

ORGANIZED
TO
ACCOMPLISH
OUR MINISTRY

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“You, though, keep your senses in all things, suffer evil, do the work of an evangelizer, fully accomplish your ministry.”—2 Tim. 4:5.

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NOTE: Bible quotations in this book are from the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, 1981 edition, unless otherwise indicated.

Dear Fellow Ministers:

Organized to Accomplish Our Ministry is published for Jehovah's Witnesses. It draws attention to our basic Scriptural responsibilities. By reading it you will get an overall view of how the Christian congregation operates today. Its counsel and direction will help us to remain at unity with our brothers everywhere, who are busily 'engaged in the holy work of the good news of God.'—Rom. 15:16.

In addition to preaching the good news of the Kingdom worldwide, our aim is to help those thousands of people newly associating with us. Many of them desire to meet the Scriptural requirements for becoming dedicated and baptized witnesses of Jehovah. They, too, need to become familiar with Jehovah's organization and how to share the Kingdom good news with others. To that end, information has been included in this book that is especially beneficial to such persons.

General information is here published concerning the duties of elders and ministerial servants, judicial procedures and various features of congregation organization. Details regarding these matters are reviewed from time to time in *The Watchtower*, *Our Kingdom Ministry* and other publications of the Society.

It is our prayer that the reading and application of what is contained in this publication will bring Jehovah's blessing and will play a vital role in helping all of us to be theocratically organized to 'fully accomplish our ministry.'—2 Tim. 4:5.

—The Publishers

CHAPTER 1

ORGANIZED TO ACCOMPLISH OUR MINISTRY

AS THE great God of purpose, Jehovah is working out something good for those who love him. He is gathering and instructing a great multinational crowd of dedicated, cleansed people to worship and serve him. (Isa. 2:2, 3) Are you not happy to be one of such persons having the glad-some prospect of surviving the approaching end of this present wicked system of things and living on into a righteous new world? (2 Pet. 3:13) Surely you are, and especially since this unique work of ingathering is proceeding irresistibly toward its successful conclusion!—Isa. 55:10, 11.

What God is accomplishing through his glorified Son, Jesus Christ, should concern each one of us. Why so? Because our spiritual security now and our everlasting future are involved. Mankind today is adversely affected by the administrations operating under human rulerships. God's way of ruling, or managing affairs, is far superior to the way imperfect men have been ruling for thousands of years. Happily, in his wisdom and mercy, Jehovah has purposed "an administration . . . to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth." (Eph. 1:9, 10) Through this arrangement obedient ones from among mankind are being reconciled to God as a united family.—2 Cor. 5:18, 19.

This unifying activity on God's part commenced at Pentecost in the year 33 C.E. with the outpouring of holy spirit on about 120 disciples of

Jesus Christ. Some three years later it was extended to uncircumcised Gentiles. (Acts 10:1-48) In these modern times there is a gathered remnant of joint heirs with Christ, who are destined to be united with him in a heavenly inheritance. These constitute part of the "little flock" who Jesus indicated would be approved by Jehovah for a share in the heavenly Kingdom. (Luke 12:32) For about the past half century, however, there has also been a 'gathering of things on the earth,' or of things destined for the earth, a bringing together of a "great crowd" of "other sheep," who entertain prospects of life eternal in an earthly Paradise. Truly, an increasing throng is being affected in a wholesome, spiritual and uplifting way by God's purpose to have one united flock under Christ.—Rev. 7:9, 10; John 10:16.

THEIR WORK AS MINISTERS

All these dedicated and baptized followers of Jesus Christ have a most important work to do. The anointed remnant serve as "ambassadors substituting for Christ." They invite others: "Become reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5:20) Their loyal companions, the "other sheep," support them in their ministry of reconciliation, all working together as one unified organization.—2 Cor. 6:1.

Under divine command, the work of these ministers involves preaching the Kingdom good news in all the earth and making disciples of people of all the nations. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) This activity also includes sounding the divine warning of the approaching "great day of God the Almighty." (Rev. 16:14-16; Ezek. 33:6-9) Being worldwide in scope, this work is indeed significant. The fact that it must be completed soon adds to its importance.

Mankind's state of affairs today forcefully re-

minds us of the apostle Paul's words at 1 Corinthians 7:29, 31, that "the time left is reduced" and that "the scene of this world is changing." In view of this, the question arises: Will this vital work be completed in the time divinely allowed for it? By Jehovah's undeserved kindness it will.

We recall how Jesus himself declared to religious opposers that if his disciples remained silent concerning his kingship, the very stones would cry out. (Luke 19:40) Our faith in Jehovah and his Word assures us that the ingathering work will be successfully accomplished.—Compare Isaiah 14:24, 27.

Through his Son, Jehovah has equipped us well with the things we need. (Heb. 13:20, 21) Above all, we have the provision of His inspired Word and holy spirit. Material facilities are available to publish and distribute the Kingdom message. As the God of order, Jehovah has arranged for us to be organized so as to 'fully accomplish our ministry.' (2 Tim. 4:5; 1 Cor. 14:33) It is evident that Jehovah and his Son are with us. Therefore, the work continues to move on to its grand climax soon in vindication of Jehovah's name and word.

MINISTRY MORE URGENT NOW

The establishment of God's Kingdom in the invisible heavens in 1914 inevitably forced this present system of things into its foretold "last days." (2 Tim. 3:1-5; Rev. 11:15, 18) Shortly after World War I Jehovah's people were revitalized by God's spirit to put forth a special effort in proclaiming the good news. From that time forward a tremendous witness has been given, resulting in a dividing of the people. During this period Jesus Christ, along with his holy angels, has been separating lovers of righteousness from those who are indifferent to, or who actively oppose,

the truth. This separating, or dividing, work was foretold in Jesus' illustration of the sheep and the goats. (Matt. 25:31-46) Consequently there is no question about the profound effect that the established Kingdom of God is having on the people and nations of this world.

We are now nearing the end of the present ungodly world. (2 Pet. 3:7, 11, 12) The ministry has become more urgent than ever before. (John 9:4) This calls for faithful Christians to be filled with zeal. They cannot loiter at their God-assigned work or be indifferent to its being fully accomplished. (Rom. 12:11) This is no time for independent thinking or conflicting actions on their part. More than ever before, the remnant of Kingdom heirs, along with the increasing number of "other sheep," are determined to work together as a united body. As one organized flock they follow Christ's lead so as to finish the global witness before the outbreak of the "great tribulation."—John 10:14-16; Matt. 24:14, 21.

ATTITUDE TOWARD THE MINISTRY

When Jesus was on earth, what did he do following his baptism in the Jordan River? The Bible record clearly shows that he commenced preaching and teaching about God's Kingdom. (Matt. 4:17; Luke 4:43) Such activity was carried out with a sense of purpose and in a limited time. In Jesus' case it was necessary to complete this work his Father had given him to do before Jesus submitted to a sacrificial death on the torture stake. Faithfully he finished his earthly assignment. (John 17:4) We are urged to follow his steps closely and to acquire the same mental attitude that he lovingly displayed.—1 Pet. 2:21; 4:1, 2.

As a chosen apostle assigned by the Lord Jesus to accomplish a ministry among the nations, Paul

followed Christ's footsteps closely. Therefore, he urged his fellow workers to become imitators of him. (1 Cor. 11:1) What was his point of view toward the ministry?

When recounting his experiences of joys and hardships in his ministry, Paul said to the assembled overseers from Ephesus: "Nevertheless, I do not make my soul of any account as dear to me, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received of the Lord Jesus, to bear thorough witness to the good news of the undeserved kindness of God." (Acts 20:24) He maintained a keen sense of responsibility before Jehovah to preach the good news to all who would hear. Do you see the 'necessity laid upon you' to do likewise?—1 Cor. 9:16.

It was not easy for Paul to accomplish his assigned ministry. Besides dangers of an external kind and suffering at the hands of opposers, he acknowledged his own fleshly weaknesses and limitations. (Rom. 7:18) But did this cause him to develop a negative attitude? To the contrary, he came to appreciate why he had to rely fully on Jehovah. (Phil. 4:13) He was confident about the outworking of Jehovah's purpose and continued to be appreciative of Jehovah's undeserved kindness in assigning him to the ministry. (Eph. 3:7-9) That appreciation was demonstrated in his not giving up under any circumstances. He knew that Jehovah would not fail to give him the needed support, in time of trials, as long as he remained faithful in caring for his treasure of service. (2 Cor. 4:7-9, 16) Are we imitating his outstanding example?

Having established such a fine record himself, Paul could write to his fellow worker Timothy: "I solemnly charge you before God and Christ

Jesus, who is destined to judge the living and the dead, and by his manifestation and his kingdom, preach the word, . . . do the work of an evangelizer, fully accomplish your ministry." (2 Tim. 4:1-5) That charge to Timothy, who was also a Christian overseer and a missionary, included various responsibilities within the congregation of believers as well as outside. Note that the work of evangelizing is stressed as being an essential part of Timothy's ministry. His teaching by example and by word would result in saving both himself and all those who would listen.—1 Tim. 4:11-16.

The work of the other first-century Christian disciples also provides us with fine examples. (Acts 1:8) People of Samaria became believers and were baptized in response to the preaching of Philip. They were empowered with holy spirit through representatives of the governing body of apostles and older men who visited them from Jerusalem. (Acts 8:9-17) Later Philip was directed by holy spirit to speak to an Ethiopian proselyte who accepted the good news and was baptized. (Acts 8:26-38) An outstanding example of Jehovah's working through his Christian organization to expand the preaching of the good news is recorded in Acts chapter 10. There we read about Cornelius and his family who received help through the ministry of the apostle Peter. They became the first uncircumcised Gentile converts to the Christian faith.—Acts 10:1-48.

Jehovah blessed those individuals and groups of persons who came into association with the organization he was using. The Christian congregations continued to grow as they responded favorably to the Scriptural and organizational direction provided by the apostles and the body of

older men in Jerusalem. Luke calls this to our attention when he writes: "Now as they traveled on through the cities they would deliver to those there for observance the decrees that had been decided upon by the apostles and older men who were in Jerusalem. Therefore, indeed, the congregations continued to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number from day to day." (Acts 16:4, 5) What about those associating with God's organization today? Do they not find and experience a similar pattern of growth?

ORGANIZED FOR THE MINISTRY TODAY

By following the examples of Jesus Christ and his early disciples we can share in marvelous results. These are seen in the benefits being reaped by those who have become modern-day witnesses of Jehovah, organized for the ministry. True to his promise, Jesus Christ has appointed and identified a "faithful and discreet slave," giving him charge "over all his belongings." (Matt. 24: 45-47) That 'faithful slave' has dispensed abundant spiritual food for the household of God so that millions more of distressed mankind can hear the good news and learn about God's Kingdom and eventually share in serving God. Jehovah's faithful organization continues to encourage and direct our individual and united efforts to fulfill the commission to make known the good news.

The vast majority of those associated with Jehovah's organization today are dedicated and baptized. However, it may be that you have begun to associate regularly with the congregation of Jehovah's people and are considering the steps of dedication and baptism. Whatever the case may be, the pages that follow will call your attention to the way in which Jehovah's spirit-directed organization operates today. This will help you to

have a share in the marvelous work that is being accomplished through it.

As you make it your aim to work unitedly with Jehovah's people the fruitage of Kingdom witnessing as well as of God's spirit will be manifest in your life. You will be helped to see how to "conduct yourself in God's household." (1 Tim. 3:15; Matt. 13:23; John 15:8; Gal. 5:22, 23) Be sure to look up and note how all the cited scriptures apply, as these, too, will enhance your appreciation. May this book help all of us to work closely with Jehovah's organization and to use the remaining time wisely in fully accomplishing our ministry.

CHAPTER 2

BENEFITING FROM THEOCRATIC SUBJECTION

SUBJECTION to God as the Universal Sovereign is essential if we are to accomplish our ministry fully. Recognition of his Son's headship over the Christian congregation is also necessary. And it is important to observe, in a relative sense, the principle of subjection in other areas of life. Such theocratic subjection benefits everyone concerned.

To render such subjection properly, we need to recognize the headship principle that the apostle stated simply at 1 Corinthians 11:3: "But I want you to know that the head of every man is the Christ; in turn the head of a woman is the man; in turn the head of the Christ is God." So this indicates that other than Jehovah, every person is subject to headship in this overall arrangement.

Most persons today do not recognize or observe these principles. Why? Trouble started in Eden when mankind's parents deliberately chose to take themselves out from under God's sovereign headship. (Gen. 3:4, 5) When this occurred, they did not attain to greater freedom. Instead, they came under the influence of a wicked spirit creature, Satan the Devil. The first rebellion alienated mankind. (Col. 1:21) As a result, today the majority of mankind still remains in the power of the wicked one.—1 John 5:19.

By learning and acting upon the truth of God's Word we have come out from under Satan's influence. As dedicated, baptized Witnesses, do we not accept Jehovah as the Sovereign of our life? Do we not agree with loyal King David who acknowledged Jehovah as "head over all"? (1 Chron. 29:11) Certainly! We humbly confess that "Jehovah is God. It is he that has made us, and not we ourselves. We are his people and the sheep of his pasturage." (Ps. 100:3) Our recognition of Jehovah's greatness and the need for being totally submissive to him takes into consideration his worthiness and the reasons why he created all things. (Rev. 4:11) As ministers of the true God, we follow Jesus Christ who is a perfect example of subjection to God.

What did Jesus learn by the things he suffered while on earth? Obedience to God's will even under adversity. (Heb. 5:8) Furthermore, Jesus did not do a single thing of his own initiative; he did not speak of his own originality nor did he seek his own glory. (John 5:19, 30; 6:38; 7:16-18) During his ministry he found delight in doing his Father's will, even though this course brought opposition and persecution. (John 15:20) Nonetheless, he showed subjection to God by

'humbling himself' even to the point of "death on a torture stake." (Phil. 2:5-8) The outcome of his complete subjection was rewarding in many ways, resulting in everlasting salvation for mankind, exaltation and perfection for himself and glory to his Father.—Heb. 5:9; Phil. 2:9-11.

AREAS IN WHICH WE BENEFIT

Truly, subjection to God is most beneficial. Briefly reflecting on our own everyday life as Jehovah's dedicated worshipers should make this self-evident. By putting God first in our life, doing his will, we are directed in the right way. (Compare Jeremiah 10:23.) We escape many of the anxieties and frustrations that overtake those who refuse to submit to Jehovah's sovereignty. Our Adversary, the Devil, constantly seeks to ensnare and devour us. We pray for and experience deliverance from that wicked one, provided we take a stand against him and humble ourselves before Jehovah in willing subjection.—Matt. 6:10, 13; 1 Pet. 5:6-9.

The benefits of subjecting ourselves to God extend to our relationships with others. These are measurably improved, sparing us the problems that beset those who reflect this world's spirit of independence. Thanks to Jehovah God, we can enjoy happy marriage and family life, as well as better relationships with fellow workers and employers, and we can conduct ourselves lawfully and with good conscience toward worldly governments and authorities. We can also have the best of association with our Christian brothers.

Within the marriage and family structure, husbands are assigned the position of headship, since "the head of a woman is the man." At the same time, men are to be in subjection to Christ, while the head of Christ is God. (1 Cor. 11:3)

Wives are to be in subjection to their husbands, and children to their parents. (Eph. 5:22-24; 6:1) When each family follows the headship principle, peaceable fruit results.

This requires that husbands exercise headship in a loving way, imitating Christ. (Eph. 5:25-29) When they do not abuse or abdicate their headship, it is a delight for the wife and the family to show subjection. The wife's role is that of a helper, or complement. (Gen. 2:18) By patiently giving support and respect to her husband, she gains favor from her husband and praise from God. (1 Pet. 3:1-4) When husbands and wives follow Bible counsel on headship, they thus set an example for children in showing subjection to God.

Subjection to God also affects our view of worldly governments, the "superior authorities," that have been "placed in their relative positions by God." (Rom. 13:1-7) As law-abiding citizens, Christians pay taxes; they pay back "Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God." (Matt. 22:21) Being submissive and obedient to the duly constituted authorities over us in everything that is not in conflict with Jehovah's righteous law, we are able to direct our efforts and apply our energies to the important work of preaching the good news of God's established Kingdom.—Acts 5:29; Mark 13:10.

By adherence to Bible principles, Christians are able to improve their employer-employee relationships. Even though this may at times be difficult, servants of God seek to be at peace with all men. They serve honestly and reliably at their secular jobs. (Rom. 12:18; 1 Pet. 2:18) Thus, they do not become involved in distress-

ing controversies or violate their Bible-trained conscience.

Within the Christian congregation, subjection to God is reflected by obedience to his Word in all that we say and do. This includes our ministry, meeting attendance and participation, relationship with elders and cooperation with organizational arrangements. Yes, it takes in our conversation, attitude and conduct. Subsequent chapters in this publication will help you to become better acquainted with the Bible-based principles and rules that all in "God's household" are exhorted to observe.—1 Tim. 3:15.

Our subjection to God allows us to enjoy the peaceful security of a truly theocratic order. Such theocratic order is not oppressive. (1 John 5:3) Jehovah's divine qualities are reflected by a harmonious society of godly subjects. (1 Cor. 14:33, 40) Our own observations and experience with Jehovah's organization today have led us to express sentiments similar to those of God's servant David. After noting the contrast between Jehovah's servants and wicked ones who boast in their own power and riches, he exclaimed joyfully, "Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!" —Ps. 144:15.

Theocratic subjection affects all aspects of our life. It benefits us now so that we are organized to accomplish our ministry fully. By faith we see the day when all obedient mankind will be brought into subjection to Jehovah God. This will be accomplished through the good offices of Christ Jesus. (Heb. 2:7, 8; 1 Cor. 15:27, 28) It is essential that we recognize his role in God's arrangement, since being submissive to Christ is a part of our being in subjection to God.

CHAPTER 3

RECOGNIZING CHRIST'S ROLE IN GOD'S ARRANGEMENT

THE rebellion in Eden temporarily interrupted mankind's relationship with God. However, Jehovah's purpose for the earth and mankind remained unchanged. Even as he pronounced sentence upon those who rebelled against his sovereignty, God's words gave promise of a deliverance for Adam's offspring. There would be a restoration of true worship and God would destroy the wicked one together with all his evil works.—Gen. 3:15.

This he would accomplish through his Son, Jesus Christ. (1 John 3:8b) Therefore, all who wish to receive the benefits that come from being in subjection to God must recognize Christ's role in God's arrangement.—Acts 4:12; Phil. 2:9, 11.

WHAT CHRIST'S ROLE IS

During Christ's earthly ministry it became clear just what that role would be. The reconciliation of obedient mankind to God would be accomplished through him. (John 14:6) He gave himself as a ransom in exchange for many, to their salvation. (Matt. 20:28) All authority in heaven and on earth was assigned to him. (Matt. 28:18) So Jesus was to serve as more than just an example of godly conduct. He became the key figure in Jehovah's purpose for mankind. He is our only means of being restored to God's favor.—Acts 5:31; 2 Cor. 5:18, 19.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul explained the role of Jesus Christ in these words: "For he must rule as king until God has put

all enemies under his feet. But when all things will have been subjected to him, then the Son himself will also subject himself to the One who subjected all things to him, that God may be all things to everyone." (1 Cor. 15:25, 28) Also, in the inspired letter to the Hebrews we read about Jesus: "You made him a little lower than angels; with glory and honor you crowned him, and appointed him over the works of your hands. All things you subjected under his feet.' For in that he subjected all things to him God left nothing that is not subject to him. Now, though, we do not yet see all things in subjection to him."—Heb. 2:7, 8.

We are assured that Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead as a spirit creature and was rewarded with immortality. (1 Pet. 3:18) He was exalted to God's right hand to exercise rulership over his subjects here on earth. (Acts 2:32-36) Being alive in the heavens, he has not needed a succession of substitutes to serve in his stead during his physical absence. From his heavenly position Christ personally has been able to oversee the congregation. As its head he has exercised watchful care, thus fulfilling his promise: "And, look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things."—Matt. 28:20.

WHAT RECOGNITION OF HIS ROLE MEANS

Jesus' followers in the first century recognized fully the role of Christ in God's arrangement. They looked to no man as their leader. They worked in unity under the headship of Christ, submitting themselves to his direction expressed through holy spirit and through the inspired Scriptures. (Acts 15:12-21; Rev. 1:1) The apostle Paul clearly stated the understanding of the Christian congregation at that time when he

wrote: "Speaking the truth, let us by love grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ. From him all the body, by being harmoniously joined together and being made to cooperate through every joint that gives what is needed, according to the functioning of each respective member in due measure, makes for the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."—Eph. 4:15, 16.

Also, in his letter to the congregation in Colossae he wrote concerning Christ: "He is the head of the body, the congregation. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that he might become the one who is first in all things; because God saw good for all fullness to dwell in him, and through him to reconcile again to himself all other things by making peace through the blood he shed on the torture stake, no matter whether they are the things upon the earth or the things in the heavens."—Col. 1:18-20.

Through Christ's administrative rule of the congregation, the remaining ones of his anointed followers have been brought into unity with him during these last days. (Matt. 24:31) Additionally, he has supervised the gathering together of a great crowd of "other sheep" who, together with the anointed remnant, make up one flock under the Fine Shepherd.—Matt. 25:31-46; John 10:16.

From his heavenly position, Jesus Christ as our High Priest administers the benefits of his propitiatory sacrifice in behalf of his dedicated followers here on earth. (Heb. 4:14-16; 1 John 2:2) In this way he provides them with needed help in view of their inherent human weaknesses. The apostle Paul explained: "For we have as high priest, not one who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tested in all

respects like ourselves, but without sin.” (Heb. 4:15) He then encourages those who exercise faith to take full advantage of this arrangement by God, saying in verse 16: “Let us, therefore, approach with freeness of speech to the throne of undeserved kindness . . . for help at the right time.”

AN INVINCIBLE LEADER

Just as was true with the Christian congregation in the first century, so we today have no need for a human leader. Jesus, alive in the heavens, lovingly serves as Head of the congregation in this 20th century. He still gives direction through holy spirit, enlightenment from the Holy Scriptures and the use of qualified undershepherds who are accountable to him and his heavenly Father as they care for the flock of God. (1 Pet. 5:2, 3; Heb. 13:17) Speaking prophetically of the Christ, Isaiah wrote: “Look! As a witness to the national groups I have given him, as a leader and commander to the national groups.” (Isa. 55:4) Jesus confirmed the fulfillment of this prophecy in himself when he told his disciples: “Neither be called ‘leaders,’ for your Leader is one, the Christ.”—Matt. 23:10.

As an example of his mental attitude and willingness to help us in our weaknesses, Jesus extended the invitation to those who listened in his day: “Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls. For my yoke is kindly and my load is light.” (Matt. 11:28-30) By ruling over the Christian congregation with mildness and in a way that has brought refreshment and strength to our souls, Jesus Christ has

proved himself to be like his heavenly Father, Jehovah God.—Isa. 40:11.

World events fulfilling Bible prophecy prove beyond doubt that since 1914 Jesus Christ has been entrusted with Kingdom power. He is now ruling in the midst of his enemies. (Ps. 110:1, 2; 2:1-12) What does this portend for those now living on earth? As to his enemies, his role as King of kings and Lord of lords will be powerfully demonstrated when he executes divine judgment against them. (Rev. 11:15; 12:10; 19:16) Jehovah's promise of deliverance expressed at the beginning of man's rebellion will soon be fulfilled toward those on his right hand of favor. (Rom. 16:20) How happy we are to have recognized Christ's role in God's arrangement and to be organized to accomplish a worldwide ministry under his leadership during these last days!

CHAPTER 4

HOW THE CONGREGATION IS ORGANIZED AND GOVERNED

AN IMPORTANT basic truth about God was expressed by the apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians when he wrote: "For God is a God, not of disorder, but of peace." Then, commenting further with regard to congregation meetings he said: "But let all things take place decently and by arrangement."—1 Cor. 14:33, 40.

At the very beginning of this same letter the apostle gave admonition concerning reported dissensions within the Corinthian congregation. Paul exhorted the brothers there to "speak in agreement" and to be "fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought." (1 Cor. 1:

10, 11) He then proceeded to give counsel with regard to various matters that were affecting the unity of the congregation. Using the illustration of a perfect human body, he showed clearly the need for unity and cooperation. Hence all those making up the Christian congregation, regardless of their position, are urged to care for one another in a loving way. (1 Cor. 12:12-26) Such harmonious cooperation among the various members of the congregation implies an orderly arrangement—organization.

But how was the Christian congregation to be organized? Who would organize it? What kind of organization would it have and who would be in charge? A key thought for our protection today, as it was for the first-century Christians in Corinth, is what the apostle stated at 1 Corinthians 4:6. There he gave the rule: "Do not go beyond the things that are written." By letting the Bible be our guide, we can get clear answers to our questions.

ORGANIZED THEOCRATICALLY

The Christian congregation was established in 33 C.E. on the Jewish festival day of Pentecost. It was organized and governed theocratically, that is, under God (*theos*) rule (*kratos*). The inspired account of what took place there in Jerusalem nearly 2,000 years ago leaves no doubt that the congregation of anointed ones was established by God. (Acts 2:1-47) It was his building, his household. (1 Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:19) It is important for us to learn what we can about the congregation back there because the same pattern of organization and operation that was established during the first century is adhered to by the Christian congregation of God today, which has now been

enlarged by the addition of the "great crowd."
—Rev. 7:9, 10.

The early congregation began with about 120 members. Holy spirit was poured out first upon these in fulfillment of Joel 2:28, 29. (Acts 2:16-18) But that same day 3,000 others were baptized in water and brought into the spirit-begotten congregation. They had embraced the word about the Christ and "continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles." After that, "Jehovah continued to join to them daily those being saved."—Acts 2:41, 42, 47.

The growth of the anointed congregation in Jerusalem became such that the Jewish high priest accused the disciples of having filled Jerusalem with their teaching. The new disciples in Jerusalem included many Jewish priests who became part of the congregation.—Acts 5:28; 6:7.

Jesus had said: "You will be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) And so it was that when a great persecution arose in Jerusalem following the death of Stephen, the disciples living there were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. But wherever they went they continued declaring the good news and making more disciples, including some from among the Samaritans. (Acts 8:1-13) Still later the good news began to be preached with good success among the uncircumcised non-Jewish nations. (Acts 10:1-48) All this preaching activity and the making of many disciples resulted in new Christian congregations being formed outside Jerusalem.—Acts 11:19-21; 14:21-23.

Arrangements were made for each newly established congregation to be organized and governed God's way, hence theocratically. This in-

volved the appointment of older men to care for the flock. Paul and Barnabas made such appointments in the congregations that were organized during their first missionary journey. (Acts 14: 23) Acts chapter 20 relates information about the apostle Paul's meeting with the older men of the congregation in Ephesus. Paul said to them: "Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son." (Acts 20:28) These were older men in a spiritual sense who qualified for appointment because of their spiritual qualifications. (1 Tim. 3: 1-7) Paul's fellow worker Titus was authorized to make appointments of older men in the congregations of Crete.—Titus 1:5.

As more congregations were formed, the apostles and the older men in the Jerusalem congregation continued to serve as the principal overseers of the expanded international congregation of the first century. From their position in the Jerusalem congregation they served as a governing body for the entire Christian congregation. It was their responsibility to consider matters affecting Christians everywhere. They sent out letters and decrees, all of which strengthened the congregations and made it possible for the disciples to remain united in thought and action. The congregations followed the direction of the governing body and, as a result, they received Jehovah's blessing and prospered.—Acts 8:1, 14, 15; 15:1, 2, 22-31; 16:4, 5.

The apostle Paul, in writing to the congregation in Ephesus, explained that the unity of the Christian congregation would be maintained through adherence to the headship of Jesus Christ and by

the operation of holy spirit. He urged Christians there to cultivate humility and to observe a oneness of the spirit in peaceful association among all members of the congregation. (Eph. 4:1-6) Then he quoted Psalm 68:18 and applied it to Jehovah's provision for spiritually qualified men to serve the needs of the congregation as apostles, prophets, evangelizers, shepherds and teachers. Such men, as gifts from Jehovah, would build up the entire congregation to a spiritual fullness that would be pleasing to God.—Eph. 4:7-16.

CONGREGATION TODAY FOLLOWS APOSTOLIC PATTERN

Today a similar pattern of organization is followed in all the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. These collectively form a united worldwide congregation built around the nucleus of spirit-anointed ones. (Zech. 8:23) This is possible because Jesus Christ, true to his promise, has loyally remained with his anointed disciples "all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 28:20) They dedicate their life unreservedly to Jehovah God and faithfully do his will. Those brought into the growing congregation today embrace the good news of God and are baptized as disciples of Jesus Christ. (Mark 1:14; Acts 2:41) They recognize the headship of Jesus Christ not only over the anointed members of the congregation but also over the entire flock which includes the "other sheep."—John 10:16; Eph. 1:22, 23.

Unity is maintained by loyally recognizing the headship of Christ and also by submitting to an organizational channel, "the faithful and discreet slave." What has the Master appointed this "slave" to do? Jesus answered that the "slave" was to provide spiritual food at the proper time

and to care for all His “belongings,” or Kingdom interests on earth. (Matt. 24:45-47; Luke 12:42-44) Rather than being an individual Christian, the ‘faithful slave’ today is the remnant, still living on earth, of the composite body of Christ’s anointed footstep followers. Such remaining ones are a part of spiritual Israel, the anointed congregation of God. (Gal. 6:16; compare Isaiah 43:10.) This remnant is faithfully discharging the responsibilities of the “slave” during this time of the end by taking the lead in the preaching of “this good news of the kingdom” throughout all the earth and by providing spiritual food at the proper time for the household of faith.—Matt. 24:14.

USE OF RELIGIOUS CORPORATIONS

During these last days of the present wicked system of things, the “belongings” of the Master have increased abundantly throughout all the earth. This has placed a heavy responsibility on the ‘faithful slave.’ In discharging its responsibility to provide spiritual food at the proper time and in order to get the good news of the Kingdom preached before the end comes, the remnant on earth, as “the faithful and discreet slave” class, has formed certain agencies, or legal entities. It has proved to be the course of wisdom for the ‘faithful slave’ to organize certain corporations that are recognized by the laws of various countries. These religious corporations own and operate printing facilities that produce and distribute Bibles and Bible literature on a worldwide basis for use in the Kingdom ministry.

The first in time and the principal corporation used in this way is the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. This nonprofit religious society was incorporated in 1884, is made

up of dedicated, baptized Christians and is exclusively devoted to advancing the interests of true worship in the earth. The Watch Tower Society has extended its works worldwide, establishing branch offices in various countries. Also, in compliance with local governmental regulations, a number of other religious societies have been legally formed, such as the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. (1909) and the International Bible Students Association in London, England (1914). All these legal instrumentalities cooperate with one another. These and other legal corporations are used by the modern-day Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses to facilitate the preaching of the good news worldwide and to care for the spiritual needs of the entire congregation of God in all parts of the earth.

STRUCTURE UNDER BRANCH ORGANIZATION

Whenever a branch office is established, a Branch Committee of three or more elders is appointed to care for the various responsibilities involved in looking after the work in the country or countries under the jurisdiction of that particular branch. One member of the committee serves as the coordinator of the Branch Committee.

Local congregations under each branch organization are arranged into circuits and a number of circuits make up a district. Circuits and districts may be of various sizes depending on geographical and language considerations, as well as the number of congregations within the area assigned to a branch. A circuit overseer is appointed to serve the congregations in each circuit. District overseers visit the different circuits, serve at circuit assemblies and spend some time serving

congregations, usually with the circuit overseer present. The duties of traveling overseers are set out from time to time in *Our Kingdom Ministry* as well as in correspondence addressed to them by the Society.

All in the organization recognize God's way of theocratic control. The congregations acknowledge and conform to the guidance of the Governing Body as it outlines organizational arrangements for the benefit of all. They accept the appointments made of older men to oversee the branches, districts, circuits and congregations. They look to "the faithful and discreet slave" for spiritual food at the proper time. (Matt. 24:45-47) The 'faithful slave' remnant and its Governing Body, in turn, adhere strictly to the headship of Christ, hold to Bible principles and submit to the direction of holy spirit. As all work together in unity, the results are the same as those experienced by the congregations in the first century. We are told at Acts 16:5: "Therefore, indeed, the congregations continued to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number from day to day."

CHAPTER 5

OVERSEERS TO SHEPHERD THE FLOCK

DURING his earthly ministry Jesus proved himself to be the Fine Shepherd. (John 10:11) We are told that once, upon viewing the crowds following him, "he felt pity for them, because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd." (Matt. 9:36) Peter and the other apostles observed closely his loving concern. How different he was from the false

shepherds of Israel who neglected the flock to such an extent that the sheep were scattered and spiritually starved! (Ezek. 34:7, 8) By observing Jesus' fine example of teaching and caring for the sheep, even to the point of laying down his life for them, the apostles learned how to help those with faith return to Jehovah, the Shepherd and Overseer of their souls.—1 Pet. 2:25.

By precept and example Jesus reinforced the serious responsibility he had laid upon the apostles to care for the sheep. They never lost sight of it. On one occasion Jesus impressed very strongly upon Peter's mind and heart the importance of feeding and shepherding the sheep. (John 21:15-17) Peter was deeply moved by this as indicated later in his exhortation to older men. In his first inspired letter he wrote: "Therefore, . . . shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; neither as lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock."—1 Pet. 5:1-3.

Peter's words apply with equal force to overseers in the congregation today. The need for having overseers in the congregations today is the same as it was back there in the first century, namely, to shepherd the flock of God. In his letter Peter emphasized the proper attitude that overseers should have in caring for such responsibility. Imitating Jesus, they should serve willingly, eagerly and as examples to the flock, taking the lead in Jehovah's service.

We can indeed be grateful for having spirit-appointed overseers in the congregation today. The benefits we receive are many. For example, overseers give spiritual encouragement and personal attention to the needs of individual mem-

bers of the congregation. Each week with earnestness they preside at congregation meetings where all are nourished in the faith. (Rom. 12:8) Their efforts to protect the flock from harmful elements and wicked men contribute to our spiritual security. (Isa. 32:2; Titus 1:9-11) Moreover, by their example and lead in the field ministry we are encouraged to keep active in preaching the good news regularly each month. (Phil. 3:16, 17; Heb. 13:15-17) Through these "gifts in men" Jehovah has provided well for the building up of the congregation.—Eph. 4:8, 11, 12.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR OVERSEERS

To ensure proper care of the congregation, men appointed to serve as overseers must meet the requirements set out in God's Word. Only if they do qualify could it be said that they have been appointed by holy spirit. (Acts 20:28) The Scriptural standards for Christian overseers are admittedly high, since these men have the serious responsibility of taking the lead in Jehovah's worship and being exemplary in Christian conduct. (1 Cor. 11:1; Heb. 13:7; 1 Pet. 5:3) But the standards are not so high that they cannot be met by Christian men who have a real love for Jehovah and a willingness to be used by him. The high standards provide a guarantee that those appointed as elders will be good examples in the congregation. It should be obvious to all that the overseers are individuals who apply the counsel from the Bible in all affairs of life.

The apostle Paul wrote down the basic Scriptural requirements for overseers in his first letter to Timothy and in his letter to Titus. At 1 Timothy 3:1-7 he wrote: "If any man is reaching out for an office of overseer, he is desirous of a fine work. The overseer should therefore be irrepre-

hensible, a husband of one wife, moderate in habits, sound in mind, orderly, hospitable, qualified to teach, not a drunken brawler, not a smiter, but reasonable, not belligerent, not a lover of money, a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having children in subjection with all seriousness; (if indeed any man does not know how to preside over his own household, how will he take care of God's congregation?) not a newly converted man, for fear that he might get puffed up with pride and fall into the judgment passed upon the Devil. Moreover, he should also have a fine testimony from people on the outside, in order that he might not fall into reproach and a snare of the Devil."

Paul's words to Titus state: "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might correct the things that were defective and might make appointments of older men in city after city, as I gave you orders; if there is any man free from accusation, a husband of one wife, having believing children that were not under a charge of debauchery nor unruly. For an overseer must be free from accusation as God's steward, not self-willed, not prone to wrath, not a drunken brawler, not a smiter, not greedy of dishonest gain, but hospitable, a lover of goodness, sound in mind, righteous, loyal, self-controlled, holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of teaching, that he may be able both to exhort by the teaching that is healthful and to reprove those who contradict." (Titus 1:5-9) Paul's counsel quoted above emphasizes the need for overseers to maintain a proper attitude toward carrying out their responsibilities, being willing and eager, taking the lead. Other Bible writers more indirectly or by implication set out what would be required of

Christian men in order for them to qualify for appointment as overseers, or shepherds, of the congregation.—Jas. 3:13, 17, 18.

Although a first consideration of the Scriptural requirements may prove to be somewhat overwhelming, there should be no reason for Christian men to shy away from desiring the fine work associated with the office of overseer. The fact is that all dedicated Christians should strive to measure up to these high standards. By taking the lead in exhibiting fine Christian qualities, overseers encourage other members of the congregation to do the same. This is indicated by what the apostle Paul wrote in describing how “gifts in men” are provided “with a view to the readjustment of the holy ones, for ministerial work, for the building up of the body of the Christ, *until we all attain to the oneness in the faith and in the accurate knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of stature that belongs to the fullness of the Christ.*” (Eph. 4:8, 12, 13) Since all Christians are to strive to attain spiritual maturity, those standing before the congregation as appointed overseers are required to be exemplary in taking the lead.

As indicated by what Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus, overseers would be selected from among the *older men* of the congregation. They would *not* be mere boys or *newly converted* men, but they would be individuals with experience in Christian living, having a broad knowledge of the Bible, a deep understanding of it and a genuine love for the congregation. They would be individuals who have the courage to speak up when wrongdoing exists and to take the needed action to correct it and thus protect the flock from

any who would selfishly exploit them. (Isa. 32:2) They would be men readily recognized by all in the congregation as spiritually mature men with a genuine concern for the flock of God. Their overall way of life would show this.

Those qualifying for appointment as overseers of the flock of God would be men experienced in life who had demonstrated a measure of practical wisdom in carrying on their own affairs. If married, they would be adhering to the Christian standard for marriage, namely, *husband of one wife*, and would have demonstrated their ability to *preside over their own household in a fine manner*. Because of their *having believing children who are not under a charge of debauchery nor unruly* but who are *in subjection with all seriousness*, other members of the congregation could confidently approach overseers for counsel and advice on a wide range of personal matters having to do with Christian living. Having conducted themselves properly within the family arrangement as well as within the community in general, these men would also be *irreprehensible, free from accusation* and *have a fine testimony even from people on the outside*. No valid charge of improper conduct could be brought against them to mar the reputation of the congregation. They would not have been reprovved recently for serious wrongdoing. Others in the congregation would be moved to imitate their fine example and entrust their spiritual life to their care.—1 Cor. 11:1; 16:15, 16; Phil. 2:25, 29; Heb. 13:7.

Such qualified men would be able to serve the Christian congregation in a role similar to that of the older men of Israel who were described as "wise and discreet and experienced." (Deut. 1:13) They would not be without sin. (Rom. 3:23) But

they would be known in the congregation and in the community as being upright and God-fearing, men who had demonstrated over a period of time that they conduct their life entirely on the basis of God's principles. Their blamelessness would give them freeness of speech before others in the congregation.

Men qualifying for appointment as overseers would display *moderation in personal habits* and in their dealing with others. They would not be fanatics, but their way of life would be characterized by balance, *orderliness* and *self-control*. Moderation would be demonstrated in such things as eating, drinking, recreation, hobbies and entertainment. They would *not be given to a lot of wine* but would be moderate in the use of alcoholic beverages so as *not* to leave themselves open to charges of drunkenness or of being a *drunken brawler*. One whose senses have been dulled by intoxicating drink easily loses self-control and so is not in a position to watch over the spiritual interests of the congregation.

Exercising oversight of the affairs of the congregation requires one to demonstrate a measure of *orderliness*, being systematic in life, habits and work. This includes his personal appearance, his home and his activities. Such one avoids procrastination, is able to see what is required and plans accordingly. He adheres to theocratic order. All of this is what is meant by being *moderate in habits* and *self-controlled*.

An overseer must be *reasonable*. He must be able to work in unity and cooperate with others within the body of older men who are charged with the oversight of the congregation. He should have a proper view of himself in relation to others both within the congregation and outside. As

a reasonable person, the overseer would not be opinionated, considering his views and opinions as always superior to those of his fellow elders. Others may excel in qualities or abilities that he may lack. Reasonableness comes as a result of basing one's conclusions solidly on the Scriptures and striving to imitate the example of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 2:2-8) By showing proper respect for others and considering others as superior to himself, an elder would *not become belligerent or be a smiter* of others with either physical or verbal abuse. He would *not be self-willed*, always insisting on his own way or that his point of view must be accepted as best. He would *not be prone to wrath* but would be peaceable in his dealings with others.

Similarly, one qualifying to serve as an overseer in the congregation should be *sound in mind*. This means that he should have a good comprehension of Jehovah's principles and their application. He should be levelheaded, not hasty in judgment. He should be receptive to counsel and direction. He should not be double-minded or hypocritical, not fanatical.

The apostle reminded Titus that an overseer should also be *a lover of goodness*. He should be *righteous and loyal*. These qualities would be reflected in his dealings with others and in his firm stand for what is right and good. He would be known as one who is unwavering in his devotion to Jehovah and consistent in upholding righteous principles when making judgments. He would be one who is able to keep a confidence.

As one who is sound in mind, of course, he would not be overly demanding in what he expects of others. Neither would the overseer be unduly concerned about material advantages for

himself, *not greedy of dishonest gain, not a lover of money*. He would not use his office to take material advantage of the brothers under his care nor would he hold back because of the reasonable material sacrifices he may be required to make in order to give generously of his time in caring for the needs of the congregation. His love for the brothers, as well as for strangers, and his self-sacrificing endeavors in their behalf would make him as one who is genuinely *hospitable*, freely giving of himself and his belongings for the benefit of others.—Acts 20:33-35.

In order to carry out his assignment effectively, one appointed as an overseer, or shepherd, of the congregation would need to be *qualified to teach*. Paul's words to Titus were that the overseer would be one "*holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of teaching, that he may be able both to exhort by the teaching that is healthful and to reprove those who contradict.*" (Titus 1:9) In exhibiting his art of teaching the overseer should have the ability to reason with others, produce evidence, overcome objections and set out with clearness the teaching of the Scriptures in such a way that others would be convinced and have their faith strengthened. The overseer would need to exercise such teaching ability under circumstances both favorable and unfavorable. (2 Tim. 4:2) He would need to have the patience to reprove with mildness one who is in error or convince a doubter and move him to profitable works on the basis of faith. His being qualified to teach either before an audience or on a person-to-person basis would give evidence of his meeting this important requirement.

The apostle Peter wrote that the older men of the congregation who serve in a representative

capacity should do so *willingly* and with *eagerness*, not under compulsion nor begrudgingly. They should be enthusiastic in their endeavors. They should be *taking the lead, becoming examples to the flock*.—Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:3.

All of this may look like a great deal to expect from one who would serve as an overseer. Certainly none would measure up perfectly to the high standard that has been set forth in the Bible, as outlined here, but none of the appointed elders in the congregation should be so significantly deficient in any one of these qualities that the deficiency could be considered a serious flaw. Some elders will be more outstanding in one quality than in another, whereas others of the body will excel in those qualities in which some may be weak. The effect then is that, generally speaking, as a whole, the body will have within itself all the fine qualities that are necessary for exercising proper oversight of the congregation of God.

When recommending men for appointment as overseers, the body of elders will want to keep in mind their own standing before Jehovah and their relationship with fellow Christians. Romans 12:3 counsels that each one should in no way “think more of himself than it is necessary to think; but to think so as to have a sound mind, each one as God has distributed to him a measure of faith.” Each should consider himself as a lesser one. None should prove to be “righteous overmuch” when examining the qualifications of another. (Eccl. 7:16) Having clearly in mind the Scriptural requirements for elders, they would want to determine whether or not one being considered measures up to those standards to a reasonable degree or whether he is so seriously

deficient in one or more of the Scriptural requirements that he would not qualify to serve. Allowing for human imperfections and being free from biased leanings and hypocrisy, appointed elders will make their recommendations in a manner showing due respect for Jehovah's righteous standards and for the good of the congregation. Just as with Timothy and Titus, elders today need to give prayerful consideration to each recommendation and follow the direction of holy spirit. This is one of the serious responsibilities they shoulder, and they must do so in accord with Paul's admonition 'never to lay your hands hastily upon any man.'—1 Tim. 5:21, 22.

Men meeting these high Christian standards are able to protect the congregation from spiritual dangers, and they serve as fine examples of Christian conduct for all to imitate. They have freeness of speech enabling them to be bold in giving needed counsel to those within the congregation as well as being zealous to proclaim the good news in the field ministry.—Heb. 10:19-23, 35; Acts 4:29; 1 Tim. 3:13.

FRUITAGE OF THE SPIRIT

Such spiritually qualified men would give evidence in their life that they were directed by holy spirit. They would be producing the fruitage of the spirit, described at Galatians 5:22, 23 as "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control." Their oversight of the congregation would be refreshing to the brothers and would serve to unite the congregation in rendering sacred service. Their course of conduct and the fruitage of their labors would give evidence that they are appointed by holy spirit. (Acts 20:28) Having the spiritual requirements for overseers and shepherds stated

so precisely in the inspired Scriptures has made it possible for us to have qualified appointed overseers to shepherd the flock today.

REACHING OUT

The office of overseer is to be desired by mature Christian men. (1 Tim. 3:1) However, the appointment means work, self-sacrifice and making oneself available to serve the needs of the brothers, caring for their spiritual interests. Reaching out for the office means striving to meet the qualifications set out in the Scriptures. The overseers of the congregation have a great responsibility as well as an accountability in caring for the souls of those entrusted to their care. Members of the congregation are told: "Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you." (Heb. 13:17) Although the overseers are imperfect men, there is no need for anyone in the congregation to hold back from being submissive since it is Jehovah's arrangement and he will hold the overseers responsible for their actions. They are representing him and his theocratic rule. He will remove from office those overseers who fail to manifest the fruitage of the spirit and whose pattern of life falls short of the Scriptural requirements.

Overseers themselves must also take very seriously what is stated at Hebrews 13:17. They are referred to as "those who are taking the lead," "keeping watch over" the souls of the brothers and as "those who will render an account." Overseers must exercise special care not to 'lord it over' the flock of God, not to use their position

of responsibility for selfish advantage or even serve because they feel that they are compelled to do so. The overseers must prove themselves to be loving shepherds of the flock of God.—1 Pet. 5:2, 3; Prov. 27:23.

Do we not truly appreciate the hard work and fine example of the congregation overseers? In writing to the congregation in Thessalonica Paul admonished the brothers: "Now we request you, brothers, to have regard for those who are working hard among you and presiding over you in the Lord and admonishing you; and to give them more than extraordinary consideration in love because of their work." (1 Thess. 5:12, 13) Much of the hard work of the congregation overseers serves to make our service to God easier and more enjoyable. Also, in his first letter to Timothy, Paul makes mention of the attitude that members of the congregation should cultivate toward the overseers, saying: "Let the older men who preside in a fine way be reckoned worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in speaking and teaching."—1 Tim. 5:17.

PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES MAY CHANGE

Of course, a brother who has served faithfully for a period of time may become physically ill or otherwise incapacitated, perhaps due to advancing age, and may no longer be able to care for all the responsibilities of an overseer as he once did or in the way that other overseers do. Even so, he should still be viewed and respected as an older man as long as he is appointed. There would be no need for him to step aside due to his limitations. He is still due the double honor paid to all hardworking older men who are serving to the best of their respective abilities in shepherding the flock.

But if a brother should feel that it would be best for him to step aside due to changed personal circumstances that limit his ability to serve, he may choose to do so. He should still be held in respect and be able to do much good in the congregation, even though no longer having assignments and duties given to elders.

POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Generally, men appointed as overseers are recommended for appointment by the local body of elders. This is done during regular visits of the circuit overseer. However, the Governing Body may appoint men who qualify to serve as overseers in any locality at any time. The Governing Body is not bound by the recommendations of any local group. Such recommendations serve merely as a guide and may even be rejected for reasons well known to the Governing Body. Also, at times, the Governing Body may authorize certain representatives to make appointments of overseers.—1 Tim. 1:3; Titus 1:5.

In each congregation there is a presiding overseer who serves for an indefinite period of time. The same is true of the secretary, service overseer, *Watchtower* Study conductor and Theocratic Ministry School overseer. The elders do not serve in these positions on a rotational basis. Of course, if a brother holding any of these positions moves, is unable to care for his responsibilities due to health reasons or becomes disqualified for failure to measure up to Scriptural requirements, another elder is selected to handle the assignment. In congregations where the number of overseers is limited, it may be necessary for an elder to handle more than one assignment until such time as other brothers qualify to be appointed as elders.

The presiding overseer serves as chairman at meetings of the body of elders. Communications and important records of the congregation are handled by the secretary who keeps the elders informed about important communications. Arrangements for field activity and other service-related matters come under the direction of the service overseer. The specific duties of these brothers, along with the *Watchtower* Study conductor, Theocratic Ministry School overseer and others who make up the body of elders, are set out from time to time in *Our Kingdom Ministry* and letters from the Society. Whenever appointments, deletions or removals of overseers and ministerial servants take place, appropriate announcements are made to the congregation. This enables all concerned to know who are currently serving within the local congregation and they can thus cooperate with the arrangement that is in effect.

It is suggested that the body of elders in each congregation meet periodically to discuss matters related to the spiritual progress of the congregation. Two such meetings are held each year in conjunction with the regular visits of the circuit overseer. About three months after each visit of the circuit overseer, a meeting can be scheduled. These four meetings during the year would most likely be sufficient for resolving any matters requiring the attention of the entire body of elders. Of course, the elders may convene at any time circumstances make it advisable. But if each one gives proper attention to his assigned duties and if the work of the elders is being adequately supervised and coordinated through the presiding overseer, meetings involving the entire body of elders can be kept to a minimum. Additionally,

all the elders in the circuit meet with the circuit and district overseers during the week of the semiannual circuit assembly.

CONGREGATION SERVICE COMMITTEE

There are certain duties that are cared for by the Congregation Service Committee, made up of the presiding overseer, secretary and service overseer. Members of this committee are involved in handling and signing various forms, such as those used in connection with literature inventories, orders, field reports and recommendations for appointment or removal of overseers, ministerial servants or regular pioneers. From time to time the Society calls upon the Congregation Service Committee to perform other duties.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELDERS

The presiding overseer is responsible for overseeing the Service Meeting. Periodically, however, he may invite another elder to look after this assignment for a certain month. Depending on the number available and their individual abilities, various elders handle assignments in connection with the other congregation meetings each week. These meetings are planned, outlined and prepared in advance so that they will be instructive and spiritually upbuilding. The elders are responsible for presenting instructive public talks. These also take much time in preparation. Besides teaching in the congregation, the elders also take the lead in the field ministry. They work along with the publishers, setting the example.—Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:3.

CONGREGATION BOOK STUDY CONDUCTOR

One of the outstanding privileges in the congregation is to serve as a Congregation Book Study

conductor. Such conductor has the opportunity to help others in a number of areas. Because this responsibility is a serious one, elders should be used, if available. If not, then one elder might care for more than one group, doing so at different times during the week. This, however, would depend on his circumstances. Or, capable ministerial servants could be used until such time as an elder can take over. This is something for the elders to decide. They would also decide to which group the conductor would be assigned.

One of the chief responsibilities of the Congregation Book Study conductor is teaching. In order to do so adequately, thorough preparation is necessary. He should know not only the answers to the study questions but also the reasons behind those answers and the value of the material. It should be his goal to help the group get a true understanding of what is being considered, so that they can apply the truths learned to their life and explain them to others. This would require a genuinely conscientious effort on his part, even as emphasized by Paul at Romans 12:7, where he wrote: "He that teaches, let him be at his teaching."

Another important feature of the book study conductor's work is that of taking the lead in the field ministry. The regularity, zeal and enthusiasm that he shows for the field activity will be reflected in the publishers. Because the brothers appreciate the encouragement and help that come through being together, a group witnessing schedule convenient for the majority should be worked out and maintained. (Luke 10:1-16) The conductor needs to plan so there is always enough territory to work. He will conduct the meeting for field service and organize the publishers for

that day's work. When he cannot be there, he can arrange for another elder, ministerial servant or, if neither is available, another publisher in good standing to care for these responsibilities so that the publishers enjoy the good leadership they need.

A real help to the study conductor and the entire group is the service overseer. It is a wise conductor who plans ahead for the visit of the service overseer, keeping his group informed of the time of the visit and anticipating its benefits. As all in the group are kept fully aware of the arrangements and enthusiastically support them, there is a corresponding improvement in the field activity.

Each study group is purposely kept small. This allows for the study conductor to become well acquainted with all assigned to it. As a loving shepherd he is warmly interested in each one and will try to give personal help and encouragement for the field ministry, support of congregation meetings and whatever else is appropriate to assist in keeping each person spiritually strong. Some will benefit from a personal visit when ill or depressed. An encouraging suggestion or a word of counsel might prompt some to reach out for additional privileges in the congregation, thus becoming of greater use to their brothers. While most of his efforts logically will be directed toward helping those in his own group, as an elder and shepherd he will have the entire congregation in mind. He is lovingly concerned for all in the congregation and will be ready to help others who are in need.—Acts 20:17, 28.

BENEFITING INDIVIDUALLY

The hard work of the overseers includes many things that contribute to the spiritual well-being

of the congregation as a whole and of its members individually. Much time is also used by these mature men in making visits to the homes of the brothers for the purpose of giving spiritual encouragement. While visiting the brothers privately in their home, or talking with them personally at the Kingdom Hall when home visits are not convenient or possible, the elders are able to give attention to the special needs of each one, just as a loving shepherd looks to the individual needs of each one of the many sheep in his flock.

At times it may appear that the overseers are so very busy that they really do not have time to give you the personal attention that is needed. Or you may hesitate to approach one of the overseers because you do not want to add to his burden. Although overseers do have many responsibilities and are kept busy not only with congregational matters but also with their own families and personal matters, members of the congregation should always feel free to approach them whenever they need help. It is unwise to allow a problem to remain unattended until it becomes serious. Also, it is not wise to reason that the overseers will learn of the problem by themselves if you do not bring it to their attention. Some matters causing disturbance may be more easily handled at an early stage before they grow into problems of major proportions.

CITY OVERSEER

A city overseer is appointed in cities where there is more than one congregation. Usually this appointment is made on the recommendation of the circuit overseer or circuit overseers, if more than one serves congregations in that city. This is not an appointment that changes

each year. The city overseer does not exercise jurisdiction in any congregation other than the one in which he serves as an elder. The Society's branch office may wish to communicate with him on various matters, such as expired subscriptions or arrangements for assemblies and schools that may be held in his city. However, the branch deals directly with each congregation in regard to literature supplies, monthly field service reports and other matters.

CIRCUIT OVERSEER

The Governing Body appoints qualified elders to serve as circuit overseers. These are assigned by the branch office to visit, on a regular basis, the congregations that make up their circuits, usually twice a year. They also periodically visit pioneers, special pioneers or missionaries serving in isolated territory. They plan their routing and notify each congregation sufficiently in advance so the visit will result in the most benefit.

The presiding overseer takes the lead in organizing matters so the visit will prove spiritually refreshing to all. (Rom. 1:11, 12) After he receives notification of the visit and information about the needs of the circuit overseer and his wife, if married, he makes arrangements through various brothers to get the needed literature supplies, accommodations and other necessary things. He makes sure all, including the circuit overseer, are informed of these arrangements.

The circuit overseer will contact the presiding overseer regarding the scheduling of meetings, including meetings for field service. These will be arranged in accord with what is directed in *Our Kingdom Ministry*, letters from the branch, local circumstances and the circuit overseer's suggestions. All need to be informed in advance

concerning the time of the meetings with the congregation, with the pioneers and with the elders and ministerial servants, as well as the places and times of meetings for field service. This will enable all to adjust their affairs so they can benefit from the entire week's activities.

Since the circuit overseer will check the congregation's records on Tuesday afternoon, such records should be in good order and available before he arrives. The presiding overseer will be sure to have them at the location where they will be checked. It is helpful if the presiding overseer or the secretary is available to render any assistance needed. The circuit overseer checks the Congregation's Publisher Record cards, monthly field service reports, meeting attendance records, territory records and the accounts. This will give him some insight as to possible needs of the congregation and how he may be of assistance to those responsible for keeping these records.

During his visit the circuit overseer takes time to speak with the brothers individually as he is able—at meetings, out in the field service, while enjoying their hospitality at mealtimes and otherwise. Additionally, he meets with the elders and ministerial servants, sharing appropriate Scriptural counsel, suggestions and encouragement that will help them shoulder their responsibilities in serving and shepherding the flock in their care. (Prov. 27:23; Acts 20:26-32; 1 Tim. 4:11-16) He also meets with the pioneers to encourage them in their work and give personal assistance with any problems they may be encountering in their ministry.

If there are problems that need attention, the circuit overseer will either handle these or assist the elders to the extent possible while he is with

the congregation. He will strive to help the elders or individuals involved to locate the Scriptural direction that applies. If there has been some serious wrongdoing and the elders need his assistance in handling such, he will set aside time for this purpose. If there is anything that the branch office needs to do in following through, he and the elders will provide the office with a detailed report on the matter.

While with the congregation the circuit overseer attends the regular congregation meetings. These may be adjusted from time to time in harmony with directions in *Our Kingdom Ministry*, letters from the branch office or other directives from the Society. He will give several talks to the congregation. His objective will be to encourage, fortify and motivate the congregation. He will strive to build in each one love and appreciation for Jehovah, Jesus Christ and the organization. He will encourage zealous participation in field service, providing practical suggestions on how to do the work effectively.

One of the primary objectives of the circuit overseer's visit is to provide leadership in field service. Many in the congregations have been able to adjust their schedule so that they could have a fuller share in field service that week. Some have been able to arrange to be auxiliary pioneers the month of his visit. Could you do so? Those desirous of working with him or his wife can make an appointment to do so through the presiding overseer. Much good has been accomplished by taking the circuit overseer or his wife on Bible studies and return visits. At times adjustments have to be made to do this during his visit, but the benefits are worth it. The circuit overseer is encouraged to arrange for an early

start in field service each day and to spend full days in service, taking into consideration local circumstances. Your extra effort to give full support to this aspect of the week's visit is deeply appreciated.—Prov. 27:17.

Circuit assemblies are arranged twice a year for each circuit. The circuit overseer is responsible for the operation of the assembly organization on these occasions. On the circuit overseer's recommendation the Society appoints permanent assembly personnel: an assembly overseer, an assistant assembly overseer and a news representative. They are to work closely with the circuit overseer in caring for the assembly organization. This will enable the circuit overseer to give his primary attention to the assembly program. The circuit overseer designates other capable men to care for various departments. He also arranges for an audit of the circuit accounts after each circuit assembly.

The circuit overseer reports his field service directly to the Society at the end of each month. He is also reimbursed for certain necessary expenses incurred, such as for travel, food and lodging, if these are not covered by the congregations. These traveling representatives have confidence that, as Jesus promised, material needs will be provided if they seek continually the interests of Jehovah's Kingdom. (Luke 12:31) The congregations will want to be conscious of their privilege to display hospitality to these devoted elders who serve them.—3 John 5-8.

DISTRICT OVERSEER

The district overseer is a traveling elder who is also appointed by the Governing Body and assigned by the branch office to serve a number of circuits that comprise a district. He serves as chairman of the circuit assembly programs in his district and gives the public discourse on such programs. He works the first part of each week with a host congregation in the circuit being served. He takes the lead in group witnessing and gives an upbuilding Scriptural talk to the host congregation.

The branch office assigns each circuit the dates for its circuit assembly, and when the circuit overseer has secured assembly facilities for these dates he notifies the branch office. The branch office notifies the district overseer of this schedule, which he now follows as his assigned routing. Due to travel distances for the publishers and the small size of assembly facilities, some circuits have to be divided into sections with a circuit assembly held for each section. The district overseer is informed of this and spends a week in the circuit for each circuit assembly to be held. In advance he works out with the circuit overseer which congregation can appropriately be the host congregation for each circuit assembly.

The district overseer gives encouragement to the circuit overseer and his wife (if married) and offers helpful suggestions to assist them with their work. This he does on Tuesday afternoon of his visit. From time to time the branch office will outline points that they can beneficially discuss in this meeting. The circuit overseer and his wife may have questions on which they desire assistance. (Prov. 20:5) The district overseer, too, may have points to share due to things he

has learned through experience and observation. Privately, the circuit overseer may want to discuss the needs of the circuit and points that the district overseer may be able to work into his talks on the circuit assembly program or at his meeting with the elders of the circuit.

While working with the host congregation during the first part of the week, the district overseer will give a talk to the congregation and attend an abbreviated Congregation Book Study on Tuesday evening. If the elders need advice or assistance with some congregation matters, they will let him know this in advance and he will meet with them. Primarily, during the week he will take the lead in group witnessing. He and his wife will have a full schedule for field service. The circuit overseer and his wife will also give full support to the field service activity that week. The presiding overseer will make sure all are informed of the arrangements for meetings for service. He will also see that adequate territory is available and make appointments in behalf of any who have requested to work with the traveling overseers.

At the conclusion of the circuit assembly (or assemblies) the district overseer will send the branch a report on how the program was presented and received in that circuit. Also, he will report on the spiritual condition and the needs of the circuit. Once a month he also reports his field service and expenses. His accommodations and expenses are cared for in the same way as those for the circuit overseer.

BRANCH COMMITTEE

In each of the branch offices of the Watch Tower Society throughout the world, three or more spiritually qualified and mature brothers

serve as a Branch Committee to oversee the preaching work in the country or countries under their jurisdiction as assigned by the Society. One of the committee members serves as the Branch Committee coordinator.

Those serving on the Branch Committee handle matters pertaining to all the congregations in their territory. They arrange for the providing of publications furnished by "the faithful and discreet slave" to strengthen all associated with the congregations. Their primary objective is to see to it that the good news of the Kingdom is preached throughout the territory assigned, and that congregations, circuits and districts are set up to give proper oversight to the needs of the field. The Branch Committee also gives attention to missionaries and to special, regular and auxiliary pioneer activity. When there are assemblies and conventions, these brothers see to it that arrangements and assignments are made so as to ensure that everything takes "place decently and by arrangement."—1 Cor. 14:40.

The Governing Body makes all appointments of those selected to serve as members of Branch Committees throughout the world.

ZONE OVERSEER

Periodically, arrangements are made by the Governing Body to have qualified brothers serve each of the branches throughout the earth. Brothers used in this capacity are known as zone overseers. Their primary work is helping the Branch Committee with problems or questions they have to face in carrying on the preaching and disciple-making work. Wherever practical, the zone overseer also serves the missionaries who work under the many branches of the organization worldwide. He talks with them about their problems and

needs, giving necessary encouragement in their most important Kingdom-preaching activity.

The zone overseer also examines the various records that are kept for operating a branch office. He is especially interested in what is being accomplished in the field as far as the Kingdom preaching and other congregational activities are concerned. If there is a printery, farm or other facility, he inspects each of these operations. When the zone overseer visits branches he also shares to the extent possible in the Kingdom-preaching work.

LOVING OVERSIGHT

Visits by traveling overseers provide an interchange of encouragement, and the congregations are thus strengthened and made firm in the faith. (Rom. 1:12; Eph. 4:3) All are made aware of their interdependency. Each one serving in the organization works for the common good of all and in spreading the Kingdom good news. (1 Cor. 12:12-31) Certainly we have all benefited greatly from the hard work and loving care of these mature Christian men. We will benefit even further as we continue submitting ourselves to congregation elders and other appointed overseers charged with shepherding the flock and with oversight of the work. (1 Cor. 16:15-18; Phil. 2:25, 29) As we all cooperate together we are drawn into unity with the head of the congregation, Christ Jesus, our Lord, the one appointed by Jehovah as the Fine Shepherd of the sheep. (Eph 1:22, 23) So it is that God's spirit permeates the congregations worldwide and his Word serves to guide the operation of the work throughout the earth. —Ps. 119:105.

CHAPTER 6

MINISTERIAL SERVANTS RENDER VALUABLE SERVICE

IN WRITING to the congregation at Philippi the apostle Paul said: "Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the holy ones in union with Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, along with overseers and ministerial servants." (Phil. 1:1) Note, he made particular mention of the ministerial servants in his salutation. These men evidently fulfilled an important role in assisting the elders in the congregation back there. The same is true in our time. Ministerial servants render a number of services that are most helpful to overseers and contribute to the good order of the congregation.

Have you become acquainted with the ministerial servants in your congregation? Are you aware of the many fine services they perform for your benefit and for the benefit of the entire congregation? Perhaps you have not thought of their assigned duties as being of great consequence. But the apostle specifically mentions them and states that "the men who minister in a fine manner are acquiring for themselves a fine standing and great freeness of speech in the faith in connection with Christ Jesus."—1 Tim. 3:13.

SCRIPTURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MINISTERIAL SERVANTS

Ministerial servants are expected to lead a wholesome Christian life, be responsible men and give proof that they are able to care for assignments properly. This becomes obvious when we consider what Paul had to say in his letter to

Timothy about the qualifications of ministerial servants: "Ministerial servants should likewise be serious, not double-tongued, not giving themselves to a lot of wine, not greedy of dishonest gain, holding the sacred secret of the faith with a clean conscience. Also, let these be tested as to fitness first, then let them serve as ministers, as they are free from accusation. Let ministerial servants be husbands of one wife, presiding in a fine manner over children and their own households. For the men who minister in a fine manner are acquiring for themselves a fine standing and great freeness of speech in the faith in connection with Christ Jesus."—1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12, 13.

So whereas their work within the congregation generally involves nonteaching responsibilities, ministerial servants are nonetheless spiritual men who by their hard work and exemplary Christian life not only perform vital services for the congregation but also set an example to be imitated by others.—Compare 1 Timothy 4:11, 12.

The specific Scriptural requirements for ministerial servants mentioned by Paul in his first letter to Timothy indicate that a high standard is set for men who are used in this capacity. Holding to such a standard serves to protect the congregation from any legitimate accusation as to the kind of men to whom it entrusts special responsibilities. Whether young or older in years, ministerial servants are expected to be active in the ministry each month, setting a fine example. They should be exemplary in their dress, grooming, speech, attitude and conduct. Such a pattern of living with soundness of mind gains the respect of others and reflects the seriousness with which ministerial servants view their relationship with Jehovah and their privileges of service in the congregation.—Compare Titus 2:2, 6-8.

These are men who have been "tested as to fitness." Even before receiving their appointment they have demonstrated themselves to be truly dedicated men whose faith has been made manifest in zealous Kingdom service and in helping others to be made firm in the faith. In their response to the good news they have demonstrated that they put Kingdom interests first in their life and are reaching out for whatever service privileges may be opened to them. They are indeed examples for others in the congregation to imitate.—1 Tim. 3:10.

HOW THEY ARE USED

Ministerial servants render a great variety of practical services in behalf of their brothers and sisters. In doing so they are very helpful to the overseers, relieving them of much detailed work, thus leaving them free to care for important teaching and shepherding responsibilities. In making such service assignments the elders take into account the number of appointed ministerial servants in the congregation as well as their individual abilities.

Just consider some of the services they handle. One ministerial servant may be assigned to take care of the congregation literature, making it convenient for all of us to obtain the literature we need for our personal use and for field service. Another may care for the magazines in the congregation. Others are assigned duties to keep records such as for the congregation accounts or for the assigning of territory, or they are used to handle microphones, operate sound equipment, look after the platform or perhaps help the elders in other ways. There is much work to be done in maintaining the Kingdom Hall and keeping it clean, so ministerial servants are often called

upon to assist in caring for such responsibilities. Ministerial servants are also assigned to serve as attendants, welcome new ones and help maintain order at congregation meetings.

In some congregations there may be enough ministerial servants so that a different one can be assigned to each of these duties. Elsewhere, a ministerial servant may care for several assignments. In some instances it is beneficial to have more than one person assigned to share in certain work. (If there are not enough ministerial servants to care for some of these responsibilities, the body of elders may, in these cases, arrange for other dedicated exemplary brothers to help take care of some of this necessary work. Thus, they would gain experience that would be useful later when they, in turn, become qualified to serve as ministerial servants. Or, if brothers are not available, certain sisters who show godly humility and devotion to Jehovah could be asked to assist with some things, though, of course, they would not be appointed as ministerial servants.)

Periodically, if there is good reason, elders may find it beneficial to shift some ministerial servants from one assignment to another. However, there is great advantage in having brothers continue to handle the same assignments so as to become more proficient and gain experience. Much depends on local needs as to how elders work out these assignments handled by ministerial servants.

Depending on local circumstances in each congregation, there may be other services that can be assigned to ministerial servants who are doing as the apostle Paul encouraged young Timothy, 'making their spiritual advancement manifest.' (1 Tim. 4:15) If there are not enough elders to

conduct the Congregation Book Studies, some of the more qualified ministerial servants are used as study conductors to care for assigned groups. They may be assigned to handle parts in the Service Meeting and the Theocratic Ministry School and to deliver public talks in the local congregation. Other privileges may be extended to some of the ministerial servants where there is particular need and they meet the requirements for the assignment.—Compare 1 Peter 4:10.

In assisting the elders they should give of themselves willingly, demonstrating that they have a sense of responsibility and are working for the advancement of Kingdom interests and the benefit of everyone in the congregation. By taking the lead in the field service, ministerial servants can set a good example for others and reap great satisfaction themselves in a work well done.

Though their work differs from that of the elders, it is no less a part of their sacred service to God and is important to the smooth functioning of the congregation. In time, if ministerial servants discharge their obligations well and also become qualified to serve as shepherds and teachers, they may be recommended as elders in the congregation.

If you have not done so already, why not make special effort to get acquainted with the ministerial servants in your congregation? You can show your appreciation for their hard work by cooperating with them as they care for their assigned duties. In this way you will also be showing appreciation for Jehovah's provision for maintaining an orderly household. (Gal. 6:10) The ministerial servants are appointed by holy spirit for your good.

CHAPTER 7

ARRANGEMENTS FOR REGULARLY ASSEMBLING TOGETHER

THE congregation of God is referred to in the Bible as his household. (1 Tim. 3:15) How fitting that arrangements are made for its members and their companions to assemble regularly for worship and to be fed spiritually! It is important for each one of us to gather together to hear God's Word, so as to learn his requirements and how we may serve him. This applies to both young persons and those of older years, just as it did in the case of God's ancient covenant people, the nation of Israel. His command to them through Moses was to "congregate the people, the men and the women and the little ones and your alien resident who is within your gates, in order that they may listen and in order that they may learn, as they must fear Jehovah your God and take care to carry out all the words of this law." (Deut. 31:12) A command exhorting all Christians to assemble together regularly is expressed in similar terms.—Heb. 10:23-25.

Clearly, the purpose for assembling together now, even as then, is to listen and learn and to be "taught by Jehovah." (Isa. 54:13) Assembling for worship in ancient Israel was always a joyous occasion, as reflected in the words of David who wrote, "I rejoiced when they were saying to me: 'To the house of Jehovah let us go.'" (Ps. 122:1) This is also true of Jehovah's Witnesses today as they assemble together to worship Jehovah.

KINGDOM HALL

The Bible account and secular history tell us that the first-century Christians assembled together in private homes as well as in public places. (Rom. 16:3, 5; Col. 4:15; Acts 19:8, 9) At times it was necessary for them to meet in isolated, or secluded, places to avoid detection by persecutors. Today, also, private homes and public places are used for Christian meetings, but the principal meeting place used by congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses is the Kingdom Hall.

In some localities it is more convenient to rent a hall than it is to buy or to build one. However, large numbers of congregations have chosen to purchase property and build their own Kingdom Halls, suited to their needs. Or they have bought and renovated existing buildings. In such instances it is appropriate to have a dedication program. Elders are generally familiar with information regarding ownership and operation of Kingdom Halls as set out in *Our Kingdom Ministry*, memorandums and letters provided by the Society. The Kingdom Hall, as a place of worship, should not be a pretentious building designed to impress others. While its architecture may vary from place to place, its purpose is functional. (Compare Acts 17:24.) It should be a comfortable and convenient place for conducting Christian meetings that help us to grow spiritually and to learn about Jehovah, and that encourage us to share in his Kingdom service.

Each Kingdom Hall is arranged for, financed and maintained by the local congregation(s) of Jehovah's Witnesses. The brothers should consider it a privilege not only to support the Kingdom Hall financially but also to volunteer their

services in keeping it clean, presentable and in good repair. Both inside and out, the Kingdom Hall should be a proper representation of Jehovah's organization. An elder or a ministerial servant is usually assigned to see that necessary work is cared for according to an equitable, convenient schedule. Book study groups may take turns in cleaning the Hall, following the list of things to be done each week. At times several congregations may share the use of a Kingdom Hall. This requires close cooperation among all the brothers with regard to financing and maintaining the Kingdom Hall. When it is necessary for two or more congregations to use the same Kingdom Hall, the elders of all the congregations involved set up a committee of brothers to care for the responsibility of working out convenient and practical arrangements for the proper care of the building and the property.

Meeting times are arranged for each congregation, having in mind what is convenient for the majority of publishers. Consideration should also be given to interested persons in the territory since we want them to attend. This may be worked out through the elders in a spirit of mutual concern and brotherly love.—Phil. 2:2-4; 1 Pet. 3:8.

In addition to its use for regular congregational meetings and as a meeting place for field service, the Kingdom Hall may be used for wedding ceremonies and funerals with the permission of those members of the body of elders who are present at the time the decision is made. They carefully consider what is desired and whether the individuals involved are in good standing with the congregation and otherwise qualified. Those who are granted the use of the Kingdom Hall for such purposes are expected to conduct

themselves in a way that befits such a place of worship. All involved should be sure that nothing is done that would offend the brothers or bring reproach upon Jehovah and the good name of the congregation. (Phil. 2:14, 15) At times use of the Kingdom Hall may be granted for other spiritual functions under the Society's direction, such as conducting the Kingdom Ministry School for elders and the Pioneer Service School.

Private homes of the brothers may also serve as meeting places. Those who are able to offer their home as a convenient place for some of or all the congregation meetings, as circumstances require, should view this as a privilege.

Meeting places of the congregation should always be viewed with respect by members of the congregation. Our dress, grooming and decorum should bespeak the dignity associated with worshipping Jehovah at his house. (Eccl. 5:1; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10) Ignoring such counsel would be showing a lack of appreciation for our Christian meetings.

At meetings in the Kingdom Hall qualified brothers should be assigned to serve as attendants. They should be alert, have friendly personalities and use good judgment. Their responsibilities include greeting newcomers and making them feel welcome, helping any latecomers to find seats and giving necessary attention to proper heating and ventilation of the Hall. Maintaining order during the meetings is essential. It is recommended that children sit with their parents. When a child becomes unruly, an attendant might ask the parent in a kind and tactful way to take the child out so the audience will not be unduly distracted. Even before the meeting, parents with young children can be encouraged to sit where they will cause the least distraction if it is necessary to take

the children out to discipline them or care for other needs.

Since the conduct of children inside the Kingdom Hall as well as outside can reflect favorably or unfavorably on the congregation, attendants can, where necessary, remind parents to give proper supervision so that the children will not be running in the building or around the property, especially when those in attendance are visiting with one another after the meeting is concluded. The service performed by attendants obviously contributes much to everyone's enjoyment of the meetings. It is desirable for ministerial servants to be used as attendants, particularly those who themselves have had experience in handling situations that arise in family life.—1 Tim. 3:12.

CONGREGATION MEETINGS

The Bible emphasizes the need and the value of coming together to worship and praise Jehovah. (Ps. 26:8, 12; Matt. 18:20) Faithful Nehemiah recognized this and so he urged his fellow Israelites: "We should not neglect the house of our God." (Neh. 10:39b) Those who embraced the truth at the time of Pentecost, 33 C.E., did not treat this matter lightly. They continued devoting themselves to the teachings of the apostles, "and day after day they were in constant attendance at the temple with one accord." (Acts 2:42, 46) Later, we know, when Christians came together for worship they read from the Scriptures, including inspired letters written by the apostles and other Christian disciples. (Col. 4:16; 1 Cor. 1:1, 2; 1 Thess. 1:1; Jas. 1:1) There was congregation prayer. (Acts 4:24-29; 20:36) They also related experiences from the missionary field. (Acts 11:5-18; 14:27, 28) They considered Bible doctrines and the fulfillment of inspired prophe-

cy. Instruction was given in matters of approved Christian conduct and godly devotion. They were encouraged to be zealous proclaimers of the good news.—1 Cor. 11:23-26; Eph. 5:1-33; Rom. 10:9, 10; 1 Cor. 15:58.

In our day Christian meetings in many respects follow the pattern set in apostolic days. We give heed to the inspired exhortation at Hebrews 10:25 by 'not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so now as we behold the day drawing near.' During these difficult last days of the wicked system of things, we need added encouragement that comes from regularly assembling together in order to maintain spiritual strength and Christian integrity. (Rom. 1:11, 12) As in Paul's day, we live among a crooked and twisted generation, a system of things whose ungodliness and worldly spirit we have repudiated. (Phil. 2:15, 16; Titus 2:12-14) Really, where would we rather be than in association with Jehovah's people? (Compare Psalm 84:10.) And what could be more beneficial than hearing the Word of God discussed?

Jehovah is the source of an abundance of satisfying spiritual food. (Ps. 145:14, 15) Through his Son and the earthly channel, "the faithful and discreet slave," food at the proper time is being dispensed. How is such provision served to the individual members of the organization? One means is through the various meetings arranged each week in the congregation. Consider each of these occasions and the benefits derived as our brothers regularly assemble together.

THE WATCHTOWER STUDY

For over 100 years now *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom* has been the prin-

cial journal to keep Jehovah's people well supplied with timely spiritual food. Certain articles published in *The Watchtower* are specifically prepared for weekly congregational study where instruction based upon the written Word of God is featured. Information carefully examined in the *Watchtower* Study stirs the heart and the mind of the members of the congregation and builds up their spiritual strength.

The study articles are varied as to subject matter. They deal with Bible prophecy, godly conduct, Christian morals, Bible doctrine, encouragement in the Christian ministry, admonition to cope with spiritual dangers, and Scriptural counsel on many other matters. Also, a variety of general Biblical information vital for continued spiritual growth is considered.

How do all associated with the congregation benefit from such a variety of timely spiritual food? Study material frequently deals with the application of Bible principles in daily living and fortifies against "the spirit of the world" and unclean conduct. (1 Cor. 2:12) Through the columns of *The Watchtower* comes increased light on Bible doctrine and the discussion of fulfillment of prophecy as Jehovah makes this known, thus enabling all to keep abreast of the truth and stay on the path of the righteous. (Ps. 97:11; Prov. 4:18) Attending and sharing in the *Watchtower* Study helps us always to rejoice in the hope of Jehovah's righteous new system of things. (Rom. 12:12; 2 Pet. 3:13) It helps us to manifest the fruitage of the spirit in our life and to keep strong our desire to serve Jehovah zealously. (Gal. 5:22, 23) It strengthens our faith to endure the trials ahead and to 'build a fine foundation for the future so that we may get a firm

hold on the real life.'—1 Tim. 6:19; 1 Pet. 1:6, 7.

It is evident that the material considered at the *Watchtower* Study week by week is vital. It helps us to grow spiritually, to make the truth of God's Word our own, to bring our life into conformity with the teachings of the Bible and to be united spiritually with our brothers worldwide. What can each one do to take fuller advantage of this provision for spiritual feeding? Prepare the lesson in advance, looking up all the cited scriptures. Have a share in commenting during the meeting. Such participation will make a deeper impression of the points under discussion, sounding down the truth into our heart and our mind. At the same time others benefit as they hear our expressions of faith and hope. Carefully listening to their comments, and especially the points emphasized by the *Watchtower* Study conductor, will ensure our getting the most benefit from the lesson each week.

The *Watchtower* Study should not be looked upon as just a routine meeting. If we are to maintain spiritual strength and firmness in the faith it is necessary to be present each week. None should miss this important provision for strengthening all associated with the household of faith.

PUBLIC MEETING

Usually the Public Meeting is held in conjunction with the weekly *Watchtower* Study. Regular public talks in the congregation are 45 minutes in length. The *Watchtower* Study takes one hour. These two meetings together with the songs and the opening and closing prayers should cover no more than two hours. Public Meetings complement the *Watchtower* Study, differing as to the method used in presenting information. Whereas

the *Watchtower* Study is developed as a discussion with audience participation in answering prepared questions, the Public Meeting features a discourse on a Bible subject. Such meetings featuring the spoken word play an important part in filling a spiritual need for new ones and members of the congregation.—See Acts 18:4; 19:9, 10.

By inviting interested persons and even the public in general, we may accomplish much in acquainting people with basic Bible information. The Public Meetings should help one and all to remain alert to Christian teachings and encourage steadfastness in Kingdom service.

The subjects that may be considered at Public Meetings are varied. Talks may cover Bible doctrines and prophecy, Scriptural principles and counsel regarding family life, marital problems, the difficult situations that confront youths in this wicked world, requirements regarding Christian morals, as well as Jehovah's marvelous works of creation and the way in which science confirms Biblical facts and statements. Other talks may enhance our appreciation of accounts and activities of different Bible characters, commenting on their significance for our day. Truly the Public Meeting is an occasion for taking in informative and refreshing spiritual food.

If we are to get the full benefit of the Public Meeting arrangement it is essential for us to attend regularly, pay close attention, look up the scriptures referred to by the speaker and follow along as he reads and explains them. (Luke 8:18) This will help us to become more familiar with the location of Bible books and increase our knowledge of the Scriptures. As we thus make sure of the things discussed, we should be

determined to hold fast to what we learn and personally apply it.—1 Thess. 5:21.

If there are sufficient speakers available, the congregation will no doubt have a public talk every week. Frequently this is made possible by arranging for visiting speakers from nearby congregations. But even if there is a shortage of speakers in an area, arrangements are usually made to have these talks as often as possible.

Christ Jesus, his apostles and their associates conducted public meetings similar to those enjoyed today by congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. Without question, Jesus was the greatest public speaker ever on earth. Officers said concerning him: "Never has another man spoken like this." (John 7:46) Jesus spoke with authority, astounding his audiences. (Matt. 7:28, 29) Many were the benefits received by those who took his message to heart. (Matt. 13:16, 17) The apostles followed his example. At Acts 2:22-36 we read of Peter's powerful discourse on the day of Pentecost, 33 C.E. Many were motivated to act as a result of what they heard. Later, individuals benefited from Paul's discourse in Athens. (Acts 17:22-34) Similarly, in our day millions have received benefits through the Public Meetings held in congregations, at circuit assemblies and at district, national and international conventions. We should give full support to the arrangement for Public Meetings.

THE SERVICE MEETING

This meeting stresses service, which is what our ministry is all about. It equips us to have a full share in preaching the Kingdom good news, making disciples and declaring the approaching execution of divine judgment. (Mark 13:10; Matt. 28:20; 2 Pet. 3:7) To a large extent this work is

done by speaking to other people and providing them with Bible literature. But the application of Jehovah's righteous principles in our life has a great bearing on the effectiveness of our field ministry and the fruitage that we produce. (Matt. 13:23; John 15:8) Thereby we demonstrate the good results that come from applying the Scriptures. Appropriately, the Service Meeting gives attention to all these facets of our service to God.

Each month the Society publishes *Our Kingdom Ministry*, which outlines the weekly Service Meetings. You will receive a copy through the congregation. When a new issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry* is received, the presiding overseer can carefully analyze what it contains and he either personally assigns the various meeting parts to qualified brothers or arranges for such assignments through one of the other elders.

Elders and the more qualified ministerial servants are assigned to handle the various parts on the Service Meeting program. They need to study the assigned material carefully to determine what the principal points of instruction are and how to handle them so that the brothers will understand and remember them. Careful thought is also given to application of the material to the situation of the local congregation.

While there are a variety of ways in which material can effectively be presented, in no case should the method of presentation be allowed to overshadow the material presented. The objective of demonstrations is not to have a great dramatic production with a lot of stage props. Use natural settings such as a scene at one's secular work, the door-to-door work, a home Bible study or a family discussion. Settings should fit what

is encountered locally so that publishers can relate to them.

If each one on the program sticks to the allotted time the Service Meeting will conclude in 45 minutes, not including the songs and closing prayer. Everyone who shares in the program should cooperate to that end.

Exemplary dedicated publishers, and their well-trained children, may be asked to participate in certain parts, such as demonstrations. They may be interviewed or invited to relate their experiences under the direction of responsible brothers. If you have an opportunity to participate, cooperate joyfully and conscientiously, recognizing that this is part of your service to Jehovah.

It should be the heartfelt desire of each Christian to live and accomplish things in his life in a way that influences others to follow Jesus Christ as dedicated witnesses of Jehovah. To that end, the Service Meeting programs are designed to help us in a number of ways, such as by (1) encouraging us to engage to the fullest extent possible in the house-to-house work or in street work and to improve in our presentation of the good news; (2) helping us to see the need of making return visits on individuals who display interest or accept Bible literature (this involves keeping good records and improving our ability to teach such persons); (3) moving us to set aside time for regularly conducting home Bible studies and directing students to the organization; (4) providing us with ideas on how to give an informal witness and alerting us to speak about the truth whenever we have opportunity; (5) improving our efforts to help new ones, our children and other young people to become dedicated disciples.

To get the fullest benefit from the Service

Meeting, why not prepare beforehand? You will benefit more if, prior to the meeting, you go over the program outlined in *Our Kingdom Ministry*. At times articles in various publications of the Society are considered. Not only will advance research be informative but such research will equip you to share when parts on the program call for audience participation. The more you absorb from the Service Meeting the more effective you will be in your ministry.

Regularity in attending the Service Meeting results in unified activity on the part of the entire congregation. Since every baptized Witness is a minister, this meeting is essential in helping us to carry out our commission. It is also very beneficial for anyone else who desires to become a dedicated servant of God. Make attendance at this meeting a part of your weekly schedule of activity.

Meetings of this sort are nothing new. They are based on sound Scriptural precedent. Before sending his disciples out to preach, Jesus gave them detailed instructions on what to say and do. (Matt. 10:5-11:1; Luke 10:1-16) Later his disciples continued to have such meetings where they discussed experiences in their ministry and this strengthened them for zealous Kingdom activity. (Acts 4:23-31) We continue that same practice today.

THEOCRATIC MINISTRY SCHOOL

The Theocratic Ministry School, held also at the Kingdom Hall, is an ongoing provision for the education of the entire congregation. Its curriculum includes Bible talks, student presentations and other training useful for the field ministry. Counsel is given to students to help them progressively improve in their presentations. While

presenting a great variety of information that is of interest and benefit to the entire congregation, the Theocratic Ministry School also gives opportunity for participants as well as the audience to improve various aspects of their personal ministry. Occasional written reviews provide a means of self-examination as to one's own progress in ministerial training.

Each year the Society provides a Theocratic Ministry School Schedule setting out the program to be followed. It outlines the material to be used and how the assignments are to be handled. The Theocratic Ministry School for many years has proved its worth in training Jehovah's Witnesses to be effective proclaimers of the Kingdom. All who are actively associated with the congregation may enroll, including people newly attending the meetings, as long as they are not leading a life that is out of line with Christian principles.

By enrolling in the Theocratic Ministry School we show that we are interested in advancement. Such instruction can help us to be finer public praisers of Jehovah. It can equip us to accomplish more in the time we have available for the field service, as well as to give fine comments in the congregation meetings. In the case of brothers, this instruction will assist them greatly toward qualifying as ministerial servants or elders and eventually handling major Service Meeting parts and giving public talks.

Those enrolled will be notified well in advance concerning their student assignments so that they can prepare thoroughly. When we have an assigned part in the school it is particularly important to be on hand before the meeting starts. If an emergency situation arises and it is impossible to be present to fulfill an assignment we

should be sure to notify the school overseer, just as early as possible, so that he can arrange for a replacement.

As a regular part of our spiritual feeding program, the Theocratic Ministry School provides many benefits. It was Isaiah who said: "The Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself has given me the tongue of the taught ones, that I may know how to answer the tired one with a word." (Isa. 50:4) Unquestionably the school has played an important part in training literally tens of thousands to develop the tongue of one taught by Jehovah. Over the years the program has been designed to help those enrolled to make spiritual advancement and to learn how better to express themselves in presenting the good news of the Kingdom. Under the direction of holy spirit such training has enabled God's people to give an answer to everyone demanding a reason for their hope. Being taught to use God's Word in this way is a blessing.

The congregation usually provides a Theocratic Ministry School library at the Kingdom Hall. This may contain the available publications of the Society, perhaps a number of Bible translations, a concordance and other helpful reference works. We should feel free to use any of these publications at the Kingdom Hall before or after meetings.

CONGREGATION BOOK STUDY

Members of the congregation, and others who are associated, derive great personal benefit from the Congregation Book Study, which is generally conducted with a group smaller than at the other meetings. There are just a few families, or a comparatively small number of individuals, who gather at each of these studies. Instead

of having the entire congregation come together at one place, arrangements are made for the study groups to meet in convenient locations scattered throughout the congregation's territory. One group may meet at the Kingdom Hall. Others assemble in private homes.

In some respects these group studies provide benefits that do not directly come through other provisions of the congregation. Why is this so? It is because the Congregation Book Study arrangement not only provides for a careful and detailed study of Bible subjects but, in these small groups, makes it possible for more personal attention to be given to the spiritual growth of each individual. Such personal assistance may include appropriate Scriptural counsel, encouragement and direction for carrying out our ministry, as well as other vital spiritual help to fit the needs of the individual. Here is a reflection of Jehovah's loving-kindness and his tender care for his people.—Isa. 40:11.

This meeting is a one-hour group study using the Bible and a textbook provided by the Watch Tower Society. The brother assigned as conductor is usually an elder. He is himself a student of God's Word and qualified to help each one not only to increase in Bible knowledge but also to apply this knowledge in practical ways. Basically, the meeting is conducted in the same manner as the *Watchtower* Study. It is opened and closed with prayer. Paragraphs are read. Questions are asked on the paragraphs. Comments are invited. Scriptures are read. To impress principal thoughts on the mind of each one, a brief oral review may be conducted at the end of the study. As we attend week by week we will gain not only knowledge but understanding. We will learn the reasons for

statements that are made and how to support them from the Bible, as well as how to conduct discussions of the same material with others that we are able to help in our field ministry. (2 Tim. 2:15) So this meeting will do much to equip us to become better teachers of God's Word.

With a small group such as this there is more opportunity for all of us to offer comments. It is not at all difficult to participate freely at this meeting, and thus we have the opportunity to get accustomed to making a public declaration of our faith before others. (Heb. 13:15) It is good to learn to make our comments in our own words instead of reading them out of the book.

Although anyone present may be encouraged to share in the reading of the scriptures, just one person reads the paragraphs at any one study. If possible, arrangements are made a week in advance for a baptized brother who is a good reader to read the paragraphs.

Having the study groups scattered throughout the congregation territory makes it convenient for both ourselves and newly interested people in the neighborhood to attend. We should make every effort to bring others with us to the meeting so that they can get a taste of the spiritually uplifting discussions and the warm association that we enjoy.

In addition to providing a place for group study, the location of the Congregation Book Study may be a meeting place for field service. Here the group can meet at convenient times prior to going out into the field. Cooperating in all these arrangements results in groups that are closely knit together for the twofold purpose of study and service.

MEETINGS FOR FIELD SERVICE

At various times during the week, groups of Jehovah's Witnesses may briefly assemble together in preparation for going out in the field ministry. Discussion of a Bible text, suggestions for dealing with situations likely to be encountered in the field or other points from *Our Kingdom Ministry* are usually considered at these meetings. Field service arrangements are made and one of the group leads in prayer. Then they are ready to go into the field. Such meetings provide not only the practical instruction but also real encouragement for those going out in the witness work. Arrangements can be made at this meeting to help newer ones or others that may need assistance in the preaching work. Such meetings last from 10 to 15 minutes.

NEW OR SMALL CONGREGATIONS

As more disciples are made, the number of congregations also increases. Whether a new congregation is formed from an already existing congregation or it is made up of publishers in an isolated area, it must be a group of baptized publishers and others who recognize "the faithful and discreet slave" class and desire to work under its direction. The application for a new congregation is usually submitted by the circuit overseer. In some cases small groups may find it more advantageous to be associated with the nearest congregation.

At times small congregations may be composed entirely of sisters. When such is the case, a sister who prays or conducts meetings does so with head properly covered, in harmony with the Scriptural arrangement. (1 Cor. 11:3-16) In most cases they remain seated, facing the group. None of the sisters give actual discourses at

meetings, but they read and comment on the material provided by the Watch Tower Society or, for variety, they may cover it in discussions or demonstrations.

Those brothers in a newly formed congregation who qualify for appointment as elders or ministerial servants will be recommended to the Society's branch office. If none qualify, as in the case of a group made up entirely of sisters, the branch office will designate one of them to care for correspondence with the office and to carry on meetings. In time, when brothers qualify for appointment, they will care for these responsibilities.

CIRCUIT ASSEMBLIES

Meetings of Jehovah's servants may range in size from just two or three individuals to large assemblies of many thousands. From time to time arrangements are made for congregations assigned to the same circuit to assemble together at a circuit assembly. The Scriptural theme and various parts of the program are prepared by "the faithful and discreet slave" with a special need in mind. A variety of methods are used to present the information, such as discourses, discussions, demonstrations and interviews. Also, a part of the program usually deals with local situations or counsel that specifically applies to the particular circuit. Such timely instruction builds up all who attend.

At the circuit assembly, opportunity is provided for new disciples to get baptized in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah. Circuit assemblies are always joyous occasions that afford opportunity for the brothers to "widen out" in their Christian association. (2 Cor. 6:11-13) All are encouraged by the reports and experiences related

concerning the work of preaching the good news.

DISTRICT CONVENTIONS

Once each year larger assemblies are held by Jehovah's Witnesses. Usually these are organized as district conventions combining congregations from a number of circuits. However, in smaller branches it may be more practical and convenient for all the Witnesses to assemble together in one place. These arrangements may vary due to circumstances in some lands or on the basis of direction from the Governing Body. National and international conventions are also organized periodically around the world. These conventions may be attended by tens of thousands of Witnesses from many different lands. Over the years many people have come to learn about the good news because of the publicity given to these large gatherings of Jehovah's Witnesses.

District, national and international conventions are joyous occasions of united worship for Jehovah's dedicated people. Such conventions have provided the setting for revealing increased light on the truth, releasing new publications for personal and congregational study and for use in the field ministry, and for mass baptisms. Jehovah's Witnesses consider district conventions to be of particular importance in promoting their spiritual growth and in reviewing progress in fulfilling their Christian commission. The larger conventions give evidence that Jehovah's people indeed form an international brotherhood of dedicated Christians bearing the identifying mark of disciples of Jesus Christ.—John 13:35.

By becoming involved in local congregation meetings, as well as in the larger assemblies and conventions of Jehovah's people, we are strengthened to do Jehovah's will and are protected against

outside worldly influences that would undermine our Christian faith. We can all be thankful that Jehovah has provided these periods of spiritual refreshment for his dedicated people in this time of the end.

THE LORD'S EVENING MEAL

Once each year on the anniversary date of the death of Jesus Christ, all congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses celebrate the Memorial of Christ's death, or the Lord's Evening Meal. (1 Cor. 11: 20, 23, 24) This is the most important meeting of the year for Jehovah's people. We are specifically commanded to keep this Memorial celebration. —Luke 22:19.

The Memorial date is clearly marked in the Bible as the anniversary of the Biblical Passover. (Matt. 26:17, 20, 26) The Passover was the annual celebration of the exodus of the Israelites from captivity in Egypt in the year 1513 B.C.E. At that time Jehovah marked the 14th day of their first lunar month as the date for them to eat the Passover lamb and leave their captivity in Egypt. (Ex. 12:1-51) The date is determined by counting 14 days from the new moon nearest the spring equinox, March 21-22, as it would be visible at Jerusalem in the land of Palestine. Generally, this would make the Memorial celebration each year fall on the date of the first full moon following the spring equinox.

Matthew 26:26-28 outlines in Jesus' own words the way the Memorial is celebrated. It is not a ritual with mystical overtones, but it is a symbolic meal that is shared by those who have been called to be fellow heirs with Jesus Christ in his heavenly Kingdom. (Luke 22:28-30) All other dedicated Christians and interested people are invited and encouraged to attend the Lord's Evening Meal as observers and in this way show

their appreciation for the provision Jehovah God has made for the benefit of all mankind through his Son, Jesus Christ. Jehovah's Witnesses today endeavor to make the Memorial a special event in their life each year.

Usually in the spring of the year, near Memorial time, a special public talk is given in all the congregations. Jehovah's Witnesses endeavor to invite all interested persons to attend. The talk provides a timely message for those who want to be pleasing to God and it is designed to stimulate further interest in Bible study.

Jehovah's Witnesses joyfully anticipate occasions for meeting together to be built up and encouraged spiritually. The Governing Body is alert to provide occasions for assembling together according to our spiritual needs. All of Jehovah's servants and other interested people are urged to take full advantage of all arrangements for regularly assembling together and show due appreciation for Jehovah's provisions through his earthly organization.

CHAPTER 8

MINISTERS OF THE GOOD NEWS

IN SENDING forth his Son, Jehovah gave us a perfect model to follow. (1 Pet. 2:21) When anyone becomes his follower, Jesus helps that one to preach the good news as one of God's ministers. Indicating that this would be spiritually refreshing, he said: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and *learn from me* [become my disciples, 1971 edition], for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls." (Matt. 11:28,

29) His promise has not failed any who have responded to that invitation!

As God's Chief Minister, Jesus called certain individuals to come and be his followers. (Matt. 9:9; John 1:43) He trained them in the ministry and sent them forth to do the same work he was doing. (Matt. 10:1-11:1; 20:28; Luke 4:43) Later he sent forth 70 others to share in declaring the good news concerning God's Kingdom. (Luke 10:1, 8-11) When Jesus sent his disciples forth he said to them: "He that listens to you listens to me too. And he that disregards you disregards me too. Moreover, he that disregards me disregards also him that sent me forth." (Luke 10:16) In this way he stressed the serious responsibility that was laid upon the disciples. They were to represent the Most High God! So it would be with all others who respond to Jesus' invitation to "come be my follower," even down to this day. (Luke 18:22) All who respond have a divine commission to preach the good news of the Kingdom and to make disciples.—Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20.

Having come to Jesus, therefore, in response to his invitation to follow him, we have been blessed with knowledge of Jehovah God and of Jesus Christ. (John 17:3) We have been taught Jehovah's ways. With his help we have been able to make over our mind, change our personality and harmonize our daily conduct with Jehovah's righteous standards. (Rom. 12:1, 2; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9, 10) Out of heartfelt appreciation, we have also been moved to follow our Exemplar and to present ourselves to God just as was expressed by the psalmist: "Here I have come . . . To do your will, O my God, I have delighted." (Ps. 40:7, 8; Heb. 10:7-9) Our baptism in water

is a symbol of our dedication to Jehovah and constitutes our ordination as ministers.

Always keep in mind the fact that service to God must be rendered with clean hands and out of a pure heart. (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Isa. 52:11; Ps. 24:3, 4) Through faith in Jesus Christ we have gained a clean conscience and freeness of speech. (Heb. 10:19-23, 35, 36; Rev. 7:9, 10, 14) The apostle Paul admonished Christians to do all things for God's glory so as not to be stumbling others. Also, the apostle Peter pointed out the value of exemplary godly conduct in winning unbelievers over to the truth.—1 Cor. 10:31, 33; 1 Pet. 3:1.

Jesus Christ took very seriously his commission as Jehovah's sent-forth One, and as a vigorous proclaimer of the good news of God's Kingdom he set the example for all his followers. He took the initiative and went out among the people, speaking and teaching in their homes and in public places. (Matt. 9:35; Luke 8:1) He spoke intimately with individuals, taught his disciples privately and addressed groups numbering into the thousands. (John 3:2-21; Matt. 13:36; Mark 4:10-13; 6:35-44) He took advantage of every appropriate occasion to speak words of encouragement and hope. (Luke 4:16-19) He did not pass up opportunities to witness even when he himself was in need of rest and refreshment. (Mark 6:30-34; John 4:4-34) When we read the inspired accounts of his ministry, are we not impelled to follow in his footsteps and to imitate closely his example? Certainly we are, just as the apostles were.—Matt. 4:19, 20; Luke 5:27, 28; John 1:43-45.

Consider the opportunities that are open to

Christians today to share in the work initiated by Jesus Christ nearly 2,000 years ago.

PREACHING FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE

Jehovah's modern-day witnesses recognize the value of preaching the good news systematically from house to house. This method of reaching people with the Kingdom message has been used so extensively by Jehovah's Witnesses that it has virtually become their trademark in many lands. The good results obtained give proof of Jehovah's approval and blessing. Also, the wisdom of using this method to reach millions of people effectively with the good news during a short period of time has been confirmed by most gratifying results. (Matt. 11:19; 24:14) Our field ministry has proved to be a most practical way for us to demonstrate love for Jehovah and love for our neighbors.—Matt. 22:34-40.

House-to-house preaching is not a modern innovation of Jehovah's Witnesses. It was firmly established in theocratic history long ago in the days of the apostles. Outstandingly, the apostle Paul refers to his teaching in the homes of people. Defending his ministry before the overseers in Ephesus, he said: "From the first day that I stepped into the district of Asia I . . . did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you publicly and from house to house." In this and other ways he "thoroughly bore witness both to Jews and to Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus." (Acts 20:18, 20, 21) At that time there was an urgent need to reach all the people with the good news, since the Roman emperors were encouraging idolatry and many peoples were "given to the fear of the deities." There was a pressing need to seek "the God that

made the world and all the things in it," the one who was then "telling mankind that they should all everywhere repent."—Acts 17:22-31.

Today the need for reaching people with the good news is even more urgent. The end of the present wicked system of things is approaching at a rapid pace. Life itself is in the balance for all mankind. So there is need for intensive effort on our part, now, before the great tribulation strikes. Seeing the great need, we are moved to increase our efforts in the house-to-house ministry, realizing that no better way has been found to replace this time-tested method of finding those who are hungering for the truth. It is as effective today as it was in the days of Jesus and the apostles. It is a most satisfying way for all of us to have a share in the ministry.—Mark 13:10.

According to your personal circumstances, are you having a full share in the house-to-house ministry? If you are taking advantage of every opportunity to do so we know that you are also reaping a rich reward of great joy and personal satisfaction in your service to God. (Acts 20:35; compare Ezekiel 9:11.) The house-to-house ministry may not be easy for you. You may be hindered by physical limitations or you may be assigned to work in territory where many people are not inclined to listen. There may even be governmental restrictions with which to cope. Because of your personality makeup you may also find it very difficult to initiate conversations with total strangers and therefore you must overcome a measure of nervous anxiety each time you engage in the house-to-house ministry. Do not be discouraged. (Compare Exodus 4:10-12.) Your circumstances are not unlike those of your brothers in many other places.

Do you remember Jesus' promise that he would be with those whom he sent forth to preach and make disciples? And do you remember that Jehovah has given his spirit to those carrying his message to the people? (Matt. 28:20; Isa. 61:1, 2) Take courage and have the same confidence as expressed by Paul at Philippians 4:13. He said: "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me." Take full advantage of congregation arrangements made each week for engaging in house-to-house witnessing. By working with others in field service you will receive needed encouragement and personal assistance to talk more effectively with people and present Bible literature. Pray for greater faith to overcome whatever obstacles or discouragement you may face and exert yourself vigorously as a preacher of the good news.—Luke 17:5.

There are many benefits you will personally receive from being zealous in the house-to-house ministry. As you speak to others about the good news there will be many opportunities to give a reason for your hope, and your own hope will be made more firm. (1 Pet. 3:15) You will constantly remain aware of the sharp contrast between those who are firmly established in the Kingdom hope and those who are without hope in the world. Finding those deserving of the Kingdom message and noting the reactions of those who are not will enable you personally to experience what Jesus told his disciples at Matthew 10:11-14. You will have the joyful satisfaction of knowing that you have been obedient to Jesus' command to "let your light shine," and you may even be privileged to help someone else to come to a knowledge of the truth that leads to everlasting life.—Matt. 5:16; John 17:3; 1 Tim. 4:16.

To make it convenient for publishers to share in the house-to-house activity, arrangements are made for witnessing on weekends as well as for during the week. In some areas it has become very difficult to find people in their homes during the daytime. When faced with this situation, some congregations have met with good success by arranging for evening witnessing in their territories. Some people are more inclined to receive visitors in the late afternoon or early evening rather than in the morning hours. Also, there are the following features of the ministry that may prove to be particularly effective in your area.

STORE-TO-STORE AND STREET WITNESSING

Concerning Paul's ministry in Athens, Acts 17:17 tells us: "Consequently he began to reason in the synagogue with the Jews and the other people who worshiped God and every day in the marketplace with those who happened to be on hand." Yes, in addition to teaching from house to house, Paul taught the people he found in public places, where they went to shop or to carry on business.

In modern times Jehovah's Witnesses have met with good success in calling on people at their places of business or employment. In this way it has been possible to witness to individuals for the first time even though regular visits had been made to their homes. Presenting the latest issues of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* has proved to be an effective way of witnessing to business people, but it is also appropriate to make other literature offers from time to time, using Topics for Conversation or discussions as suggested and outlined in *Our Kingdom Ministry*.

Street witnessing is done in many countries and usually entails offering the latest copies of

The Watchtower and *Awake!* to passersby in business areas. This can be done in a kind and tactful manner by approaching people with brief comments on a timely subject featured in one of the magazines. Other literature may also be offered to interested people, and arrangements can then be made to call on these people at their homes. Periodically, *Our Kingdom Ministry* offers suggestions and encouragement for us to share in this effective feature of the ministry. You may find store-to-store and street witnessing effective and enjoyable ways for you to be fulfilling your ministry.

However, just sounding a warning and proclaiming the good news is not all that is involved in the work assigned to Christians today. If you are to succeed in helping others embrace the truth that leads to life, there is a need for you to make repeated calls to help interested ones progress toward becoming mature Christians.

MAKING RETURN VISITS

Jesus said to his followers: "You will be witnesses of me . . . to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) But he also told them to "go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19, 20) Once the seeds of truth have been planted, there is a need to make return visits. Those people who manifest interest in the Kingdom message need further help if they are to grow to Christian maturity.—Heb. 6:1, 2.

Making return visits can also be a source of much joy for you in Jehovah's service. Those people who expressed interest in the good news when you first called on them will very likely be happy to receive you again. By sharing additional

Bible information with them, you may be able to strengthen their faith in God and help them to become more fully aware of their spiritual need. (Matt. 5:3) If you plan ahead, prepare well and arrange to make the return visit at a convenient time, you may be able to start a regular home Bible study. Usually this will be your objective in making return visits.

Making return visits may present a challenge for some. Perhaps you have become quite efficient in making a brief presentation of the good news from house to house and you enjoy that particular feature of the ministry. But then when you think of going back for the purpose of engaging the householder in a more detailed discussion of a Bible subject, the challenge seems to be overwhelming. You need not feel that way. Very likely on your first call you placed some Bible literature with the interested person. Why not discuss information contained in that publication? You can prepare ahead of time for that. Also, if you do not feel entirely qualified, arrange to take a more experienced publisher along to help you make the return visit.

Jehovah's organization provides the personal assistance you need to help you become effective in making return visits. Be sure that you are taking full advantage of opportunities to improve your own knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures. Trust in Jehovah and accept the assistance of your more experienced brothers and sisters. If you do, you too will improve your ability to make effective return visits and your joy in service will increase accordingly.

HOME BIBLE STUDIES

When the evangelizer Philip spoke to a man who was interested in the message of God's Word,

Philip asked: "Do you actually know what you are reading?" The man's response was: "Really, how could I ever do so, unless someone guided me?" The Bible account in Acts chapter 8 then tells us that, starting with the scripture the man was reading, Philip "declared to him the good news about Jesus." (Acts 8:26-36) We do not know how much time Philip spent with the man, but he explained the good news thoroughly so that the man believed and requested water baptism. He became a disciple of Jesus Christ.

An interested person we find today may not be at all familiar with the Bible at first, and so it may require a number of return visits and a detailed study of the Bible over a period of time (weeks, months or even a year or more) before he is able to manifest faith to the extent of requesting baptism. But your patient and loving assistance in helping honest-hearted ones become disciples has its own reward, even as Jesus said: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."—Acts 20:35.

You will no doubt find it most convenient to conduct a home Bible study by using one of the Society's publications that is especially designed for that purpose. By following the example of the one who studied with you, or by receiving the help of other capable teachers in the congregation, you can learn to conduct productive studies and contribute to the work of making disciples of Jesus Christ.

If you need personal assistance in starting and conducting a home Bible study, you should feel free to speak about your need with one of the overseers or with a fellow Witness who is known to be effective in the Bible study work. You can get personal assistance to help you put

into practice the suggestions appearing in *Our Kingdom Ministry* and demonstrated at the Service Meeting from time to time. Again, reliance on Jehovah and making your desire a matter of prayer will bring results. (1 John 3:22) So share in making disciples and, if at all possible, make it your aim to conduct at least one home Bible study regularly in addition to any study you may conduct with children in your family. By conducting Bible studies, you will again increase your joy in the ministry.

DIRECT INTERESTED ONES TO JEHOVAH'S ORGANIZATION

When we conduct Bible studies and help people become disciples of Jesus Christ, they have the prospect of coming to know Jehovah God and of being brought into his household. That household, God's congregation, is organized theocratically to accomplish Jehovah's will. Our Bible students will make better spiritual progress and grow to maturity more rapidly if we help them to recognize and cooperate with Jehovah's organization. It is important to teach them how they can do that.

To accomplish this you can use material recommended in *Our Kingdom Ministry*. Also, some of the information found in chapter 4 of this publication may be helpful. From the very beginning of your Bible discussions with interested people you can help them to see that Jehovah is using an organization to get his work done on the earth today. Point out the value of the Bible study aids used by Jehovah's Witnesses and explain how they are produced and distributed worldwide by volunteer workers who are dedicated to Jehovah God. Invite your Bible students to accompany you to the Congregation Book Study.

Introduce them to the brothers there and explain how meetings at the Kingdom Hall are conducted. Encourage them to attend. Help them to get acquainted with more of Jehovah's Witnesses at circuit assemblies and district conventions. On these and other occasions let new ones observe for themselves how Jehovah's servants display the identifying mark of true Christians, love among themselves.—John 13:35.

If your own deep appreciation for Jehovah's organization is reflected in your conversations with interested people, it will be easier for them to grow in appreciation and will move them to make greater advancement in getting to know Jehovah.

USING BIBLE LITERATURE

The early Christians became zealous publishers of the Word of God. They made copies of the Scriptures for their own personal use and for congregational study. They recommended the word of truth to others. Their handwritten copies were few in number and highly treasured. (Col. 4:16; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:14-17; 4:13; 1 Pet. 1:1) Today, with the aid of modern printing methods, Jehovah's Witnesses have been able to publish millions of Bibles and hundreds of millions of Bible study aids such as bound books and magazines in scores of languages, making them available to people worldwide.

As you share the good news with others be sure to make good use of the numerous Bible study aids provided by "the faithful and discreet slave" and published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. Service campaigns are outlined for each month in *Our Kingdom Ministry*, suggesting publications to be featured in public witnessing. You

also have opportunity to share regularly in distributing magazines at different times each month including magazine days.

Although the primary concern of the 'faithful slave' has been to provide spiritual food at the proper time for the household of God, that "slave" has reflected the generosity of Jehovah God himself in providing an abundance of spiritual food for all mankind that hunger for knowledge of God. Knowing how much you personally have benefited from reading and studying the Society's publications, you will no doubt want to share with others the things you have learned. (Heb. 13:15, 16) With the use of the Society's publications, even new ones can accomplish much good in preaching the good news from house to house.

INFORMAL WITNESSING

Jesus told those who were paying attention to his word: "You are the light of the world. . . . Let your light shine before men, that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens." (Matt. 5:14-16) The very life of these disciples should reflect God's ways by imitating Jesus Christ, who also said: "I am the light of the world." Jesus set the example for all Christians in letting the "light of life" shine forth for the benefit of all who came in contact with him. —John 8:12.

The apostle Paul likewise became an example for us to follow. (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1) The Christians in Philippi had followed his example and he addressed them as 'illuminators in the world, shining among a crooked and twisted generation.' (Phil. 2:15) We today can also let the Kingdom truth shine forth by our words and actions whenever there is opportunity for us to tell oth-

ers about the good news. True, our good example as honest and upright people may in itself draw attention to the fact that we are different from the majority of mankind today. However, if we do not open our mouth to speak the good news to those who see our good example, they may never get to know *why* we are different from the rest.—Matt. 5:15, 16.

Many of Jehovah's Witnesses have fine opportunities to present the good news to people they meet daily in their secular work, at school or otherwise while going about their normal affairs. At times we have the opportunity to talk with fellow travelers when on a journey. There are many opportunities that present themselves, but individually we must be alert to turn ordinary conversation into a witness and be prepared to speak with others on every appropriate occasion.

We will be encouraged to take advantage of every opportunity to share the good news with others if we keep in mind that whenever we do so we are praising our Creator and bringing honor to his name. At the same time we may be able to help honest-hearted ones come to know Jehovah so that they too can serve him and gain the hope of life that comes through faith in Jesus Christ. All of this is sacred service and it is pleasing to God.—Heb. 12:28; Rev. 7:9, 10.

TERRITORY ASSIGNED FOR EFFECTIVE WITNESSING

It is Jehovah's purpose to have the Kingdom message preached worldwide in an orderly manner. To this end congregations, as well as individuals who witness in isolated areas, receive assignments of territory, in both city and rural areas, from the branch office directing the work in their respective lands. (1 Cor. 14:40)

This is consistent with the God-directed arrangement existing in the first century among some of the apostles. (2 Cor. 10:13; Gal. 2:9) With the rapid expansion of the Kingdom work in these last days, much overlapping of effort is avoided by having well-organized territory assignments. This affords opportunity for more people to hear the good news.

The overall arrangement for working congregation territory comes under the service overseer's supervision. A ministerial servant may do the actual assigning of territory and keep a record concerning it up-to-date. Where the territory is limited, the Congregation Book Study conductors usually hold territory in which publishers in their group may share in field service.

If you are in a congregation where territory is plentiful, however, you may wish to have a territory of your own, perhaps one near where you live. Having such a conveniently located personal territory would enable you to make the most of the time you can devote to field service. Also, you may wish to invite other publishers to work with you in your personal territory.

When such personal territory is available, you may approach the one who assigns territory in your congregation and request any portion of territory that has not already been assigned to someone else. He should be kept informed as to the coverage of that territory. As you work your personal territory you will get acquainted with many people and, with patience, you may have the joy of helping some of them to come to appreciate God's provision for salvation.

Of course, if you have a personal territory it will be your responsibility to get in touch with as many people in that territory as you can. This

will entail calling back where no one was at home and rendering continued spiritual assistance to those who show interest in the good news of the Kingdom. From time to time *Our Kingdom Ministry* makes specific suggestions as to how territory can be worked thoroughly with the use of Bibles and books, magazines, tracts, handbills and other similar provisions of the Society. It may be that some of the people in your territory, such as those living in apartments, will have to be reached by letter, telephone or other means, such as street witnessing. The service overseer and your Congregation Book Study conductor can offer appropriate suggestions in accord with local conditions and individual circumstances.

When all of those associated with the congregation cooperate, the territory can be worked in a thorough and effective manner. We also avoid confusion as well as irritation on the part of householders due to simultaneous coverage of the same area by two or more Witnesses. In this way consideration is shown both for our brothers and for the people in the territory.

GROUP WITNESSING

Dedicated Christians have a personal responsibility to share the good news with others. There are many ways in which this can be done, but most of us appreciate being able to go out in field service accompanied by others. (Luke 10:1) For this reason congregations have meetings for field service on weekends as well as during the week. Worldly holidays also provide fine opportunities for group witnessing arrangements, since many brothers are free from secular employment on such days. Meetings for field service are scheduled for the convenience of the publishers. These may be held at the Kingdom Hall, at homes

where Congregation Book Studies are conducted or at other convenient places.

At meetings for field service, arrangements can be made to give assistance to newer or less experienced ones. Also, in some areas it may be advisable to assign two or more publishers to work together for other reasons. Those working together can always be helpful and encouraging to one another. Even if you are planning to work separately in the territory, meeting with the group can prove to be encouraging to all concerned. Just knowing that others are out in service working in the same general area gives one confidence.

NEW PUBLISHERS

From the time you begin conducting a home Bible study with an interested person, encourage him to speak with others about what he is learning from the Bible. He could be urged to speak with relatives, friends, work associates and others on an informal basis. Then, at the appropriate time and in keeping with his advancement, invite him to share in the organized field service of the congregation if he qualifies to do so. This is an important step in teaching new ones to be followers of Jesus Christ.—Matt. 9:9; Luke 6:40.

MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS

Before inviting a person to accompany you in the field service for the first time, or before you suggest that he report any field service to the congregation, there are certain qualifications he should meet. When such a person accompanies us in the field service he identifies himself publicly with the congregation of Jehovah's people, so it is understood that he has already brought his life in harmony with Jehovah's righteous stan-

dards and can be an unbaptized publisher in the congregation. The same would be true regarding his reporting time spent in informal witnessing. So whereas you will certainly want to help your Bible students to become publishers of the good news, and to report field service to the congregation even before baptism, caution must be exercised. The elders will want to know that this will not bring reproach on the congregation and thus be displeasing to Jehovah.

Very likely as you study with a person and discuss Bible principles with him the circumstances of his life will become known to you. Or you may have occasion to observe that he is living in harmony with the information he has learned from studying the Bible. But there are some aspects of the student's life that two elders will want to discuss with him and you together before you invite him to accompany you in the field service and to share in publicly witnessing to others.

Do the person's expressions show that he believes the Bible is the inspired Word of God? (2 Tim. 3:16) Does he know and believe the basic teachings of the Scriptures so that, when asked questions, he will answer in harmony with the Bible and not according to his own ideas or false religious teachings? (2 Tim. 2:15; Matt. 7:21-23) Is he heeding the Bible's command to associate with Jehovah's people in congregation meetings (if he physically and circumstantially can)? (Heb. 10:24, 25; Ps. 122:1) Does he know what the Bible says about fornication, adultery, polygamy and homosexuality, and is he living in harmony with such teachings? If the person is living with one of the opposite sex, are they properly married? (Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Heb. 13:4) Does he heed the Bible's

prohibition of drunkenness? (Eph. 5:18; 1 Pet. 4: 3, 4) Does he keep himself clean from the defilement of tobacco, betel nut and other things that contaminate the body? Is he free from nonmedical use of addictive drugs? (2 Cor. 7:1) Has he definitely broken off membership in all false religious organizations with which he may have been affiliated, and has he ceased attending their meetings and supporting or sharing in their activities? (2 Cor. 6: 14-18; Rev. 18:4) Is he free from all involvement in the political affairs of the world? (John 6:15; 15: 19; Jas. 1:27) Does he believe and live in harmony with what the Bible says about the affairs of the nations at Isaiah 2:4? Does he really want to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses?—Ps. 110:3.

If you are not sure about some of these matters, it may be helpful to invite him to look up the scriptures here cited and get his expressions on them, making sure that he sees the import of what they say and that he understands that those who share with Jehovah's Witnesses in their activity must be leading a life that harmonizes with these Scriptural requirements. The elders want to be satisfied that one who begins to participate in the field ministry with us knows what is expected of him, and they should be reasonably sure that he does qualify. Then, when such a person desires to identify himself with Jehovah's Witnesses by publicly engaging in the field ministry, we can encourage him to do so and turn in a field service report.

HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE

Young children may also qualify as publishers of the good news. Jesus received young children to himself and blessed them. (Matt. 19:13-15; 21:15, 16) Although parents are primarily re-

sponsible for their own children, others in the congregation may also wish to help young ones who are motivated from the heart to share in the Kingdom-preaching work. If you are a parent, your fine example in the field ministry will do much to encourage your children to be zealous in their service to God. When a child is exemplary in his conduct and is able to make a personal expression of his faith by speaking to others about the good news, being moved from the heart to do so, what further help can be given?

It would be in order for the parent to approach one of the elders on the service committee of the congregation and discuss whether the child is qualified to be counted as a publisher. Two elders will meet with the child and parent(s). If the child has a basic knowledge of Bible truth and gives evidence of *wanting* to share in Kingdom service, this would indicate good progress has been made. After considering these and other factors similar to those that apply to adults, the two elders can determine whether the child's field service reports may be accepted, so that he may be recognized as a publisher with the congregation.—Luke 6:45; Rom. 10:10.

REPORTING ON THE PROGRESS OF THE MINISTRY

Progressive reports on the worldwide expansion of pure worship have been a source of genuine encouragement for Jehovah's people over the years. From the time Jesus first told his disciples that the good news would have to be preached throughout all the earth, true Christians have been vitally concerned with knowing how this would be accomplished.—Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 13:10; Acts 1:8.

Early followers of Jesus Christ took interest in reports of progress in the preaching work. (Mark 6:30) As the work prospered, statistical

reports were compiled along with accounts of outstanding experiences of those having a share in preaching the good news. The Bible book of Acts tells us that there were about 120 persons present when holy spirit was poured out on the disciples at Pentecost. Soon the number of disciples grew to 3,000 and then to 5,000. The encouraging report was made that "Jehovah continued to join to them daily those being saved," and that "a great crowd of priests began to be obedient to the faith." (Acts 2:5-11, 41, 47; 6:7; 1:15; 4:4) What fine encouragement the news of these increases must have brought to the disciples! How these exciting reports must have impelled them to move ahead further with their divinely commissioned work in spite of severe persecution spearheaded by the Jewish religious leaders!

About 60-61 C.E. Paul reported in his letter to the Colossians that the good news was "bearing fruit and increasing in all the world" and "was preached in all creation that is under heaven." (Col. 1:6, 23) The Christians had been obedient to the Word, and holy spirit had empowered them to accomplish a worldwide preaching work before the end of the Jewish system of things in 70 C.E. How encouraging it was for those faithful Christian workers to hear reports of what was being accomplished! A seemingly impossible task had been completed and no doubt those having a share in the work sensed an expression of 'Well done!' from the Master.—Matt. 25:21.

In like manner, Jehovah's modern-day organization endeavors to keep precise records of the work being done in fulfillment of Matthew 24:14, which says: "And 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.” As dedicated servants of God we have an urgent work to do. Are you not personally interested in seeing to it that the ministry is accomplished thoroughly before the end comes? Of course, Jehovah will see to it that this work is completed, but will we have a share and will we receive Jehovah’s smile of approval? Will we hear his pronouncement, “Well done”?

YOUR PERSONAL FIELD SERVICE REPORT

What, exactly, are we to report? The Field Service Report slip provided by the Society indicates what information is to be included, but perhaps the following general comments, along with additional clarifications that are set out from time to time in *Our Kingdom Ministry*, will prove to be helpful.

In the columns with the headings “Books,” “Booklets” and “Individual Magazines,” list the total number of any of these items that you placed with people who are not dedicated, baptized Witnesses. Brochures are counted as booklets.

Both new and renewal subscriptions obtained from unbaptized people are reported on your Field Service Report slip in the column under the heading “Subs.” Please turn these in to the person handling subscriptions in the congregation at the very first opportunity. The congregation should promptly mail subscriptions to the Society each week to ensure the best service to subscribers.

In reporting “Return Visits” count the total number of return calls made for the purpose of further stimulating interest previously shown by people who are not dedicated, baptized Witnesses. (An exception would be where you conduct a home Bible study with an inactive brother or sister at the direction of one of the Congregation

Service Committee. Also, you may report return visits for studies conducted with a newly baptized person who has not finished studying two of the Society's publications.) The return visit could be not only by a visit to someone's home but also in the form of a letter, a telephone call or the delivery of some literature, such as the latest issue of a magazine. Each time a home Bible study is conducted it should be counted as a return visit. In order to count a return visit, you would need to contact the particular individual who showed interest previously.

Although Bible studies are usually conducted regularly at least once each week, they are reported only once each month. At the end of each month, please make out a Study Report slip for each home Bible study you have conducted during the month with people who are not dedicated, baptized Witnesses. (See exceptions in the following paragraph.) After filling out each slip completely and accurately, write the total number of these Bible studies in the box at the lower right-hand corner of your Field Service Report slip. The number you indicate on the Field Service Report slip and the number of Study Report slips you turn in will be the same.

It is important to make an accurate report of "Hours of Field Service." Basically, this is the time you spend in the house-to-house ministry, engaging in street witnessing, making return visits, conducting Bible studies or otherwise witnessing informally or publicly to people who are not dedicated and baptized Witnesses. (An exception would be where you conduct a home Bible study with an inactive brother or sister at the direction of one of the Congregation Service Committee. Also, you may continue reporting a

study being conducted with a newly baptized person who has not finished studying two of the Society's publications.) If a publisher works in areas or in situations where it is not wise to be alone and it is, therefore, necessary for another publisher to accompany him, both may count the time if both share in giving the witness. There are other essential activities for which time is not counted, such as getting ready for field service, attending the meeting for field service and traveling to and from the territory.

Your field service time should start when you begin your witness work and end when you finish your last call in each witnessing period. Time taken for refreshments or meals during a period of field service is not to be counted. Auxiliary, regular and special pioneers, as well as missionaries, have hour requirements to meet. Congregation publishers are encouraged likewise to put Kingdom interests first and exert themselves in the ministry to accomplish all that they can in the field according to their individual circumstances. All of Jehovah's dedicated servants endeavor to be whole-souled in the ministry. (Col. 3:23) Those giving public talks may count the time spent delivering these, and a parent may count up to one hour each week when studying with his or her undedicated children.

CONGREGATION'S PUBLISHER RECORD FILE

Your individual field service report for each month is compiled and recorded on a Congregation's Publisher Record card that is kept as a part of the congregation's files. These cards are not personal property. If you should move to another congregation, you may ask the secretary of the new congregation where you will be associating to write to the secretary of the congregation

from which you moved and request the transfer of your record of activity. This will serve to introduce you to the elders of that congregation and they will then be in a better position to continue giving needed spiritual assistance. If you are to be away from the congregation for a short period of less than three months, please continue to send your field service reports regularly to your home congregation.

When a person who has been having a home Bible study wants to go in the field service for the first time, this makes us rejoice. However, before he does so, the elders will want to make sure that the individual qualifies to be a publisher and that he or she really appreciates what it means to be publicly identified as associated with Jehovah's Witnesses. So the presiding overseer will arrange to have two elders (one being a member of the service committee) discuss this matter with the individual and with the brother or sister who is studying with him. (See page 98.) This will enable them to get better acquainted with him and to commend him warmly for the progress he is making.

In this discussion the elders can mention that the secretary keeps the field service records of the congregation. He and the other elders take a keen interest in all field service reports that are turned in each month. It would be appropriate to explain to the individual that when a Bible student reports field service for the first time and qualifies as an unbaptized publisher, a Congregation's Publisher Record card is made out

in his behalf and included in the congregation's file. The elders can then warmly welcome the individual as one who has a desire to become an active associate with Jehovah's Witnesses. (Rom. 15:7) Getting better acquainted with the new publisher in this way and taking a keen interest in what he has accomplished can have a fine influence on the individual. It may move him toward making even greater efforts to serve Jehovah and to turn in field service reports regularly each month.—Phil. 2:4; Heb. 13:2.

WHY WE REPORT OUR FIELD SERVICE

Do you sometimes forget to turn in your field service report? No doubt all of us need occasional reminders. But if we cultivate a proper attitude toward reporting our field ministry, and if we understand why it is important to do so, it may become easier for us to remember to make proper reports of our field service.

Someone has asked: "Since Jehovah knows what I am doing in his service, why do I need to make a report to the congregation?" True, Jehovah knows what each one is doing and he is able to judge whether our service is whole-souled or if it is just a token of what we are really able to do. Even so, the Bible reveals that Jehovah has always had a record kept of the activities of his servants. He recorded the number of days that Noah spent in the ark and the number of years the Israelites journeyed in the wilderness. God kept account of the number of those who were faithful as well as of those who disobeyed. He recorded the progressive conquest of the land of Canaan and the accomplishments of the faithful judges of Israel. Yes, he recorded many details regarding the deeds and accomplishments of his servants. He inspired this written record of what

took place, making clear to us his view of making reports and keeping accurate records.*

There are a number of reasons why we report our field service today. Although these reports obviously do not include all that we do in serving Jehovah, what is reported serves a most practical purpose toward helping all within the organization and especially the local elders and the Society.

At times reports may indicate that particular attention needs to be given to certain aspects of our ministry. The figures may show that there has been progress in some activities but that publisher increase or growth in other areas has slowed down. Encouragement may be needed or it could be that there are problems to be resolved. Responsible overseers will take note of reports and endeavor to rectify any condition that may be hindering the progress of individuals or of the congregation as a whole.

Also, reports are beneficial organizationally in determining just where there is a greater need for workers in the field. What areas are more productive? Where is little progress being made? What publications are needed to help people to learn the truth? Reports enable the Society to project literature needs for different areas of the world and then keep ahead of the need so that there is not a shortage of Bibles or Bible literature for use in the preaching work.

For most of us reports mean encouragement.

* Many historical events recorded in the Bible demonstrate the exactness of reports and records kept by Jehovah's name people. In many cases the full impact of the Bible account could not be conveyed without the specific numbers being reported. Consider the following examples: Genesis 46:27 and Exodus 12:37; Judges 7:7; 2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chronicles 14:9-13; John 6:10; 21:11; Acts 2:41; 19:19.

Are we not thrilled when we hear about the work our brothers are doing in getting the good news preached worldwide? Reports of increases in numbers of publishers help us to get an overall view of the expansion of Jehovah's organization. Individual experiences warm our heart and fill us with zeal, moving us also to have a full share in the preaching work. (Acts 15:3) So our individual cooperation with the congregation in turning in field service reports is important. It shows our concern for the brothers everywhere and in this small way we demonstrate our submission to Jehovah's organizational arrangement. —Matt. 24:45-47.

SETTING PERSONAL GOALS

There is no reason for us to become competitive in making our reports, comparing our service with that of another individual. Individual circumstances vary greatly, making it unwise for us to make such comparisons. On the other hand, we can derive much benefit from setting realistic personal goals for ourselves. These can give us a valuable basis for measuring our own progress in the ministry. Also, if our personal goals are realistic and set according to our individual circumstances, attaining these goals can give us the satisfaction that comes with accomplishment.

SHARE IN A FINAL REPORT

Regarding a symbolic work that was in a way prophetic of the preaching work we are doing today, we are told that a report was made when the work was finished. In prophetic vision Ezekiel saw six men with smashing weapons in their hands coming forth to execute judgment upon apostate Jerusalem. But then he saw a seventh man come forth also. This one had a secretary's

inkhorn with him and he was told: "Pass through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and you must put a mark on the foreheads of the men that are sighing and groaning over all the detestable things that are being done in the midst of it." After finishing his work of marking those who were to be saved from execution by the men with the smashing weapons, the man with the secretary's inkhorn returned to make a report, saying: "I have done just as you have commanded me."—Ezek. 9:1-11.

We do not know what final report Jehovah will request from his dedicated people when it comes to making a permanent record of the grand preaching work accomplished during the time of the end in fulfillment of Matthew 24:14. However, we can personally show our respect for his present organizational arrangement and demonstrate our appreciation for the small part we are allowed to have in the ministry by conscientiously reporting our field service regularly each month. It is recommended that all publishers of the good news promptly report their service activity at the end of each month. If this is done it will be greatly appreciated by the brothers who are assigned to compile the congregation field service report for mailing to the Society.

It is obvious that Jehovah is now, indeed, speeding up the ingathering of those people he will protect through "the great tribulation." We are living in the time of fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in this regard: "The little one himself will become a thousand, and the small one a mighty nation. I myself, Jehovah, shall speed it up in its own time." (Rev. 7:9, 14; Isa. 60:22)

As part of the worldwide association of brothers entrusted with the ministry, we want to be able to report as did the visionary man with the secretary's inkhorn: "I have done just as you have commanded me."—Ezek. 9:11.

CHAPTER 9

WAYS TO EXPAND YOUR MINISTRY

WHEN the time came for Jesus to send his disciples out as Kingdom preachers, he said to them: "Yes, the harvest is great, but the workers are few." There was much work to be done, and so he added: "Beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest." (Matt. 9:37, 38) As Jesus instructed the disciples on how to go about their ministry there was a ring of urgency in his words. He said: "You will by no means complete the circuit of the cities of Israel until the Son of man arrives."—Matt. 10:23.

Today, also, there is a great need in the field of the Christian ministry. Time is running out and this good news of the Kingdom must be preached before the end comes. (Mark 13:10) Since the field is the world, it becomes clear that we are faced with a situation quite similar to that experienced by Jesus and his disciples, only on a much larger scale. We, too, are few in number in comparison with the world of mankind, but we can be sure that Jehovah's hand is not short with regard to his ability to have the Kingdom good news declared throughout the inhabited earth. The good news *will be preached* and the end *will come* on schedule according to Jehovah's own purpose. But will we be found faithful in having discharged our responsibility

to share in the ministry at hand? (Ezek. 33:8, 9) Will we put God's Kingdom first in our life and fully accomplish our ministry? What theocratic goals are we pursuing to that end?

What Jehovah requires of each one of his dedicated servants was expressed by Jesus when he said: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength." (Mark 12:30) All of us are required to be whole-souled in our service to him. This means that we can individually demonstrate the depth of our devotion and the genuineness of our dedication by doing our utmost in the ministry. (2 Tim. 2:15) There are many opportunities open to each one, according to our individual circumstances and abilities. Just consider what some of these opportunities are and decide what theocratic goals you will pursue in fulfilling your ministry.

SERVING AS A CONGREGATION PUBLISHER

All who embrace the truth have the privilege of publishing the good news. This is the basic work that Jesus gave his disciples to do. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) A disciple of Jesus Christ usually begins speaking about the good news to others just as soon as he recognizes its value. This is what Andrew, Philip, Cornelius and others did. (John 1:40, 41, 43-45; Acts 10:1, 2, 24; 16:14, 15, 25-34) Does this mean that a person may participate in telling others about the good news even before he gets baptized? Yes. As soon as an individual qualifies as an unbaptized publisher in the congregation, the opportunity to participate in the house-to-house preaching of the good news is opened up to him. Also, according to his abili-

ty and circumstances he may regularly share in other features of the Kingdom ministry.

As a baptized member of the congregation you, of course, are interested in doing all you can to help others learn the good news. Men and women alike have the privilege of sharing in the God-ordained preaching work in the field. All should set a fine example in caring for their respective roles within the congregation. (1 Tim. 2:9-15; Titus 2:1-10; 1 Pet. 5:5) Male members of the congregation who make spiritual advancement and qualify may be appointed as ministerial servants. (1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12, 13) Such ones who reach out for the responsibilities of an overseer and who meet the Scriptural requirements are appointed to this position. They are used in teaching the congregation and serve as shepherds of the flock. (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) It is certainly a privilege to have even a small part in advancing the interests of God's Kingdom. Anyone who can expand his ministry to attain special privileges of service is happy indeed.

SERVING WHERE THE NEED IS GREATER

It may be that you have come to a knowledge of the truth in a congregation where the territory is frequently worked and a fine witness is continually being given for the benefit of anyone who should wish to come to know Jehovah. In such circumstances you may feel that you should expand your service privileges by moving to another area or, in some cases, even to another land where there is a greater need in the field. (Acts 16:9) If you are a brother who presently serves as an elder or a ministerial servant in the congregation, there may be another congregation either nearby or elsewhere that would appreciate

having your assistance in caring for congregational responsibilities.

If serving where the need is greater is something you would like to do, why not discuss the matter with the elders of your congregation. They may be able to help you determine how to go about making such a move or how to qualify for such work sometime in the future.

AUXILIARY, REGULAR AND SPECIAL PIONEER SERVICE

All publishers should be acquainted with the general requirements for the auxiliary, regular and special pioneer service as well as other branches of full-time service. From time to time *Our Kingdom Ministry* sets out additional specific information. A pioneer publisher of the good news must be an exemplary baptized Christian, male or female, whose personal circumstances allow the spending of a specified number of hours each month in publicly preaching the good news. Applications for auxiliary pioneer service are approved by the local congregation's service committee, whereas regular and special pioneers are appointed and assigned by the Society.

Auxiliary pioneers may be appointed for a minimum of one month or they may pioneer for any number of consecutive months, according to their individual circumstances and personal qualifications. Many Kingdom publishers enjoy serving as auxiliary pioneers on special occasions, such as during the Memorial season or the month of the circuit overseer's visit to the congregation. Vacation months are chosen by some. Baptized school-age publishers may wish to enroll as auxiliary pioneers during those months they have time off from school because of vacations or worldly

holidays. Whatever your personal circumstances, if you are baptized, are of good moral standing, can arrange to meet the requirement of spending 60 hours a month in the field ministry and believe you could serve one or more months as an auxiliary pioneer, the congregation elders will be pleased to consider your application for this privilege of service.

To qualify for appointment as a *regular pioneer* you must currently be in a position to reach the yearly field service quota of 1,000 hours. This is a requirement. To fulfill this quota you will need to work for a monthly goal of 90 hours. As a regular pioneer, you may choose your own assignment of territory, but you must always work in close cooperation with the congregation where you are assigned. Zealous pioneers can be a real blessing to the congregation, generating enthusiasm for the field ministry and even encouraging others to take up the pioneer service. Before the elders recommend your appointment as a regular pioneer, however, you must be baptized for at least six months, have good morals and have shown yourself to be an exemplary publisher. You must be able to follow a practical schedule that will enable you to spend the required number of hours in field service.

Special pioneers are chosen by the Society from among regular pioneers who have demonstrated their effectiveness in the ministry and who are able to serve wherever the Society chooses to assign them. This is often in unassigned or isolated territory where they can find interest and form new congregations. At times, special pioneers are assigned to congregations that need help in covering their territory regularly with the Kingdom

message. Some special pioneers who are also elders have been assigned to help small congregations even where there is not a particular need for more workers in the field. Special pioneers receive modest reimbursement for the necessary living expenses they incur.

MISSIONARY SERVICE

Getting the Kingdom good news preached "to the most distant part of the earth" before the end comes has made it necessary for the Society to send forth missionaries into many lands. (Acts 1:8; Matt. 24:14) This has opened up opportunities for greatly expanded service privileges for thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses and especially for those already sharing in the full-time service.

Usually those invited to share in missionary work are given specialized training in Gilead school. Over the years thousands of full-time ministers have received missionary training. They have been chosen from among those who have already proved themselves as zealous workers, as whole-souled in their devotion and as having a great measure of ability in Kingdom service.

To qualify for missionary work a person must be between the ages of 21 and 40 and have good physical health and stamina, since many missionary assignments are in areas of the earth where living conditions are difficult and there is exposure to unaccustomed diseases. Also, a person going into missionary work may be required to adjust to a different standard of living and an entirely new cultural environment.

If you are already in the full-time service and you would like to reach out for additional privileges as a missionary, you can learn more about the requirements by attending the meet-

ings for people interested in missionary service when these are arranged at district conventions. Your circuit overseer may also be able to help you with good advice. If you qualify, you may be privileged to take up a sacred service that has wonderfully contributed to the worldwide expansion of true worship.

BETHEL SERVICE

Serving at one of the many Bethel homes around the world is a very special privilege. The name Bethel means "House of God," and that designation is certainly appropriate for these centers of theocratic activity. Brothers and sisters who are in Bethel service do a vital work in connection with producing and distributing literature used by Jehovah's Witnesses everywhere. Also, from Brooklyn Bethel the Governing Body provides theocratic oversight and direction for the congregations throughout the earth.

Much of the service being performed at the Bethel homes is hard physical work. For this reason most of those called into Bethel service are dedicated and baptized brothers, young in years, in good health and strong physically. If there is a need in your country and if you would like to serve at Bethel, you can learn more about the requirements by attending the special meetings for people interested in Bethel service when these are arranged at district conventions. Your circuit overseer can also be of assistance in this regard.

WHAT ARE YOUR SPIRITUAL GOALS FOR THE FUTURE?

If you have dedicated your life unreservedly to Jehovah, your ultimate goal is that of attaining to everlasting life in Jehovah's righteous new world. But what are your service goals along

the way? By having spiritual goals you are less likely to misdirect your energies and other resources. (1 Cor. 9:26) You will be able to aim for something worth while. Such goals are conducive to spiritual growth and will help you to concentrate on more important things as you use opportunities to reach out for additional service privileges.—Phil. 1:10; 1 Tim. 4:15, 16.

In his illustration of the man that sowed, Jesus emphasized the fact that good symbolic soil produces varying amounts of fruitage. He said: "As for the one sown upon the fine soil, this is the one hearing the word and getting the sense of it, who really does bear fruit and produces, this one a hundredfold, that one sixty, the other thirty." (Matt. 13:23) If we have got the sense of the Word into our heart, should we not exert ourselves to make that Word produce abundant fruitage for Jehovah's praise? Do we not want to bear much Kingdom fruitage as we zealously share in the Kingdom ministry? And do we not want to produce abundantly the fruitage of God's spirit in our life every day? (John 15:2, 3) Having spiritual goals can help us do all of that.

The apostle Paul is an example for us to imitate in our service to God. (1 Cor. 11:1) He exerted himself vigorously in serving Jehovah to the very limit of his ability. He recognized that Jehovah's service provided him with many opportunities. To the brothers in Corinth he wrote: "A large door that leads to activity has been opened to me." Is this not true in our case also? Are there not many opportunities for us to serve Jehovah in association with the congregation, especially in preaching the Kingdom good news? Paul recognized that going through that door would not be easy, for he added, "But there are many op-

posers.” (1 Cor. 16:9) In accepting that service Paul was willing to discipline himself severely, even as would an athlete whose heart desire was to win a mere fading crown in the games. Notice what he said at 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, including the words: “I pummel my body and lead it as a slave.” Are we of that same mind?

Many of the missionaries in foreign lands today are there because they, with encouragement from their parents and others, set Gilead training and missionary work as a theocratic goal early in life, even while they were yet children in school. Similarly, many brothers now serving at Bethel set Bethel service as a goal either while they were very young children or when they first became acquainted with the good news and learned about this special privilege of service.

According to their differing personal circumstances in life, each one is encouraged to work toward certain theocratic goals. Some of those goals might be increasing participation in field service each week, starting and conducting a home Bible study, making more time to prepare for congregation meetings, enrolling as an auxiliary or regular pioneer, serving where the need is greater, serving at Bethel or in the missionary field. Of course, at congregation meetings, at conventions and in the Society's publications attention may be drawn to other theocratic goals that you, according to your own personal circumstances, may want to consider and strive to reach. The important thing is that you remain steadfast and fully accomplish your ministry. If you do, you will also attain your ultimate goal of everlasting life in Jehovah's service.—Luke 13:24; 1 Tim. 4:7b, 8.

CHAPTER 10

HOW THE MINISTRY IS SUPPORTED

WHEN sending his disciples out to preach, Jesus said: "You received free, give free. Do not procure gold or silver or copper for your girdle purses, or a food pouch for the trip, or two undergarments, or sandals or a staff; for the worker deserves his food." (Matt. 10:8b-10) They were to trust in Jehovah that he would sustain them in the ministry. The Kingdom good news was not to be commercialized nor was it to be used for selfish personal advantage. The disciples adhered to Jesus' direction and their ministry was fully accomplished.—Col. 1:6, 23.

Now, in fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy concerning the last days, Jehovah's Witnesses have carried the ministry of the good news "to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8; Matt. 24:14) In doing this they have freely offered their time and energies in sharing spiritual things, thus remaining obedient to Jesus' words: "You received free, give free." Trusting in Jehovah to provide for his fellow workers, they have not become anxious but continue putting God's Kingdom first in their life. (1 Cor. 3:5-9; Matt. 6:25-34) The results give clear evidence of Jehovah's approval and blessing.

But when viewing the methods used by Jehovah's Witnesses in preaching the good news today, such as using the printed page, and realizing the phenomenal extent of their distribution of Bible literature, some will ask: 'How is all of this possible?' True, printing establishments that produce and distribute huge quantities of Bi-

bles and Bible literature require money for their operation. Much additional expense is incurred in maintaining Bethel homes for ministers who operate printing presses, oversee the preaching work worldwide and in other ways serve full time for the advancement of the good news. Missionaries are trained and sent to many lands, and other ministers are assigned as special pioneers who spend their time working in isolated areas or with small congregations. Traveling overseers ministering to the thousands of congregations everywhere are also given some material assistance to help them continue in their important work. Clearly, the work of the ministry in our day involves the outlay of large sums of money. From where does it all come?

Apart from the contributions made by interested people, Jehovah's Witnesses themselves send voluntary contributions to local branch offices of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. Seeing the need, they demonstrate the same willing spirit that motivated God's servants whose generous giving in ancient times supplied the needs for building Jehovah's place of worship. (Ex. 35:20-29; 1 Chron. 29:9) While some gifts are received from estates through wills of Jehovah's Witnesses, contributions to the Society from individuals, congregations and circuits are usually sent in small amounts. Such donations, large and small, are appreciatively acknowledged. When added together, they provide enough to keep the work going.

So while sharing personally in the ministry of the good news, preaching publicly and from house to house, Jehovah's Witnesses also consider it a privilege to use their money and other

material possessions to advance the Christian ministry. We are reminded of how Jesus and his disciples maintained a common purse or money box from which funds were taken to help the poor and to care for other necessary expenses. (John 12:6; 13:28, 29) The Bible record tells us of the women who gave material support to the ministry of Jesus and his disciples. (Mark 15:40, 41; Luke 8:3) The apostle Paul gratefully accepted loving material assistance from others who were interested in advancing the good news and who wished to have a share in his ministry. (1 Thess. 2:9; Phil. 4:14-16) Jehovah's Witnesses continue to follow these ancient patterns of hard work and generous giving. Thus, it is possible for honest-hearted ones everywhere to be freely offered 'the waters of life.'—Rev. 22:17.

CARING FOR THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL CONGREGATIONS

Expenses within the local congregations are also covered by voluntary contributions. No collections are taken nor is there an assessment of dues, but contribution boxes are provided at meeting places so that each one can have a part in giving, "just as he has resolved in his heart." —2 Cor. 9:7.

Since overseers in the congregations serve without a salary for their services, money contributed serves principally to provide a Kingdom Hall in which the congregation can meet and to pay for its operation and upkeep. If there is more money than is needed to care for these expenses, the body of elders may discuss how those funds can best be used to advance the Kingdom ministry. It may be decided that some of the money should be sent to the local branch office of the

Watch Tower Society for use in furthering the Kingdom work. If so, a resolution to this effect should be adopted by the congregation. In this way many congregations make regular contributions to advance the Kingdom work. Special needs may arise from time to time, but when each one endeavors to remain alert to the needs of the local congregation, it should not be necessary to make frequent announcements regarding contributions.

CARING FOR THE POOR

One purpose of the money box maintained by Jesus and his disciples was to help poor people. (Mark 14:3-5; John 13:29) That Christian responsibility has continued just as Jesus said: "You always have the poor with you." (Mark 14:7) How do Jehovah's Witnesses discharge their responsibility in this regard today?

At times, faithful ones in the congregation may be in need of material assistance because of advanced age, infirmity or some adversity beyond their control. Individuals in the congregation who become aware of such need may feel moved to act in harmony with the words of the apostle John: "Whoever has this world's means for supporting life and beholds his brother having need and yet shuts the door of his tender compassions upon him, in what way does the love of God remain in him? Little children, let us love, neither in word nor with the tongue, but in deed and truth." (1 John 3:17, 18; compare 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12.) True worship involves looking after faithful and loyal ones who may be in need of material assistance.—Jas. 1:27; 2:14-17.

In his first letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul explained how material assistance may be provid-

ed to deserving ones. You can read his counsel at 1 Timothy 5:3-21. The first responsibility rests upon each Christian to care for the needs of his own household. Older or infirm ones should receive assistance from their children, grandchildren or other close relatives. (At times material assistance is available through governmental or social agencies, and so relatives or others may show kindness in helping the needy one to make proper requests for such assistance.) A situation may arise where it might become necessary for the congregation as a whole to consider providing some form of assistance to certain needy brothers and sisters who have a long history of faithful service. If there are no family members or other relatives to assist such ones, the body of elders can make appropriate recommendations and suggestions to provide some help. Faithful Christians consider it a privilege to confirm their love for one another through sharing their material possessions with worthy ones in time of need.

Many of our brothers within a certain area may come to be in need due to persecutions, wars, earthquakes, floods, famines or other calamitous occurrences that are common in this critical time of the end. (Matt. 24:7-9) On such occasions local congregations may not have anything to share with one another and so the Society coordinates the efforts of the brothers elsewhere to provide what is needed. This is similar to the way Christians in Asia Minor provided food for the brothers in Palestine during a time of famine. (1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 9:1-5) By following their example we confirm our love for our brothers and prove ourselves to be genuine disciples of Jesus Christ. —John 13:35.

LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION

The distribution of Bibles and Bible literature, such as magazines, books, booklets and tracts, plays an important role in spreading the Kingdom message everywhere. Usually one of the ministerial servants is assigned by the body of elders to look after the congregation's supply of literature, and another ministerial servant is assigned to take care of the magazines. All such literature is made available to the publishers, who, in turn, offer it to those of the public who show interest.

The brothers assigned to look after such literature and magazine supplies take their responsibilities seriously. They keep a written record of all movements of stock, including the date and the amount of literature received, as well as a progressive inventory. By keeping informed as to what literature is available and by monitoring the flow of literature to the field they can always arrange to have an adequate supply on hand to care for the needs of the congregation. Since Bible literature has proved to be so effective in spreading the good news, publishers are encouraged to feature it in their ministry. *Our Kingdom Ministry* announces a specific literature offer for each month so as to ensure an orderly and thorough witness throughout the territory.

Another ministerial servant may be assigned to receive all subscriptions for *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* and prepare these for mailing to the Society regularly each week.

CONGREGATION CONTRIBUTIONS

An elder or a ministerial servant is assigned by the body of elders to care for the congregation accounts. Each congregation has contribution box-

es set up in the Kingdom Hall. After each meeting brothers remove any money that may have been deposited in the contribution boxes and make a record of it. The body of elders will make appropriate arrangements for safeguarding all these funds until such time as they can be forwarded to the Society or otherwise used to care for the needs of the congregation. This may entail the opening of a bank account for the congregation. The brother handling the congregation accounts makes a monthly statement for the information of the congregation, and every three months the presiding overseer arranges for an auditing of the accounts. A reminder of this is published regularly in *Our Kingdom Ministry*.

FINANCING OUR CIRCUIT ASSEMBLIES

Expenses involved in operating circuit assemblies are defrayed by the Witnesses making up the circuit. Contribution boxes are provided at the assemblies just as they are at local congregation meetings and in this way the brothers can make voluntary contributions to the circuit. At times it may be necessary for the various congregations in a circuit to assist with initial expenses and in such case the circuit overseer may advise the congregations of this privilege. In most instances, however, the circuit will already have on hand sufficient funds from previous assemblies. If it should occur that there is a deficit at the conclusion of an assembly, it is the responsibility of the elders to discuss the matter and determine what contributions their respective congregations may be able to make to the circuit funds. They would then handle this with their congregations by means of a resolution.

A brother selected by the circuit overseer handles the circuit accounts, paying bills that are approved by the circuit overseer. The elders decide what should be done with any funds that may be left over in excess of what will be needed for initial expenses of the next assembly. It may be that the circuit is in need of equipment used in connection with circuit assemblies, or the elders may wish to send a contribution to the Society for the advancement of the good news in other areas. Decisions should be made only with regard to funds that the circuit has on hand in its account and these decisions should be put in writing as resolutions adopted by the elders. Money belonging to the circuit may be deposited with the branch office for safekeeping until such time as it is needed by the circuit.

The circuit overseer will arrange for an audit of the circuit accounts following each circuit assembly.

As dedicated Christians, we recognize that our time, mental and physical assets, talents, material possessions and even our very life are gifts from God and intended for use in his service. (Luke 17:10; 1 Cor. 4:7) By making proper use of all our resources we demonstrate the genuineness of our love and the depth of our devotion to Jehovah. It is our desire to honor Jehovah with our valuable things, knowing that he is pleased with whatever gift we bring when it is given as an expression of our whole-souled devotion. (Prov. 3:9; Col. 3:23, 24; compare Mark 14:3-9 with Luke 21:1-4.) By maintaining a proper view of material things and by generous Christian giving we may experience the fulfillment of Jesus' words in our day: "You received free, give free." We, in turn, receive the greater joy.—Matt. 10:8b; Acts 20:35.

CHAPTER 11

HOLDING TO JEHOVAH'S RIGHTEOUS STANDARDS

AS DEDICATED servants of God, bearing his name, we are under obligation to reflect Jehovah's glory in all that we say and do. (2 Cor. 3:18) This involves our holding to his righteous standards, which are a reflection of his own perfect personality. (Col. 3:10) We must become imitators of God as a holy people.—Eph. 5:1, 2.

Calling this need to the attention of Christians, Peter wrote: "As obedient children, quit being fashioned according to the desires you formerly had in your ignorance, but, in accord with the Holy One who called you, do you also become holy yourselves in all your conduct, because it is written: 'You must be holy, because I am holy.'" (1 Pet. 1:14-16) As with Israel of old, members of the Christian congregation are required to maintain holiness. This means that they are to remain untarnished, clean from sinful contamination and worldliness. They are thus set apart for Jehovah's exclusive service.—Ex. 20:5.

Holiness is maintained by adhering to Jehovah's laws and principles. These are clearly set out in the Holy Scriptures. (2 Tim. 3:16) Through a study of the Scriptures we were taught about Jehovah's ways and we were drawn to him. In becoming one of his people, it was not just a matter of accepting a few basic doctrines and then getting baptized in water. Our study of the

Bible convinced us of the need to seek first God's Kingdom and to mold our life according to his righteous standards. (Matt. 6:33; Rom. 12:2) In effect, this results in putting on a new personality modeled after Jesus Christ.—Eph. 4:22-24.

Living up to our dedication by holding to Jehovah's righteous standards is not always easy. Our Adversary, Satan the Devil, seeks to turn us aside from the truth. Wicked influences from the world around us and our own sinful tendencies make things difficult at times. All of this requires a spiritual fight on our part. The Scriptures tell us not to be puzzled when opposition or trials are encountered. We may have to suffer for the sake of righteousness. We can be happy in undergoing trials, knowing that such trials are proof that we are doing God's will.—1 Pet. 3:14-16; 4:14-16.

Though he was perfect, Jesus learned obedience by the things he suffered. At no time did he yield to Satan's temptations or to worldly aspirations. (Matt. 4:1-11; John 6:15) Not once did Jesus even give thought to compromising the truth. Though his faithful course incurred the world's hatred, he always held to Jehovah's righteous standards. Shortly before his death he warned his disciples that just as the world hated him because he was no part of it, so, too, the world would hate them. (John 15:19; 17:16) From that time forward followers of Jesus Christ have experienced tribulation, but they have taken courage in knowing that the Son of God conquered the world.—John 16:33.

For us to overcome the world, we need to uphold Jehovah's righteous standards as our Master did. In addition to avoiding involvement with the world in its political and social fields, we must resist the world's degrading moral climate. So we should take seriously the counsel at James 1:21: "Hence put away all filthiness and that superfluous thing, badness, and accept with mildness the implanting of the word which is able to save your souls." By regularly implanting the word of truth in our mind and heart through study and meeting attendance, we keep strong in faith in the face of temptations and trials. Even though worldly attractions exert a strong influence, we must not even begin to desire what the world offers. Why not? Pointedly the disciple James warns: "Adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God." (Jas. 4:4) Can you not see the reasons for the Bible's strong admonition that we hold to Jehovah's righteous standards and remain separate from the world?

The inspired counsel of God's Word warns us against sharing in shameful and immoral conduct. It tells us that 'fornication and uncleanness of every sort or greediness should not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits holy people.' So we must refuse to allow our mind to dwell upon things that are obscene, shameful or base and we should not discuss such things in unnecessary conversation. We must avoid being immorally influenced because of watching un-

cleanness displayed publicly as forms of entertainment. (Eph. 5:3-5) Thereby we give proof of wanting to hold to Jehovah's clean and righteous standards of morality.

PHYSICAL CLEANNESSE HONORS JEHOVAH

Along with spiritual and moral cleanness, Christians recognize the importance of being physically clean. In ancient Israel the God of holiness required cleanness in the camp. (Deut. 23:14) The way of life then had to conform to Jehovah's standard of cleanness. Our way of life, too, must be kept clean so that Jehovah 'may see nothing indecent in us.'

In view of our public witnessing, we are usually well known in the community where we live. Keeping a neat and orderly home, inside and out, is in itself a witness to neighbors. This is something in which the whole family should be involved. Husbands and fathers should take particular interest in the home and its surroundings, knowing that a tidy yard and well-kept home merit favorable testimony from those on the outside. Family heads recognize that this, along with their taking the lead in spiritual matters, is an indication that they are presiding well over their own household. (1 Tim. 3:4, 12) Wives, too, have a responsibility in caring for things, especially inside the home. (Titus 2:4, 5) Well-trained children do their part in keeping themselves, as well as their rooms, clean and neat. Thus, the entire family works together in developing habits and patterns of cleanness that will fit in with the new world under God's Kingdom.

Our grooming and dress should be in keeping with godly principles. We would not think of appearing before prominent officials dressed in a slovenly and careless manner. How much more concerned should we be when serving Jehovah, representing him in the field ministry or on the platform! Our grooming and clothing styles can influence others as to how they view the true worship of Jehovah. It certainly would not be fitting to be immodest or inconsiderate of others. (Mic. 6:8; 1 Cor. 10:31-33; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10) Hence, when we participate in the field ministry or assemble for worship at congregation meetings, circuit assemblies and larger conventions, we should have in mind what the Scriptures say about physical cleanness and modest appearance so as to honor Jehovah always.

The same would apply when visiting the Bethel home at Brooklyn or any of the Society's branch offices. Remember, the name Bethel means "House of God," so our dress, grooming and conduct should be similar to what is expected of us when attending meetings for worship at the Kingdom Hall.

RECREATION

The propriety of having some time for rest and refreshment is recognized. Once Jesus invited his disciples to go to a lonely place and "rest up a bit." (Mark 6:31) Healthful recreation can provide some pleasant diversion. It can refresh us so that we can press ahead with our normal work. There are many wholesome things that individuals or families can do in order to enjoy

a change of pace and recuperate their physical and mental powers. Many have benefited from following the Scriptural counsel and balanced suggestions contained in the Society's publications on this matter.

With so many forms of recreation available, Christians should be selective and exercise godly wisdom in what they do. While it has its place, recreation is not the big thing in life. We are warned that in "the last days," men would become "lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God." (2 Tim. 3:1, 4) Much of what is today termed recreation and entertainment is objectionable to one who desires to hold to Jehovah's righteous standards.

Early Christians had to resist an unwholesome environment in the pleasure-seeking Roman world. At the circus, spectators were entertained by viewing the sufferings of others. Violence, bloodshed and sexual immorality were key elements in the recreation of the populace. Early Christians stayed away from such things. Much of the modern world's entertainment features similar attractions and caters to base human emotions. We need to 'keep strict watch on how we walk' by turning away from demoralizing entertainment. (Eph. 5:15, 16) And even though the entertainment itself may be acceptable, often the presence and influence of worldly people can be harmful.—See 1 Peter 4:1-4.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Children of Jehovah's Witnesses benefit from getting a basic secular education. While attend-

ing school, they should be interested in learning how to read and write well. Other subjects taught in primary school as well as in high school can be of value to young people as they pursue spiritual goals. During their school years they should make a diligent effort to remember their Creator by putting spiritual things first.—Eccl. 12:1.

If you are a Christian youth attending school, your parents have no doubt encouraged you to exercise special care. Even though worldly youths go unrestrained in their rebellious course of conduct, you do not need to side with them. (2 Tim. 3:1, 2) Under these circumstances there is much you can do to ward off worldly influences. Jehovah has not left any of us exposed to dangers without providing necessary protection. (Ps. 23:4; 91:1, 2) So take advantage of Jehovah's provisions for the congregation; this will serve to safeguard you.—Ps. 23:5.

To keep separate from the world while in school, young Witnesses should consider the dangers of becoming involved in extracurricular activities. Though classmates and teachers may not always understand your decision of nonparticipation, pleasing God is what counts. This requires exercising a Bible-trained conscience and standing firm in the resolve not to become involved in worldly competition or nationalistic practices that violate Bible principles. (Gal. 5:19, 26; see footnote in 1971 edition.) By listening to the Scriptural counsel of godly parents and benefiting from the good association and instruction of the congregation, the youth in our midst will be aided in holding to Jehovah's righteous standards.

SECULAR WORK AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS

Family heads have a Scriptural obligation to provide for the needs of their own household. (1 Tim. 5:8) Even so, they as ministers recognize that their secular work is secondary to the vital Kingdom interests. (Matt. 6:33; Rom. 11:13) By practicing godly devotion and being content with having sustenance and covering, they avoid the anxieties and snares of the materialistic way of life so common in the world.—1 Tim. 6:6-10.

Not only family heads but also other dedicated Christians who find it necessary to be secularly employed should have such Scriptural principles in mind. Making honest provision for themselves means that they would not want to profit from activities that violate God's law or are illegal from the standpoint of Caesar. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Rom. 13:1, 2) Also, there is a need to be constantly aware of the dangers of bad association. As soldiers of Christ, our brothers refrain from engaging in commercial endeavors that violate Christian standards or jeopardize their spirituality. (2 Tim. 2:4) Neither do they become involved in unscriptural connections with God's religious enemy, Babylon the Great.—2 Cor. 6:14-17; Rev. 18:2, 4.

Observing God's righteous standards will prevent us from taking advantage of our theocratic association in order to promote personal or other business interests. The purpose of our association with others at Christian meetings in the local congregation and when attending circuit assemblies and larger conventions is exclusively for worshipping Jehovah, feeding at his spiritual table

and enjoying an interchange of encouragement. (Rom. 1:11, 12; Heb. 10:24, 25) Such association should always be kept on a high spiritual level.

“DO ALL THINGS FOR GOD’S GLORY”

In addition to the foregoing, other aspects of our daily life should give clear evidence that our profession of Christianity is genuine. (Rom. 2:21-24) Our personal habits, for example, may seem to be of relatively little consequence. But, concerning these very things we are admonished: “Whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God’s glory. Keep from becoming causes for stumbling.” (1 Cor. 10:31-33) Such counsel is applicable at all times—in our private life, when we are among our Christian brothers or when we are being observed by worldly people.

It is a fine thing to be hospitable. (1 Pet. 4:9) When inviting others to our home for a meal, refreshments, a period of study or relaxation and fellowship, we should keep in mind those in the congregation who may be needy or disadvantaged. (Luke 14:12-14) If we are guests on such occasions, our conduct should be in line with the counsel at Mark 12:31. It is always good to show appreciation for the thoughtfulness and kindness of others.

At times, several families may be invited to a home for Christian fellowship. Or, brothers may be invited to attend a wedding reception or a similar social occasion. (John 2:2) Reasonably, those who are hosts in such cases should feel personally responsible for what takes place. With this

in mind, discerning Christians have seen the wisdom of limiting the size of such groups and the duration of the gatherings. Alcoholic beverages, if served at all, should be used in moderation. (Phil. 4:5) If there is an effort to make such Christian get-togethers spiritually upbuilding and they are planned accordingly, food and drink will not be the most important considerations. There is a need to exercise caution when large groups get together. The relaxed atmosphere at such gatherings has led some to go beyond the limits of proper Christian conduct and become involved in excessive eating and drinking and even serious wrongdoing.

Truly, Christians rejoice in God's bounteous gifts and find that they can 'eat and indeed drink and see good for all their hard work.' (Eccl. 3: 12, 13) Realizing that these and other activities should always be to God's glory, hosts as well as guests will look back on social gatherings, not with troubled consciences, but with the satisfaction of having been spiritually refreshed.

DWELLING IN CHRISTIAN UNITY

Jehovah's righteous standards for his people also require that they "observe the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace." (Eph. 4: 1-3) Rather than seeking to please themselves, they would each seek to pursue what is good toward others. This is the spirit you have doubtless found in your association with the brothers in your congregation. No matter what a person's racial, national, social, economic or education-

al background may be, all are governed by the same righteous standards. Even outsiders have observed that this is outstandingly characteristic of Jehovah's people.—1 Pet. 2:12.

Further emphasizing the basis for unity, the apostle writes: "One body there is, and one spirit, even as you were called in the one hope to which you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all persons, who is over all and through all and in all." (Eph. 4: 4-6) How forcefully this calls for unity in understanding basic Bible doctrine as well as more advanced Bible teaching in recognition of Jehovah's sovereign will and authority! Truly, Jehovah has given his people a pure language of truth that enables them to serve together shoulder to shoulder.—Zeph. 3:9.

The unity and peace of the Christian congregation today has certainly been a source of refreshment for all of us who worship Jehovah. We have experienced the fulfillment of Jehovah's promise: "In unity I shall set them, like a flock in the pen." (Mic. 2:12) It behooves all of us to maintain that peaceful unity by living daily as a holy people, always holding to Jehovah's righteous standards.

Happy are all who have been accepted into the clean congregations of Jehovah! It is worth every sacrifice we may be called upon to make just to be called by Jehovah's name. As we maintain our precious relationship with him, we will strive diligently to hold to Jehovah's righteous standards ourselves and recommend them to others.

CHAPTER 12

WHEN DIFFICULTIES ARISE

UNQUESTIONABLY a tremendous witness is being given worldwide as a result of our Kingdom ministry. This is a cause for wonderment on the part of millions of people. Even observers not favorably disposed toward the Kingdom good news have commended us for our zeal, unity and cooperative spirit. All credit goes to Jehovah God, since the work being accomplished by our ministry is due to his spirit and blessing.—Zech. 4:6.

Application of Bible principles enables us to put on the new Christian personality. (Col. 3:10) Every effort is made to conform our way of life to Jehovah's righteous standards. For this reason we put aside petty disputes and personal differences. By accepting Jehovah's view of matters we overcome divisive worldly elements, and this allows us to work unitedly in love as an international brotherhood.—Acts 10:34, 35.

Nevertheless, from time to time difficulties may arise, affecting the peace and unity of the congregation. What is the cause? In most cases it is a failure to heed and apply Bible counsel. We still have to cope with imperfect human tendencies. Someone may, even without fully realizing it, take a false step that could introduce moral or spiritual uncleanness into the congregation. Not one of us is without sin. By our thoughtless action or unguarded tongue we may offend another, or perhaps we may begin to feel offended because of what someone else has said or done. (Rom. 3:23) When such difficulties arise, what can be done to help set matters straight?

We can be thankful that Jehovah has lovingly taken all of this into consideration. His Word provides counsel on what to do when difficulties arise due to our inherited human imperfections and limitations or when wrongdoing is otherwise introduced into the congregation. Personal assistance is available from loving elders. By accepting their mature help and heeding Scriptural counsel, we can continue to enjoy a fine relationship with all in the congregation and maintain a good standing with Jehovah. If some wrongdoing on our part requires discipline or reproof, rest assured that such correction is an expression of our heavenly Father's love.—Prov. 3:11, 12; Heb. 12:6.

PERSONAL DIFFICULTIES

There may be times when personal disputes or other difficulties of a minor nature arise between individual members of the congregation. These should quickly be settled in the spirit of brotherly love. (Eph. 4:26; Phil. 2:2-4; Col. 3:12-14) Very likely you will find that most problems of a personal nature involving your relationship with another member of the congregation can be resolved simply by applying Peter's counsel to "have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins." (1 Pet. 4:8) Such minor difficulties stem from human imperfections. We all stumble many times. (Jas. 3:2) By recognizing these facts and applying the golden rule, doing to others just as we would want them to do to us, usually we can dispose of minor offenses on the part of our Christian brothers by simply forgiving and forgetting.—Matt. 7:12.

But if something has disturbed your relationship with another member of the congregation to the extent that another approach or course

needs to be taken, wisdom dictates that you not delay resolving the matter, knowing that your relationship with Jehovah is also involved. Jesus counseled: "If, then, you are bringing your gift to the altar and you there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, and go away; first make your peace with your brother, and then, when you have come back, offer up your gift." (Matt. 5:23, 24) There may have been a misunderstanding. If so, it should be cleared up very easily by keeping in mind the basic need for unity within the congregated body and keeping the lines of communication open. This is the thought expressed at Ephesians 4:25, where we read: "Wherefore, now that you have put away falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, because we are members belonging to one another." Good communication among all members of the congregation goes a long way toward avoiding misunderstandings and resolving problems that do arise because of our human imperfections.

WEIGHTY RESPONSIBILITY OF ELDERS

At times overseers may find it necessary to counsel or correct someone, trying to readjust his thinking. This is not always easy to do. To the Christians in Galatia, Paul wrote: "Brothers, even though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness."—Gal. 6:1.

Surrounded as we all are with worldly influences and faced with temptations every day, the sinful flesh of some may allow them to become involved in questionable conduct or even to take a false step into sin before they are aware of it. The shepherds, by being vigilant and attentive to

the needs of the flock, may be able to prevent someone from taking a more serious step that could bring into question his relationship with Jehovah. This is their objective when giving counsel to one who may have sinned.—Heb. 13:17.

Knowing just how subtly sin may creep in upon one, the apostle cautioned the brothers that they also are subject to temptation. He wrote them: "Each keep an eye on yourself, for fear you also may be tempted." (Gal. 6:1b) Yes, to overseers today this reminder is especially fitting. They also need to watch closely their own personal conduct, so as to guard against falling into temptation.

Overseers are expected to be exemplary. Their example in daily living should add force to their words of counsel and instruction to the congregation. (Rom. 2:21-23) Although a brother may have qualified fully at the time of his appointment, if he should later on fail to maintain his proper relationship with Jehovah, the same holy spirit that led to his appointment will direct his removal from office in Jehovah's own time and way. Paul admonished all Christians, including appointed overseers: "Consequently let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall."—1 Cor. 10:12.

By keeping themselves entirely free from accusation as they exercise watchful care over the flock, the overseers can protect the congregation from many potential spiritual dangers and avoid the need to handle more serious problems that could develop if there was negligence on their part. Shepherds of the flock should always strive to make their service to the congregation measure up to Jehovah's promise through Isaiah: "And each one must prove to be like a hiding

place from the wind and a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water in a waterless country, like the shadow of a heavy crag in an exhausted land.”—Isa. 32:2.

NOT OVERLOOKING SERIOUS WRONGS

Willingness to overlook offenses and to forgive does not mean that we are not concerned about wrongdoing or that we approve of it. Not all wrongs can simply be charged to inherited imperfection; nor is it for our brother's good or for the good of the congregation to overlook it if he commits wrongs that go beyond minor offenses. (Lev. 19:17; Ps. 141:5) Under the Law covenant given through Moses there was recognition of a difference in degree of seriousness of sins and transgressions. This is also true for Christians under the new covenant.—Compare 1 John 5:16, 17.

When giving counsel, Jesus outlined some specific procedures for resolving problems of serious wrongdoing, such as fraud or slander, that may arise between fellow Christians. Note the steps that he set out: “Moreover, if your brother commits a sin, [1] go lay bare his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, [2] take along with you one or two more, in order that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every matter may be established. If he does not listen to them, [3] speak to the congregation. If he does not listen even to the congregation, let him be to you just as a man of the nations and as a tax collector.”—Matt. 18:15-17.

If someone in the congregation has committed such a serious sin against you personally, do not be hasty to turn to the overseers, or someone else, requesting them to intervene in your be-

half. First of all, as Jesus counsels, speak with the one against whom you have a complaint. Try to resolve the matter between just the two of you without involving anyone else at all. If the matter can be straightened out in this way, the one who has sinned will certainly appreciate the fact that you have not told others about his sin and have not marred his good reputation among others in the congregation. You will have "gained your brother."

Where the sinner accepts reproof, seeks forgiveness and straightens the matter out, Jesus states there is no need to carry the matter further. This fact shows that, although serious, the offenses here discussed were limited in nature to such as could be settled between the individuals involved. This would not include such offenses as fornication, adultery, homosexuality, blasphemy, apostasy, idolatry and similar gross sins that should be reported to the elders and handled by them. When the Law covenant was in force, these sins required more than forgiveness from an offended individual.—1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:19-21.

In view of this and in view of the illustration that Jesus subsequently gave, as recorded at Matthew 18:23-35, the sins considered in Matthew 18:15-17 evidently were sins such as those involving financial or property matters—failure to make proper payment for something or some action involving a measure of fraud. The sin might damage one's reputation by actual slander. In these cases, if the offender recognized his wrong, expressed willingness to right it to the extent possible and sought forgiveness, the matter could be settled by the offended one's granting forgiveness.—Compare Matthew 5:25, 26.

If the one who sinned against you cannot be

convinced by your reasoning with him alone, then do as Jesus said and take one or two others along and speak with him again. The one or two you take with you should have the same objective, that of gaining your brother. Preferably they should be witnesses of the alleged wrongdoing, but if there are no eyewitnesses, you may choose to take along responsible brothers who become witnesses to the evidence presented in the discussion. Also, after listening to what you and the other person have to say, they may help the two of you reason on the matter and seek a solution to the problem. Keep in mind, however, that if you alone were not able to convince your brother that a wrong was committed, there is always the possibility that he has not sinned against you and that the individuals you take along with you may be required to convince you that you have no reason for complaint against your brother. (Prov. 18:17) Remember that the objective is to establish peace between you and your brother, to 'gain your brother.'

But if you are convinced that your brother has sinned against you and it has not been resolved either when you spoke with him alone or when you went to him with one or two others, and if a serious sin is involved so that it would be wrong just to let it pass, then you should report the matter to the overseers of the congregation. Having done this, you have taken it as far as you can. Leave the problem in the hands of the responsible members of the congregation and trust in Jehovah that it will be resolved. Never should you allow the wrong conduct of someone else to become a reason for stumbling or a force to rob you of your joy in Jehovah's service.—Ps. 119:165.

If upon investigation it should become evident to the shepherds of the flock that the brother has indeed committed a serious sin against you and yet has been unwilling to repent and make appropriate amends, it may become necessary for the overseers to expel the unrepentant wrongdoer and in that way protect the flock and safeguard the cleanness of the congregation.—Matt. 18:17.

HANDLING OTHER JUDICIAL MATTERS

Some cases of wrongdoing may be brought to the attention of the overseers by individual brothers or sisters who report unresolved personal grievances. (Matt. 18:17) On the other hand, the elders may be approached by individuals who either confess their own sins or report what they know regarding the wrongdoing of others. (Jas. 5:16; Lev. 5:1) But regardless of the exact manner in which the elders first hear reports of serious wrongdoing on the part of a baptized member of the congregation, an initial investigation will be made. If it is established that there is substance to the report and evidence is produced showing that a serious sin actually may have been committed, the congregation's body of elders will assign a judicial committee of at least three brothers to handle the matter. In the case of reported serious wrongdoing on the part of one who is not yet baptized, see page 148.

While exercising watchful care over the flock, seeking to protect it from any elements that would be spiritually damaging, the elders will also endeavor to use their spiritual qualifications to restore or reprove any who have erred. (Jude 21-23) This would be in harmony with instructions given to Timothy by the apostle Paul. He wrote: "I solemnly charge you before God

and Christ Jesus, who is destined to judge the living and the dead, and by his manifestation and his kingdom, preach the word, be at it urgently in favorable season, in troublesome season, reprove, reprimand, exhort, with all long-suffering and art of teaching." (2 Tim. 4:1, 2) Doing this may take much time and effort, but it is a part of the hard work of the elders that the congregation appreciates and for which they give the elders double honor.—1 Tim. 5:17.

In every situation where guilt is established, a primary endeavor of the overseers is to restore the wrongdoer if he is genuinely repentant, as indicated, for example, by his producing "works that befit repentance." (Acts 26:20) If they are able to help him and he is repentant, their administering reproof, either privately or before onlookers concerned in the case, serves to discipline him and instill a wholesome fear in any such onlookers. (1 Tim. 5:20; compare 2 Samuel 12:13.) Thus, the wrongdoer may be helped to 'make straight paths for his feet' thereafter.—Heb. 12:13.

However, the wrongdoer may have become hardened in his course of wrong conduct and fail to respond to the efforts of his brothers to help him. Fruits, or works, befitting repentance may not be in evidence, nor may genuine repentance be apparent at the time of the hearing. What then? In such cases it would be necessary for the responsible overseers to expel the unrepentant wrongdoer from the congregation, thus denying him fellowship with Jehovah's clean congregation. This would be done to protect other members of the congregation from the bad influence of the wrongdoer, safeguarding the moral and spiritual cleanness of the congregation and protecting its

good name. (Compare Deuteronomy 21:20, 21; 22:23, 24.) This is what the apostle Paul did when he became aware of the shameful conduct of a member of the congregation in Corinth. (1 Cor. 5:11-13) Also, this same apostle reports on the disfellowshipping of others who rebelled against the truth in the first century.—1 Tim. 1:20.

IF THE DECISION IS TO DISFELLOWSHIP

When a judicial committee handling a case of wrongdoing reaches the conclusion that the unrepentant person should be disfellowshipped, how should they deal with him?

It is appropriate for the committee to speak with him and let him know of their decision to disfellowship him from the congregation. They clearly state the Scriptural reason(s) for the disfellowshipping action. When informing the wrongdoer of their decision, the judicial committee should tell him that if he believes that a serious error in judgment has been made and he wishes to appeal the decision of the committee, he may do so by writing a letter clearly stating his reasons for the appeal. He will be allowed seven days for doing this. If such written appeal is received, the body of elders should arrange for an appeal committee to rehear the case. They may use local elders or elders from nearby congregations; they should be men who are experienced and qualified. The body of elders should request one of the traveling overseers to suggest who might serve on the appeal committee. Every effort should be made to conduct the appeal within one week after the written appeal is received. If there is an appeal, announcement of the disfellowshipping will be held in abeyance. In the meantime the accused person will be restricted from commenting and

praying at meetings or enjoying special privileges of service.

If the wrongdoer does not indicate that he wishes to appeal, the judicial committee should explain to him the need for repentance and what steps he can take toward being reinstated in due time. This would be both helpful and kind, with the hope that he will change his ways and in time qualify to return to Jehovah's organization.—2 Cor. 2:6, 7.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF DISFELLOWSHIPPING

When it becomes necessary to remove an unrepentant wrongdoer from the congregation, a brief announcement is made, simply stating that the person has been disfellowshipped. There is no need to say more. This will alert faithful members of the congregation to stop associating with that person.—1 Cor. 5:11.

UNBAPTIZED PUBLISHERS WHO ARE WRONGDOERS

What of individuals who, as unbaptized publishers, have shared in the field service with the congregation and perhaps have enrolled in the Theocratic Ministry School, but who have now become involved in serious wrongdoing? Since they are not recognized members of the congregation, they could not be formally expelled therefrom. However, it may be that they do not fully understand the Bible's standards, and kind counsel may help them to make straight paths for their feet.

If an unbaptized wrongdoer is still unrepentant after two elders have met with him and tried to help him, then it becomes necessary to inform the congregation. A brief announcement is made that the person is no longer recognized as an unbaptized publisher. (1 Cor. 15:33) The congregation will

then view the wrongdoer as a person of the world. No field service reports would be accepted from such a person.

REINSTATEMENT

A disfellowshipped person may be reinstated in the congregation when he gives clear evidence of repentance, demonstrating that he has abandoned his sinful course of conduct and is desirous of having a good relationship with Jehovah and his organization. The elders are careful to allow sufficient time, perhaps many months, a year or even longer, for the disfellowshipped person to prove that his profession of repentance is genuine. When the body of elders receives a written plea for reinstatement, the original judicial committee that disfellowshipped the person should, if possible, be the committee that speaks with that individual, evaluating the evidence and works of godly repentance on his part, and decides whether to reinstate him at that time or not.

If the person requesting reinstatement was disfellowshipped by another congregation, the local judicial committee may consider the person's plea. Thereafter, the local judicial committee will communicate with the body of elders of the congregation that disfellowshipped the individual, giving them their recommendation. However, the decision to reinstate is made by a judicial committee of the congregation that took the disfellowshipping action.

When the judicial committee is convinced that the disfellowshipped person is genuinely repentant and should be reinstated, an announcement of the reinstatement is made, mentioning also any restrictions that apply until the person has regained a measure of spiritual strength.

Elders are acquainted with the procedure to follow in handling pleas for reinstatement by those disfellowshipped from the congregation. Before any decision can be made in such cases, they have to weigh the various factors that apply.

In dealing with one (adult or minor) who had been an unbaptized publisher and became an unrepentant wrongdoer but who now wishes to renew his association with the congregation and become a publisher again, two elders meeting with him should weigh all the factors. If he has a good attitude, a Bible study may be held with him. If he progresses spiritually and eventually qualifies, then a brief announcement can be made that he is again recognized as an unbaptized publisher.

DISASSOCIATION

The term *disassociation* applies to the action taken by a person who, although being a baptized member of the congregation, deliberately repudiates his Christian standing, rejecting the congregation and stating that he no longer wants to be recognized or known as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. As a *disassociated* person, his situation before Jehovah is far different from that of an *inactive* Christian who, having grown weak spiritually, no longer shares in the field ministry. Such an *inactive* person may have failed to study God's Word regularly, or his zeal for serving Jehovah may have cooled off due to his experiencing personal problems or persecution. (1 Cor. 11:30; Rom. 14:1) The elders, as well as other concerned members of the congregation, will continue rendering appropriate spiritual assistance to the *inactive* brother. (1 Thess. 5:14; Rom. 15:1; Heb. 12:12) However, the person who has *disassociated himself* by repudiating

the faith and deliberately abandoning Jehovah's worship is viewed in the same way as one who has been disfellowshipped. A brief announcement would be made to inform the congregation that the person has voluntarily disassociated himself from the congregation.

Concerning those who renounced their Christian faith in his day, the apostle John wrote: "They went out from us, but they were not of our sort; for if they had been of our sort, they would have remained with us." (1 John 2:19) Also, a person might renounce his place in the Christian congregation by his actions, such as by becoming part of a secular organization the objective of which is contrary to the Bible and, hence, is under judgment by Jehovah God. (Compare Revelation 19:17-21; Isaiah 2:4.) So if a person who is a Christian chooses to join those who are disapproved by God, it would be fitting for the congregation to acknowledge by a brief announcement that he has *disassociated himself* and is no longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Such a person would be viewed in the same way as a disfellowshipped person.

CASES INVOLVING MINOR CHILDREN

Serious wrongdoing on the part of minor children who are baptized members of the congregation should be reported to the elders. When the elders investigate and handle cases of serious sins where a minor is involved, it would be good if the dedicated parents of the young person would be present and cooperate with the elders acting in a judicial capacity, not attempting to shield the erring child from necessary disciplinary action. Just as in dealing with adult offenders, elders serving on the judicial committee where a minor is involved would endeavor to restore the wrong-

doer. However, if the young person is unrepentant, disfellowshipping action would be taken.

MARKING DISORDERLY ONES

In his second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul expressed a warning concerning certain ones who walk disorderly and who, if accorded full acceptance as being of good standing in the congregation, could be exerting an unhealthy influence upon others. Paul admonished the Thessalonian Christians "to withdraw from every brother walking disorderly and not according to the tradition you received from us." (2 Thess. 3:6) He further clarified that statement by writing: "But if anyone is not obedient to our word through this letter, keep this one marked, stop associating with him, that he may become ashamed. And yet do not be considering him as an enemy, but continue admonishing him as a brother."—2 Thess. 3:14, 15.

Occasionally, in the congregation today, there may be those who, although not known to be guilty of practicing a grave sin for which they could be expelled, nevertheless continue to display flagrant disregard for theocratic order.

After giving repeated admonitions to such individuals and finding that they persist in disregarding well-established Bible principles, the elders may decide to speak to the congregation and give appropriate admonitions concerning such disorderly conduct. Even though no name has been mentioned, individual members of the congregation would then be obliged to 'mark' a person, or persons, of that kind, just as Paul advised the brothers in Thessalonica. If the disorderly one should still persist in his wayward course of conduct, he remains in grave danger of eventually committing a serious sin that could lead

to his being disfellowshipped. On the other hand, the loving concern and firm stand of faithful members of the congregation could indeed move him to shame and repentance. When it is clearly evident that the individual has abandoned his disorderly course, it would no longer be necessary to treat him as a "marked" individual.

JEHOVAH BLESSES UNITED CLEAN WORSHIP

All who are associated with the congregation of God today can certainly rejoice in the rich spiritual estate Jehovah has given to his people. Our spiritual pastures have indeed been made fruitful and we have been provided with an abundance of refreshing waters of truth. We have experienced Jehovah's protective care through his theocratic arrangement under the headship of Christ. (Ps. 23; Isa. 32:1, 2) The spiritual paradise in which we find ourselves has given us a feeling of security in these troublesome last days.

By our maintaining fine conduct as ministers of God's good news and by our example of Christian unity, the Kingdom truth will continue to shine forth through us. With Jehovah's blessing we will have the joy of seeing many more people come to know Jehovah and join us in fully accomplishing the ministry.

CHAPTER 13

A WORLDWIDE ASSOCIATION OF BROTHERS

AFTER dealing exclusively with one man, Abraham, and his descendants the Israelites for a period of 2,000 years, Jehovah God "turned his attention to the nations to take out of them a

people for his name.” (Acts 15:14) That people for Jehovah’s name would be his witnesses, gathered together in unity of thought and action regardless of their physical location on earth. This uniting of a people for God’s service out of all the nations would result from the fulfillment of Jesus’ command to his disciples to “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.” —Matt. 28:19, 20.

In turning to Jehovah in dedication, you have become a disciple of Jesus Christ and have come into a modern-day worldwide association of Christian brothers. (1 Pet. 2:17) You have come to love and respect your Christian companions in the local congregation even though some of them may be of a different race or nationality. It may well be that some of your closest companions in the congregation are persons who formerly would have been socially unacceptable to you due to basic racial, cultural, educational or economic differences. Still, here we all are within the close bonds of a society where unhypocritical brotherly love has created an unbreakable bond of fellowship that far excels any other relationships we have had in the past socially, religiously or even among our blood relatives.—Mark 10:29, 30; Col. 3:14; 1 Pet. 1:22.

ADJUSTMENTS IN THINKING

If some have had difficulty in breaking free from racial, political, social or other ingrained prejudices, they can just think of the early Jewish Christians who had to break free from their religious prejudices against people of all other nations. Recall that when Peter was given instructions to go to the home of the Roman centu-

tion Cornelius, Jehovah kindly prepared him for the assignment. Please read the entire account at Acts chapter 10.

In a vision Peter was told to kill and eat certain animals that were ceremonially unclean for Jews even to touch. When Peter objected, a voice from heaven told him: "You stop calling defiled the things God has cleansed." (Acts 10:15) It took this divine intervention to condition Peter's mind for the assignment he was about to receive, namely, to go and visit a man of the nations. But when he obeyed Jehovah's direction he declared: "You well know how unlawful it is for a Jew to join himself to or approach a man of another race; and yet God has shown me I should call no man defiled or unclean. Hence I came, really without objection, when I was sent for." (Acts 10:28, 29) Thereafter Peter witnessed the evidence of Jehovah's approval of Cornelius and his household. Although sometime later Peter inconsistently withdrew from eating and associating with Gentile believers when some visiting Jewish Christians were present, he and other faithful Jewish Christians worked at maintaining unity within the body of the Christian congregation. —Gal. 2:11-14; 1 Pet. 3:10-12.

Likewise it was necessary for Saul of Tarsus to humble himself, associate with Christian overseers who were formerly considered socially far inferior to him as a highly educated Pharisee and even take directions from them. (Acts 4:13; Gal. 1:13-20; Phil. 3:4-11) Also, we can only imagine the adjustments that must have taken place in the thinking of such people as Sergius Paulus, Dionysius, Damaris, Philemon, Onesimus and others as they accepted the good news and

became disciples of Jesus Christ.—Acts 13:6-12; 17:22, 33, 34; Philem. 8-20.

MAINTAINING OUR INTERNATIONAL UNITY

No doubt the love of the brothers and the sisters in your local congregation helped to draw you to Jehovah. This was something you likely had not experienced previously in association with other groups of people. You observed the unmistakable mark of love that characterizes true disciples of Jesus Christ. (John 13:35) But then how much more you came to appreciate Jehovah's dealings with mankind today when you observed that this love existing among the local group of God's people was only a taste of the love on the part of the whole international association of Jehovah's people! You became a witness to and a participant in the fulfillment of Bible prophecy about the gathering of people together in the last days to worship Jehovah in peace and unity. Why not turn to and read that prophecy in Micah 4:1-5.

In view of all the divisive factors that separate men on earth today, who would ever have thought it possible to unite a people "out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues"? (Rev. 7:9; Matt. 24:31) Consider the educational differences between people of a modern, highly technological society and those who have held to ancient tribal customs and superstitions up until the present time. Look at the religious rivalries among people of the same race and nationality. With nationalism coming to the fore, people have become more divided in a political sense than ever before. And then if you consider the vast economic differences between groups of people everywhere, along with countless other divisive factors, the uniting of individuals out of all these

nations, factions, groups and classes in an unbreakable bond of love and peace is a miracle that could be performed only by the Almighty God.—Zech. 4:6.

But such is a reality, and when you become a dedicated minister in the congregation, you are a participant in it. Your faith has brought you into a blessed estate that can be described as a spiritual paradise. Benefiting from that paradise, you also have the responsibility to help maintain it. This is done by heeding the apostle's words at Galatians 6:10, where he wrote: "Really, then, as long as we have time favorable for it, let us work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith." Building and maintaining the spiritual paradise also means "doing nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind considering that the others are superior to you, keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just your own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others." (Phil. 2:3, 4) As we train ourselves to look at our Christian brothers and sisters as Jehovah views them and not according to what they are in the flesh—not fixing attention on human imperfections that will eventually disappear as we all continue to put on the new personality—we will be able to enjoy peaceful and happy relationships with our brothers and our sisters.

CONCERN FOR ONE ANOTHER

As the apostle Paul so well illustrated at 1 Corinthians 12:14-26, members of the body, belonging to one another, have the same care for one another. So, what affects one part, or segment, of the organization affects all of God's people. The fact that we may be separated by great distances from some of the members of

the worldwide brotherhood does not mean we are less concerned with their welfare. If some are being persecuted, the rest are greatly distressed; and if some of our brothers are suffering want or have become victims of disaster or the effects of war or civil strife, the rest are anxious to find ways to be of assistance both spiritually and in a material way.—Compare 2 Corinthians 1:8-11.

All of us should pray for our brothers every day. There are brothers who are facing trials by temptation and inducements to do what is bad. The sufferings of some of our brothers may come to be publicly known, but with others the opposition they face daily from workmates and from within divided households is relatively unknown. (1 Thess. 2:14; Matt. 10:35, 36) This is the concern of all because we are one worldwide association of brothers. (1 Pet. 5:9) Also, there are those working hard in Jehovah's service, taking the lead in the preaching work and in overseeing congregations. And there are those charged with oversight of the worldwide work of the brothers. All of them need our prayers, and by prayer we demonstrate our genuine interest and the love we have for our brothers even when there may not be anything else we can personally do to be of assistance.—Eph. 1:16; 1 Thess. 1:2, 3; 5:25.

With all the turmoil on earth during these last days and the resulting emergencies, as well as disasters such as earthquakes, floods or famines occurring frequently, Christian witnesses of Jehovah must be prepared to come to the aid of one another. This may mean, at times, conducting extensive campaigns of relief and arranging for large amounts of material assistance. First-century Christians set the example in this regard. Remembering Jesus' own counsel, the disciples

in other nations gladly sent material gifts to the brothers in Judea during a time of famine. (Acts 11:27-30; 20:35) The apostle Paul was able to organize the preparation of the gift for relief so that everything was carried out in an orderly manner. (2 Cor. 9:1-15) In modern times when our brothers become victims of circumstances and are in need of material relief, the organization and individual Christians are quick to respond and supply what is needed.

SET APART TO DO JEHOVAH'S WILL

The worldwide association of brothers has been organized so as to accomplish fully its ministry in doing Jehovah's will. At this particular time his will is that the good news of the Kingdom be preached in all the earth for a witness to all the nations. (Matt. 24:14) While we are doing this work, it is Jehovah's will that we always conduct ourselves according to his high moral standards. (1 Pet. 1:14-16) In order to get Jehovah's work done, all of us should be willing to subject ourselves to one another and work for the advancement of the good news. (Eph. 5:21) This is not a time for seeking our own personal interests but a time as never before to put God's Kingdom first in our life. (Matt. 6:33) Keeping this one thought in mind and working in unity with one another for the sake of the good news will bring joyful satisfaction now and the sure hope of everlasting blessings to come.

Jehovah's Witnesses are truly a distinct people, set apart from the rest of mankind as a clean people, zealous in service to our God. (Titus 2:14) We are not distinct and separate in such a way as to call attention to ourselves. Rather, it is made obvious to all that our worship of Jehovah is what has made us different. Not only do

we work shoulder to shoulder with our brothers around the earth but we even speak the one language of truth and unitedly act in harmony with the truth we speak. This was foretold by Jehovah's prophet Zephaniah, who wrote: "For then I shall give to peoples the change to a pure language, in order for them all to call upon the name of Jehovah, in order to serve him shoulder to shoulder."—Zeph. 3:9.

Then Zephaniah goes on to describe the unified, clean, worldwide brotherhood that has become a reality today: "As regards the remaining ones of Israel, they will do no unrighteousness, nor speak a lie, nor will there be found in their mouths a tricky tongue; for they themselves will feed and actually lie stretched out, and there will be no one making them tremble." (Zeph. 3:13) Having gained an understanding of Jehovah's Word of truth and having made over their mind and conformed their way of life to Jehovah's standards, Jehovah's Witnesses are able to work in unity and accomplish what appears to be impossible in the eyes of those who view matters from the imperfect human standpoint. Yes, the worldwide Christian association of brothers is indeed a distinct people, God's people, bringing honor to him in all the earth.

The worldwide association of Jehovah's Witnesses exemplifies what Jesus commanded his disciples and what he pointed out as the sure identifying mark of his true disciples. Jesus said: "I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:34, 35) Those seeking to know Jehovah have this convincing evidence be-

fore them as they observe what is taking place among his people. How happy we all are to be a part of Jehovah's organized people with the privilege of carrying on a glorious ministry in this time of the end! By continuing to clothe ourselves with love and identifying ourselves with this distinguishing mark, we can be confident that we will have many joyous privileges of service within the modern-day worldwide association of brothers.

CHAPTER 14

ENDURING WITH LIFE IN VIEW

WHILE ministering in Lystra during his first missionary journey, the apostle Paul was set upon by Jews, stoned and dragged outside the city as dead. But he recovered and continued his missionary work, undaunted by that painful and trying experience. Later he returned to Lystra and encouraged the brothers to stand firm in the faith. Referring to his previous experience in Lystra along with other trials he had endured, he said: "We must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations." (Acts 14:19-22) He maintained a positive attitude. What an excellent example for us today!

How could Paul feel that way about suffering severe persecutions? It was because he was enduring with a purpose. He was enduring with life in view. When he became a Christian he knew that it would not be an easy way of life. He himself had formerly persecuted Christians and had delivered some of them up to death. (Acts 22:4; Gal. 1:13) He was familiar with Jesus' own words telling his disciples that they would be hated and persecuted. (Matt. 10:22; John 15:20)

But he was also aware of what Jesus had said regarding the outcome to those who would successfully endure trials. Jesus said: "He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved." Or, according to Luke's account: "By endurance on your part you will acquire your souls [future lives, footnote in 1971 edition]."—Matt. 24:13; Luke 21:19.

Yes, Paul was determined to prove faithful to the One who had called him to be an apostle. He knew that there was a reward in store for him and he knew that Jehovah would sustain him in every trial encountered in the quest for life, as long as he remained faithful. (Gal. 1:15, 16; 2 Tim. 4:6, 7; Rom. 8:35-39) His course of conduct and the outcome for him provide strong encouragement for us today to remain faithful in fulfilling our ministry. The outcome can be the same for us as it was for Paul.

WHY TRIALS ARE INCREASING

It may be that you have been in the truth for many years and, if so, you certainly know what it means to endure tests of your integrity. Even if you have only recently come to know Jehovah and have served him for a short period of time, you also can testify to the fact that Satan the Devil is bent on opposing anyone who submits to Jehovah's sovereignty as His dedicated witness. (2 Tim. 3:12) But whether you have endured much or little in Jehovah's service there is no reason for you to become fearful or discouraged, since you have Jehovah's sure promise that he will sustain you and reward your endurance with deliverance and future life.—Heb. 13:5, 6; Rev. 2:10.

All of us may yet expect to be subjected to

particularly difficult trials during these remaining last days of Satan's old order. The reason is expressed at Revelation 12:12, which says: "On this account be glad, you heavens and you who reside in them! Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time." Yes, since the war in heaven that followed the establishing of God's Kingdom in 1914 Satan has no longer been permitted access to Jehovah's heavens. He was hurled down to the earth where his wicked deeds have been confined since that time. The increased woe on the earth since 1914, including intensified persecution of Jehovah's dedicated servants, is a result of Satan's anger and it gives proof that we are living in the last days of his wicked rule over mankind. —Rev. 12:1-12.

Infuriated over his debased condition and knowing that his time is short, Satan, with the aid of his demons, makes every effort to interfere with the preaching and teaching work of Jehovah's people. This brings Jehovah's servants into the battle lines of a spiritual warfare described at Ephesians 6:12 as "a wrestling, not against blood and flesh, but against the governments, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places." That warfare reaches its culmination during the great tribulation now near at hand. If we are to come off victorious on Jehovah's side, we must not let up in the fight but keep our spiritual armor intact and push ahead in the all-out war against every wicked machination of the Devil. (Eph. 6:10-17) This calls for great endurance on our part as we keep on with the ministry entrusted to our care. But just

what is involved in this and how will we be able to endure?

CULTIVATING ENDURANCE

Endurance means "the ability to withstand hardship, adversity or stress." In a spiritual sense it refers to the quality of firmness in doing what is right in the face of hardship, opposition, persecution or other factors designed to turn us away from our determined course of integrity to God. Christian endurance must be cultivated. This takes time. Our ability to endure increases as we make spiritual progress. By enduring minor tests of our faith from the very beginning of our Christian career and by remaining firm in our dedication, we become stronger so as to endure more difficult trials that are sure to come later on. We cannot afford to wait until major trials come along before making it our determination to stand firm in the faith. Our firm decision must be made before the test comes. Pointing out that endurance is to be cultivated along with other godly qualities, Peter wrote: "Yes, for this very reason, by your contributing in response all earnest effort, supply to your faith virtue, to your virtue knowledge, to your knowledge self-control, to your self-control endurance, to your endurance godly devotion, to your godly devotion brotherly affection, to your brotherly affection love."—2 Pet. 1:5-7; 1 Tim. 6:11.

The importance of cultivating endurance was called to our attention by James when he wrote: "Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials, knowing as you do that this tested quality of your faith works out endurance. But let endurance have its work complete, that you may be complete and sound in all respects,

not lacking in anything.” (Jas. 1:2-4) James says we should welcome trials that test our faith and be joyous about them because they help us to work out endurance. Have you looked at matters that way? Then James shows that endurance itself has a work to perform in perfecting our Christian personality and making us fully acceptable to God. Yes, our endurance is built up day by day as we face and overcome trials large and small. Endurance, in turn, produces other desirable qualities that we need. If we beg off from enduring minor trials that come along, we will never be able to face the larger, more important tests of our faith.—Luke 16:10.

Only when our endurance is perfected can it complete its work of producing the godly qualities that make us pleasing to God and move him to grant us the reward of everlasting life. So James further stated: “Happy is the man that keeps on enduring trial, because on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life, which Jehovah promised to those who continue loving him.” (Jas. 1:12) Yes, it is with life in view that we endure. Without endurance we cannot stay in the truth. If we succumb to worldly pressures, we will be coerced back into the world. Without endurance we would not have Jehovah’s spirit and could not therefore produce its fruitage in our life.

If we are to keep on enduring in these difficult times, we need to cultivate the proper attitude toward suffering as Christians. Recall that James wrote, “Consider it all joy.” (Jas. 1:2) That may not be so easy to do inasmuch as various forms of physical suffering or mental anguish could be involved. But remember that future life is what is at stake. An experience of the apostles helps us to see how we can rejoice in present sufferings.

The account is in the book of Acts and reads: "They summoned the apostles, flogged them, and ordered them to stop speaking upon the basis of Jesus' name, and let them go. These, therefore, went their way from before the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name." (Acts 5:40, 41) They understood that their suffering was proof that they had been obedient to Jesus' command and that they had Jehovah's approval. Years later, when writing his first letter, Peter commented on the value of such suffering for righteousness' sake. Please read what he had to say at 1 Peter 4:12-16.

Another experience involves Paul and Silas. When carrying on their missionary work in Philippi, they were arrested and charged with disturbing the city and publishing unlawful customs. As a result, they were severely beaten and thrown into prison. The Bible account tells us that, while they were yet in prison with their wounds unattended, "about the middle of the night Paul and Silas were praying and praising God with song; yes, the prisoners were hearing them." (Acts 16:16-25) Paul and his companion rightly viewed their sufferings for Christ not only as an evidence of their own integrity before God and men but also as a means of giving a further witness to those who might be inclined to listen to the good news. The future life of others was also involved. Later the jailer and his household listened and became disciples. (Acts 16:26-34) Paul and Silas trusted in Jehovah's power and his willingness to sustain them in their sufferings. They were not disappointed.

Today, also, Jehovah has provided all that we need to sustain us during times of trial. He wants

us to endure. He has given us his inspired Word to equip us with accurate knowledge concerning his purpose. This builds up our faith. We have opportunity to associate with fellow believers in the study of God's Word as well as in performing our sacred service. We also have the privilege of maintaining a close association with Jehovah himself through prayer. He listens to our expressions of praise and our earnest requests for help so that we can maintain a clean standing before him. (Phil. 4:13) And not to be overlooked is the strength derived from contemplating the hope set before us.—Matt. 24:13; Rev. 21:1-4.

ENDURING VARIOUS TRIALS

The trials we must endure today are much the same as those faced by the early disciples of Jesus Christ. In modern times Jehovah's Witnesses have suffered verbal and physical abuse at the hands of misinformed or misguided opposers. Just as in the days of the apostles, much of the opposition has been instigated by fanatical religious elements whose false teachings and practices are exposed by the Kingdom good news. (Acts 17:5-9, 13) At times Jehovah's people have found relief by claiming legal rights that have been guaranteed by political governments. (Acts 22:25; 25:11) However, rulers themselves have also imposed official bans on the good news and have endeavored to put an end to our Christian ministry. (Ps. 2:1-3) When such circumstances arise we boldly follow the example of the faithful apostles and continue to "obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

As the spirit of nationalism has continued to grow throughout the earth in recent years, greater pressures have been brought to bear

upon preachers of the good news to abandon their God-given ministry. All of God's servants have come to appreciate more fully the warning at Revelation 14:9-12 concerning the worship of "the wild beast and its image." They realize the significance of John's words: "Here is where it means endurance for the holy ones, those who observe the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."

Tests that come because of wars, revolutions or outright persecution and official bans may make it impossible for you to carry on Christian worship in a fully organized manner. Circumstances may develop making it impossible to hold large congregation meetings. Contact with the branch office may temporarily be broken off. Visits by circuit overseers may be interrupted. New publications may not arrive. If any of these things happen to you, what should you do?

The answer is: Do whatever you can, and as much as you can, in the way of pure worship under the circumstances. Personal study should be possible. Usually small groups of brothers can meet for study in homes. Publications studied in the past and the Bible itself can be used as a basis for meetings. Do not become excited or worried. Generally, in a short time some form of communication with responsible brothers will be established. The Governing Body seeks to find ways of getting in touch with the brothers.

But even if you find yourself isolated from all your Christian brothers, keep in mind that you are not isolated from Jehovah and his Son, Jesus Christ. Your hope can remain firm. Jehovah can still hear your prayers and he can strengthen

you with his spirit. Look to him for guidance. Remember that you are a servant of Jehovah and a disciple of Jesus Christ, and as opportunities to witness to others open up, make good use of them. Jehovah will bless your efforts, and others may soon join you in worship.—Phil. 1:27-30; 4:6, 7; 2 Tim. 4:16-18; Acts 4:13-31; 5:27-42.

Even though, like the apostles and others, you should be faced with the very threat of death, put strong trust in “the God who raises up the dead.” (2 Cor. 1:8-10) Your faith in his provision of the resurrection can help you to endure even the most severe opposition. (Luke 21:19) Christ Jesus set the example; he knew that his faithfulness under test would strengthen others to endure. You, too, can be a source of strength to your brothers in a similar way.—John 16:33; Heb. 12:2, 3; 1 Pet. 2:21.

Besides persecution or direct opposition to our ministry, there are many other difficult situations you may have to endure. Although having the freedom to preach openly, some have become discouraged and have stopped serving Jehovah because of the apathy of people in their territory. Others have had to cope with their own physical illnesses or otherwise endure limitations imposed by their frail human bodies. Apparently the apostle Paul had to endure a weakness in the flesh that interfered with his service or made it more difficult at times. (2 Cor. 12:7) Our human imperfections and those of others may pose particularly difficult circumstances to endure. Imperfections may show up in personality conflicts with fellow Christians. But such obstacles, too, can be overcome and successfully endured by those who adhere to the counsel of

Jehovah's Word.—Ezek. 2:3-5; 1 Cor. 9:27; 13:8; Col. 3:12-14; 1 Pet. 4:8.

STEADFAST IN ACCOMPLISHING OUR MINISTRY

We must always hold fast to the one whom Jehovah has appointed as Head of the congregation, Christ Jesus. (Compare Colossians 2:18, 19.) We need to work closely with "the faithful and discreet slave," the Governing Body and those appointed as overseers. All of these are being used by Christ Jesus to accomplish his Father's will. We need to make full use of the privilege of prayer. Remember, not even prison walls or solitary confinement can cut off our communication with the Supreme Judge of all the earth.

With determination and endurance let us fully accomplish our ministry, persevering in the work that the resurrected Jesus Christ set out for all his disciples: "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." (Matt. 28:19, 20) Like him, let us keep the Kingdom hope and the prospect of everlasting life clearly before us and endure. (Heb. 12:2) It is our privilege as baptized disciples of Christ to share in carrying out his prophecy, which has a major fulfillment at this "conclusion of the system of things," namely: "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." (Matt. 24: 3, 14) Having applied ourselves wholeheartedly in that work during this period of time, what a joy it will be to enter into an eternity of life in serving Jehovah in his righteous new world!

APPENDIX

“Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins.” This was the advice Peter gave to a multitude of conscience-stricken Jews and circumcised proselytes when they asked: “Men, brothers, what shall we do?” It was Pentecost of 33 C.E. and a large crowd had gathered to investigate the phenomenal experience of a small group of Jesus’ disciples who had just received the outpouring of holy spirit. Peter explained to those inquirers the meaning of what they had seen and heard, and as they came to realize the extent of their guilt in connection with the murder of the true Messiah, “they were stabbed to the heart” and began seeking ways to obtain God’s forgiveness. —Acts 2:1-40.

Those that Peter addressed that day were already professed worshipers of Jehovah God. They claimed a relationship with him as members of the nation of natural Israel and as adherents to the Law of Moses. Some of them may have been persons who had responded earlier to the preaching of John the Baptizer and had been baptized in symbol of repentance for sins committed against the Law covenant. (Matt. 21:23-26) But more recently they may have been influenced by the Jewish religious leaders to reject the true Messiah, Jesus, and to go along with the conspiracy to put him to death. (Matt. 27:15-23; Acts 2:36; 3:13-18) Now repentant due to what they had seen and heard on that momentous day, they threw themselves upon God’s mercy. They responded to Peter’s exhortation, repented of their sins committed against Jehovah’s Anointed and were

baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. (Acts 2:41) After that "they continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles."—Acts 2:42.

The situation with most people today is entirely different. Even adherents to Christendom's religions have not come to know Jehovah as the one true and living God. (Ps. 83:18; Mark 12:29) Instead, many nominal Christians worship a triune god, not unlike people of the first century to whom Paul wrote: "You were at that particular time [before coming into the truth] without Christ, alienated from the state of Israel and strangers to the covenants of the promise, and you had no hope and were without God in the world." (Eph. 2:12) Therefore most persons find, upon making a careful examination of the teachings of the Bible, that their previous religious training did not bring them into a relationship with the true God. In fact, it had not taught them to serve Jehovah at all.

Perhaps this has been your experience too. Now, however, you have taken in accurate knowledge and have come to know and love Jehovah and his Son, Jesus Christ. (John 17:3) You have been drawn to Jehovah and, in appreciation for what he has done for you, you want to serve him, bringing honor to his name and helping others to come to know and love him also.

In your study you have been taught about Jehovah himself and about Jesus Christ. You have learned a number of basic Bible teachings and have seen the need to reject God-dishonoring doctrines that have no basis in Scripture but, rather, stem from the satanic false religion of Babylon the Great. You have been taught to recognize and adhere to Jehovah's righteous moral standards that are required of all of his true

servants. You have come to recognize Jehovah's matchless universal organization and have come to be associated with its visible part.

The information that follows in this section will serve as a review to help you examine yourself regarding your understanding of Jehovah's purposes and the opportunities set before you to serve him. The questions provide the basis for the congregation elders to have some helpful discussions with you. In reviewing these questions with you, the elders will help you to determine whether you have become qualified to be baptized in water as a symbol of your dedication to God. If there are points that are not clear to you, or if it is found that you have not as yet brought your life into harmony with Jehovah's righteous standards, the elders will be most happy to render the needed personal assistance so that you can qualify to get baptized at a later time.

As you review this information take time to meditate on each scripture so that you will be able to express in your own words how the text applies to the subject being considered. Also, look up the references that are cited but not quoted, so that you can benefit from this additional information. Jehovah is sure to bless your earnest endeavors to become fully acquainted with his loving requirements with a view to making an acceptable dedication of your life to him.

[NOTE TO CONGREGATION ELDERS: The elders can do much to help a newly interested person advance in the truth. Endeavor to get acquainted with him as soon as possible after he starts having a regular home Bible study. Close cooperation between the elders and the one conducting the study will help the new one to become a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ.

As the Bible student makes good progress, he will conform his way of life to Jehovah's righteous standards and,

according to his personal circumstances, attend congregation meetings regularly. In time, he may meet with two elders to determine if he qualifies to be an unbaptized publisher. If he qualifies, he may then obtain a copy of *Organized to Accomplish Our Ministry*.

When he makes known to one of the elders his desire to be baptized, he should begin reviewing material in the Appendix of *Organized to Accomplish Our Ministry*, starting on page 175. It should be pointed out that all the questions can be answered on the basis of the quoted Scripture texts. Additional references give further Scriptural proof or other related background information. Encourage the Bible student to look up and read as many of the cited scriptures as he can, since these will help him to round out his understanding of the answers so as to be able to express these in his own words.

After the person requesting baptism has had time to study over the designated information, the presiding overseer will make arrangements for some of the elders to review the questions and answers with him. The four parts can be covered in three sessions of about one hour each, Parts III and IV being covered together in the third session. Where possible, a different elder should be assigned to handle each of the three review sessions. It would be good to open and close each session with prayer.

The elders will make sure that a person being baptized has acquired a *reasonable* understanding of basic Bible teachings. Additionally, they will want to ascertain whether the prospective minister qualifies in other ways to be accepted into the Christian congregation as one fully dedicated to Jehovah. If the person does not understand primary Bible teachings, or if he has not as yet conformed his life to Scriptural principles, the elders will arrange for him to receive the necessary personal assistance so as to qualify for baptism at a later time. Others may need to be given time to gain more experience in the field service. It will be up to the elders to use discretion in apportioning the hour or so spent in each session so as to discern fully whether the baptismal candidate is ready to take this important step. Although more time may be spent on certain questions and less on others, *all* the questions should be reviewed.

The elders assigned to help a baptismal candidate will meet after the third session and decide whether or not the person should be accepted for baptism. If for some reason it is determined that he is not ready for baptism, arrangements will be made for the person to receive needed assistance so that he may qualify later.

Elders will take into consideration the background, abil-

ity and other circumstances of each baptismal candidate. Our interest is in those whose hearts are turned to Jehovah and who have grasped the sense of fundamental Bible truths. With your loving assistance, those being baptized will be encouraged and helped to enter into the Christian ministry, adequately prepared to accomplish that important assignment.]

QUESTIONS FOR THOSE DESIRING TO BE BAPTIZED

PART I ELEMENTARY BIBLE TEACHINGS—Heb. 5:11-6:3

During your study of the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses you have become acquainted with the pattern of truth and very likely find it is quite different from what you formerly believed. What you have learned has brought you great spiritual refreshment and has no doubt set before you the hope of future life and blessings on a Paradise earth under God's Kingdom. Your faith in his Word has been strengthened, and through association with his organized people you have already experienced many blessings. You have come to appreciate how Jehovah is dealing with his chosen people today.—Zech. 8:23.

Now, as you prepare for water baptism in symbol of your personal dedication to Jehovah God, you will benefit from a review of elementary Bible teachings conducted by the congregation elders. If you do not understand some things so as to be able to give a reasonable answer to those who may ask or to persons you will approach in field service, the elders will kindly help you to improve your understanding.—1 Pet. 3:15.

Your desire should be in harmony with the words of the apostle Paul that we read at Hebrews 6:1-3: "For this reason, now that we have left the primary doctrine about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying a foundation again, namely, repentance from dead works, and faith toward

God, . . . the laying on of the hands, the resurrection of the dead and everlasting judgment. And this we will do, if God indeed permits.”

May Jehovah continue to bless all your endeavors to take in knowledge of him, and may he grant you the promised reward.—John 17:3.

The True God

(1) Who is the true God?

You well know today, and you must call back to your heart that Jehovah is the true God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. There is no other.—Deut. 4:39.

Jesus spoke these things, and, raising his eyes to heaven, he said: “Father, . . . this means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God.”—John 17:1-3.

This is what the true God, Jehovah, has said, . . . “I am Jehovah. That is my name.”—Isa. 42:5, 8.

For even though there are those who are called “gods,” whether in heaven or on earth, just as there are many “gods” and many “lords,” there is actually to us one God the Father, out of whom all things are, and we for him; and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are, and we through him.—1 Cor. 8:5, 6.

Additional references: Deuteronomy 4:35; Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 43:10-12.

(2) What are some of Jehovah’s outstanding qualities?

God is *love*.—1 John 4:8.

The Rock, perfect is his activity, for all his ways are *justice*. A God of faithfulness, with whom there is no injustice; righteous and upright is he.—Deut. 32:4.

O the depth of God’s riches and *wisdom* and knowledge! How unsearchable his judgments are and past tracing out his ways are!—Rom. 11:33.

Alas, O Sovereign Lord Jehovah! Here you yourself have made the heavens and the earth by your great *power* and by your outstretched arm. The whole matter is not too wonderful for you yourself.—Jer. 32:17.

Additional references: Exodus 34:6; 2 Peter 3:9; Jeremiah 3:12; Psalm 90:2.

(3) What does it mean to give Jehovah exclusive devotion? Why is he alone deserving?

Jesus said to him [Satan]: "It is written, 'It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.'"—Luke 4:8.

No one can slave for two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stick to the one and despise the other. You cannot slave for God and for Riches.—Matt. 6:24.

You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created.—Rev. 4:11.

Additional references: Exodus 20:4, 5; Isaiah 33:22; 42:8; Acts 17:28.

(4) Why is it important for us to use God's personal name in worship?

Everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved.—Rom. 10:13.

For all the peoples, for their part, will walk each one in the name of its god; but we, for our part, shall walk in the name of Jehovah our God to time indefinite, even forever.—Mic. 4:5.

Additional references: Exodus 20:7; Psalm 91:14; Isaiah 12:4, 5; Joel 2:32; Acts 15:14.

(5) How will Jehovah God sanctify his name? How can we have a share in it?

I shall certainly magnify myself and sanctify myself and make myself known before the eyes of many nations; and they will have to know that I am Jehovah.—Ezek. 38:23.

O may they be ashamed and be disturbed for all times, and may they become abashed and perish; that people may know that you, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth.—Ps. 83:17, 18.

Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, that I may make a reply to him that is taunting me.—Prov. 27:11.

Additional references: Exodus 5:2; Psalm 2:2, 9; Ezekiel 36:16-24; 1 Peter 2:12.

(6) Why would it be wrong for us to make an image of God or attempt to worship him through the use of images?

You must not make for yourself a carved image, any form like anything that is in the heavens above or that is on the earth underneath or that is in the waters under the earth.

You must not bow down to them or be led to serve them, because I Jehovah your God am a God exacting exclusive devotion.—Deut. 5:8, 9.

You did not see any form on the day of Jehovah's speaking to you in Horeb.—Deut. 4:15.

God is a Spirit, and those worshiping him must worship with spirit and truth.—John 4:24.

We are walking by faith, not by sight.—2 Cor. 5:7.

Additional references: Psalm 115:4-8; Isaiah 42:8; Acts 17:29.

(7) Why should we endeavor to continue learning all we can about Jehovah? How can we do so?

Become imitators of God, as beloved children.—Eph. 5:1.

God proceeded to create the man in his image, in God's image he created him.—Gen. 1:27.

If you men had known me, you would have known my Father also; from this moment on you know him and have seen him. . . . He that has seen me has seen the Father also.—John 14:7-9.

His invisible qualities are clearly . . . perceived by the things made.—Rom. 1:20.

Additional references: John 1:18; Exodus 33:13; Jeremiah 22:15, 16; 1 John 4:8; compare 1 John 2:3-6.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) Has your study of the Bible caused you to reject certain false teachings about God? What are they? (b) Has the knowledge you now have about God moved you to want to serve him? What are you now doing to demonstrate your desire to serve Jehovah? (c) What will you need to do in order to continue building your appreciation for Jehovah?

Jesus Christ and the Ransom

(1) Who is Jesus Christ?

Peter said: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."—Matt. 16:16.

In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god. This one was in the beginning with God. So the Word became flesh and resided among us, and we had a view of his glory, a glory such as belongs to an only-begotten son from a father.—John 1:1, 2, 14.

Additional references: Luke 1:30-33; Colossians 1:15-17; Acts 2:36; 3:15; 5:31.

(2) What is his position in relation to Jehovah God?

I am going my way to the Father, because the Father is greater than I am.—John 14:28.

There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus.—1 Tim. 2:5.

Additional references: Philippians 2:5-11; John 14:10, 11; 1 Corinthians 11:3.

(3) Why did Jesus come to earth and die a sacrificial death?

The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many.—Matt. 20:28.

He beheld Jesus coming toward him, and he said: "See, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world!"—John 1:29.

Additional references: Hebrews 2:9, 14, 15; John 3:16; 18:37.

(4) Why do we need the ransom? How does it affect you personally?

Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned.—Rom. 5:12.

By means of him we have the release by ransom through the blood of that one, yes, the forgiveness of our trespasses.—Eph. 1:7.

Just as in Adam all are dying, so also in the Christ all will be made alive.—1 Cor. 15:22.

For the love the Christ has compels us, because this is what we have judged, that one man died for all; so, then, all had died; and he died for all that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised up.—2 Cor. 5:14, 15.

Additional references: Romans 3:23; Psalm 51:5; Galatians 1:4; 1 John 4:11.

(5) How does Christ return and for what purpose?

The Son of man is destined to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will recompense each one according to his behavior.—Matt. 16:27.

When the Son of man arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne.—Matt. 25:31.

The utterance of Jehovah to my Lord is: "Sit at my right hand until I place your enemies as a stool for your

feet." The rod of your strength Jehovah will send out of Zion, saying: "Go subduing in the midst of your enemies." —Ps. 110:1, 2.

Additional references: 1 Peter 3:18; Daniel 7:13, 14; 2 Thesalonians 1:7-10; Luke 23:42, 43.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) How is the ransom an expression of God's love for mankind? (b) In what way can you show your appreciation for the ransom?

The Operation of Holy Spirit

(1) What is the holy spirit and what has it accomplished as indicated by the following Bible texts?

God's active force was moving to and fro over the surface of the waters.—Gen. 1:2; compare Psalm 33:6 and 104:30.

The spirit of Jehovah it was that spoke by me, and his word was upon my tongue.—2 Sam. 23:2; compare 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

But if it is by means of God's spirit that I expel the demons, the kingdom of God has really overtaken you.—Matt. 12:28.

They all became filled with holy spirit and started to speak with different tongues, just as the spirit was granting them to make utterance.—Acts 2:4.

Additional references: Isaiah 61:1, 2; Acts 1:8; Revelation 1:10.

(2) How does holy spirit operate for our benefit today?

If you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!—Luke 11:13.

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Your spirit is good; may it lead me in the land of uprightness.—Ps. 143:10.

All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness.—2 Tim. 3:16.

Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God.—Acts 20:28.

Additional references: John 14:26; Matthew 10:19, 20; Philippians 4:13; Joel 2:28, 29.

(3) Whose ideas are recorded in the Bible? Why should you regularly study God's Word?

That is why we also thank God incessantly, because when you received God's word, which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God, which is also at work in you believers.—1 Thess. 2:13.

Now the latter were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures daily as to whether these things were so.—Acts 17:11.

Additional references: Psalm 1:1-3; 119:105; 1 Timothy 4:13-16; John 17:17.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) Have you endeavored to read the entire Bible? Why would it be good for you to do so? (b) When you have asked Jehovah to help you and direct you by holy spirit, why should you then endeavor to pay close attention to Bible-based counsel?

Prayer

(1) To whom should our prayers be directed?

You must pray, then, this way: "Our Father in the heavens . . ."—Matt. 6:9.

In everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God.—Phil. 4:6.

Additional references: Psalm 5:1, 2; 65:1, 2; 69:13.

(2) Does Jehovah listen to all prayers? Why do you so answer?

If you ask the Father for anything he will give it to you in my name.—John 16:23.

When you pray, you must not be as the hypocrites; because they like to pray . . . to be visible to men.—Matt. 6:5.

The eyes of Jehovah are upon the righteous ones, and his ears are toward their supplication.—1 Pet. 3:12.

Additional references: Acts 10:30, 34, 35; Micah 3:4; Proverbs 28:9; Matthew 6:6-8.

(3) What are some of the things you can pray about?

Let your name be sanctified. Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth. Give us today our bread for this day; and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the wicked one.—Matt. 6:9-13.

No matter what it is that we ask according to his will, he hears us.—1 John 5:14.

Additional references: Philippians 1:9; Acts 12:5; James 5:16.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) When do you find time to pray? (b) How can you keep your prayers from becoming routine? (c) In your study of the Bible, what did you learn about prayer that you did not know previously? How has this affected your personal prayers to God?

The Kingdom of God

(1) By what right is Jehovah the Universal Sovereign?

Upon hearing this they with one accord raised their voices to God and said: "Sovereign Lord, you are the One who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all the things in them."—Acts 4:24.

You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created.—Rev. 4:11.

Additional references: Psalm 90:2; 100:3; Hebrews 3:4.

(2) With whom has he shared rulership over his creation?

Someone like a son of man happened to be coming; and to the Ancient of Days he gained access, and they brought him up close even before that One. And to him there were given rulership and dignity and kingdom.—Dan. 7:13, 14.

The utterance of Jehovah to my Lord is: "Sit at my right hand until I place your enemies as a stool for your feet." The rod of your strength Jehovah will send out of Zion, saying: "Go subduing in the midst of your enemies."—Ps. 110:1, 2.

However, you are the ones that have stuck with me in my trials; and I make a covenant with you, just as my Father has made a covenant with me, for a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel.—Luke 22:28-30.

Additional references: Revelation 5:9, 10; 14:1.

(3) Is the Kingdom of God a condition or a government?

In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite.—Dan. 2:44.

The very One sitting in the heavens will laugh; Jehovah himself will hold them in derision. At that time he will speak to them in his anger and in his hot displeasure he will disturb them, saying: "I, even I, have installed my king upon Zion, my holy mountain."—Ps. 2:4-6.

My kingdom is no part of this world. If my kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought that I should not be delivered up to the Jews. But, as it is, my kingdom is not from this source.—John 18:36.

Additional references: Isaiah 9:7; Luke 1:32, 33; Revelation 20:6.

(4) What blessings will Kingdom rule bring for the earth and for mankind?

And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away.—Rev. 21:4.

The sucking child will certainly play upon the hole of the cobra; and upon the light aperture of a poisonous snake will a weaned child actually put his own hand. They will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy mountain.—Isa. 11:8, 9.

Additional references: Isaiah 26:9; 65:21, 22; Luke 23:43.

(5) What does it mean to seek first the Kingdom?

Stop storing up for yourselves treasures upon the earth . . . Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . No one can slave for two masters . . . You cannot slave for God and for Riches. . . . So never be anxious and say, "What are we to eat?" or, "What are we to drink?" or, "What are we to put on?" For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing.—Matt. 6:19-32.

Let us also put off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, as we look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus.—Heb. 12:1, 2.

Additional references: Matthew 13:44-46; 16:24; 19:27-29.

(6) How do we know that we have entered into the time of the end and that God's Kingdom is ruling?

While he was sitting upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached him privately, saying: "Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?"—Matt. 24:3.

Now learn from the fig tree as an illustration this point: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and it puts

forth leaves, you know that summer is near. Likewise also you, when you see all these things, know that he is near at the doors. Truly I say to you that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur.—Matt. 24:32-34.

The rod of your strength Jehovah will send out of Zion, saying: "Go subduing in the midst of your enemies."—Ps. 110:2.

Additional references: Revelation 6:1-6; 12:1-12; Matthew 24:1-25:46; 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) How do you personally endeavor to put God's Kingdom first in your life? (b) In what practical ways can you demonstrate that you are a loyal advocate of God's Kingdom? (c) As a loyal advocate of God's Kingdom, what is your attitude toward involvement in the political affairs of the nations?

Satan and the Demons

(1) Who is Satan the Devil? Where did he and his demons come from?

So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth.—Rev. 12:9; compare Genesis 3:1-5.

That one was a manslayer when he began, and he did not stand fast in the truth, because truth is not in him. When he speaks the lie, he speaks according to his own disposition, because he is a liar and the father of the lie.—John 8:44.

And the angels that did not keep their original position but forsook their own proper dwelling place he has reserved with eternal bonds under dense darkness for the judgment of the great day.—Jude 6.

Additional references: Job 1:6; 2:1; James 1:14, 15; Ephesians 6:11, 12; compare Ezekiel 28:12-15.

(2) What warnings do we have in the Bible to help us avoid spiritistic practices?

There should not be found in you anyone who . . . employs divination, a practicer of magic or anyone who looks for omens or a sorcerer, or one who binds others with a spell or anyone who consults a spirit medium or a professional foreteller of events or anyone who inquires of the dead.—Deut. 18:10, 11.

But as for . . . those practicing spiritism . . . , their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur. This means the second death.—Rev. 21:8.

Additional references: Acts 16:16-18; Galatians 5:19, 20.

(3) How can we protect ourselves against the influences of Satan and the demons?

Subject yourselves, therefore, to God; but oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you.—Jas. 4:7.

Put on the complete suit of armor from God that you may be able to stand firm against the machinations of the Devil.—Eph. 6:11.

Additional references: Matthew 6:13; Proverbs 18:10; Acts 19:19, 20.

(4) What do God's words to Pharaoh indicate as to His reason for allowing Satan and his demons to continue living until now?

For by now I could have thrust my hand out that I might strike you and your people with pestilence and that you might be effaced from the earth. But, in fact, for this cause I have kept you in existence, for the sake of showing you my power and in order to have my name declared in all the earth.—Ex. 9:15, 16.

Additional references: Romans 9:14-18; Job 1:9-12; 2:4-6; 2 Peter 3:9, 15.

(5) What will become of Satan and his demons according to Jehovah's judgment against them?

I shall put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He will bruise you in the head and you will bruise him in the heel.—Gen. 3:15.

Therefore, since the "young children" are sharers of blood and flesh, he also similarly partook of the same things, that through his death he might bring to nothing the one having the means to cause death, that is, the Devil.—Heb. 2:14.

And the Devil who was misleading them was hurled into the lake of fire and sulphur, where both the wild beast and the false prophet already were.—Rev. 20:10.

Additional references: Romans 16:20; Revelation 12:7-9; 20:1-3, 7-10.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) What influence does Satan have on people today? (b) What are some of the spiritistic practices of people today, and why should we avoid these?

The Soul, Sin and Death

(1) What is the human soul? Can it die?

Jehovah God proceeded to form the man out of dust from the ground and to blow into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man came to be a living soul.—Gen. 2:7.

Look! All the souls—to me they belong. As the soul of the father so likewise the soul of the son—to me they belong. The soul that is sinning—it itself will die.—Ezek. 18:4, 20.

Additional references: 1 Corinthians 15:45; Acts 3:23; Matthew 10:28.

(2) What is sin? How did we all become sinners?

Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, and so sin is lawlessness.—1 John 3:4.

Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned.—Rom. 5:12.

Additional references: Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8; 1 Kings 8:46; Psalm 51:5.

(3) What should you do if you commit a sin?

My sin I finally confessed to you, and my error I did not cover. I said: "I shall make confession over my transgressions to Jehovah."—Ps. 32:5.

Is there anyone sick among you? Let him call the older men of the congregation to him, and let them pray over him, greasing him with oil in the name of Jehovah. And the prayer of faith will make the indisposed one well, and Jehovah will raise him up. Also, if he has committed sins, it will be forgiven him. Therefore openly confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may get healed. A righteous man's supplication, when it is at work, has much force.—Jas. 5:14-16.

He that is covering over his transgressions will not succeed, but he that is confessing and leaving them will be shown mercy.—Prov. 28:13.

Additional references: Daniel 9:20; 1 John 1:9.

(4) What should be our attitude toward committing sins?

Do not let sin continue to rule as king in your mortal bodies that you should obey their desires. Neither go on presenting your members to sin as weapons of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, also your members to God as weapons of righteousness. For sin must not be master over you, seeing

that you are not under law but under undeserved kindness.—Rom. 6:12-14.

Additional reference: Romans 7:14-25.

(5) What is death?

The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all, neither do they anymore have wages, because the remembrance of them has been forgotten.—Eccl. 9:5, 10.

He said to them: "Lazarus our friend has gone to rest, but I am journeying there to awaken him from sleep." Therefore the disciples said to him: "Lord, if he has gone to rest, he will get well." Jesus had spoken, however, about his death. But they imagined he was speaking about taking rest in sleep. At that time, therefore, Jesus said to them outspokenly: "Lazarus has died."—John 11:11-14.

Additional references: Genesis 3:19; Psalm 6:5; 146:4; Ecclesiastes 3:19, 20; Isaiah 38:18.

(6) Why do people die?

The wages sin pays is death.—Rom. 6:23.

In Adam all are dying.—1 Cor. 15:22.

Additional references: Romans 5:12, 17, 19; Job 14:1, 4.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) How have you benefited from learning what the Bible teaches about the soul, sin and death? (b) What are some of the false religious doctrines that are disproved by what you have learned? (c) In what way do false religious teachings about the soul dishonor God?

Resurrection

(1) What hope is there for one who dies?

I have hope toward God, which hope these men themselves also entertain, that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.—Acts 24:15.

Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life, those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment.—John 5:28, 29.

Additional references: Acts 17:31; Revelation 20:13; Isaiah 25:8.

(2) How many from among mankind will be raised to heavenly life with Jesus Christ?

I saw, and, look! the Lamb standing upon the Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand hav-

ing his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. And they are singing as if a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one was able to master that song but the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been bought from the earth.—Rev. 14:1, 3.

Additional references: Revelation 7:4-8; compare Luke 12:32.

(3) What will they do there?

You made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they are to rule as kings over the earth.—Rev. 5:10.

I saw thrones, and there were those who sat down on them, and power of judging was given them. . . . And they came to life and ruled as kings with the Christ for a thousand years. Happy and holy is anyone having part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of the Christ, and will rule as kings with him for the thousand years.—Rev. 20:4, 6.

Additional reference: 1 Corinthians 6:3.

(4) What is the hope for the rest of mankind that will also be resurrected?

And he went on to say: "Jesus, remember me when you get into your kingdom." And he said to him: "Truly I tell you today, You will be with me in Paradise."—Luke 23:42, 43.

I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. But another scroll was opened; it is the scroll of life. And the dead were judged out of those things written in the scrolls according to their deeds. And the sea gave up those dead in it, and death and Hades gave up those dead in them, and they were judged individually according to their deeds.—Rev. 20:12, 13.

Additional references: Isaiah 65:17, 20; Revelation 21:1-4.

(5) Who will not be resurrected, and why?

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you traverse sea and dry land to make one proselyte, and when he becomes one you make him a subject for Gehenna twice as much so as yourselves. Serpents, offspring of vipers, how are you to flee from the judgment of Gehenna?—Matt. 23:15, 33.

When the Son of man arrives in his glory, . . . he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will put the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. . . . Then he

will say, in turn, to those on his left, "Be on your way from me, you who have been cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels." . . . And these will depart into everlasting cutting-off.—Matt. 25:31-46.

Additional references: 2 Peter 3:5-7; Jude 8-13.

(6) Why should we hold firmly to our hope in the resurrection of the dead?

If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied. If, like men, I have fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, of what good is it to me? If the dead are not to be raised up, "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die."—1 Cor. 15:19, 32.

And do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather be in fear of him that can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.—Matt. 10:28.

Additional references: Hebrews 2:14, 15; 11:17-19.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) Has learning about the resurrection hope enhanced your appreciation for Jehovah's love? How so? (b) Why should you want to tell others about the resurrection hope?

Marriage and Divorce

(1) What is the Christian standard for marriage?

In reply he said: "Did you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh'? So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has yoked together let no man put apart."—Matt. 19:4-6.

Additional references: 1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Genesis 2:24; 1 Corinthians 7:2.

(2) What is the only Scriptural basis for divorce that frees one to remarry?

I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except on the ground of fornication, and marries another commits adultery.—Matt. 19:9.

Additional references: Mark 10:11, 12; Matthew 5:32; Luke 16:18.

(3) What does the Bible say about married persons separating from each other?

Therefore what God yoked together let no man put apart.—Mark 10:9.

To the married people I give instructions, yet not I but the Lord, that a wife should not depart from her husband; . . . and a husband should not leave his wife.—1 Cor. 7: 10, 11.

Additional references: 1 Corinthians 7:4, 5, 12-16.

(4) Why should persons living together as husband and wife be properly married?

Continue reminding them to be in subjection and be obedient to governments and authorities as rulers.—Titus 3:1.

Additional references: Matthew 22:21; Luke 2:1-5; Hebrews 13:4.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) What benefits are derived from adhering to Jehovah's standard for marriage as regards the husband? the wife? the children? the community? (b) If you are a married person, are you sure that your marriage has been properly registered with the civil authorities?

Sanctity of Life

(1) Why is all life to be viewed as sacred?

The God that made the world . . . gives to all persons life and breath and all things. For by him we have life and move and exist.—Acts 17:24, 25, 28.

Christ Jesus . . . gave himself a corresponding ransom for all.—1 Tim. 2:5, 6.

Additional reference: Psalm 36:9.

(2) How does Jehovah view (a) the unlawful shedding of human blood? (b) abortion? (c) suicide?

Anyone shedding man's blood, by man will his own blood be shed.—Gen. 9:6.

But as for the . . . murderers . . . , their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur. This means the second death.—Rev. 21:8.

And in case men should struggle with each other and they really hurt a pregnant woman and her children do come out but no fatal accident occurs, he is to have damages imposed. . . . But if a fatal accident should occur, then you must give soul for soul.—Ex. 21:22, 23.

Look! All the souls—to me they belong. As the soul of the father so likewise the soul of the son—to me they belong.—Ezek. 18:4.

Additional references: Numbers 35:31; 2 Samuel 17:23; Matthew 27:3-5.

(3) How do the following scriptures show that Jehovah considers blood as something sacred?

Only flesh with its soul—its blood—you must not eat.—Gen. 9:4.

Whenever your soul craves it you may slaughter, and you must eat meat according to the blessing of Jehovah your God . . . Only the blood you must not eat. On the earth you should pour it out as water.—Deut. 12:15, 16.

Any soul who eats any blood, that soul must be cut off from his people.—Lev. 7:27.

Keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled.—Acts 15:29.

Additional references: Leviticus 17:11; 1 Chronicles 11:18, 19; 1 Samuel 14:31-34; Romans 5:9.

(4) What do the following scriptures reveal as to different ways a person could become bloodguilty?

When I say to someone wicked, "You will positively die," and you do not actually warn him . . . , his blood I shall ask back from your own hand.—Ezek. 3:18, 19.

In case you build a new house, you must also make a parapet for your roof, that you may not place bloodguilt upon your house because someone falling might fall from it.—Deut. 22:8.

Additional references: Acts 20:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 9:16.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) How has the Scriptural view of blood affected your thinking on this matter? (b) As a Christian, what local foods or medical practices will you henceforth avoid? (c) How does the Bible teaching concerning the sanctity of life affect your view of certain dangerous sports or types of recreation? (d) Does God's view of life and blood seem reasonable to you? (e) What stand should a Christian take if he is told that in order to save his own life or the life of a loved one a blood transfusion would be needed?

**PART II JEHOVAH'S RIGHTEOUS
REQUIREMENTS—Mic. 6:8**

In your study of the Bible you have learned the importance of bringing your life into harmony with Jehovah's righteous standards. Responding to what you learned may have entailed a number of adjustments in your attitude toward life itself and in your personal conduct. Making such changes,

however, is not what is referred to in the Bible as sacred service. Rather, Jehovah God accepts sacred service only from those whose lives have been made to reflect his righteousness.—1 Pet. 1:14-16; Isa. 52:11.

Now that you have brought your life into harmony with Jehovah's standard of righteousness, you are in a position to render acceptable sacred service as a minister of the good news. Reviewing the following questions along with the quoted and cited Scripture references will help you fix clearly in mind Jehovah's righteous requirements and will remind you of some of the things you can do in order to become one of Jehovah's approved servants. This information will impress upon you the importance of doing all things with a good conscience and to Jehovah's honor.—2 Cor. 1:12; 1 Tim. 1:19; 1 Pet. 3:16, 21.

Christian Law

(1) According to Jesus, what are the two greatest commandments of the Mosaic Law?

"You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. The second, like it, is this, "You must love your neighbor as yourself."—Matt. 22:37-39.

(2) Are Christians under the Mosaic Law covenant with its requirements of Sabbath-keeping and sacrifices?

Christ is the end of the Law, so that everyone exercising faith may have righteousness.—Rom. 10:4.

Let no man judge you in eating and drinking or in respect of a festival or of an observance of the new moon or of a sabbath; for those things are a shadow of the things to come, but the reality belongs to the Christ.—Col. 2:16, 17.

Additional references: Galatians 3:24, 25; Colossians 2:13, 14; Hebrews 8:6, 13.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) In what way do you demonstrate that you love Jehovah with your whole heart, mind, soul and strength? (b) In what practical ways do you show that you love your neighbor as yourself?

Personal Relationships With Others

(1) What Christian quality should outstandingly characterize our relationship with our spiritual brothers and sisters?

I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves.—John 13:34, 35.

Clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union.—Col. 3:14.

Additional references: James 2:8; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

(2) What Christian principles should govern our dealings with persons who are not Jehovah's Witnesses?

Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them.—Luke 6:31.

As long as we have time favorable for it, let us work what is good toward all.—Gal. 6:10.

Additional references: Matthew 5:43-48; Romans 12:17, 18; Luke 10:29-37.

(3) How should Christians view the shortcomings of fellow believers?

Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Even as Jehovah freely forgave you, so do you also.—Col. 3:13.

Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.—1 Pet. 4:8.

Additional references: Matthew 7:1-5; Proverbs 17:9; 19:11; Matthew 6:12.

(4) If your brother sins against you personally and you find it difficult merely to overlook the transgression, or if his sin against you is of a serious nature and should not be covered over, what should you do?

Moreover, if your brother commits a sin, go lay bare his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take along with you one or two more, in order that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every matter may be established. If he does not listen to them, speak to the congregation. If he does not listen even to the congregation, let him be to you just as a man of the nations and as a tax collector.—Matt. 18:15-17.

Additional references: Matthew 5:23, 24; Ephesians 4:25.

(5) What is the fruitage of the spirit and how will cultivating it help us to maintain a fine relationship with others?

The fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control.—Gal. 5: 22, 23.

Additional reference: James 3:17, 18.

Elevated Christian Morals**(1) Why is moral cleanness of all individuals among Jehovah's people important to every one of us?**

Many will follow their acts of loose conduct, and on account of these the way of the truth will be spoken of abusively.—2 Pet. 2:2.

Beloved ones, though I was making every effort to write you about the salvation we hold in common, I found it necessary to write you to exhort you to put up a hard fight for the faith that was once for all time delivered to the holy ones. My reason is that certain men have slipped in who have long ago been appointed by the Scriptures to this judgment, ungodly men, turning the undeserved kindness of our God into an excuse for loose conduct and proving false to our only Owner and Lord, Jesus Christ.—Jude 3, 4.

Additional references: Romans 1:32; 1 Peter 1:16; Joshua 7:1-26.

(2) Why must lying be avoided?

The Devil . . . did not stand fast in the truth, because truth is not in him. When he speaks the lie, he speaks according to his own disposition, because he is a liar and the father of the lie.—John 8:44.

As for . . . all the liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur.—Rev. 21:8.

Additional references: Exodus 20:16; Proverbs 6:12-19; 2 Corinthians 6:4, 7.

(3) What is the Christian view of stealing?

Let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief.—1 Pet. 4:15.

Let the stealer steal no more, but rather let him do hard work, doing with his hands what is good work, that he may have something to distribute to someone in need.—Eph. 4:28.

Additional reference: Exodus 20:15.

(4) Does the Bible prohibit the use of alcoholic beverages in moderation?

Go, eat your food with rejoicing and drink your wine with a good heart, because already the true God has found pleasure in your works.—Ecc. 9:7.

Additional references: Psalm 104:15; 1 Timothy 5:23.

(5) What is the Christian view of drunkenness?

What! Do you not know that unrighteous persons will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, . . . nor greedy persons, nor drunkards . . . will inherit God's kingdom.—1 Cor. 6:9, 10.

Ministerial servants should likewise be serious, . . . not giving themselves to a lot of wine.—1 Tim. 3:8.

Additional references: 1 Corinthians 5:11; 1 Peter 4:3; 1 Timothy 3:2, 3.

(6) Why should Christians abstain from the nonmedical use of addictive or mind-altering drugs?

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. And quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.—Rom. 12:1, 2.

Additional references: Revelation 21:8, *Int*; 1 Corinthians 16:13; Proverbs 3:21-23; 5:1, 2; 1 Peter 4:7.

(7) What additional reasons are there for not using tobacco, betel nut or other similar addictive substances that are known to be harmful to physical and mental health?

Therefore, since we have these promises, beloved ones, let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear.—2 Cor. 7:1.

Additional references: James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:16.

(8) What does the Bible say about fornication, adultery, sexual relations with another person of the same sex (homosexuality) and other unlawful sexual conduct?

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, and they are fornication, uncleanness, loose conduct . . . Those who practice such things will not inherit God's kingdom.—Gal. 5:19-21.

What! Do you not know that unrighteous persons will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural

purposes, nor men who lie with men . . . will inherit God's kingdom.—1 Cor. 6:9-11.

God gave them up to disgraceful sexual appetites, for both their females changed the natural use of themselves into one contrary to nature; and likewise even the males left the natural use of the female and became violently inflamed in their lust toward one another, males with males, working what is obscene and receiving in themselves the full recompense, which was due for their error.—Rom. 1:26, 27.

Let marriage be honorable among all, and the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers.—Heb. 13:4.

Additional references: Ephesians 5:5; 1 Peter 4:3; Mark 7:20-23; Revelation 21:8.

(9) By adhering to what Bible counsel will you be able to ward off temptations and pressures that would induce you to engage in any form of sexual immorality, including sexual perversions?

Keep your minds fixed on the things above, not on the things upon the earth. Deaden, therefore, your body members that are upon the earth as respects fornication, uncleanness, sexual appetite, hurtful desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.—Col. 3:2, 5.

Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, continue considering these things.—Phil. 4:8.

Additional references: Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9, 10.

(10) What is gambling? Why would a Christian avoid becoming involved in any form of gambling?

But you men are those leaving Jehovah, those forgetting my holy mountain, those setting in order a table for the god of Good Luck and those filling up mixed wine for the god of Destiny.—Isa. 65:11.

Do you not know that unrighteous persons will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be misled. Neither . . . thieves, nor greedy persons . . . will inherit God's kingdom.—1 Cor. 6:9, 10.

Additional references: 1 Corinthians 5:11; 15:33.

(11) If a person in weakness commits a serious sin but he wants help to be restored to Jehovah's favor, what action should he take immediately?

My sin I finally confessed to you, and my error I did not cover. I said: "I shall make confession over my transgressions to Jehovah."—Ps. 32:5.

Is there anyone suffering evil among you? Let him carry on prayer. Is there anyone in good spirits? Let him sing psalms. Is there anyone sick among you? Let him call the older men of the congregation to him, and let them pray over him, greasing him with oil in the name of Jehovah. And the prayer of faith will make the indisposed one well, and Jehovah will raise him up. Also, if he has committed sins, it will be forgiven him.—Jas. 5:13-15.

Additional references: Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 2:1, 2; Galatians 6:1.

(12) In addition to confessing one's own sins, what personal responsibility rests upon each Christian with regard to reporting serious wrongdoing by others that could threaten the spiritual or moral cleanness of the congregation?

Now in case a soul sins in that he has heard public cursing and he is a witness or he has seen it or has come to know of it, if he does not report it, then he must answer for his error.—Lev. 5:1.

He that is partner with a thief is hating his own soul. An oath involving a curse he may hear, but he reports nothing.—Prov. 29:24.

Additional references: Deuteronomy 13:6-8; 1 Corinthians 1:11; 5:1.

(13) What is the proper viewpoint to have when one is Scripturally reproved?

The discipline of Jehovah, O my son, do not reject; and do not abhor his reproof.—Prov. 3:11.

For the commandment is a lamp, and a light the law is, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life.—Prov. 6:23.

Additional references: Proverbs 15:32; Revelation 3:19; Hebrews 12:5-11.

(14) What action does the congregation take when a person in its midst proves to be a persistent and unrepentant violator of God's commandments?

In my letter I wrote you to quit mixing in company with fornicators, not meaning entirely with the fornicators of this world or the greedy persons and extortioners or idolaters. Otherwise, you would actually have to get out of the world.

But now I am writing you to quit mixing in company with anyone called a brother that is a fornicator or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man. For what do I have to do with judging those outside? Do you not judge those inside, while God judges those outside? "Remove the wicked man from among yourselves."—1 Cor. 5:9-13.

As for a man that promotes a sect, reject him after a first and a second admonition; knowing that such a man has been turned out of the way and is sinning, he being self-condemned.—Titus 3:10, 11.

Additional references: 1 Corinthians 5:5, 6; Joshua 7:1-26.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) Do you think that Jehovah's moral standards and requirements for his servants are reasonable? (b) How have you personally benefited from what you have learned about elevated Christian morals? (c) Why would a person have to conform his way of life to Jehovah's standards before he could be accepted for Christian baptism?

Idolatry

(1) What is idolatry? What warnings does the Bible give concerning idolatry?

Guard yourselves from idols.—1 John 5:21.

You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form like anything that is in the heavens above or that is on the earth underneath or that is in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down to them nor be induced to serve them, because I Jehovah your God am a God exacting exclusive devotion.—Ex. 20:4, 5.

Additional references: Jeremiah 10:14, 15; Psalm 115:4-8; Isaiah 42:8; 48:11.

(2) What are various forms of idolatry that Christians must guard against in this modern world?

Now while Paul was waiting for them in Athens, his spirit within him came to be irritated at beholding that the city was full of idols. Paul now stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens, I behold that in all things you seem to be more given to the fear of the deities than others are."—Acts 17:16, 22.

Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold . . . And the herald was crying out loudly: "To you it is being said, O peoples, . . . that . . . you fall down and worship the image of gold that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up."—Dan. 3:1-5.

On a set day Herod clothed himself with royal raiment and sat down upon the judgment seat and began giving them

a public address. In turn the assembled people began shouting: "A god's voice, and not a man's!" Instantly the angel of Jehovah struck him, because he did not give the glory to God; and he became eaten up with worms and expired.—Acts 12:21-23.

If anyone worships the wild beast and its image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, he will also drink of the wine of the anger of God.—Rev. 14:9, 10.

Additional references: 1 Samuel 15:22, 23; Colossians 3:5.

Separate From the World

(1) According to the Bible, who is "the ruler of the world" and "the god of this system of things"?

I shall not speak much with you anymore, for the ruler of the world is coming. And he has no hold on me [Jesus Christ].—John 14:30.

The god of this system of things has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, that the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine through.—2 Cor. 4:4.

Additional references: 1 John 5:19; Revelation 12:9.

(2) What is the position of Christians as to this world alienated from God?

They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world.—John 17:16.

Do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God.—Jas. 4:4.

Additional reference: John 15:19-21.

(3) What was Jesus' attitude toward participation in the political affairs of the world?

The Devil took him along to an unusually high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and he said to him: "All these things I will give you if you fall down and do an act of worship to me." Then Jesus said to him: "Go away, Satan! For it is written, 'It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.'"—Matt. 4:8-10.

Jesus, knowing they were about to come and seize him to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain all alone.—John 6:15.

Additional reference: John 18:36.

(4) When a person separates himself from the world and becomes a Christian, what treatment might he expect from those remaining in the world?

All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted.—2 Tim. 3:12.

If you were part of the world, the world would be fond of what is its own. Now because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you. . . . If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also.—John 15:19-21.

Additional reference: Luke 21:12, 13.

(5) How does being separate from the world affect the secular employment of a Christian?

Let the stealer steal no more, but rather let him do hard work, doing with his hands what is good work, that he may have something to distribute to someone in need.—Eph. 4:28.

The Devil . . . is a liar and the father of the lie.—John 8:44.

What! Do you not know that unrighteous persons will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God's kingdom.—1 Cor. 6:9, 10.

He will certainly render judgment among many peoples, and set matters straight respecting mighty nations far away. And they will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. They will not lift up sword, nation against nation, neither will they learn war anymore.—Mic. 4:2, 3.

Write them to abstain . . . from blood.—Acts 15:20.

Jesus, knowing they were about to come and seize him to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain all alone.—John 6:15.

I heard another voice out of heaven say: "Get out of her [Babylon the Great], my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues."—Rev. 18:4.

Additional references: Isaiah 2:2-4; John 17:16; Romans 13:8-10; 1 Corinthians 7:23.

(6) Adhering to what additional Bible principles will help a Christian to remain separate from the world with regard to his choice of entertainment and recreation?

Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits.—1 Cor. 15:33.

Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world. Furthermore, the world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever.—1 John 2:15-17.

So keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, buying out the opportune time for yourselves, because the days are wicked. On this account cease becoming unreasonable, but go on perceiving what the will of Jehovah is. Also, do not be getting drunk with wine, in which there is debauchery, but keep getting filled with spirit, speaking to yourselves with psalms and praises to God and spiritual songs, singing and accompanying yourselves with music in your hearts to Jehovah, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ giving thanks always for all things to our God and Father.—Eph. 5:15-20.

Let fornication and uncleanness of every sort or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits holy people.—Eph. 5:3.

Additional references: Philippians 4:8; Ephesians 5:4; Colossians 3:5, 6; Proverbs 26:18, 19.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) How has your study of the Bible helped you to keep yourself separate from the world? (b) What pressures or enticements have you had to resist in order to come into a good relationship with Jehovah and maintain it? (c) What Bible counsel have you found to be particularly helpful in maintaining separateness from the world?

Interfaith

Would it be proper for true Christians to share in worship with other religious groups?

I heard another voice out of heaven say: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues. For her sins have massed together clear up to heaven, and God has called her acts of injustice to mind."—Rev. 18:4, 5.

Additional references: 1 Corinthians 10:20; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Matthew 7:13, 14, 21-23; 2 Timothy 3:2, 5; Numbers 25:1, 2.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) What are some examples of interfaith activity that true Christians should avoid? (b) Why would a person have to make sure that he has cut off all association with false religious organizations before

presenting himself for baptism as one of Jehovah's Witnesses? (c) What would this include?

Holidays and Celebrations

(1) Are Christians under obligation to observe certain days as holidays?

Now that you have come to know God, or rather now that you have come to be known by God, how is it that you are turning back again to the weak and beggarly elementary things and want to slave for them over again? You are scrupulously observing days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that somehow I have toiled to no purpose respecting you.—Gal. 4:9-11.

Additional reference: Colossians 2:16, 17.

(2) What is the only religious celebration that Christians are commanded to observe?

Also, he took a loaf, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them, saying: "This means my body which is to be given in your behalf. Keep doing this in remembrance of me."—Luke 22:19.

Additional reference: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

(3) What are some of the Bible principles that will help you to determine whether or not you should observe or participate in celebrations that are popular in your community?

They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world.—John 17:16.

Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world. Furthermore, the world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever.—1 John 2:15-17.

The time that has passed by is sufficient for you to have worked out the will of the nations when you proceeded in deeds of loose conduct, lusts, excesses with wine, revelries, drinking matches, and illegal idolatries.—1 Pet. 4:3.

Additional references: 1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; Galatians 5:19-21; Romans 13:13.

(4) What mention is made in the Bible of birthday celebrations? How does this affect your view of birthday celebrations?

But when Herod's birthday was being celebrated the daughter of Herodias danced at it and pleased Herod so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. Then she, under her mother's coaching, said: "Give me here upon a platter the head of John the Baptist." Grieved though he was, the king out of regard for his oaths and for those reclining with him commanded it to be given; and he sent and had John beheaded in the prison. And his head was brought on a platter and given to the maiden, and she brought it to her mother.—Matt. 14:6-11.

Additional references: Genesis 40:20-22; Ecclesiastes 7:1, 8.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) What are some of the holidays or celebrations popular in your community that true Christians avoid? (b) What do you need to do to keep from getting involved in worldly holidays or celebrations that run counter to Christian principles? (c) If you have minor children, how can you help them avoid unchristian practices related to worldly holidays?

Baptism

(1) Why do Jehovah's Witnesses baptize in water those who embrace the Christian faith?

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.—Matt. 28:19.

He commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.—Acts 10:48.

Additional references: Matthew 3:13-17; 1 Peter 2:21; Acts 8:12, 35-38.

(2) Who should be baptized? When?

Those who embraced his word heartily were baptized.—Acts 2:41.

When they believed Philip, who was declaring the good news of the kingdom of God and of the name of Jesus Christ, they proceeded to be baptized.—Acts 8:12.

Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.—Acts 2:38.

Additional references: Hebrews 10:5-7; Luke 3:21, 23; 1 Peter 3:21.

(3) What does it mean to be baptized in the name of (a) the Father? (b) the Son? (c) the holy spirit?

You, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth.—Ps. 83:18.

God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name, so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the ground, and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.—Phil. 2:9-11.

I will request the Father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever, the spirit of the truth.—John 14:16, 17.

Additional references: Revelation 1:5; Joel 2:28, 29.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) Why do you want to be baptized? (b) Have you already brought your life into harmony with Jehovah's righteous requirements according to what you have learned from your study of the Bible? (c) Are you at present sharing the good news of the Kingdom with others, demonstrating that you understand that this is Jehovah's will for you at this time? (d) Have you expressed to Jehovah in prayer your desire to be one of his dedicated Witnesses and to serve him in unity with his organized people?

PART III SUBMISSION TO JEHOVAH'S ARRANGEMENT OF THINGS

While still in Eden the first man and woman joined the rebellion led by "the original serpent," Satan the Devil. (Rev. 12:9) They ceased being submissive to Jehovah's arrangement of things. Having been introduced to a course of independence from God, they set out on their own. From that time forward the course taken by mankind has only served to confirm the truthfulness of Jeremiah's words recorded at Jeremiah 10:23, where we read: "I well know, O Jehovah, that to earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step."

Through your study of the Bible you have learned about Jehovah's purpose to bring all things back into subjection to himself, just as they were in the beginning. (Eph. 1:8-10; 1 Cor. 15:24-28)

Having reached this point in your study you are also desirous of finding your place in Jehovah's arrangement of things and of being submissive to his rule. The following questions and related Scripture references will help you to examine your own understanding of submission to Jehovah's arrangements as regards congregation organization, Christian family life and the political rulers of the day.

Submission in the Congregation Arrangement

(1) What is the basic principle underlying Jehovah's arrangement of things within the Christian congregation?

But I want you to know that the head of every man is the Christ; in turn the head of a woman is the man; in turn the head of the Christ is God.—1 Cor. 11:3.

He [Jesus Christ] is the head of the body, the congregation.—Col. 1:18.

Additional references: Ephesians 1:22, 23; Hebrews 12:9; James 4:7.

(2) Why is there a particular need for submitting to Jehovah's arrangement of things in the Christian congregation today?

For God is a God, not of disorder, but of peace. . . . But let all things take place decently and by arrangement.—1 Cor. 14:33, 40.

You, though, keep your senses in all things, . . . do the work of an evangelizer, fully accomplish your ministry.—2 Tim. 4:5.

Additional references: Ephesians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 12:18, 28.

(3) What are some examples of Jesus' disciples submitting to his instructions in order to carry out their ministry in an orderly way?

Now he summoned the twelve, and he initiated sending them out two by two, and he began to give them authority over the unclean spirits. And the apostles gathered together

before Jesus and reported to him all the things they had done and taught.—Mark 6:7, 30.

After these things the Lord designated seventy others and sent them forth by twos in advance of him into every city and place to which he himself was going to come.—Luke 10:1.

Additional references: Luke 9:14-17; Matthew 10:1-23.

(4) How does Jesus exercise headship over the Christian congregation today?

Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so. Truly I say to you, He will appoint him over all his belongings.—Matt. 24:45-47.

But the helper, the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name, that one will teach you all things and bring back to your minds all the things I told you.—John 14:26.

Additional references: Luke 12:42-44; John 16:12-14.

(5) By what visible means is Christ's headship represented in the congregation?

However, from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the older men of the congregation. When they got to him he said to them: . . . "Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God."—Acts 20:17, 18, 28.

Therefore, to the older men among you I give this exhortation, . . . Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; neither as lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock.—1 Pet. 5:1-3.

Additional references: Titus 1:5; Isaiah 32:1, 2.

(6) How do members of the congregation demonstrate submission to the headship of Christ in the congregation?

Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out imitate their faith.—Heb. 13:7.

Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this

with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you.—Heb. 13:17.

Additional references: 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13; 1 Corinthians 16:16.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) Are you able to identify “the faithful and discreet slave” today? How? (b) What is the Governing Body of the Christian congregation? What purpose does it serve? (See Acts 6:1-6; 8:14; 15:1-29; 16:4, 5.) (c) What legal agencies are used by the Governing Body today to accomplish the publishing of the good news worldwide? (d) Why would submitting to Jehovah’s arrangement in the congregation include giving material support to the work of the congregation to the extent of your ability?

Submission in Christian Family Life

(1) In God’s arrangement of things, who is the head of the married woman?

You wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as it is becoming in the Lord.—Col. 3:18.

Let wives be in subjection to their husbands as to the Lord, because a husband is head of his wife as the Christ also is head of the congregation, he being a savior of this body.—Eph. 5:22, 23.

Additional reference: Titus 2:4, 5.

(2) How should a husband exercise headship over his wife? Whose example does he have to follow as a pattern?

In this way husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself, for no man ever hated his own flesh; but he feeds and cherishes it, as the Christ also does the congregation.—Eph. 5:28, 29.

You husbands, keep on loving your wives and do not be bitterly angry with them.—Col. 3:19.

Additional reference: 1 Peter 3:7.

(3) Is the wife whose husband is not a believer freed from his headship?

In like manner, you wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, in order that, if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives, because of having been eyewitnesses of your chaste conduct together with deep respect.—1 Pet. 3:1, 2.

Additional references: Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10.

(4) Who is responsible before God for the training and disciplining of children?

And you, fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah.—Eph. 6:4.

Additional references: Colossians 3:21; Proverbs 13:24; 29:15; Deuteronomy 6:6, 7.

(5) What responsibility do children have in the family arrangement?

Children, be obedient to your parents in union with the Lord, for this is righteous: "Honor your father and your mother"; which is the first command with a promise: "That it may go well with you and you may endure a long time on the earth."—Eph. 6:1-3.

You children, be obedient to your parents in everything, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord.—Col. 3:20.

Additional references: Deuteronomy 5:16; Proverbs 1:8; 4:1; 6:20; 23:22.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) If you are a married woman, in what way can you demonstrate your submission to your husband? (b) Does this seem to be righteous and just to you? (c) If your husband does not appreciate your cooperation in this regard, how do you still benefit? (d) If you are a man with family responsibilities, what worldly attitudes must you avoid if you are to exercise your headship in a Christlike manner? (e) If you are a minor child, what benefits will come to you and to the family as a result of your being submissive to your parents? (f) What factors may make it difficult for you to be submissive at times?

Submission to the Civil Authorities**(1) What is the proper attitude for Christians to maintain toward worldly rulers?**

Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities, for there is no authority except by God; the existing authorities stand placed in their relative positions by God.—Rom. 13:1.

Continue reminding them to be in subjection and be obedient to governments and authorities as rulers.—Titus 3:1.

Additional references: 1 Peter 2:13, 14; Daniel 6:5; Acts 26:2, 3; 1 Timothy 2:1-3.

(2) Must a Christian pay all taxes and assessments demanded by law?

Render to all their dues, to him who calls for the tax, the tax; to him who calls for the tribute, the tribute; to him who calls for fear, such fear; to him who calls for honor, such honor.—Rom. 13:7.

Additional reference: Luke 20:21-25.

(3) Are there any circumstances under which a Christian would refuse to obey the worldly rulers?

With that they called them and charged them, nowhere to make any utterance or to teach upon the basis of the name of Jesus. But in reply Peter and John said to them: "Whether it is righteous in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, judge for yourselves. But as for us, we cannot stop speaking about the things we have seen and heard."—Acts 4:18-20.

In answer Peter and the other apostles said: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

Additional references: Isaiah 2:4; Daniel 3:16-18; 6:4-24; Exodus 1:15-20.

(4) Should Christians comply with legal requirements such as the registering of marriages and births, respond to census inquiries or obtain required licenses and permits that do not conflict with God's laws?

Now in those days a decree went forth . . . for all the inhabited earth to be registered . . . Of course, Joseph also went up from Galilee . . . to get registered with Mary, who had been given him in marriage.—Luke 2:1-5.

Continue reminding them to be in subjection and be obedient to governments and authorities as rulers.—Titus 3:1.

Additional references: 1 Timothy 3:2, 9; compare Acts 18:1-3; Hebrews 13:4.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) Why is it important for you to be submissive to the civil authorities even when their rule may seem to be oppressive? (b) How can you be submissive to the political rulers without violating Christian neutrality?

**PART IV WORKS THAT DEMONSTRATE
CHRISTIAN FAITH—Jas. 2:18**

You have already observed in your association with Jehovah's Witnesses that they are a busy

people, "always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58) The very fact that you have been able to take in accurate knowledge about Jehovah and his purposes is an evidence of the diligent efforts of Jehovah's dedicated people in your behalf.

By the time you have come to consider this portion of the book *Organized to Accomplish Our Ministry* with the overseers of the local congregation, you should already be giving clear evidence of your heart appreciation for what you have learned. You show this appreciation by attending and participating in all the congregation meetings to the extent of your ability. Also, you should already be having a regular share in the Kingdom-preaching work, helping others to come to know Jehovah and what he is doing for mankind. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) It is not sufficient for a person merely to know what is right and be able to answer specific questions in harmony with what is true. Having knowledge is really of little value unless it is applied in a practical way, and this for the benefit of others as well as for oneself.—John 13:17; 1 John 5:3.

Addressing his words to sincere inquirers, Jehovah's prophet Micah wrote: "With what shall I confront Jehovah? With what shall I bow myself to God on high? Shall I confront him with whole burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, with tens of thousands of torrents of oil? Shall I give my firstborn son for my revolt, the fruitage of my belly for the sin of my soul? He has told you, O earthling man, what is good. And what is Jehovah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be modest in walking with

your God?" (Mic. 6:6-8) Yes, Jehovah wants you to walk with him in modesty, give him your heart and take pleasure in doing his will.—Prov. 23:26.

This section of questions will help you to identify clearly and fix in mind Jehovah's requirements as to Christian works. It will help you to be sure that you have made a proper dedication of your life to Jehovah God before submitting to water baptism. You can be sure that Jehovah appreciates your sincere response to his undeserved kindness expressed in your behalf.

Relationship Between Works and Faith

Why must approved works accompany our Christian faith?

Faith, if it does not have works, is dead in itself. Nevertheless, a certain one will say: "You have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith apart from the works, and I shall show you my faith by my works." Indeed, as the body without spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.—Jas. 2:17, 18, 26.

The conclusion of the matter, everything having been heard, is: Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man. For the true God himself will bring every sort of work into the judgment in relation to every hidden thing, as to whether it is good or bad.—Eccl. 12:13, 14.

Additional references: John 6:27-29; 13:17; James 1:27; 4:17; compare Matthew 7:15-27.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) In what way are Christian works different from works of the Law? (b) Why would it not be proper for us to compare our works of faith with those of fellow believers?

Christian Meetings

(1) Why is it beneficial to attend the meetings arranged by the congregation?

Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you behold the day drawing near.—Heb. 10:24, 25.

Additional references: Proverbs 18:1; Romans 1:11, 12.

(2) What is the proper attitude for us to have toward opportunities to meet together with our spiritual brothers and sisters?

I rejoiced when they were saying to me: "To the house of Jehovah let us go."—Ps. 122:1.

Additional references: 1 Corinthians 16:19, 20; Romans 16:16; 1:11.

(3) What information beneficial to Jehovah's people is considered at congregation meetings?

And when this letter has been read among you, arrange that it also be read in the congregation of the Laodiceans and that you also read the one from Laodicea.—Col. 4:16.

Who really is the faithful steward, the discreet one, whom his master will appoint over his body of attendants to keep giving them their measure of food supplies at the proper time?—Luke 12:42.

Additional references: Revelation 2:1; 3:1; Acts 13:1; 1 Timothy 5:17.

(4) Whose teaching and instruction is given at the congregation meetings?

And all your sons will be persons taught by Jehovah, and the peace of your sons will be abundant.—Isa. 54:13.

Additional references: Job 36:22; Isaiah 30:20; Romans 15:4.

(5) Why should you endeavor to participate in congregation meetings by commenting and otherwise, as you have opportunity?

I will declare your name to my brothers; in the middle of the congregation I shall praise you.—Ps. 22:22.

Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works.—Heb. 10:24.

Additional reference: Romans 10:9, 10.

(6) Who should attend the congregation meetings in order to be instructed in righteousness?

Congregate the people, the men and the women and the little ones . . . , in order that they may listen and in order that they may learn, as they must fear Jehovah your

God and take care to carry out all the words of this law.—Deut. 31:12.

Additional references: Nehemiah 8:1-3; compare Acts 16:1, 2 with 2 Timothy 3:14, 15.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) What effort have you personally put forth in order to be in regular attendance at congregation meetings? (b) How have you benefited from regular association with Jehovah's Witnesses at congregation meetings? (c) Why is it beneficial for you to prepare well for each congregation meeting? How do you find time to do so?

Our Kingdom Ministry

(1) What urgent work does the Bible set out for all Christians at this time?

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.—Matt. 24:14.

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.—Matt. 28:19, 20.

Additional references: Mark 13:10; Acts 1:8; 2:17, 18.

(2) According to the following scriptures, what are some of the various ways in which our ministry may be accomplished?

He went journeying from city to city and from village to village, preaching and declaring the good news of the kingdom of God.—Luke 8:1.

A certain woman named Martha received him as guest into the house. This woman also had a sister called Mary, who, however, sat down at the feet of the Lord and kept listening to his word.—Luke 10:38, 39.

Now Jesus, tired out from the journey, was sitting at the fountain just as he was. . . . A woman of Samaria came to draw water. . . . Jesus said to her: "Everyone drinking from this water will get thirsty again. Whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty at all."—John 4:6-14.

Consequently he began to reason in the synagogue with the Jews and the other people who worshiped God and every day in the marketplace with those who happened to be on hand.—Acts 17:17.

I did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you publicly and from house to house.—Acts 20:20.

Additional references: Matthew 10:11-14; Acts 5:42; 18:4; Proverbs 1:20, 21.

(3) Is this work done in our own strength?

We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the power beyond what is normal may be God's and not that out of ourselves.—2 Cor. 4:7.

Additional references: 2 Timothy 4:17; Revelation 14:6; Matthew 10:19, 20; Philippians 4:13.

(4) Why should you be willing to preach the good news to all kinds of people in your assigned territory?

At this Peter opened his mouth and said: "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him."—Acts 10:34, 35.

Additional references: Matthew 24:14; Revelation 14:6; Psalm 49:1, 2.

(5) Why should you take most seriously your responsibility to share the good news with others?

I call you to witness this very day that I am clean from the blood of all men, for I have not held back from telling you all the counsel of God.—Acts 20:26, 27.

Additional references: 1 Corinthians 9:16; Ezekiel 33:8; 1 Timothy 4:16.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) Are you at present having a regular share each month in Kingdom service, preaching the good news to others? (b) Is someone helping you and training you to be effective in the field ministry? (c) Why is working from house to house in the field ministry so important? (d) When you find a person who manifests genuine interest in the good news, what further assistance should you endeavor to give that person? (e) While exerting yourself in the field ministry, why would it be wrong for you to make comparisons between your ministry and that of others?

Honoring Jehovah With Your Valuable Things

(1) What pattern set in ancient Israel serves as a model for giving material support to the Kingdom work today?

And the people gave way to rejoicing over their making voluntary offerings, for it was with a complete heart that they made voluntary offerings to Jehovah; and even David the king himself rejoiced with great joy.—1 Chron. 29:9.

Additional references: Exodus 35:21, 22, 29; Proverbs 3:9, 10; Malachi 3:10.

(2) What lesson did Jesus teach about generous giving?

And he sat down with the treasury chests in view and began observing how the crowd was dropping money into the treasury chests; and many rich people were dropping in many coins. Now a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins, which have very little value. So he called his disciples to him and said to them: "Truly I say to you that this poor widow dropped in more than all those dropping money into the treasury chests; for they all dropped in out of their surplus, but she, out of her want, dropped in all of what she had, her whole living."—Mark 12:41-44.

I have exhibited to you in all things that by thus laboring you must assist those who are weak, and must bear in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, when he himself said, "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."—Acts 20:35.

Additional reference: Luke 6:38.

(3) What example of giving in support of the congregation was set by first-century Christians?

In everything you are being enriched for every sort of generosity, which produces through us an expression of thanks to God; because the ministry of this public service is not only to supply abundantly the wants of the holy ones but also to be rich with many expressions of thanks to God. Through the proof that this ministry gives, they glorify God because you are submissive to the good news about the Christ, as you publicly declare you are, and because you are generous in your contribution to them and to all; and with supplication for you they long for you because of the surpassing undeserved kindness of God upon you.—2 Cor. 9:11-14.

Additional references: Philippians 4:14-16; Romans 15:26.

(4) Why must we be concerned about our brothers and sisters who come to be in need of material assistance?

If a brother or a sister is in a naked state and lacking the food sufficient for the day, yet a certain one of you says to them: "Go in peace, keep warm and well fed," but you do not give them the necessities for their body, of what benefit is it?—Jas. 2:15, 16.

Additional references: James 1:27; 2 Corinthians 9:1, 2; Proverbs 11:25.

(5) In addition to any material contributions to advance the good news, what should we offer that is even more important?

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.—Rom. 12:1.

Through him let us always offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name.—Heb. 13:15.

Additional references: Mark 12:30, 31; Matthew 28:19, 20.

(6) What should be our attitude toward giving of ourselves and of our material possessions in Jehovah's service?

And yet, who am I and who are my people, that we should retain power to make voluntary offerings like this? For everything is from you, and out of your own hand we have given to you.—1 Chron. 29:14.

Additional references: 1 Corinthians 4:7; 2 Corinthians 9:6, 7; Luke 17:10.

Optional questions for discussion: (a) What are some of the needs of the local congregation that are taken care of by the voluntary contributions of the members of the congregation? (b) How do contributions made directly to the nearest branch office of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society assist in the advancement of the good news? (c) Why should all contributions be made on a voluntary basis and not solicited or assessed?

Dedication and Baptism

(1) What should always be our attitude toward the doing of Jehovah's will?

To do your will, O my God, I have delighted, and your law is within my inward parts.—Ps. 40:8.

Happy is the man in fear of Jehovah, in whose commandments he has taken very much delight.—Ps. 112:1.

My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work.—John 4:34.

Additional references: Hebrews 10:9; Luke 10:27.

(2) Why should this joyful and willing attitude prevail even when we are persecuted or undergoing any form of trial?

Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials, knowing as you do that this tested quality of your faith works out endurance.—Jas. 1:2, 3.

These, therefore, went their way from before the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name.—Acts 5:41.

Additional references: Matthew 5:10-12; 1 Peter 2:20; 4:14.

(3) What does it mean for a person to dedicate himself to Jehovah?

Look! I am come (in the roll of the book it is written about me) to do your will, O God. . . . Look! I am come to do your will.—Heb. 10:7, 9.

Then Jesus said to his disciples: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and continually follow me."—Matt. 16:24.

Additional references: Psalm 143:10; Ecclesiastes 12:13; compare 1 Kings 18:21 and Hosea 9:10.

(4) When a person has sincerely repented, turned around and made a decision to follow Christ, why should he be baptized?

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.—Matt. 28:19.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, in order to be baptized by him.—Matt. 3:13.

In fact, to this course you were called, because even Christ

suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely.—1 Pet. 2:21.

Additional references: Acts 8:12, 35, 36; 19:5; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21.

(5) Why is it appropriate for dedicated and baptized Christians to be called Jehovah's Witnesses?

"You are my witnesses," is the utterance of Jehovah, "even my servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and have faith in me, and that you may understand that I am the same One. Before me there was no God formed, and after me there continued to be none. I—I am Jehovah, and besides me there is no savior. I myself have told forth and have saved and have caused it to be heard, when there was among you no strange god. So you are my witnesses," is the utterance of Jehovah, "and I am God."—Isa. 43:10-12.

And from Jesus Christ, "the Faithful Witness," "The first-born from the dead," and "The Ruler of the kings of the earth."—Rev. 1:5.

Additional references: John 18:37; Revelation 3:14; 1 Peter 2:9, 21.

**CONCLUDING QUESTIONS
FOR DISCUSSION:**

(a) Following your baptism in water, why will it be vital for you to maintain a good schedule for personal study and to share regularly in the ministry? (b) How will staying in close association with the congregation help you to carry out your dedication to Jehovah? (c) How will you go about proving to Jehovah that your dedication has been made in sincerity and from your heart? (d) Are you now thoroughly convinced that you should be baptized at the first opportunity?

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