

The Watchtower Society teaches that there is NO Clergy Class among the Jehovah's Witnesses:

The Watchtower, February 1st 1954 Issue, Page 93:

...Jehovah has in recent years, by means of his Word, his spirit and his guiding providences, again provided for a service organization in the earth to carry out his purposes. Known as the New World society [of Jehovah's Witnesses], it brings to the people the truth, has no clergy-laity distinction but all its members work and preach.

The Watchtower, April 15th 1955 Issue, Pages 229-230:

Christ made no provision for a clergy-laity distinction in the Christian congregation but said, "Do not you be called 'Rabbi', for one is your teacher, whereas all you are brothers. Moreover, do not call anyone your father on earth, for One is your Father, the heavenly One." However, he did provide for overseers and assistants, missionaries, shepherds and teachers, "with a view to the training of the holy ones for ministerial work, for the building up of the body of the Christ." There was no clergy-laity distinction, because all were preachers. Christ set the example for all to follow, even as Paul shows: "Become imitators of me, even as I am of Christ."-Matt. 23:8, 9; Eph. 4:11, 12; 1 Cor. 11:1, NW.

The Watchtower, November 1st 1957 Issue, Pages 647-648:

NO CHRISTIAN LAITY

Most persons who profess to be Christians think they are doing quite well if, in addition to being honest and giving to charity, they go to church on Sunday, listen to a sermon and contribute toward the clergyman's salary and the other expenses of their religious organization. No doubt this misapprehension of theirs largely rests on the false distinction between clergy and laity. Such a distinction, while very common among pagan religions, never did have a place in true Christianity; it certainly did not exist in the early Christian congregation. As one religious journal observed in commenting on "Layman's Sunday":

"Certainly in the little band of Jesus and his disciples there was no division into clergy and laity. Much as any [clergyman] would like to regard Jesus as his counterpart in the early situation, his manner, speech and mood were what we would today call 'lay.' And just so, the disciples who might look from here like a [newly formed] laity were really the preachers who were sent out.

"In the rest of the New Testament the word for clergy (kleros) means not a special order among the Christians but all the Christians. And the word for laity (laós) means not a recipient part of the congregation but, again, all the Christians. All are called to one service, and all are God's people. Our distinction between clergy and laity was not known to the New Testament, so St. Paul could not have added 'clergy and laity' to the list of Jew and Gentile, slave and free, rich and poor, men and women who are one in Christ. Had he lived in the second century, however, he might have so expanded his list."--The Christian Century, October 12, 1955 .

The Watchtower, June 15th 1958 Issue, Page 359:

The fact of the matter is that the very profession or vocation of a Christian clergy is without Scriptural foundation or precedent. The clergy-laity distinction was wholly unknown by Christians of the first century. They heeded Jesus' instructions: "Do not you be called 'Rabbi', for one is your teacher, whereas all you are brothers. Moreover, do not call anyone your father on earth, for One is your Father, the heavenly One. Neither be called 'leaders', for your Leader is one, the Christ."--Matt. 23:8-10.

The Watchtower, July 1st 1958 Issue, Page 409:

Jesus gave no instruction about a clergy and a laity. Hence Jehovah's witnesses recognize no such distinction. Jesus made no room for clergymen, doctors of divinity, or "fathers" as distinguished from the 'common herd' of sheep. In fact he warned against it, as did his apostle Paul. So to be one of Jehovah's witnesses one must be a minister. In the organization of Jehovah's witnesses all are brothers, all are preachers of the good news of God's established kingdom.--Matt. 23:8-12; 1 Pet. 5:3; Matt. 24:14.

The Watchtower, August 15th 1958 Issue, Pages 487-488:

These Christian ministers and witnesses of Jehovah follow the example set by the apostles and go "from house to house," looking for those who are "conscious of their spiritual need." Finding such ones, they make return visits, endeavoring to start a weekly home Bible study. If successful, they continue this study, not only until the student dedicates himself to do God's will, but until he no longer needs such aid. All ministers are either being trained or training others. There is no clergy-laity distinction, nor are honorary titles bestowed upon any. All keep progressing from students to ministers who can assist others.--Acts 20:20; Matt. 5:3; 23:8.

The Watchtower, April 15th 1959 Issue, Page 255:

What are meetings of Jehovah's witnesses like?

They are quite unlike orthodox church services. For instance, no collection is ever taken; contributions are wholly voluntary. At the meetings the Bible is studied, in conjunction with Bible study aids. There are upbuilding discussions in which all can participate. No one is looked down upon either because he is a beginner in Bible knowledge or because of economic circumstances. There is no clergy-laity distinction. At the meetings all--men, women and children--learn how they can walk in the footsteps of Christ, sharing their faith and hope with others. Their meetings are not limited to Jehovah's witnesses. They would like you to know that all persons of good will are welcome. By attending, you will better understand why Jehovah's witnesses are different and, above all, you will learn more about the Kingdom good news--the only basis for true happiness today.

The Watchtower, July 1st 1961 Issue, Page 415:

The question may now well be posed: Where today do such organizational arrangements as existed among these early Christians prevail? Where are there assemblies held in the vernacular tongue, in which there are overseers and assistants but no clergy-laity distinction, in which the emphasis is upon the Word of God and which are in the nature of a school? There can be only one answer: at the Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's witnesses.

The Watchtower, January 1st 1963 Issue, Page 18:

The whole organization of Jehovah's witnesses is made up of ordained ministers, and their chief function and training is the use of the sermon. They use Bible sermons from door to door and in their home Bible study work.

The Watchtower, March 1st 1963 Issue, Page 147:

Also in the congregational life of Jehovah's witnesses, we notice the general priesthood. Although in every congregation a number of its members are appointed to do special services, such as having oversight, taking care of statistics, literature and money, assigning territories for the preaching work and presiding at Bible studies, corresponding to the pattern of the early church, these members are servants of their brothers and not a clergy, and the rest are not a laity. At the congregational meetings all present participate in the oral discussions. Because he is a minister, any competent male member is called on to perform funerals, baptisms and weddings, and to conduct the service in annual commemoration of the Lord's death. After appropriate training, given to everybody, all qualified males are assigned to teach and preach from the platform, which is possible because the subjects to be taught in a congregation of all ministers are so manifold and varied that there are assignments for all degrees of teaching and preaching ability. Thus, as in the early church, 'all ceremonies are performed by any Christian.'--Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 2:12; Eph. 4:11-13.

The Watchtower, February 1st 1964 Issue, Page 86:

Among the witnesses of Jehovah any adult, dedicated and baptized male Christian who is qualified may serve in such ministerial capacities as giving public Bible discourses and funeral talks, performing marriages and presiding at the Lord's evening meal or supper. There is no clergy class. Overseers and their ministerial assistants are merely servants of their fellow Christians. They are not specially ordained and therefore they are such special servants only so long as they have an appointment so to serve.--Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Tim. 3:1-7.

The Watchtower, October 15th 1964 Issue, Pages 611-612:

This society's members adhere strictly to the high moral standards set forth in the Bible. Not content with that, they also recognize and accept the responsibility of following the example of Jesus, who was a faithful and tireless preacher of the kingdom of God. So this society is truly distinctive in that all its members, young and old, male and female, are Christian ministers. Among them there is no division into clergy and laity. When they come together, each one, as opportunity affords, shares in 'holding fast the public declaration of his hope, inciting his fellows to love and fine works.'--Matt. 24:14; Heb. 10:23, 24.

The Watchtower, May 1st 1965 Issue, Page 278:

In the early Christian congregation there was no salaried clergy, in fact, no clergy-laity distinction; all preached as they had opportunity and to the extent of their abilities. Far from being served and paid, those who took the lead bore the greatest burdens, even as Jesus showed it should be: "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your minister [diákonos, "servant"], and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave."

The Watchtower, July 15th 1967 Issue, Page 424:

Does true Christianity inspire unselfishness in our times, in this last third of the twentieth century, as it did nineteen centuries ago? Yes, it does. Among whom? Among the Christian witnesses of Jehovah. They have an organization patterned after the early Christians' in which there is no clergy-laity distinction but in which every Christian is a minister of the good news.

The Watchtower, May 15th 1968 Issue, Page 306:

There is no clergy-laity distinction among true followers of the Lord Jesus.

The Watchtower, April 1st 1969 Issue, Page 199:

Jesus, the Head, does not split up the body of his congregation into a clergy class and a laity class of the "common people." He says to his followers: "Do not you be called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, whereas all you are brothers. Moreover, do not call anyone your father on earth, for one is your Father, the heavenly One. Neither be called 'leaders,' for your Leader is one, the Christ."--Matt. 23:8-10.

So Jesus shows that there is no division among those who make up the true church. All are brothers; there are no class distinctions.

The Watchtower, July 1st 1969 Issue, Page 407:

There exists no clergy-laity distinction [among the Jehovah's Witnesses], but all together are brothers and servants of Jehovah and one another.

The Watchtower, October 15th 1969 Issue, Page 634:

In harmony with this, there is no clergy-laity distinction among Jehovah's witnesses. All baptized Christians are spiritual brothers and sisters, just as Jesus indicated.

The Watchtower, December 1st 1969 Issue, Page 727:

We [Jehovah's Witnesses] will continue to disapprove of the dividing up of the religious people into clergy and laity. We have the Bible behind us in this position.

The Watchtower, February 1st 1971 Issue, Page 80:

Such men [of Christendom] had become a clergy class that preached the religious philosophies of men to church members who formed an inactive and inferior laity class. This was not God's way, and the religious organization that prompted it was not his.

[...]

Every dedicated, baptized person in this Christian organization [of Jehovah's Witnesses] is a preacher.

The Watchtower, June 1st 1971 Issue, Page 330:

Another reason why many feel there is no place for them in the service of God is due to the clergy-laity distinction that is fostered in the churches. However, there was no clergy-laity division in early Christianity, and there is none today in true Christianity. Whether one has a heavenly hope or one hopes to live forever on the paradise earth when God's will is fully done here, still each one has a responsibility before God as a minister in harmony with what is set out in the Scriptures. The setting apart of a clergy class dates back to Babylonish, pagan worship. No precedent for it is found in the ministry of Jesus or his disciples. As M'Clintock and Strong's Cyclopædia says, "The great commission in Matt. xxviii, 19, 20 was not delivered to the eleven apostles merely, but to the general body of the disciples . . . So on the day of Pentecost the whole mass of believers at Jerusalem seem to have been inspired with preaching powers." While referring to a "technical distinction between clergy and laity," they go on to say that this "is almost ignored in the New Testament, and we find members of the Church, whether official or private, male or female, freely exercising their liberty in proclaiming Jesus everywhere."

The Watchtower, November 15th 1971 Issue, Page 677:

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES-Their Teachings and Practices

[...]

There is no clergy-laity distinction among them.--Mark 10:42-45.

Their religion is not a set of rituals but a way of life.--Rom. 12:1, 2.

The Watchtower, March 15th 1973 Issue, Page 167:

Jehovah has allowed no dividing of his "sheep" into a clergy class and a laity class [among the Jehovah's Witnesses].

The Watchtower, August 15th 1974 Issue, Page 491:

Christendom's religious architecture distorted truth in yet another way. The interiors of cathedrals and churches were designed in such a way as to separate the priestly or clergy class from the laity. In the special area set aside for them, priests performed ritualistic ceremonies at the altar. Greater sanctity was thus attached to one group of professed Christians than to another. This contradicted the truth that all of God's devoted servants are "holy," all are "brothers."--Matt. 23:8-10.

The Watchtower, April 1st 1975 Issue, Page 202:

CLERGY-LAITY DISTINCTION

Jesus Christ had given no instructions for his disciples to be divided up into clergy and laity. They were all equals as members of a spiritual family, all spirit-begotten brothers of Jesus Christ, anointed to be a body of priests, with prospects of being heavenly kings and priests with Christ. The apostle Peter called them "a royal priesthood." (1 Pet. 2:5, 9)

The Watchtower, October 1st 1977 Issue, Page 599:

Special titles that set apart a "clergy" class from a "laity" are not used among Jehovah's Witnesses.

Truth Book (1981), Page 119:

Jesus, the Head, does not split up the body of his congregation into a clergy class and a laity class of the "common people." He says to his followers: "Do not you be called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, whereas all you are brothers. Moreover, do not call anyone your father on earth, for one is your Father, the heavenly One. Neither be called 'leaders,' for your Leader is one, the Christ." (Matthew 23:8-10) So Jesus shows that there is no division among those who make up the true church. However, he did arrange for men to take the lead in the Christian congregation, to serve the spiritual needs of their brothers and organize the work of preaching the good news. Jesus said such ones were not to "lord it over" their brothers but were to be like slaves or servants to them. (Matthew 20:25-28)

The Watchtower, December 1st 1981 Issue, Page 23:

Since they [Jehovah's Witnesses] were all ministers, these Christians rejected a clergy-laity distinction.

The Watchtower, February 1st 1982 Issue, Page 7:

...no clergy-laity distinction was intended in genuine Christianity.

The Watchtower, August 15th 1984 Issue, Pages 10-15:

Must All True Christians Be Ministers?

"All things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of the reconciliation."-2 CORINTHIANS 5:18.

"THERE was no distinction [in the apostle Paul's day] between clergy and laity for there were no clergy." That startling statement, which appeared in the London Times, expresses a basic truth regarding early Christianity. There was no clergy-laity division. Does that mean that the Christian congregation was without any visible leadership? And were there no ministers in any sense?

2. Some time after Pentecost, 33 C.E., as the number of anointed Christians grew by the thousands, it became necessary to appoint qualified men in each congregation to serve as overseers and as ministerial servants. But they did not form a clergy class. Their appointment did not depend on a university or seminary career. They did not receive a salary for their services. They were humble men with spiritual qualifications, appointed by holy spirit to care for the flock. Were they, though, the only ones who preached the 'good news of the Kingdom'? Were they the only ministers in the congregation?-- Matthew 24:14; Acts 20:17 , 28; 1 Peter 5:1-3; 1 Timothy 3:1-10.

3. These questions are answered by Paul's counsel in his letters to the Christians in Corinth . Note the introduction to his second letter: "Paul . . . to the congregation of God that is in Corinth , together with all the holy ones who are in all of Achaia." There is no doubt about it-he wrote to the whole body of anointed Christians in Corinth and Achaia, not just to those taking the lead. Thus his comments on the Christian ministry are very pertinent to "all the holy ones." Based on his activity and Timothy's, he reasoned: "Since we have this ministry according to the mercy that was shown us, we do not give up." "But all things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of the reconciliation . . . We are therefore ambassadors substituting for Christ, as though God were making entreaty through us." He continues: "In no way are we giving any cause for stumbling, that our ministry might not be found fault with; but in every way we recommend ourselves as God's ministers, by the endurance of much."--2 Corinthians 1:1; 4:1; 5:18-20; 6:3, 4.

4. These words imply that every anointed Christian has to be a minister and ambassador for Christ. For what reason? Because the world, by its sin, is "alienated from the life that belongs to God" and needs a ministry of

reconciliation in order that obedient and loyal people from all nations may have a relationship through Christ with the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.--Ephesians 4:18 ; Romans 5:1, 2.

5. To the congregation in Rome , Paul wrote: "But what does it [God's Word] say? 'The word is near you, in your own mouth and in your own heart'; that is, the 'word' of faith, which we are preaching. For if you publicly declare that 'word in your own mouth,' that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation."--Romans 10:8-10.

6. Did Paul direct those words to a select few? His introduction shows otherwise, for he wrote: "To all those who are in Rome as God's beloved ones." He added: "I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ concerning all of you, because your faith is talked about throughout the whole world." Clearly, Paul directed his counsel and encouragement, including chapter 10, to the whole congregation. The privilege of making public declaration was open to all. In fact, he strengthened his argument by adding: "However, how will they call on him in whom they have not put faith? How, in turn, will they put faith in him of whom they have not heard? How, in turn, will they hear without someone to preach? How, in turn, will they preach unless they have been sent forth? Just as it is written: 'How co mel y are the feet of those who declare good news of good things!'"--Romans 1:7, 8; 10:14, 15.

7. How encouraging that is for every anointed Christian! It means that all of them should have the joy of spreading the Kingdom message of salvation to others. Yes, in God's sight, their feet can be and should be "co mel y" in a figurative sense. Why so? Because genuine Christianity is not an egocentric religion that leads to self-satisfaction, seclusion and vows of silence. On the contrary, it promotes an active Christian ministry expressed in word and deed! How conscious Paul was of that is seen by his exclamation: "Really, woe is me if I did not declare the good news!"--1 Corinthians 9:16; Isaiah 52:7.

8. But what about the millions of true Christians who do not have an anointing by holy spirit because their hope is for everlasting life on earth, not in heaven? Must they also be ministers?--Psalm 37:29; 2 Peter 3:13 . Are Those of the "Great Crowd" Ministers?

9. The book of Revelation supplies a partial answer to those questions . For example, after having seen in vision the anointed congregation of 144,000, John says: "After these things I saw, and, look! a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes; and there were palm branches in their hands. And they keep on crying with a loud voice, saying: 'Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.'" Certainly these, who are now being gathered to survive the great tribulation, are not hiding their Christian identity. They are declaring with "a loud voice" the origin of their salvation. How do they do that today? Among other things, by aiding the small remnant of anointed ones in the fulfillment of other vital ministerial prophecies and commands.--Revelation 7:9, 10, 14.

10. For instance, this numberless crowd is playing an essential role in carrying out Jesus' command to preach and teach, which he gave to his faithful disciples in Galilee . On that occasion Jesus said: "All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth. Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you." That mandate was given to all Christians, not to a select clergy class.- - Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 15:6.

11. Jesus' command is also closely related to the prophecy that he gave regarding "the conclusion of the system of things." He stated: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." How has this challenge to preach the Kingdom message worldwide in one generation been met? Certainly the dwindling thousands of anointed Christians could not have done this lifesaving work alone. It would have been an impossible task!-- Matthew 24:3, 14; Luke 21:32 .

12. The anointed "joint heirs with Christ" are happy to recognize the part played by the more than two million ministers of the "great crowd" who have spread the message of the Kingdom throughout the world in such a relatively short space of time. Even back in the 1930's, many true Christians accepted the responsibility of the ministry in other lands and offered to serve where the need was greater. Thanks to the self-sacrificing example of these brothers and sisters, whether of the anointed or of the "other sheep" class, the Kingdom work took stronger root in many countries in Europe , Africa , Asia and the Americas.--Romans 8:17.

13. Prior to 1943 "the faithful and discreet slave" class of anointed Christians saw the need to establish a missionary school so that Christian ministers could receive additional training and preparation with a view to opening up and accelerating the preaching work in many other lands. From its inauguration in 1943 and up till March 4, 1984, that Gilead School ("Gilead" in Hebrew means "witness heap") has trained some 6,100 graduates, most of whom have been sent to foreign assignments around the world. Only 292 (4.8 percent) of these Gilead graduates professed to be of the anointed class, so the majority of these specially trained ministers have been of the "great crowd." Like the rest of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide they accepted the Christian ministry as an integral part of Christian life when they made their dedication to Jehovah through Christ Jesus.-- Matthew 24:45-47; Hebrews 10:7.

Vocation Based on What?

14. Does that mean that Christians have a personal vocation, or calling from God, to the ministry? It is true that some in Christendom have depicted their "vocation" as an extremely emotional experience, as if God had called them directly to his service. But is the Christian ministry mainly based on something as transient as emotion?

15. When the apostle Paul spoke of sacred service to God, what did he show to be the basis of it? He wrote: "Consequently I entreat you by the compassions of God, brothers, to present your bodies a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God, a sacred service with your power of reason ["as an act of intelligent worship," Phillips; "as rational creatures," The New English Bible, footnote]." Yes, sacred service to God is based on reason. How so? Because one's dedication and personal relationship to Jehovah are founded on knowledge of the true God. Thus the Christian's calling to the ministry, although a happy experience in itself, is not just the result of an emotional reaction. It has a solid motivation--love of God and love of neighbor.--Romans 12:1; John 17:3.

16. But you may ask, Were those early Christians also ministers even if they had full-time secular work or were housewives? Yes, they were. Maybe they could spend only a small fraction of their time in the Christian ministry, preaching and teaching, but that was their prime purpose in life. They knew they had to 'let their light shine' as true disciples of Christ. In effect they were worker-ministers long before Christendom had its worker-priest movement.-- Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:9.

Proof of Their Ministry

17. How do Jehovah's Witnesses prove that they are ministers if they have no diploma or university degree? Well, how did the early Christians establish that they were ministers? Christ himself provided this insight: "Every good tree produces fine fruit." Christian ministers should produce "fine fruit," which includes sharing in the disciple-making work.-- Matthew 7:17.

18. The apostle Paul explained it this way: "Are we starting again to recommend ourselves? Or do we, perhaps, like some men, need letters of recommendation to you or from you? You yourselves are our letter, inscribed on our hearts and known and being read by all mankind. For you are shown to be a letter of Christ written by us as ministers, inscribed not with ink but with spirit of a living God, not on stone tablets, but on fleshly tablets, on hearts." How was that writing on hearts accomplished? By the preaching of the seedlike word of faith that became implanted in the heart. In turn this seed motivated the receiver also to preach the same message of salvation to others.--2 Corinthians 3:1-3.

19. Do Jehovah's Witnesses have proof of 'a letter of Christ written by them as ministers'? The facts speak for themselves. In 1931, when they first accepted their unique name, there were about 50,000 Witnesses preaching around the world. The report for 1983 shows a peak of over 2,652,000 ministers preaching the Kingdom good news in association with 46,235 congregations. Yes, there are nearly as many congregations now as there were Witnesses in 1931! The truth has indeed been written on millions of hearts over the last few decades--and that is irrefutable proof of the ministry of Jehovah's Witnesses.--Isaiah 43:10-12.

20. The need for Christian ministers today is more urgent than ever. The time is short and the harvest is great. All the more reason, then, for us to be qualified, capable ministers who preach and teach in a productive way. How can we do that? How can we be more effective ministers? Are the examples of Christ and the apostles of practical value for us today?--Ephesians 5:15, 16; Matthew 9:37, 38.

God's Word Book (Published in 1989), Page 147:

There were only about 10,000 Witnesses back then, but they knew the work that had to be done. Courageously, they set about the task of preaching. They realized that a clergy-laity division was contrary to both the Bible's commands and the apostolic pattern. So all of them, to the last individual, learned how to speak to their neighbors about God's Kingdom. They became an organization of preachers.

Proclaimers Book (Published in 1993), Pages 144-145:

There is no clergy-laity distinction among true Christians [Jehovah's Witnesses]. (Matt. 20:25-27; 23:8-12) Page 204:

The Bible Students [Jehovah's Witnesses] were keenly interested in understanding not only Bible doctrine but also the manner in which God's service was to be performed, as indicated by the Scriptures. They realized that the Bible made no provision for titled clergymen, with a laity to whom they would preach. Brother Russell [Founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses] was determined that there would be no clergy class among them. Through the columns of the Watch Tower, its readers were frequently reminded that Jesus told his followers: "Your Leader is one, the Christ," but, "All you are brothers."--Matt. 23:8, 10.

The Watchtower, February 15, 1994 Issue, Page 7:

It is precisely because of this close adherence to Bible teachings that the veneration and idolization of human leaders so characteristic of cults today is not to be found among Jehovah's Witnesses. They reject the concept of a clergy-laity distinction. The Encyclopedia of Religion aptly states about Jehovah's Witnesses: "A clergy

class and distinctive titles are prohibited."

The Watchtower, May 1, 1994 Issue, Page 23:

Although various Protestant groups broke free from the power of Rome , they carried with them many of the basic teachings and practices of the apostasy--the clergy-laity concept...

Page 25:

They [Jehovah's Witnesses] never had a clergy class...

The Watchtower, May 15, 1995 Issue, Page 18:

The Bible Students [Jehovah's Witnesses] ...came to see that there is no Scriptural basis for a clergy-laity distinction. (Matthew 23:8-10) On the contrary, all Christians [Jehovah's Witnesses] are to be preachers of the good news. (Acts 1:8)