

The author's perspective provides a valuable tool for understanding some of the inconsistencies found in JW theology. Evangelical Christians sometimes ask how the Watchtower came to this or that conclusion. We might ask ourselves why a particular JW can't understand our position. This is because we are coming to the discussion with very different presuppositions. An evangelical Christian asks what the Bible says about the issue and seeks an understanding close to the original authors of the Scripture. The Governing Body, which unilaterally formulates theology for the JWs, asks how this or that issue can be rationally explained.

The Methodists use the Wesleyan Quadrilateral to explain how they arrive at their understanding of Scripture. This tool can be adapted to help explain how any group thinks about theological and philosophical issues. The Wesleyan Quadrilateral states that four areas determine our understanding of an issue. They are Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. How much weight is given to each aspect determines the outcome. If Scripture is the primary determinant, then tradition, reason, and experience will be given less weight. In the case at hand, given the same question, the Evangelical Christian will give much more weight to Scripture and less weight to tradition, reason, and experience. Conversely, the Governing Body will give much more weight to reason and correspondingly less to Scripture. As a result, two people looking at the same issue will arrive at different conclusions. Until both parties understand that, there will be puzzlement at how wrong the other person is. Once a different starting point is acknowledged, the conversation can move beyond a stalemate to a discussion of the underlying methodology.