship of the Only True God* 1983, p. 177).

Let us present an opinion of a widely known Jehovah’s Witness who admitted that while expecting the year 1975 the Witnesses did not take into consideration Jesus’ words on ‘that day and hour’. The second quotation is a similar statement by the Watchtower Society:

What will the 1970’s bring? (...) We were expecting that 6,000 years of man’s existence would be reached in 1975. Would this date bring us to the start of Christ’s Millennial Reign? That possibility

intrigued us. Now we can look back on that year and appreciate that the words of Jesus at Matthew 24:36 do not allow us to fix a date for the end. He stated: “Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.” (*The Watchtower* February 15, 1984, p. 25);

More recently, many Witnesses conjectured that events associated with the beginning of Christ’s Millennial Reign might start to take place in 1975. Their anticipation was based on the understanding that the seventh millennium of human history would begin then. (...) The mistakes or misconceptions, as in the case of first-century Christians, were due to a failure to heed Jesus’ caution, ‘You do not know the time.’ (*Awake!* June 22, 1995, p. 9).

That the expectations of publishers were ‘different’ from the Watchtower Society’s hopes is testified by a publication describing problems of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Czechoslovakia in 1969 (see *2000 Yearbook of Jehovah’s Witnesses* pp. 196-197; compare Appendix 1 of the present book).

At the end let us also say that the aforementioned index of the Watchtower Society does not have any reference to even a single publication discussing 1975 in connection with the following words of Jesus:

“It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority” (Acts 1:7).

Autumn, Early Autumn, September, September 5 and 1975

Did the Watchtower Society determine the time of ‘possible’ Armageddon even more precisely? Was the year 1975 enough for them? It seems it was not, because in 1975 Vice President F. Franz said something about September:

He stressed that, according to dependable Bible chronology, 6,000 years of human history will end this coming September according to the lunar calendar. This coincides with a time when “the human species [is] about to starve itself to death,” as well as its being faced with poisoning by pollution and destruction by nuclear weapons. Franz added: “There’s no basis for believing that mankind, faced with what it now faces, can exist for the seventh thousand-year period” under the present system of things. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1975, p. 285).

Also in early October 1975 the Society mentioned September:

SINCE a new Jewish lunar year began in September 1975 a significant point in human history was reached. What was that? According to the Bible’s count of time, mankind then completed 6,000 years of existence on earth. Yes, the first man Adam, if he had chosen to remain obedient under God’s rulership, would have still been alive and 6,000 years old in September of this year. (...) Does it mean that Christ’s millennial Kingdom rule, as the final 1,000 years of that “rest day,” is to be reckoned from September 1975? (...) No, it does not mean that. (*The Watchtower* October 1, 1975, p. 579).

Interestingly, the Watchtower Society wrote about “September” only in the year 1975! Earlier it used such terms as “autumn” and “early autumn”, which we discuss below.

But that is not the whole story, because according to R. Franz, the former member of the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses, his uncle in his speech (of September 7) told the Gilead school graduates about “September 5”:

And do you know what that means? That here on this day of your graduation, why it is the *second day of the seventh millennium* of man’s existence here on earth. Isn’t that something?... (*Crisis of Conscience* R. Franz, 2004, p. 97).

It is interesting that this ‘exact’ date was verbalized by F. Franz after it already passed! Was he earlier afraid of a fiasco? Moreover, a publication reporting the Gilead school graduation omits a passage from the speech by Vice President, which was quoted by R. Franz, and this celebration took place in the presence of other Governing Body’s members (see *The Watchtower* November 1, 1975, pp. 671-672).

However, R. Franz also mentions that his uncle spoke about September 5 in his talks which he presented as a guest speaker in different countries:

Earlier, toward the start of 1975, President Knorr had made a trip around the world, taking Vice President Franz with him. The vice president’s speeches in all countries visited centered on 1975. Upon their return, the other members of the Governing Body, having heard reports from many countries of the stirring effect of the vice president’s talk, asked to hear a tape recording of it, made in Australia. [Footnote: This was in the session of February 19, 1975].

In his talk, the vice president spoke of 1975 as a “year of great possibilities, tremendous probabilities.” He told his audience that, according to the Hebrew calendar, they were “already in the fifth lunar month of 1975,” with less than seven lunar months remaining. He emphasized several times that the Hebrew year would close with Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, on September 5, 1975.

Acknowledging that much would have to happen in that short time if the final windup was to come by then, he went on to talk about the possibility of a year or so difference due to some lapse of time between Adam's creation and Eve's creation. (...) Toward the close, he urged his listeners not to take an improper view, however, and assume that the coming destruction could be "years away," and focus their attention on other matters, such as getting married and raising families, building up a fine business venture or spending years at college in some engineering course.

After hearing the tape, a few of the Governing Body members expressed concern that if indeed no "very bold, extreme predictions" were being made, some subtle predictions were, and the effect was palpably evident in the excitement generated.

This was the first time that concern was expressed in the Governing Body discussions. But no action was taken, no policy decided upon. (*Crisis of Conscience* R. Franz, 2004, s. 249).

It is strange that there is no sign of the date "September 5" in the articles of the Watchtower Society. Is it mentioned only in archives of speeches, gathered in Brooklyn?

There are also frequent mentions in the Witness publications about „autumn" and „early autumn" 1975. Sometimes both versions appear in one and the same article. Here are the following examples:

However, Bible chronology which indicates that Adam was created in the fall of the year 4026 B.C.E. would bring us down to the year 1975 C.E. as the date marking 6,000 years of human history with yet 1,000 years to come for Christ's Kingdom rule. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1970, p. 273).

See also *The Watchtower* May 1, 1967, p. 262; *The Watchtower* July 15, 1967, p. 446; *The Watchtower* May 1, 1968, p. 271; *The Watchtower* August 15, 1968, p. 499; *Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God* 1966, p. 29.

1975 - 6000 - End of 6th 1,000-year day of man's existence (in early autumn) (*Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God* 1966, p. 35).

See also *The Watchtower* May 1, 1968, p. 272; *1975 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, p. 256.

Term “Must” and 1975

In the Watchtower Society’s literature from the period of 1975 campaign, at least five times appears a term “must” or “have to be”, which determines what Jesus has to do in connection with the expected Armageddon and the millennial reign. It shows how determined Jehovah’s Witnesses were, who went as far as to enforce their will on God. Here are examples of that:

This would mean that the remnant of these (...) would be sealed (...) the end of six thousand year of humankind’s existence. We are near that point of time now! Bible time-scheduling indicates it. A world storm must therefore be shortly ahead. (*Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God* 1966, p. 357);

That this peace is near is indicated, not only by world conditions, which fulfill Bible prophecy, but also by the fact that six thousand years of mankind’s history is soon to end. It was pointed out that, in ancient Israel, a sabbath day was enjoyed after six days of toil; also that the thousand-year reign of Christ is merely a day from God’s viewpoint. “In order for the Lord Jesus Christ to be ‘Lord even of the sabbath day,’” the speaker declared, “his thousand-year reign would have to be the seventh in a series of thousand-year periods or millenniums.” (Matt. 12:8, AV) That time is near at hand! (*The Watchtower* September 1, 1969, p. 523);

Further, Bible chronology indicates that we are at the close of six thousand years of human history. For Jesus to be ‘Lord of the sabbath,’ his thousand-year reign would have to be the seventh in a series of thousand-year periods. Would not, then, the end of six millenniums of mankind’s laborious enslavement under Satan the Devil be the fitting time for Jehovah God to usher in a sabbath millennium for all mankind? (*The Watchtower* September 1, 1970, p. 539);

More recently earnest researchers of the Holy Bible have made a recheck of its chronology. According to their calculations the six millenniums of mankind’s life on earth would end in the mid-seventies. Thus the seventh millennium from man’s creation by Jehovah God would begin within less than ten years. (...) In order for the Lord Jesus Christ to be “Lord even of the sabbath day,” his thousand-year reign would have to be the seventh in a series of thousand-year periods or millenniums. (Matt. 12:8, AV) Thus it would be a sabbatic reign. Since early in the existence of mankind Satan the Devil has been on the loose, making the human family to toil in hard bondage, causing the earth to be filled with violence before the global flood of Noah’s day and inducing the same old earth to be filled with even greater violence today. Soon now six millenniums of his wicked exploiting of mankind as his slaves will end, within the lifetime of the generation that has witnessed world events since the close of the Gentile Times in 1914 till now, according to the prophetic words of Jesus in Matthew 24:34. Would not, then, the end of six millenniums of mankind’s laborious enslavement under Satan the Devil be the fitting time for Jehovah God to usher in a Sabbath millennium for all his human creatures? Yes, indeed! And his King Jesus Christ will be Lord of that Sabbath. (*The Watchtower* October 15, 1969, pp. 622-623).

The same words appear in a brochure *The Approaching Peace of a Thousand Years*, 1969, pp. 25-27.

Apart from the Watchtower Society’s statements arguing that the millennium “must” happen after 6,000 years of man’s existence, we have other passages presenting the same teaching, but without that ‘strong’ term. However, it does not change the firmness of predictions. Here are some examples:

It would also be most fitting on God's part, for, remember, mankind has yet ahead of it what the last book of the Holy Bible speaks of as the reign of Jesus Christ over earth for a thousand years, the millennial reign of Christ. Prophetically Jesus Christ, when on earth nineteen centuries ago, said concerning himself: "For Lord of the sabbath is what the Son of man is." (Matthew 12:8) It would not be by mere chance or accident but would be according to the loving purpose of Jehovah God for the reign of Jesus Christ, the "Lord of the sabbath," to run parallel with the seventh millennium of man's existence. (*Life*

Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God 1966, p. 30);

According to the Bible timetable, man's history on earth has been nearly 6,000 years. Adam was created in 4026 B.C.E., which means that six thousand years of human history end about the fall of 1975 C.E. We are in the great 7,000-year rest day of God, starting at the time he rested after the creation of Adam and Eve. There are, therefore, a thousand years left to run. Without Satan and his demons to disturb mankind it will indeed be a restful time. (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1967, pp. 446-447);

Within a few years at most the final parts of Bible prophecy relative to these "last days" will undergo fulfillment, resulting in the liberation of surviving mankind into Christ's glorious 1,000-year reign. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1968, p. 272);

Hence, the first six thousand years since man's creation could be likened to the first six days of the week in ancient Israel. The seventh one-thousand-year period could be likened to the seventh day, the sabbath, of that week. - 2 Pet. 3:8. How fitting it would be for God, following this pattern, to end man's misery after six thousand years of human rule and follow it with His glorious Kingdom rule for a thousand years! This Kingdom Christians have prayed for during many centuries. (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, p. 14);

Actually these six thousand years have been, as it were, man's workweek, in which he labored by the sweat of his face. But he will get rest during the coming thousand-year reign of Christ, which Bible chronology and fulfillment of Bible prophecy show is to begin very soon. - Gen. 2:3. The seventh one thousand years of the seventh "day" will thus in itself be a sabbath. During it Satan and his demons will be bound. Christ and his anointed followers will rule with him as kings and priests. With what result? That all God's enemies will be put beneath Christ's feet. By means of this sabbath the seventh day will truly be sacred, for it will cause righteousness to flourish. (*The Watchtower* February 15, 1970, p. 120);

However, Bible chronology which indicates that Adam was created in the fall of the year 4026 B.C.E. would bring us down to the year 1975 C.E. as the date marking 6,000 years of human history with yet 1,000 years to come for Christ's Kingdom rule. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1970, p. 273).

It seems it is worthwhile to check how often appear such words describing 'the end', as Armageddon, 'day of Jehovah', 'millennial reign', destruction, etc. in the Watchtower Society's publications published in the period of 1975 campaign, before it and after it.

Here is a sample: the word "millennium" used 1960-1977 only in the *Watchtower* magazine (according to results showed by *CD Watchtower Library - 2005 Edition* 2006):

1960 - 2
1961 - 1
1962 - 1
1963 - 2
1964 - 2
1965 - 2
1966 - 0
1967 - 37
1968 - 14
1969 - 24
1970 - 2
1971 - 1
1972 - 0
1973 - 0
1974 - 8
1975 - 24
1976 - 2
1977 - 0.

We see from the above that especially in the years 1967-1969 and 1974-1975 the word "millennium" was a pet term, used by the Watchtower Society. We will stop with that one word, because there are many such key words, and such issue would require deeper inquiries and research.

Creation of Adam and Eve and 1975

Before the year 1975 the Watchtower Society taught that both Adam and Eve were created in the same year 4026 B.C.E. From that moment one should calculate 6,000 years which ended in 1975. Later, when the expected year passed, this view was changed, though even earlier – as we will see – Vice President F. Franz speculated that the interval between Adam's and the creation of Eve was just one year.

The following are the Watchtower Society's statements concerning creation of Adam and Eve in one year. Notice that gradually such event was treated as more and more certain.

From the most reliable investigations of Bible chronology, (...) we find that Adam was created in the autumn of the year 4026 B.C.E. Sometime in that same year Eve could well have been created, directly after which God's rest day commenced. In what year, then, would the first 6,000 years of man's existence and also the first 6,000 years of God's rest day come to an end? The year 1975. (*Awake!* October 8, 1966, p. 19);

Since it was also Jehovah's purpose for man to multiply and fill the earth, it is logical that he would create Eve soon after Adam, perhaps just a few weeks or months later in the same year, 4026 B.C.E. After her creation, God's rest day, the seventh period, immediately followed. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1968, p. 271);

To calculate where man is in the stream of time relative to God's seventh day of 7,000 years, we need to determine how long a time has elapsed from the year of Adam and Eve's creation in 4026 B.C.E. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1968, p. 271);

Eve's creation was quickly accomplished, 'while Adam was sleeping.' (Gen. 2:21) (*The Watchtower* August 15, 1968, p. 500);

According to reliable Bible chronology, Adam and Eve were created in 4026 B.C.E. (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, p. 14). See also *The Watchtower* July 15, 1967, p. 446.

The following is a statement of F. Franz from March 2, 1975, in which he seems to doubt (but not deny) that Adam and Eve were created in the same year:

we do not know how short was the time interval between Adam's creation and the creation of Eve, at which point God's rest day of seven thousand years began. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1975, p. 285).

Compare his another statement quoted by R. Franz and included below.

We also have another proof that Jehovah's Witnesses used to teach that Adam and Eve were created in the same year. Well, their older Bible dictionary states in one place that Adam was 130 years old when his son Seth was born, and in another place it states that Eve was 130 years old when she gave birth to that son. (see *Aid to Bible Understanding* 1971 pp. 333, 538). It shows that the first couple was created in the same year. Of course, in the new dictionary the Watchtower Society changed a passage concerning Eve (see *Insight on the Scriptures* 1988 vol. 1, p. 772).

How they get themselves out after September 1975, when Armageddon did not come? The Watchtower Society Simple stated that we do not know when God created Eve, and we can calculate 6,000 from that event:

It shows a time lapse between the creation of Adam and that of his wife, Eve. During that time,

God had Adam name the animals. Whether that period amounted to weeks or months or years, we do not know. (*The Watchtower* October 1, 1975, p. 579);

Why do we not know when God's "rest day" began and when it will end? Although the time of Adam's creation can be determined, the beginning of God's "rest day" cannot. This is so because there was a time lapse of unspecified length between Adam's creation and the creation of Eve. Not until after the creation of Eve did God's "rest day" begin. The start of that day being unknown, its end is likewise unknown. (*The Watchtower* January 1, 1976, p. 30);

How much time elapsed between the creation of the man and that of the woman? The Bible does not reveal this. (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1976, p. 436);

What, then, does this mean? Simply this: That these factors, and the possibilities for which they allow, prevent us from saying with any positiveness how much time elapsed between Adam's creation and that of the first woman. We do not know whether it was a brief time such as a month or a few months, a year or even more. (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1976, p. 437).

Let us compare two contradictory statements making the Bible responsible for such speculation:

According to reliable Bible chronology, Adam and Eve were created in 4026 B.C.E. (*Awake!* October 8, 1968, p. 14);

How much time elapsed between the creation of the man and that of the woman? The Bible does not reveal this. (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1976, p. 436).

I recall from my childhood that when Armageddon did not come in 1975, publishers replied to questions that God by delaying that event gave people a chance to convert. They also add that the date of 'the end' might be postponed for a year or so. I had no idea, why. I could not find such explanation in the Watchtower Society's publications. At last the matter was presented by R. Franz, the former member of the Governing Body, who recalled his uncle, Vice President F. Franz and his statement of 1975:

"he went on to talk about the possibility of a year or so difference due to some lapse of time between Adam's creation and Eve's creation" (*Crisis of Conscience* R. Franz, 2004, s. 249).

Did F. Franz think of 1976?

Jehovah's Witnesses were convinced to use the above explanation (Armageddon after a year or so) by a publication which appeared in 1976:

What, then, does this mean? Simply this: That these factors, and the possibilities for which they allow, prevent us from saying with any positiveness how much time elapsed between Adam's creation and that of the first woman. We do not know whether it was a brief time such as a month or a few months, a year or even more. (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1976, p. 437).

Adding a year or so could be a result of the problem of sin of the first couple, but it will be discussed in a chapter "Adam's Sin and 1975".

It is important to know that even before 1975 campaign was started, the Watchtower Society had a view that the millennium will start right after 6,000 years from man's creation:

The coming thousand-year period is the seventh thousand-year period since man's creation, hence the final thousand years of Jehovah's great sabbath day. (*The Watchtower* April 1, 1954, p. 222).

Adam's Sin and 1975

When I discussed the year 1975 with Jehovah's Witnesses, I heard another explanation: that 6,000 years should be counted from sin of Adam and Eve, not from their creation. Since we do not know when they committed their sin, so we cannot determine the end of 6,000 years and the beginning of the millennium. I could not find such interpretation in the publications, but we cannot rule out that such an explanation existed or that it was verbally transmitted among publishers (in early days of the Watchtower Society the return of Christ in 1874 was calculated by adding 6,000 years to a date of Adam's sin in a year 4126 before Christ, not to a date of his creation in 4128; see *Thy Kingdom Come* 1919, pp. 127-128).

Let us check if the Watchtower Society determined the moment of that sin. Yes, it determined it, that it happened two years after man's creation. Also in other publications it pointed to the same year in which it placed creation (4025 and 4026 B.C.E.). The following are older and newer statements from the Watchtower Society's publications:

Man's creation was placed in 4128 and sin's entrance in 4126 B.C.E. (*The Watchtower* 15 August 1974, p. 507; see also *God's Kingdom of a Thousand Years Has Approached* 1973, pp. 207-208);

So, then, whereas Usher dates A. D. 1 as the year 4005 from the creation of Adam, it really was, as we have shown, the year 4129, according to the Bible record... (*The Time Is at Hand* 1917, p. 53);

Fall 4127 B.C. Fall of Adam (*The Finished Mystery* 1917, p. 60);

It will be remembered that the reckoning of chronology began with the creation of Adam, and that some time was spent by Adam and Eve before sin entered. Just how long we are not informed, but two years would not be an improbable estimate. (*Thy Kingdom Come* 1919, p. 127);

There is some Scriptural evidence to indicate that approximately two years of time elapsed during which they enjoyed the blessedness of their home and the beauties of their surroundings and uninterrupted sweet fellowship with each other. Then began the sorrows of man, and since then sorrows have ever been present with the human race. (*Creation* 1927, p. 60);

Man's existence covers nearly 6,000 years (4025 B.C. to over 1,950 years A. D.) as shown by Bible chronology. ("*Make Sure of All Things*" 1953, p. 325; compare pp. 296, 344);

Edenic Judgment Day (c.4025 B.C.) Brought Condemnation to Adam and Eve and Disabilities to Their Offspring. ("*Make Sure of All Things*" 1953, p. 219; compare p. 383).

About the year 4026 B.C.E., Jehovah God had said to the Serpent that had brought about man's downfall in the Garden of Eden... (*The Watchtower* December 15, 1970, p. 751). See also *The Watchtower* 1 November 1972, p. 648).

Also the Bible dictionary of Jehovah's Witnesses pointed to the year 4026 B.C.E. as the year of sin and announcement of punishment:

Jehovah God, at Genesis 3:15, stated his purpose prophetically in the garden of Eden in the presence of Adam and Eve and the "serpent," about 4026 B.C.E. (*Aid to Bible Understanding* 1971, p. 387).

This passage was changed a bit by the Watchtower Society in the newer dictionary, removing the inconvenient date:

Jehovah God, at Genesis 3:15, stated his purpose prophetically in the garden of Eden in the presence of Adam, Eve, and the “serpent.” (*Insight on the Scriptures* 1988 vol. 1, p. 521).

As we see from the above, although the Watchtower Society moved the beginning of 6,000 calculation two years later, it gave them only year 1977, which passed long ago without fulfillment of any prophecy.

God's Rest and 1975

Before the year 1975 the Watchtower Society taught that Adam and Eve were created in the same year 4026 B.C.E. and right away 'God's rest' began, so that the seventh day started, which will last 7,000 years. From that moment one should count 6,000 years which ended in 1975. Later, when the expected year passed, that view was changed, namely that it is unknown when God started to rest after creation of the first couple.

The following are several statements of the Watchtower Society concerning God's rest right after the creation of Adam and Eve in 4026 B.C.E.

At the first let us mention that before 1975 campaign Jehovah's Witnesses several times changed their mind on the above subject. For example a book published in 1953 taught:

The Christian era is now nearing its close and we are almost six thousand years from man's creation, after which God's resting began, or his desisting from earthly creation; and now the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ is before mankind, after which he will hand over all things to God his Father. So, not by human interpretation, but by God's own interpretation, the seventh day of rest adds up to seven thousand years. (*New Heavens and New Earth* 1953, pp. 41-42).

Also another publication of that period stated:

The coming thousand-year period is the seventh thousand-year period since man's creation, hence the final thousand years of Jehovah's great sabbath day. (*The Watchtower* April 1, 1954, p. 222).

As we see, the Watchtower Society used to teach that God's rest began right after man's creation.

Later, a book published in 1963 taught something different (!):

The first edition of this book, published in 1963, stated: "Does this mean, then, that by 1963 we had progressed 5,988 years into the 'day' on which Jehovah 'has been resting from all his work'? (Gen. 2:3) No, for the creation of Adam does not correspond with the beginning of Jehovah's rest day. Following Adam's creation, and still within the sixth creative day, Jehovah appears to have been forming further animal and bird creations. Also, he had Adam name the animals, which would take some time, and he proceeded to create Eve. (Gen. 2:18-22; see also *NW*, 1953 Ed., footnote on vs. 19) Whatever time elapsed between Adam's creation and the end of the 'sixth day' must be subtracted from the 5,988 years in order to give the actual length of time from the beginning of the 'seventh day' until [1963]. It does no good to use Bible chronology for speculating on dates that are still future in the stream of time. - Matt. 24:36." ("*All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial*" 1990, pp. 286-287 [see ed. 1963, pp. 285-286]).

So we see from the quotation that the Watchtower Society changed its view on God's rest and later ceased to call people to avoid speculating on Bible chronology.

Afterwards, just before 1975 campaign, their view was changed again (!) in a book printed in 1965:

Because, after Jehovah God created Adam and Eve, his sixth creative day ended and his seventh day of desisting from earthly creative work began, which day he blessed and made sacred. ("*Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie*" 1965, p. 303);

For the man that has entered into God's rest has also himself rested from his own works, just as God did from his own [in 4026 B.C.E.] ("*Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie*" 1965, p. 297).

The above view was supported by other Watchtower publications published during 1975

campaign, in the years 1966-1975. Notice the growing certainty concerning the discussed event. Here are some passages:

Does God's rest day parallel the time man has been on earth since his creation? Apparently so. From the most reliable investigations of Bible chronology, harmonizing with many accepted dates of secular history, we find that Adam was created in the autumn of the year 4026 B.C.E. Sometime in that same year Eve could well have been created, directly after which God's rest day commenced. In what year, then, would the first 6,000 years of man's existence and also the first 6,000 years of God's rest day come to an end? The year 1975. (*Awake!* October 8, 1966, p. 19);

Does it mean that God's rest day began 4026 B.C.E.? It could have. The *Life Everlasting* book does not say it did not. The book merely presents the chronology. You can accept it or reject it. If that is the case, what does that mean to us? [He went into some length showing the feasibility of the 4026 B.C.E. date as being the beginning of God's rest day.] (*The Watchtower* October 15, 1966, p. 631);

According to the Bible timetable, man's history on earth has been nearly 6,000 years. Adam was created in 4026 B.C.E., which means that six thousand years of human history end about the fall of 1975 C.E. We are in the great 7,000-year rest day of God, starting at the time he rested after the creation of Adam and Eve. There are, therefore, a thousand years left to run. Without Satan and his demons to disturb mankind it will indeed be a restful time. (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1967, pp. 446-447);

Since it was also Jehovah's purpose for man to multiply and fill the earth, it is logical that he would create Eve soon after Adam, perhaps just a few weeks or months later in the same year, 4026 B.C.E. After her creation, God's rest day, the seventh period, immediately followed. Therefore, God's seventh day and the time man has been on earth apparently run parallel. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1968, p. 271);

And yet the end of that sixth creative "day" could end within the same Gregorian calendar year of Adam's creation. It may involve only a difference of weeks or months, not years. (...) After the sixth creative day ends, the seventh one begins. This time between Adam's creation and the beginning of the seventh day, the day of rest, let it be noted, need not have been a long time. It could have been a rather short one. The naming of the animals by Adam, and his discovery that there was no complement for himself, required no great length of time. The animals were in subjection to Adam; they were peaceful; they came under God's leading; they were not needing to be chased down and caught. It took Noah only seven days to get the same *kinds* of animals, male and female, into the Ark. (Gen. 7:1-4) Eve's creation was quickly accomplished, 'while Adam was sleeping.' (Gen. 2:21) So the lapse of time between Adam's creation and the end of the sixth creative day, though unknown, was a comparatively short period of time. (*The Watchtower* August 15, 1968, pp. 499-500);

"EVENING" OF SEVENTH CREATIVE "DAY" BEGINS, 4026 B.C.E. (*God's 'Eternal Purpose' Now Triumphant for Man's Good* 1974, p. 51).

After 1975 the Watchtower Society changed its view on God's rest and returned to the view taught in 1963. Interestingly, that only after September 1975 it stated: "so it does us no good to speculate". Here is the 'new' teaching:

It shows a time lapse between the creation of Adam and that of his wife, Eve. During that time, God had Adam name the animals. Whether that period amounted to weeks or months or years, we do not know. So we do not know exactly when Jehovah's great "rest day" began, nor do we know exactly when it will end. The same applies to the beginning of Christ's millennial reign. The Bible provides us no way to fix the date, and so it does us no good to speculate when that date may be. (*The Watchtower* October 1, 1975, p. 579);

Why do we not know when God's "rest day" began and when it will end? Although the time of Adam's creation can be determined, the beginning of God's "rest day" cannot. This is so because there was a time lapse of unspecified length between Adam's creation and the creation of Eve. Not until after the creation of Eve did God's "rest day" begin. The start of that day being unknown, its end is likewise unknown. (*The Watchtower* January 1, 1976, p. 30);

For one thing, even though Bible chronology clearly indicates that we have reached the mark of six thousand years since the time of the creation of the first human, Adam, it does not tell us just how long

after that event the sixth creative day came to its close and the seventh creative period or “day,” God’s great rest day, began. (...) But that great rest day did not begin immediately after Adam’s creation. (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1976, p. 436);

What, then, does this mean? Simply this: That these factors, and the possibilities for which they allow, prevent us from saying with any positiveness how much time elapsed between Adam’s creation and that of the first woman. We do not know whether it was a brief time such as a month or a few months, a year or even more. But whatever time elapsed would have to be added to the time that has passed since Adam’s creation in order for us to know how far along we are within God’s seventh “day,” his grand day of rest. So our having advanced six thousand years from the start of human existence is one thing. Advancing six thousand years into God’s seventh creative “day” is quite another. And we do not know just how far along in the stream of time we are in this regard. (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1976, p. 437).

We should also mention that the concept of 7,000 years (a span of each creative day) was abandoned by the Watchtower Society after a dozen or so years after 1975. Jehovah’s Witnesses organization taught about „God’s” and Biblical origin of that concept till 1987:

The Scriptures, together with subsequent facts which are indisputable proofs beyond a doubt, indicate that the seventh day or epoch of creation, mentioned in Genesis, covers a period of seven thousand years of our time (*Creation* 1927 p. 28);

So, not by human interpretation, but by God's own interpretation, the seventh day of rest adds up to seven thousand years. (*New Heavens and New Earth* 1953 p. 42);

The Bible record, together with verifiable history, indicates that the seventh day of that creative week covers a period of 7,000 years. Hence, each of the six preceding “days” would be of the same length. (*Awake!* November 8, 1982 p. 7).

Here are the last two texts about the period of 7,000 years:

Second, a study of the fulfillment of Bible prophecy and of our location in the stream of time strongly indicate that each of the creative days (Genesis, chapter 1) is 7,000 years long. It is understood that Christ’s reign of a thousand years will bring to a close God’s 7,000-year ‘rest day,’ the last ‘day’ of the creative week. (Revelation 20:6; Genesis 2:2, 3) Based on this reasoning, the entire creative week would be 49,000 years long. (*The Watchtower* January 1, 1987, p. 30);

nor will Jehovah bring forth new material productions during the present 7,000-year day of resting from his works of creation. (*The Watchtower* March 1, 1987, p. 27).

After 1987 texts about “thousands of years” for each creative day started to appear in the Watchtower Society’s publications. This change from “7,000 years” to “thousands of years” was possibly made under influence of rank and file Witnesses who could not find such a concrete number in the Bible and maybe they asked the organization for explanation. Here are some examples of that new concept:

This makes it evident that each creative day, or work period, was at least thousands of years in length. (*Insight on the Scriptures* 1988 vol. 1, p. 594);

A dazzling vision of God’s purpose accomplished, the preparations for which he had made by six creative days of work over thousands of years of time! (*The Watchtower* August 1, 1989 p. 27);

The first chapter of Genesis provides a completely reasonable account of how these “unrepeatable” “unique events” came about during creative ‘days’ that stretched through millenniums of time. (*Bible - God’s Word or Man’s?* 1989 p. 110).

Rejection of “7,000 years” was a covering up of the last trace connected to the year 1975 and the period 6,000 years along with the millennium which were to complement that period. According to the present teaching of the Watchtower Society, the expected millennial reign of Christ is not directly connected with the date of Adam’s creation in 4026 B.C.E. and with the beginning of God’s rest.

Disillusionment, Responsibility and 1975

We will discuss here two subjects (disillusionment and responsibility). Because it is the 'easiest' thing for Jehovah's Witnesses to talk about disillusionment with the year 1975, so we will quote words from official publications of the Watchtower Society. Also the problem of responsibility for delusion or 'inappropriate' hopes for that year will be presented from literature of the same kind:

Disillusionment

The year 1975 came and passed, and nothing has happened. Here are 'traces' of Jehovah's Witnesses' disillusionment that the promised Kingdom of God did not come:

The mid-nineteen seventies have seen the completion of six thousand years of human history. In connection with this, many sincere servants of Jehovah had great expectations as to the nearness of the "great tribulation" mentioned at Matthew 24:21, 22, and the final phase of Jehovah's day. (*The Watchtower* August 1, 1976, p. 476);

We were expecting that 6,000 years of man's existence would be reached in 1975. Would this date bring us to the start of Christ's Millennial Reign? That possibility intrigued us. Now we can look back on that year and appreciate that the words of Jesus at Matthew 24:36 do not allow us to fix a date for the end. He stated: "Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father." (*The Watchtower* February 15, 1984, p. 25);

This system of things is into its 72nd year since the crucial date of 1914. Satan's world has lasted longer than many expected. In fact, some faithful Christians who expected to see Armageddon and the beginning of the new system of things in their lifetime have died. (*The Watchtower* July 1, 1986, pp. 19-20);

More recently, many Witnesses conjectured that events associated with the beginning of Christ's Millennial Reign might start to take place in 1975. Their anticipation was based on the understanding that the seventh millennium of human history would begin then. These erroneous views did not mean that God's promises were wrong, that he had made a mistake. By no means! The mistakes or misconceptions, as in the case of first-century Christians, were due to a failure to heed Jesus' caution, 'You do not know the time.' The wrong conclusions were due, not to malice or to unfaithfulness to Christ, but to a fervent desire to realize the fulfillment of God's promises in their own time. (*Awake!* June 22, 1995, p. 9);

[Mexico] There were strong expectations concerning the year 1975 and what it might mean in the fulfillment of Jehovah's purpose. Some set their hearts on that date as the time when the old system would be destroyed and God's new world would be established. When those expectations were not realized, there were some who ceased serving God. A number became apostates. But the vast majority of Jehovah's Witnesses were motivated by love for Jehovah. They knew that God's Word would never fail. (*1995 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, p. 227);

The Witnesses had long shared the belief that the Thousand Year Reign of Christ would follow after 6,000 years of human history. (*Jehovah's Witnesses - Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* 1993, p. 104);

Again, in 1975, there was disappointment when expectations regarding the start of the Millennium failed to materialize. As a result, some withdrew from the organization. Others, because they sought to subvert the faith of associates, were disfellowshipped. No doubt, disappointment over the date was a factor, but in some instances the roots went deeper. Some individuals also argued against the need to participate in the house-to-house ministry. Certain ones did not simply choose to go their own way; they became aggressive in opposing the organization with which they had been associated, and they made use of the

public press and television to air their views. Nevertheless, the number who defected was relatively small. (*Jehovah's Witnesses - Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* 1993, p. 633);

[Philippines] As the work moved ahead rapidly, the number of publishers continued to increase, surpassing 77,000 by 1975. (...) However, there were many who stopped serving Jehovah when the present system of things did not end in 1975. By 1979, the number of publishers had fallen below 59,000. Cornelio Cañete, who was serving as a circuit overseer in the mid-1970's, said: "Some got baptized because of 1975 and stayed for a few years. After 1975, they left the truth." (*2003 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, p. 162).

Surely, expectation for the year 1975 and unfulfilled hopes resulted in formation of an apostate group in Mozambique, as the Watchtower Society documented it in one of its publications (see *1996 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, pp. 158-159; compare Appendix 1 of the present book).

We will not present the concrete statistics showing how many people left the Watchtower Society after 1975. It was noticed by R. Franz and every interested person can consult his work (*Crisis of Conscience* R. Franz, 2004, pp. 247, 252). But we will notice how the number of baptism among Jehovah's Witnesses declined right after 1975.

Such remarkable number of baptized people from 1974 and 1975 (**297,872** and **295,073**), which gave 13,5% and 9,7% growth (*The Watchtower* January 1, 1975, p. 18 [see also pp. 24-27]; *The Watchtower* January 1, 1976, p. 19 [see also pp. 20-23]) was repeated only in 1990 (**301,518** – 6,1% growth), but then there were two times more Witnesses involved in reaching new converts (*The Watchtower* January 1, 1991, p. 17 [see also pp. 18-21]).

In 1978 there were only **95,052** people baptized, which gave minus growth or decline -1,4%, because more publishers left than joined the organization (*The Watchtower* January 1, 1979, p. 16 [see also pp. 18-21]). But in 1966, when 1975 campaign was started, only **58,904** people were baptized (2,4% growth) – *The Watchtower* January 1, 1967, p. 21 [see also pp. 24-27].

Responsibility

When neither Armageddon nor happy millennium did not come in 1975, the Watchtower Society tried to reprimand its publishers that they deluded themselves into extravagant hopes and came to wrong conclusions. Notice, how such 'invectives' appeared after the year 1975:

Did Jesus mean that we should adjust our financial and secular affairs so that our resources would just carry us to a certain date that we might think marks the end? If our house is suffering serious deterioration, should we let it go, on the assumption that we would need it only a few months longer? Or, if someone in the family possibly needs special medical care, should we say, 'Well, we'll put it off because the time is so near for this system of things to go'? This is not the kind of thinking that Jesus advised. (...) But it is not advisable for us to set our sights on a certain date, neglecting everyday things we would ordinarily care for as Christians, such as things that we and our families really need. (...) If anyone has been disappointed through not following this line of thought, he should now concentrate on adjusting his viewpoint, seeing that it was not the word of God that failed or deceived him and brought disappointment, but that his own understanding was based on wrong premises. (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1976, pp. 440-441);

This does not mean plunging into the pioneer work without making adequate preparation. It does not mean putting aside just enough funds to get through to some date in the mid-1970's. (*The Watchtower* March 15, 1975, p. 188).

Interestingly, as late as in March 1975 the Watchtower Society started to rebuke its publishers who relied on their savings allowing them to survive only to the mid-seventies of the twentieth century.

Such individual case of savings enough to live till 1975 was mentioned in one of the publications:

At our district convention in 1957 in Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., there was a talk on serving where the need for Kingdom proclaimers was greater. (...) In 1959 we sold our house, loaded up our belongings, and drove to Montreal, Canada. (...) Finally, we arrived in Mombasa, Kenya (...) In 1975, when

our funds were depleted, we were sad to leave the friends we had come to love so dearly. (*Awake!* March 8, 2008, pp. 13-14).

It seems that the above remarks of the Watchtower Society were at least 'a bit' different than its past remarks. Here is one of the earlier thoughts:

Reports are heard of brothers selling their homes and property and planning to finish out the rest of their days in this old system in the pioneer service. Certainly this is a fine way to spend the short time remaining before the wicked world's end. - 1 John 2:17. (*Kingdom Ministry* No. 5, 1974 p. 3).

For other such statements, see the chapter „Preaching Ministry and 1975”.

Here are further statements of the Watchtower Society, in which it shifted its responsibility for the year 1975 on to publishers:

Are we serving Jehovah God because we love him, trust him and have full confidence in what he says? Or are we 'becoming weary in well-doing,' looking for a certain date primarily as bringing a relief to *ourselves*, with little concern for the lives of other people? (...) It may be that some who have been serving God have planned their lives according to a mistaken view of just what was to happen on a certain date or in a certain year. They may have, for this reason, put off or neglected things that they otherwise would have cared for. But they have missed the point of the Bible's warnings concerning the end of this system of things, thinking that Bible chronology reveals the specific date. What do Jesus' own words show concerning the proper attitude as to the end - to look for a date, or what? (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1976, p. 440);

However, say that you are one who counted heavily on a date, and, commendably, set your attention more strictly on the urgency of the times and the need of the people to hear. And say you now, temporarily, feel somewhat disappointed; are you really the loser? Are you really hurt? We believe you can say that you have gained and profited by taking this conscientious course. Also, you have been enabled to get a really mature, more reasonable viewpoint. (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1976, p. 441);

These clear statements of Jesus indicate that God's servants will never be given the date of Christ's "coming" for judgment until it actually takes place. In fact, it will come at what appears to them an 'unlikely' time. (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1976, p. 441).

Let us devote one sentence on famine, about which the Watchtower Society wrote so much before the year 1975. Afterwards it claimed:

Note, though, what Jesus actually warned about. His words do not indicate that, as the "great tribulation" draws close, the world situation will get to be such that everybody, everywhere, will be in a state of near starvation. (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1976, p. 441).

The following are two passages on chronology, from the same article:

The chronology in the Bible is not there without good purpose. That chronology indicates that we are at the close of six thousand years of human history. While not revealing when God's day of adverse judgment upon this wicked system of things will begin, this chronological fact does add one more reason to the many, many other reasons we already have for being confident that the remaining time is very short. (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1976, p. 443);

We have heard his "word" that the generation living in this "time of the end" will be the generation that will experience the "great tribulation." (Matt. 24:34) We have heard his word of promise that we can enter into his "rest" now, by faith, and that a great crowd of his servants will survive that tribulation to enter into the new order that follows. (*The Watchtower* July 15, 1976, p. 439).

As we see, although the Watchtower Society 'corrected' thinking of publishers in sphere of chronology and made them believe that they misunderstood its intention, it nevertheless recalled them the teaching of generation 1914.

However, after a few years, when surely many people could not accept such assessment, Jehovah's Witnesses organization wrote a 'disclaimer' of its former statements and took a part of responsibility for the year 1975 on itself:

In modern times such eagerness, commendable in itself, has led to attempts at setting dates for the desired liberation from the suffering and troubles that are the lot of persons throughout the earth. With the appearance of the book *Life Everlasting - in Freedom of the Sons of God*, and its comments as to how appropriate it would be for the millennial reign of Christ to parallel the seventh millennium of man's existence, considerable expectation was aroused regarding the year 1975. There were statements made then, and thereafter, stressing that this was only a possibility. Unfortunately, however, along with such cautionary information, there were other statements published that implied that such realization of hopes by that year was more of a probability than a mere possibility. It is to be regretted that these latter statements apparently overshadowed the cautionary ones and contributed to a buildup of the expectation already initiated. In its issue of July 15, 1976, *The Watchtower*, commenting on the inadvisability of setting our sights on a certain date, stated: "If anyone has been disappointed through not following this line of thought, he should now concentrate on adjusting his viewpoint, seeing that it was not the word of God that failed or deceived him and brought disappointment, but that his own understanding was based on wrong premises." In saying "anyone," *The Watchtower* included all disappointed ones of Jehovah's Witnesses, hence including *persons having to do with the publication of the information* that contributed to the buildup of hopes centered on that date. Nevertheless, there is no reason for us to be shaken in faith in God's promises. Rather, as a consequence, we are all moved to make a closer examination of the Scriptures regarding this matter of a day of judgment. In doing so, we find that the important thing is not the date. (*The Watchtower* March 15, 1980, pp. 17-18).

Under the content three questions were asked:

5. (a) How did strong expectation develop regarding the year 1975? (b) Why did cautionary statements published not accomplish a curbing of such concern over a date?

6. Did the information in the July 15, 1976, *Watchtower* endeavor to lay the responsibility for such expectation solely or primarily on its readers? Explain.

However, the Watchtower Society was quickly back on its feet and it compensated the loss of publishers with a new recruitment:

Loyal Witnesses moved forward vigorously into the 1980's! Likely the presence of a small number of apostates had contributed to the slowing down of Jehovah's work during the last half of the 1970's - when the average yearly increase in the active ranks of Jehovah's Witnesses fell to less than 1 percent. However, the annual increase in the last five years has averaged more than 6 percent. Kingdom publishers reached a worldwide peak of 3,024,131 in 1985, compared with 2,179,256 in 1975. Jehovah continues to 'speed up' his work! (*The Watchtower* December 15, 1986, p. 20).

The organization presented to new Jehovah's Witnesses an old catchword, known in the twenties, when it was promised that "*millions now living will never die*" (see a booklet with the same title, published in 1920 as *Millions Now Living Will Never Die!*). Now, when almost all old publishers forgot the 'slogan', it was taught again:

Millions Now Alive Will Never Die Off Our Earth (*The Watchtower* October 1, 1983, p. 8);

Like Noah, we are entrusted with a lifesaving work but this time looking to the salvation of 'millions now living who may never die.' (*The Watchtower* January 1, 1986, pp. 15, 18);

Millions Now Living Will Never Die. This is no wild assertion. There are sound reasons to believe it. (*Awake!* May 22, 1989, p. 32).

Later, there was an emphasized recalling of the teaching on generation 1914, abandoned by the Society only in November 1995:

And if the wicked system of this world survived until the turn of the century, which is highly improbable in view of world trends and the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, there would still be survivors of

the World War I generation. However, the fact that their number is dwindling is one more indication that “the conclusion of the system of things” is moving fast toward its end. (*The Watchtower* October 15, 1980, p. 31);

And Jesus has told us to rejoice at seeing the dark storm clouds of Armageddon gathering since that time. He has told us that the “generation” of 1914 - the year that the sign began to be fulfilled - “will by no means pass away until all these things occur.” (Matthew 24:34) Some of that “generation” could survive until the end of the century. But there are many indications that “the end” is much closer than that! (*The Watchtower* March 1, 1984, pp. 18-19);

The apostle Paul was spearheading the Christian missionary activity. He was also laying a foundation for a work that would be completed in our 20th century. (*The Watchtower* January 1, 1989, p. 12 [in later reprints of the same *Watchtower* the last words were changed: He was also laying a foundation for a work that would be completed in our day.]);

Jesus said: “This generation will by no means pass away until all these things [including the end of this system] occur.” (Matthew 24:34, 14) Which generation did Jesus mean? He meant the generation of people who were living in 1914. Those persons yet remaining of that generation are now very old. However, some of them will still be alive to see the end of this wicked system. So of this we can be certain: Shortly now there will be a sudden end to all wickedness and wicked people at Armageddon. (*You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* 1989, p. 154);

Before the last members of the generation that was alive in 1914 will have passed off the scene, all the things foretold will occur, including the “great tribulation” in which the present wicked world will end - Matt. 24:21, 22, 34. (*Reasoning From the Scriptures* 1989 p. 97 [in Polish edition of 2001, pp. 72-73, the sentence was changed!]);

This time of the end is, however, to be a relatively short period - stretching over one generation. (Luke 21:31, 32) The fact that we are now 80 years beyond 1914 indicates that we can soon expect the deliverance that God’s Kingdom will bring. (*Awake!* November 8, 1994, p. 10).

After the rejection of the generation 1914 doctrine in November 1995, the Watchtower Society tried to shift the responsibility for the failed prophecy of the end on to rank and file publishers, as it was in case of 1975. It was presented this way:

Eager to see the end of this evil system, Jehovah’s people have at times speculated about the time when the “great tribulation” would break out, even tying this to calculations of what is the lifetime of a generation since 1914. However, we “bring a heart of wisdom in,” not by speculating about how many years or days make up a generation, but by thinking about how we “count our days” in bringing joyful praise to Jehovah (Psalm 90:12). (*The Watchtower* November 1, 1995, p. 17).

We recalled the change of generation 1914 doctrine in the chapter “Generation 1914 and 1975”. There we outlined the present interpretation concerning “this generation”.

We think that after presenting such a rich data we should not directly pronounce if the Watchtower Society determined the year 1975 as the time for Armageddon. Every person can come to his or her own satisfactory conclusions from the above material. We encourage all interested people to read all the involved literature, listed at the beginning of this work.

Let us add that the book *Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God* is discussed in the separate article “*Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God and 1975*” (see Appendix 1).

Appendix 1

Life Everlasting – In Freedom of the Sons of God and 1975

At the first we will present the titles of headings in this article:

Advertisement of *Life Everlasting*....

Life Everlasting... and Misunderstandings.

Life Everlasting... and Schisms.

Life Everlasting... and Nicolae Ceausescu.

Life Everlasting... and 1975.

Life Everlasting... and *The Watchtower* March 15, 1980.

Life Everlasting... in Memories.

The book entitled *Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God* created a big sensation among Jehovah's Witnesses in the second part of the sixties and in the first half of the seventies in the twentieth century. It was published in 1966 and was distributed mainly at the convention in Baltimore (USA), where it was advertised by the Watchtower Society's President N. Knorr (d 1977) and Vice President F. Franz (President since 1977). It was the first publication discussing the year 1975. According to R. Franz (1922-2010), the former member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses (in years 1971-1980), his uncle, F. Franz was its author (see *Crisis of Conscience* R. Franz, 2004, pp. 72-73, 238). Only the first English printing reached 3 million copies, although there were only 1,118,665 publishers worldwide (*The Watchtower* January 1, 1967, pp. 24-27). One of the Watchtower Society's publications, which we will quote, called the bestseller "the absorbing book"! It was advertised in English publications till 1978 when possibly the supplies ran out (see *Our Kingdom Ministry* No. 1, 1978, p. 3). So we can just imagine how many copies were 'produced' in the further English printings. Today the Watchtower Society and its publishers hesitate to recall the old book which gave them so much hope.

And what can we tell about the work of Jehovah's Witnesses entitled *Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God*?

Actually we can only tell that the book is not very different from other Watchtower Society's publications published in those years. There is one different element: a standard teaching of Jehovah's Witnesses living in those years, namely "the year 1975"! We may add that the said book was the first Watchtower publication announcing the year 1975 as the most appropriate time for the millennial reign of Christ.

Before we will quote several passages from that book so popular among publishers, let us include words of advertisements of that book, published in other Watchtower Society's publications.

Advertisement of *Life Everlasting*...

The first quoted advertisement of the said book was a bit vague, although it mentions "this critical time":

To give aid today in this critical time to such prospective sons of God the Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society of Pennsylvania has now published a new book in English, entitled "Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God." We can heartily recommend that you read it, study it with the Holy Bible, and so safeguard your priceless freedom that is the gift of God through Christ. (*The Watchtower* November 15, 1966, p. 694).

However, the other advertisement is more powerful, because it personally involved President and Vice President of the Watchtower Society during convention in Baltimore, in 1966. The following chart

contains both their statements and words of anonymous people.

President N. Knorr	Vice President F. Franz
<p>“Jehovah, the God of freedom and liberty, has freed his people from Babylonish bondage and has given them a work of liberation to do. That work of liberation and salvation must go on to the finish! To give aid today in this critical time to prospective sons of God,” announced President Knorr, “a new book in English, entitled ‘<i>Life Everlasting - in Freedom of the Sons of God</i>,’ has been published.” At all assembly points where it was released, the book was received enthusiastically. Crowds gathered around stands and soon supplies of the book were depleted. Immediately its contents were examined. It did not take the brothers very long to find the chart beginning on page 31, showing that 6,000 years of man’s existence end in 1975. Discussion of 1975 overshadowed about everything else. “The new book compels us to realize that Armageddon is, in fact, very close indeed,” said a conventioner. Surely it was one of the outstanding blessings to be carried home! (<i>The Watchtower</i> October 15, 1966, pp. 628-629).</p>	<p>At the Baltimore assembly Brother Franz in his closing remarks made some interesting comments regarding the year 1975. He began casually by saying, “Just before I got on the platform a young man came to me and said, ‘Say, what does this 1975 mean? Does it mean this, that or any other thing?’” In part, Brother Franz went on to say: ‘You have noticed the chart [on pages 31-35 in the book <i>Life Everlasting - in Freedom of the Sons of God</i>]. It shows that 6,000 years of human experience will end in 1975, about nine years from now. What does that mean? Does it mean that God’s rest day began 4026 B.C.E.? It could have. The <i>Life Everlasting</i> book does not say it did not. The book merely presents the chronology. You can accept it or reject it. If that is the case, what does that mean to us? [He went into some length showing the feasibility of the 4026 B.C.E. date as being the beginning of God’s rest day.] ‘What about the year 1975? What is it going to mean, dear friends?’ asked Brother Franz. ‘Does it mean that Armageddon is going to be finished, with Satan bound, by 1975? It could! It could! All things are possible with God. Does it mean that Babylon the Great is going to go down by 1975? It could. Does it mean that the attack of Gog of Magog is going to be made on Jehovah’s witnesses to wipe them out, then Gog himself will be put out of action? It could. But we are not saying. All things are possible with God. But we are not saying. And don’t any of you be specific in saying anything that is going to happen between now and 1975. But the big point of it all is this, dear friends: Time is short. Time is running out, no question about that. ‘When we were approaching the end of the Gentile Times in 1914, there was no sign that the Gentile Times were going to end. Conditions on earth gave us no hint of what was to come, even as late as June of that year. Then suddenly there was a murder. World War I broke out. You know the rest. Famines, earthquakes and pestilences followed, as Jesus foretold would happen. ‘But what do we have today as we approach 1975? Conditions have not been peaceful. We’ve been having world wars, famines, earthquakes, pestilences and we have these conditions still as we approach 1975. Do these things mean something? These things mean that we’re in the “time of the end.” And the end has to come sometime. Jesus said: “As these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near.” (Luke 21:28) So we know that as we come to 1975 our deliverance is that much nearer.’ “Let us make the most of the time and get in all the good hard work to Jehovah while the opportunity affords,” he urged. (<i>The Watchtower</i> October 15, 1966, p. 631).</p>

Let us add that the advertized book does not contain itself such reservations, as presented by Franz at the convention. Did he withdraw from his earlier firmness expressed in the publication?

Consider that the book does not contain even one mention about such Jesus’ warnings as from Matthew 24:36, Mark 13:32 or Acts 1:7.

But there are such firm words in it:

We are near that point of time now! Bible time-scheduling indicates it.* A world storm must therefore be shortly ahead. [* See Chart on pages 31-35] (*Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God* 1966, p. 357).

The third advertisement was included in the *Awake!* magazine of 1967 and it was presented as a letter written by someone in “the full-time ministry” (the article *Life Everlasting Book Appreciated*). We will quote just a passage:

Among the many expressions of appreciation for the new Bible-study aid *Life Everlasting in Freedom of the Sons of God* that have been received by the Watch Tower Society is the following from one who has been in the full-time ministry for the past forty-two years. (...) And how comforting to read of the present 'Earth-wide Movement of "Men of Good Will" to Freedom,' and to be assured 'that soon they will be enjoying 'A Paradise of Freedom!' "How soon? 1975? It was truly exciting to peruse the chart at the end of chapter 1 on 'Significant Dates from Man's Creation to 7000 A.M.' and yet how carefully the book worded matters: 'How appropriate it would be for Jehovah God to make of this coming seventh period of a thousand years a sabbath of rest and release.' Undoubtedly 'this would be most timely for mankind,' and judging by the fulfillment of such prophecies as that found in Matthew 24, we cannot escape it: Whether 1975 sees the beginning of the thousand-year reign of Christ or not, 'the long-awaited time for this is at hand.' (*Awake!* January 22, 1967, p. 26).

The advertisements of the said book were also printed in the following Watchtower Society's publications:

Awake! October 22, 1966, p. 24;
The Watchtower January 1, 1967, pp. 28-29;
1967 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses, pp. 49-50, 52;
Kingdom Ministry No. 1, 1968, pp. 3-6.

Life Everlasting... and Misunderstandings

The said book was a reason for misunderstandings, for example among Jehovah's Witnesses in Czechoslovakia, so that the country's office had to correct them. Here is the report:

“Six Thousand Years of Human Existence” In 1969 the *Watchtower* magazine in Czech began publishing a series of articles based on the book *Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God*. Chapter 1, under the subheading “Six Thousand Years of Human Existence Closing,” contained an explanation of the Jubilee and of Bible chronology. This material influenced some in a positive way; it also led to many questions and much speculation. The office in Czechoslovakia sent a letter dated February 22, 1972, to all congregations. It set out a lengthy explanation of reasons why we should not make any definite assertions about the date when Armageddon will strike. It pointed out that no publication of the Society had said that Armageddon will come in a certain year. The letter concluded: “Jehovah's Witnesses around the world are familiar with these facts, and no one should add any personal claims as to what will happen before or during the year 1975. There are no Scriptural grounds for any claims, and they could have a detrimental effect on the preaching work. Strive, therefore, that you 'all speak in agreement and that there be no divisions among you but that you may be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought.' (1 Cor. 1:10) For concerning that day and hour nobody knows.” - Matt. 24:36. (*2000 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, pp. 196-197).

It is a pity that the Watchtower Society did not quote the mentioned letter in its entirety. It would be interesting to know if the letter discussed for example the following words from the said book:

We are near that point of time now! Bible time-scheduling indicates it.* A world storm must therefore be shortly ahead. [* See Chart on pages 31-35] (*Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God* 1966, p. 357).

Life Everlasting... and Schisms

The said book was allegedly a material against dissenters who appeared in 1975, for example among Jehovah's Witnesses in Mozambique. Here is the report:

Apostasy and Village No. 10. A movement that stirred up much trouble was started by an apostate group that called themselves "the anointed." Originating mainly from the Malawian villages, this group claimed that the "time of the elders" had ended in 1975 and that they, as "the anointed," should be the ones taking the lead. The material in the Society's book *Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God* was a great aid in helping some who had doubts to understand what was involved in the genuine anointing. But the influence of the apostates spread, and many who listened to them were led astray. As part of their doctrine, they said that it was not necessary to send in reports to the Society. They would simply throw these into the air after saying a prayer. It is estimated that about 500 were disfellowshipped as a result of this apostate influence. They decided of their own accord, and with the permission of the authorities, to build their own village. This became Village No. 10. Later on, the leader of the movement was attended to by a train of young women, many of whom bore him children. Village No. 10 and its group continued in existence throughout the remaining period of life in the camps. They caused many difficulties for the faithful brothers. Some who were initially influenced to join the group later repented and returned to Jehovah's organization. The apostate community was finally disbanded when life in the camps came to a close. (*1996 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, pp. 158-159).

The Watchtower Society 'forgot' to add that "the year 1975" is not a part of that event by a mere coincidence. So it seems that in Mozambique the book could be 'blamed' for the situation, and it was not only a 'publication' helpful to 'faithful' Jehovah's Witnesses. Surely frustrated dissenters left the organization when nothing of suggestions or teachings from the said book were fulfilled in 1975.

Life Everlasting... and Nicolae Ceausescu

It is a curiosity that in 1971 the Watchtower Society sent among other things the said book to a communist dictator of Romania, so called "the Sun of Carpathians", Nicolae Ceausescu (d 1989). In its letter it demanded from him that he should give more freedom to publishers in Romania, and by the sent book it hoped to convert him or threaten him with Armageddon expected in 1975. It is reported in a book *2006 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* (p. 130).

This event was by no means a novelty in the activity of the Watchtower Society, because as early as in 1949 Jehovah's Witnesses sent their petition to the USSR government and Joseph Stalin and showed their "neutrality" by threatening them with Jehovah, who will allegedly be active in Armageddon:

"We demand that Jehovah's Witnesses be released from prison and that the persecution against them be stopped. Jehovah God's organization, by means of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, should be permitted to preach, unhindered, the good news of Jehovah's Kingdom to all the inhabitants of the Soviet Union; otherwise, Jehovah will utterly destroy the Soviet Union and the Communist Party. "This we demand in the name of Jehovah God..." (*Awake!* February 22, 1999, p. 12).

Life Everlasting... and 1975

The following are all the passages referring directly to the year 1975:

SIX THOUSAND YEARS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE CLOSING

The time is fast drawing near for the reality that was foreshadowed by the Jubilee of liberty to be proclaimed throughout the earth to all mankind now oppressed by many enslaving things. In view of the earth-wide situation and the world's condition, it appears most urgent for the liberation like that of the Jubilee to come soon. Most certainly the near future would be the most appropriate time for it. God's own written Word indicates that it is the appointed time for it. (*Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God* 1966, pp. 26-27);

By doing this it becomes evident that man is nearing the end of six thousand years of his existence and the beginning of the seventh period of a thousand years of his existence. (p. 27);

and the published timetable resulting from this independent study gives the date of man's creation as 4026 B.C.E. According to this trustworthy Bible chronology six thousand years from man's creation will end in 1975, and the seventh period of a thousand years of human history will begin in the fall of 1975 C.E. (p. 29);

How appropriate it would be for Jehovah God to make of this coming seventh period of a thousand years a sabbath period of rest and release, a great Jubilee sabbath for the proclaiming of liberty throughout the earth to all its inhabitants! This would be most timely for mankind. It would also be most fitting on God's part, for, remember, mankind has yet ahead of it what the last book of the Holy Bible speaks of as the reign of Jesus Christ over earth for a thousand years, the millennial reign of Christ. Prophetically Jesus Christ, when on earth nineteen centuries ago, said concerning himself: "For Lord of the sabbath is what the Son of man is." (Matthew 12:8) It would not be by mere chance or accident but would be according to the loving purpose of Jehovah God for the reign of Jesus Christ, the "Lord of the sabbath," to run parallel with the seventh millennium of man's existence. (p. 30);

- 4026 - Creation of Adam (in early autumn) (p. 31);
- 1975 - 6000 - End of 6th 1,000-year day of man's existence (in early autumn)
- 2975 - 7000 - End of 7th 1,000-year day of man's existence (in early autumn) (p. 35).

The sealing of the last of these, a mere remnant finally, would be accomplished before the thousand-year reign of the "Lamb of God," Jesus Christ, begins. This would mean that the remnant of these "slaves of our God" would be sealed in their foreheads as God's special property toward the end of six thousand year of humankind's existence. We are near that point of time now! Bible time-scheduling indicates it.* A world storm must therefore be shortly ahead. [* See Chart on pages 31-35] (p. 357).

Life Everlasting... and the Watchtower March 15, 1980

In the publication quoted below the Watchtower Society tried to excuse its publishers and itself of "the year 1975". An 'accomplice' in that failure was the said book, which was – as it seems – presented in false way. It is stated that the book pointed to 1975 as a "possibility" for the beginning of the millennium. But we will quote a passage from the book which expresses a certainty, although the Watchtower Society is now silent concerning that certainty.

<i>The Watchtower March 15, 1980, p. 17</i>	<i>Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God 1966, p. 357</i>
<p>In modern times such eagerness, commendable in itself, has led to attempts at setting dates for the desired liberation from the suffering and troubles that are the lot of persons throughout the earth. With the appearance of the book <i>Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God</i>, and its comments as to how appropriate it would be for the millennial reign of Christ to parallel the seventh millennium of man's existence, considerable expectation was aroused regarding the year 1975. There were statements made then, and thereafter, stressing that this was only a possibility.</p>	<p>The sealing of the last of these, a mere remnant finally, would be accomplished before the thousand-year reign of the "Lamb of God," Jesus Christ, begins. This would mean that the remnant of these "slaves of our God" would be sealed in their foreheads as God's special property toward the end of six thousand year of humankind's existence. We are near that point of time now! Bible time-scheduling indicates it.* A world storm must therefore be shortly ahead. [* See Chart on pages 31-35].</p>

Life Everlasting... in Memories

The Watchtower Society recalls the said book in two of its known publications. Firstly in 1975, when it was yet uncertain if Armageddon comes that year. The other mention was published in 1993, in the handbook entitled *Jehovah's Witnesses - Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*. Here are the both quotations:

Just think where we are in the stream of time! Its importance was deeply impressed on our minds back in 1966. God's people then received the absorbing book *Life Everlasting - in Freedom of the Sons of God*. It did not take long for most of them to note the chronological chart in it that identified 1975 as the "end of 6th 1,000-year day of man's existence (in early autumn)." This certainly raised questions. Does this

mean that Babylon the Great will go down by 1975? Will Armageddon be over, with Satan bound, by then? 'It could' acknowledged F. W. Franz, the Watch Tower Society's vice-president, after posing similar questions at the "God's Sons of Liberty" District Assembly in Baltimore, Maryland. However, he added, in essence: 'But we are not saying. All things are possible with God. But we are not saying. And don't any of you be specific in saying anything that is going to happen between now and 1975. But the big point of it all is this, dear friends: Time is short. Time is running out, no question about that.' Among other things, Brother Franz urged: "Let us make the most of the time and get in all the good hard work to Jehovah while the opportunity affords." Some years have passed since then, but this has only heightened the urgency of the preaching work. Jehovah's servants know that they have not dedicated their lives to God until a certain year. They are his dedicated people forever! (...) May we remain alert, active, as the end nears. We must "keep on the watch." This is not the day for spiritual sleepyheads! It is the time for wakefulness, diligence, faithfulness, in serving the Divine One whose marvelous and incomparable purpose cannot and will not fail. (*1975 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, p. 256);

The Witnesses had long shared the belief that the Thousand Year Reign of Christ would follow after 6,000 years of human history. But when would 6,000 years of human existence end? The book *Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God*, released at a series of district conventions held in 1966, pointed to 1975. Right at the convention, as the brothers examined the contents, the new book triggered much discussion about 1975. At the convention held in Baltimore, Maryland, F. W. Franz gave the concluding talk. He began by saying: "Just before I got on the platform a young man came to me and said, 'Say, what does this 1975 mean?'" Brother Franz then referred to the many questions that had arisen as to whether the material in the new book meant that by 1975 Armageddon would be finished, and Satan would be bound. He stated, in essence: 'It could. But we are not saying. All things are possible with God. But we are not saying. And don't any of you be specific in saying anything that is going to happen between now and 1975. But the big point of it all is this, dear friends: Time is short. Time is running out, no question about that.' (*Jehovah's Witnesses - Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* 1993, p. 104).

It is worthwhile to compare the above words of F. Franz with his actual statement of 1966 (see above: Advertisement of *Life Everlasting*...). Notice that Vice President's statement was 'shortened' a bit, so that the dramaturgy of those events was lost.

Appendix 2

Photocopies of Key Watchtower Publications Concerning 1975

Where Are We According to God's Timetable? (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1967).

Making Wise Use of the Remaining Time (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1968).

Why Are You Looking Forward to 1975? (*The Watchtower* August 15, 1968).

The Approaching Peace of a Thousand Years (*The Watchtower* October 15, 1969, pp. 622-623).

An Ingathering Affecting All Mankind (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1970, pp. 273, 276-277).

How Much Longer Will It Be? (*Awake!* October 8, 1966).

What Will the 1970's Bring? (*Awake!* October 8, 1968).

The book *Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God* 1966, pp. 26-30, 35, 357.

Appendix 3

“Individual Speculation”

Today three years passed from the moment when I started to write Polish version of the book *Armageddon in 1975 – ‘Probability’ or ‘Possibility’?*

I am thankful to Jan (John) Lewandowski for his wise remarks, so that I decided to supply my work with several passages which I did not include earlier, but which were given to me by this known expert.

Should we add something to this work after some reflection?

Yes. We should add a discussion of a passage published in *the Watchtower* October 15, 1974.

These are words are the report of a summer convention of 1974. It was a significant time for publishers. It was even emphasized by the Watchtower Society which quote a journal:

Jehovah’s witnesses really believe this. God’s purpose, as quoted above from the Bible, is to set up his government that will crush out of existence all human rulership. Correct, therefore, was the headline in the *Milwaukee Journal*, “THE END IS NEAR, WITNESSES SAY.” The article noted: “There is a feeling of urgency among the estimated 41,000 Jehovah’s Witnesses meeting at County Stadium through Sunday.” Imagine, if you can, the excitement of knowing that God will soon destroy this wicked system of things, and in time have the earth transformed into a paradise. Jehovah’s witnesses are extremely confident that this will soon occur, because of what God’s Word teaches. (*The Watchtower* October 15, 1974, p. 634).

The following passage was mentioned above, and it is worth of a comment:

The publications of Jehovah’s witnesses have shown that, according to Bible chronology, it appears that 6,000 years of man’s existence will be completed in the mid-1970’s. But these publications have never said that the world’s end would come then. Nevertheless, there has been considerable individual speculation on the matter. (*The Watchtower* October 15, 1974, p. 635).

But when the Watchtower Society wrote about “individual speculation”, it should admit that it was created such speculation by producing its own chronology.

Secondly, “individual speculation” embraced almost all Jehovah’s Witnesses. That alleged “individual speculation” lied in expecting Armageddon and the millennial Kingdom.

Thirdly, as for the chronology, allowing to say that “it appears” something, it rather “indicates” to the Watchtower Society, without any “guessing”, and it still indicates, because this chronology is still in use (see *Insight on the Scriptures* 1988 vol. 1, p. 459).

Here is just one passage of those years which “indicates”, and does not say that “it appears”:

However, Bible chronology which indicates that Adam was created in the fall of the year 4026 B.C.E. would bring us down to the year 1975 C.E. as the date marking 6,000 years of human history with yet 1,000 years to come for Christ’s Kingdom rule. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1970, p. 273).

Is that true that “these publications have never said that the world’s end would come then”?

Maybe the Watchtower Society did not pronounce it every time (but see the above quotation), but it “speculated” about ‘the end’, which is proved by passages quoted in this book. Is that just a “speculation” or “pronouncing”? I leave the decision to the reader.

Now we include words which appeared directly after the above quotations, and which were already discussed in this book:

So the assembly presentation “Why We Have Not Been Told ‘That Day and Hour’” was very timely. It emphasized that we do not know the exact time when God will bring the end. All we know is that the end will come within the generation that sees fulfilled on it the sign that Jesus Christ said would then be

in evidence. (See Matthew chapters 24, 25.) All indications are that the fulfillment of this sign began in 1914. So we can be confident that the end is near; we do not have the slightest doubt that God will bring it about, the speaker stressed. But we have to wait and see exactly when, in the meantime keeping busy in God's service. (*The Watchtower* October 15, 1974, p. 635).

In this passage we find words about 'generation 1914' and that "the end is near". Maybe there is nothing strange about it, but after the rejection of that teaching in November 1995, rank and file publishers were blamed of "speculation", again.

But this subject was extensively discussed in the last chapter, so if you are interested, you can read it.

It seems that the discussed passage was the first try by the Watchtower Society to safeguard itself against possibility, if nothing would happen in 1975. And the teaching on "generation 1914" was a form of little delay of Armageddon. But it also failed, because this interpretation was rejected and 'generation' that remembered the year 1914 passed away.

We also present a sentence in which the Watchtower Society talks about „speculation” and what is interesting, it is from the article discussing 1975 (*Making Wise Use of the Remaining Time*):

With accurate knowledge of Jehovah and his purposes, the Christian rejects the speculations of men. This includes the speculations of historians who do not believe the Bible, but who attach fantastic dates to events in man's history. (*The Watchtower* May 1, 1968, p. 270).

Can we reconcile the assurance that Jehovah's Witnesses do not „speculate” with the statement of the Watchtower Society that there was much “individual speculation” about 1975?

Thus, it is worthwhile to quote several passages from Witness publications which refer to the term „speculation” in the context of 1975. These are statements published before 1975 campaign, during the campaign and from October 1975:

Whatever time elapsed between Adam's creation and the end of the 'sixth day' must be subtracted from the 5,988 years in order to give the actual length of time from the beginning of the 'seventh day' until [1963]. It does no good to use Bible chronology for speculating on dates that are still future in the stream of time. - Matt. 24:36. (*"All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial"* 1990 p. 287; see ed. 1963 p. 286);

What about all this talk concerning the year 1975? Lively discussions, some based on speculation, have burst into flame during recent months among serious students of the Bible (...) The nearness of such an important date indeed fires the imagination and presents unlimited possibilities for discussion. (*The Watchtower* August 15, 1968 p. 494);

“Six Thousand Years of Human Existence”. In 1969 the *Watchtower* magazine in Czech began publishing a series of articles based on the book *Life Everlasting - In Freedom of the Sons of God*. Chapter 1, under the subheading “Six Thousand Years of Human Existence Closing,” contained an explanation of the Jubilee and of Bible chronology. This material influenced some in a positive way; it also led to many questions and much speculation. (*2000 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* pp. 196-197);

The same applies to the beginning of Christ's millennial reign. The Bible provides us no way to fix the date, and so it does us no good to speculate when that date may be. (*The Watchtower* October 1, 1975 p. 579).

We see from that statements that Jehovah's Witnesses were busy with “speculation”, because even the Watchtower Society several times rebuked them for it. But could they have another approach to the subject of the year 1975? It seems they could not, because the organization “fed” them with such speculative statements:

If the 1970's should see intervention by Jehovah God to bring an end to a corrupt world drifting toward ultimate disintegration, that should surely not surprise us. If you feel that this is painting the picture too darkly, consider what warnings the hard facts have forced even men of this world to express. They sense that disaster is approaching, but, lacking the Bible's guidance, they do not know what to do about it. (*Awake!* October 8, 1968 p. 14).

False prophecies

A generation of Watchtower publishers waiting for year 1925 is almost extinct, but thousands of former and present Jehovah's Witnesses who remember hopes connected with year 1975 are still alive.

Although 36 years passed after that once important date for the Watchtower Society, even recalling it rouses emotions in many people. After 1975 failure thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses left their organization, which in their eyes became a corporal 'false prophet'.

Now, after over 40 years since 1966, in which "1975 campaign" was started, we can in non-emotional manner follow through some issues concerning the Watchtower Society's argumentation applying to the date expected by its followers.

Włodzimierz Bednarski

The book answers the following questions:

- What Jehovah's Witnesses really taught about the year 1975?
- Was the 1975 prediction presented as something more than a 'probable' or 'possible' scenario?
- And more...