

**Statement**  
**June 24, 2024**

**Key findings of the survey “Jehovah’s Witnesses in Japan—A Quantitative Study”**

The independent research team conducting the nationwide online survey Jehovah’s Witnesses in Japan—A Quantitative Study (JWJ-QS) has released a summary of preliminary findings.<sup>1</sup> (Forthcoming reports will provide finalized results from the full statistical analysis.) The scientific study inquired about the personal views, family life, and well-being of Jehovah’s Witnesses in 150 congregations throughout Japan. The findings, based on anonymous replies from nearly 7,200 respondents, indicate that Jehovah’s Witnesses of all generations freely decided to become and remain Jehovah’s Witnesses and lead satisfying personal and family lives. Moreover, the clear majority value their relationships with non-Witness family members and place a high priority on raising their children in a supportive and caring environment. The survey’s key findings, as drawn from the JWJ-QS Summary Report of Preliminary Findings, are as follows:

- **Education:** Similar to the general population in Japan, Jehovah’s Witnesses come from a range of educational backgrounds. For the Jehovah’s Witness sample population: (1) Some 95% continued schooling beyond compulsory education, compared with over two-thirds for the general population, (2) 58.4% graduated from high school, compared with 35% for the general population, and (3) 36.7% completed postsecondary education, compared with one-third for the general population.
- **Employment:** The employment rate of Jehovah’s Witnesses is comparable to that of the general population. Their employment rate was 57.7%, compared with 60.9% for the Japanese population.
- **Economic status:** The majority (53.8%) of Jehovah’s Witnesses can easily afford nonessentials, with a large majority (84.1%) having no difficulty purchasing essentials. A small minority (2.4%) have difficulty purchasing food. Although the survey did not provide data to determine the poverty status, the research findings indicate that the proportion of Jehovah’s Witnesses likely living above the poverty line (84.2%) is comparable with 84.6% among the general population.

---

<sup>1</sup> The results are available online at <https://jwj-qs.jp/>.

- **Second generation:** Of the sample population, 38.9% are second-generation Jehovah’s Witnesses with at least one JW parent. About half of the sample population (53.2%) were first-generation Witnesses with no JW parents.
- **Baptism:** The decision to become one of Jehovah’s Witnesses occurs after a significant period of Bible study and reflection. The average age at baptism was nearly 28 years. Most studied the Bible with the Witnesses before baptism for longer than one year (62.7%), with almost half (48.1%) having studied for two or more years. Almost all (96.8%) agreed that it was their personal choice to become a Witness. Only 1.8 % disagreed.
- **Motivation to remain:** The top reasons that initially attracted the sample population to Jehovah’s Witnesses were their good-hearted qualities (39.8%), the logic of their beliefs (37.8%), and having Witness family members (37%). For most respondents, however, having Witness family members was not a motivation to remain a Witness. The number one reason to remain a Witness was “to be closer to God” (66.4%), followed by the “logic of the teachings” (42.9%) and “hope for the future” (40.6%). Less than 1% indicated that fear of rejection by a Witness family member was the reason to remain. The vast majority (96.1%) “never” or “rarely” regretted being Jehovah’s Witnesses.
- **Motivation to return:** A minority (3.7%) had previously stopped and later resumed their association with Jehovah’s Witnesses. Almost half (48.9%) resumed their association within four years. The most important motivation for their decision to return was wanting a closer relationship with God (90.3%), wanting to make better decisions in life (89.6%), or their view that the Witness way of life was a better way (89.6%). A minority indicated that missing association with Witness friends (37.7%) or Witness family (29.9%) was an important motivation for their return.
- **Relationships:** Across all relationships (Witness and non-Witness), most indicated that their relationships were good before or improved after becoming Jehovah’s Witnesses. Over 40% of those with spouses reported slightly or significantly better marital relationships after they became Jehovah’s Witnesses, and over 30% of those with children reported improved parent-child relationships. Nearly 90% of respondents reported being satisfied with their family life.
- **Child discipline:** The survey showed that for Jehovah’s Witnesses, the words most closely associated with the term “discipline” were to “instruct” (91.7%) or “correct” (90.4%), with only a fraction (2.2%) associating “discipline” with “physically punish.” More than 98% of the survey participants indicated that it was “never” (83.1%), “very rarely” (12%), or “rarely” (3.1%) acceptable for parents to use physical punishment with children. Across all generations, Witness parents were more likely to commend and explain matters to their children compared with non-Witness parents.

- **Views toward sex education:** The overwhelming majority (98.9%) agreed that teaching children about sex can help to protect them from sexual abuse.
- **Content of religious publications and instruction:** Among the parental practices encouraged by Witness instructional materials, more than 90% of respondents selected forgiveness, recreational activities with children, reassurance of parental love when a child makes a mistake, and freedom for children to express their viewpoint.
- **Willingness to help:** A high proportion stated that they would provide help to someone in urgent need. Few made a distinction between rich and poor. Willingness to help someone in urgent need was high toward people of another religion (95.1%), a family with many children (92.8%), government officials or police (89.8%), and those who had stopped being Witnesses (81.9%).
- **Health and well-being:** The majority (89.2%) have a high degree of satisfaction with their life and described their outlook as hopeful or confident (74.2%). The majority indicated that their health was excellent, satisfactory, or good (78.2%), and most engaged in some form of exercise (57.6%), while a significant majority had regular checkups with their doctor (81.4%). Nearly all agreed (99%) that parents have the responsibility to take care of their children's health and that people should seek medical treatment when they are sick (97.1%). And 98.3% rejected the idea that people should just pray to God to heal them and not accept any medical treatment.
- **Discrimination:** Survey participants indicated the types of discrimination they had experienced in the past 12 months (since January 2023). Nearly 95% had seen media coverage that they felt misrepresented their religious community. Over 500 survey participants reported being victims of insults as a result of their religious beliefs, 63 were denied employment, and 54 had been threatened or attacked.

## *Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan—A Quantitative Study*

- Conducted by an independent research team in January 2024
- Largest-ever quantitative study on Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan
- 7,640 study participants

### **NOTABLE CONCLUSIONS:**

- **Well-being:** Jehovah's Witnesses have satisfying personal and family lives, with a positive outlook.
- **Education:** Jehovah's Witnesses have a range of educational backgrounds, with some 95% pursuing education beyond secondary school.
- **Relationships:** Across all relationships (Witness and non-Witness), most participants indicated that their relationships were good, both before and after becoming Jehovah's Witnesses.
- **Child discipline:** More than 98% of the survey participants indicated that it was “never” (83.1%), “very rarely” (12%), or “rarely” (3.1%) acceptable for parents to use physical punishment with children.
- **Discrimination:** Nearly 95% had seen media coverage that they felt misrepresented their religious community. Over 500 respondents reported being victims of insults, 63 were denied employment, and 54 had been threatened or attacked.
- **Motivation:** The vast majority (96.1%) “never” or “rarely” regret being a Witness. The number one reason participants gave to remain a Witness is “to be closer to God.”

Public Information Department of Jehovah's Witnesses