

**Submission
No 135**

**INQUIRY INTO THE RECRUITMENT METHODS AND IMPACTS OF
CULTS AND ORGANISED FRINGE GROUPS**

Name: Javan Worrall

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Submission Text: I had been a Jehovah's Witness for 25+ since birth, leaving for about a decade during my teenage years and early adulthood. During covid, I developed an alcohol addiction, which I turned to my local elders for help in overcoming. I was disfellowshipped and shunned in 2022 for approximately a year and a half because I could not overcome my addiction initially. During this time my family and I received no support from the local congregation or elders who are supposed to be "shepherding the flock." I was reinstated in 2024 and moved into a different congregation where I thought my family and I would receive more help with our spiritual struggles, and where my in-laws were also attending. When my alcoholism returned due to a lack of support systems and dealing with past trauma, I was again disfellowshipped and shunned. At this point I had given up on the religion but had lost all friends and extended family contact. I have moved on, but this experience has left deep emotional scars. I continue to seek counselling through psychotherapy and have, for the most part, put my alcoholism behind me through self compassion and letting-go of guilt and religious trauma.