

# ORGANIZED

TO DO JEHOVAH'S WILL









# ORGANIZED

## TO DO JEHOVAH'S WILL

“To do your will,  
O my God, is my delight.”  
—Ps. 40:8.

This book issued to \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Place of baptism \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

*Organized to Do Jehovah's Will*

November 2021 Printing

English (od-E)

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WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Publishers

Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

Walkill, New York, U.S.A.

Made in U.S.A.

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## Dear Fellow Publishers of the Good News:

What an amazing privilege we have to be united in the worship of the only true God, Jehovah! We are his “fellow workers,” entrusted with the sacred and lifesaving work of preaching and teaching the good news of his established Kingdom. (1 Cor. 3:9; Matt. 28:19, 20) To accomplish this worldwide work in peace and unity, we must be well-organized.—1 Cor. 14:40.

This book will help you to understand how the Christian congregation functions today. It discusses the privileges and responsibilities that you have as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. If you value your privileges and fulfill your responsibilities, you will be “made firm in the faith.”—Acts 16:4, 5; Gal. 6:5.

Therefore, we encourage you to study this book carefully. Look for ways that you can apply the information in your own life. For example, if you have recently become an unbaptized publisher, what steps must you take to get baptized as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses? On the other hand, if you are baptized, what can you do to grow spiritually and



expand your service to Jehovah? (1 Tim. 4:15) How can you contribute to the peace of the congregation? (2 Cor. 13:11) Look for the answers to these questions in this book.

If you are a baptized male, what can you do to qualify to serve as a ministerial servant and later as an elder? As thousands of new ones continue to flock to God's organization, there is an urgent need for qualified brothers to take the lead. This book will help you to see what is involved in "reaching out" for these spiritual goals.—1 Tim. 3:1.

We earnestly pray that this book will help you to see your place in Jehovah's arrangement and to treasure it. We love all of you very much and continue to pray that you will be among those who eternally rejoice in worshipping our heavenly Father, Jehovah.—Ps. 37:10, 11; Isa. 65:21-25.

Your brothers,

*Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses*

# Organized to Do Jehovah's Will

THROUGHOUT the world, there are numerous religious, political, commercial, and social organizations with varying characteristics, objectives, viewpoints, and philosophies. But one organization is noticeably different from all the rest. God's Word clearly identifies that organization as Jehovah's Witnesses.

<sup>2</sup> Happily, you have become associated with Jehovah's organization. Having proved to yourself what God's will is, you are now doing it. (Ps. 143:10; Rom. 12:2) You are an active minister serving with a loving, worldwide association of brothers. (2 Cor. 6:4; 1 Pet. 2:17; 5:9) As promised in God's Word, this brings you rich blessings and much happiness. (Prov. 10:22; Mark 10:30) By faithfully doing Jehovah's will now, you are being prepared for a lasting, glorious future.—1 Tim. 6:18, 19; 1 John 2:17.

<sup>3</sup> Our Grand Creator has a unique worldwide organization that is ruled theocratically. This means that it is ruled by Jehovah, who is Head over all. We have complete confidence in him. He is our Judge, our Lawgiver, and our King. (Isa. 33:22) Being a God of order, he has coordinated arrangements for our "working together with him" in serving the divine purpose.—2 Cor. 6:1, 2.

<sup>4</sup>As the end of the present system of things draws ever nearer, we move ahead under the leadership of the appointed King, Christ Jesus. (Isa. 55:4; Rev. 6:2; 11:15) It was none other than Jesus who foretold that his followers would do works greater than those he accomplished during his earthly ministry. (John 14:12) That would be true because over a longer period of time and in increasing numbers, Jesus' followers would cover a widening territory. They would proclaim the Kingdom good news to the ends of the earth.—Matt. 24:14; 28: 19, 20; Acts 1:8.

<sup>5</sup>This has already proved to be a reality. However, as Jesus clearly stated, the activity of declaring the good news will end at Jehovah's appointed time. All indications in God's prophetic Word are that Jehovah's great and awe-inspiring day has drawn close.—Joel 2: 31; Zeph. 1:14-18; 2:2, 3; 1 Pet. 4:7.

<sup>6</sup>As we perceive what the will of Jehovah is at this late hour, we need to intensify our efforts in doing what God requires. This calls for us to become well-acquainted with the way God's organization functions and to cooperate fully with it. The operation of the organization is based on Scriptural principles, including the commandments, laws, orders, regulations, and teachings set out in God's inspired Word.—Ps. 19:7-9.

<sup>7</sup>When Jehovah's people adhere to such Bible-based direction, they dwell and work together in peace and unity. (Ps. 133:1; Isa. 60:17; Rom. 14:19) What strengthens bonds among our brothers everywhere? Love. We

are motivated by and clothed with love. (John 13:34, 35; Col. 3:14) In this divinely favored way, we keep pace with the heavenly part of Jehovah's organization.

### **THE HEAVENLY PART OF JEHOVAH'S ORGANIZATION**

<sup>8</sup> The prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel saw visions of the heavenly part of Jehovah's organization. (Isa., chap. 6; Ezek., chap. 1; Dan. 7:9, 10) Likewise, the apostle John had a vision of this heavenly arrangement and provided us a glimpse of it in the book of Revelation. He saw Jehovah on a glorious throne accompanied by angelic creatures, who proclaim: "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is coming." (Rev. 4:8) John also saw "standing in the midst of the throne . . . a lamb," the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.—Rev. 5:6, 13, 14; John 1:29.

<sup>9</sup> This vision of Jehovah sitting on a throne indicates that he is the Head of this organization. Regarding him and his superior position, 1 Chronicles 29:11, 12 states: "Yours, O Jehovah, are the greatness and the mightiness and the beauty and the splendor and the majesty, for everything in the heavens and on the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Jehovah. You are the One exalting yourself as head over all. The riches and the glory are from you, and you rule over everything, and in your hand there are power and mightiness, and your hand is able to make great and to give strength to all."

<sup>10</sup> As Jehovah's fellow worker, Jesus Christ occupies an elevated position in the heavens, and much authority has been given to him. Indeed, God "subject-

ed all things under his feet and made him head over all things with regard to the congregation.” (Eph. 1:22) The apostle Paul said of Jesus: “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) Thus, we can have full confidence in the righteous leadership of Jesus Christ.

<sup>11</sup> The prophet Daniel saw in vision the Ancient of Days on His heavenly throne and angels numbering “a thousand thousands [who] kept ministering to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.” (Dan. 7:10) The Bible refers to this army of angels as “spirits for holy service, sent out to minister for those who are going to inherit salvation.” (Heb. 1:14) All these spirit creatures are organized into ‘thrones, lordships, governments, and authorities.’—Col. 1:16.

<sup>12</sup> When we take time to contemplate these features of the heavenly part of Jehovah’s organization, we can understand Isaiah’s reaction to the vision in which he “saw Jehovah sitting on a lofty and elevated throne,”

We need to intensify our efforts in doing what God requires. This calls for us to become well-acquainted with the way God’s organization functions

and “seraphs were standing above him.” Isaiah stated: “Woe to me! I am as good as dead, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of armies himself!” Indeed, Isaiah was awestruck and humbled when he grasped the scope of Jehovah’s organization. He was so deeply affected by this experience that when a call went out from heaven regarding a special work of proclaiming Jehovah’s judgments, Isaiah’s reaction was: “Here I am! Send me!”—Isa. 6:1-5, 8.

<sup>13</sup> Recognizing and appreciating Jehovah’s organization motivates His people in a similar way. As the organization moves forward, we endeavor to keep up with it. We strive to demonstrate our confidence in Jehovah’s organization today.

## **JEHOVAH’S ORGANIZATION ON THE MOVE**

<sup>14</sup> In chapter 1 of Ezekiel’s prophecy, Jehovah is pictured as riding on a colossal heavenly chariot. This resplendent vehicle represents the invisible part of Jehovah’s organization. He rides this chariot in the sense of benevolently directing it and using it according to his purpose.—Ps. 103:20.

<sup>15</sup> Each wheel of this chariot has a wheel inside it—one of the same diameter that fits crosswise into the base wheel. Only in this way can the wheels be said to “go in any of the four directions.” (Ezek. 1:17) The wheels can instantly change course. However, this chariot is not without control or intelligent supervision. Jehovah does not let his organization go in just any direction that it

might be inclined to go. Ezekiel 1:20 says: “They would go where the spirit inclined them to go.” Thus, it is Jehovah who causes his organization to move to wherever his spirit impels it to move. The question we must ask ourselves is, ‘Am I in step with it?’

<sup>16</sup> Keeping pace with Jehovah’s organization involves more than just attending meetings and participating in the field ministry. Primarily, our keeping pace has to do with progress and spiritual growth. We “make sure of the more important things” and stay up-to-date with the spiritual feeding program. (Phil. 1:10; 4:8, 9; John 17:3) We must remember, too, that where there is organization, there is good coordination and cooperation. So we must see the importance of making the best use of the spiritual and material assets that Jehovah has entrusted to us in order to accomplish his work. As we keep pace with Jehovah’s heavenly chariot, our lives are consistent with the message we proclaim.

<sup>17</sup> With the help of Jehovah’s organization, we are moving forward in doing God’s will. Remember that the Rider of this heavenly chariot is Jehovah. Therefore, keeping pace with his chariot shows that we have respect for Jehovah and confidence in our Rock. (Ps. 18:31) The Bible promises: “Jehovah will give strength to his people. Jehovah will bless his people with peace.” (Ps. 29:11) Being a part of Jehovah’s organization today, we share in the strength that he gives and enjoy the peace with which he blesses his organized people. Yes, there is no question about it, rich blessings will continue to be ours as we do Jehovah’s will now and forever.

## Recognizing Christ's Role in God's Arrangement

“IN THE beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” and everything he made was “very good.” (Gen. 1:1, 31) Jehovah made humans with wonderful prospects for the future. However, the rebellion in Eden temporarily interrupted mankind's happy state. Yet, Jehovah's purpose for the earth and for mankind remained unchanged. God indicated that there would be deliverance for obedient descendants of Adam. There would be a restoration of true worship, and God would destroy the wicked one together with all his evil works. (Gen. 3:15) Once again, things would be “very good.” Jehovah would accomplish this through his Son, Jesus Christ. (1 John 3:8) Therefore, it is imperative that we recognize Christ's role in God's arrangement.—Acts 4:12; Phil. 2:9, 11.

### **WHAT CHRIST'S ROLE IS**

<sup>2</sup> When thinking of Christ's role in God's arrangement, we recognize that his role has many facets. Jesus serves as mankind's Redeemer, as High Priest, as Head of the Christian congregation, and now as King of God's Kingdom. Meditating on these roles heightens our appreciation for God's arrangement and deepens our love for Christ Jesus. The Bible describes some of his varied roles.



<sup>3</sup> During Christ's earthly ministry, it became clear that the reconciliation of obedient mankind to God would be accomplished through Jesus. (John 14:6) As mankind's Redeemer, Jesus gave himself as a ransom in exchange for many. (Matt. 20:28) So Jesus is more than just an example of godly conduct. He is the key figure in the outworking of 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) Jesus' sacrificial death and his resurrection have opened the way for obedient mankind to experience eternal blessings under the rule of God's heavenly Kingdom.

<sup>4</sup> As High Priest, Jesus is able to "sympathize with our weaknesses" and make atonement for the sins of his dedicated followers here on earth. The apostle Paul explained: "We do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tested in all respects as we have, but without sin." Paul then encouraged those who exercise faith in Jesus Christ to take full advantage of this arrangement for reconciliation to God, saying: "Let us, then, approach the throne of undeserved kindness with freeness of speech, so that we may receive mercy and find undeserved kindness to help us at the right time."—Heb. 4:14-16; 1 John 2:2.

<sup>5</sup> Jesus is also Head of the Christian congregation. As was true of his followers in the first century, we today have no need of a human leader. Jesus gives direction through holy spirit and through qualified undershepherds, who are accountable to him and to his

heavenly Father for the care of the flock of God. (Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3) Speaking prophetically of Jesus, Jehovah said: “Look! I made him a witness to the nations, a leader and commander to the nations.” (Isa. 55:4) Jesus confirmed the fulfillment of this prophecy when he told his disciples: “Neither be called leaders, for your Leader is one, the Christ.”—Matt. 23:10.

Jesus is the key figure in the outworking of Jehovah’s purpose for mankind

<sup>6</sup>As an expression of his mental attitude and willingness to help us, Jesus extends the invitation: “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 yourselves. For my yoke is kindly, and my load is light.” (Matt. 11:28-30) By administering the affairs of the Christian congregation with mildness and in a way that brings us refreshment, Jesus Christ has proved himself to be “the fine shepherd” in imitation of his heavenly Father, Jehovah God.—John 10:11; Isa. 40:11.

<sup>7</sup>In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul explained another facet of Jesus Christ’s role in these words: “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) Before com-

ing to earth, Jesus was God's "master worker," being the first of God's creation. (Prov. 8:22-31) When God sent Jesus to earth, he did God's will at all times. He endured the supreme test and died faithful to his Father. (John 4:34; 15:10) Because his Son was loyal even to death, God resurrected him to heaven and gave him the right to be King of the heavenly Kingdom. (Acts 2:32-36) As such, Christ Jesus has the awesome assignment from God to lead myriads of powerful spirit creatures in removing human rule from the earth and ridding our globe of all wickedness. (Prov. 2:21, 22; 2 Thess. 1:6-9; Rev. 19:11-21; 20:1-3) Then God's heavenly Kingdom under Christ will be the only ruling authority over the entire earth.—Rev. 11:15.

### **WHAT RECOGNITION OF HIS ROLE MEANS**

<sup>8</sup> Jesus Christ, our Exemplar, is perfect. He has been commissioned to care for us. In order to benefit from his loving, watchful care, we need to remain loyal to Jehovah and keep in step with Jehovah's progressive organization.

<sup>9</sup> Jesus' followers in the first century fully recognized the role of Christ in God's arrangement. They showed this by working together in unity under the headship of Christ, submitting themselves to his direction, as given by means of holy spirit. (Acts 15:12-21) The apostle Paul made reference to the unity of the anointed Christian congregation 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 is harmoniously joined

together and made to cooperate through every joint that gives what is needed. When each respective member functions properly, this contributes to the growth of the body as it builds itself up in love.”—Eph. 4:15, 16.

<sup>10</sup> When each one in the congregation cooperates with the others and all work in harmony under Christ’s headship, there is growth and a warm spirit of love, which is “a perfect bond of union.”—John 10:16; Col. 3:14; 1 Cor. 12:14-26.

<sup>11</sup> World events in fulfillment of 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. 2:1-12; 110:1, 2) What does this signify for those now living on earth? Jesus will soon demonstrate his role as King of kings and Lord of lords when he executes divine judgment against his enemies. (Rev. 11:15; 12:10; 19:16) Then, Jehovah’s promise of deliverance expressed at the beginning of man’s rebellion will be fulfilled toward those at Christ’s right hand of favor. (Matt. 25:34) How happy we are to have recognized Christ’s role in God’s arrangement! May we remain unified in accomplishing a worldwide ministry under Christ’s leadership during these last days.

## “Remember Those Who Are Taking the Lead Among You”

THESE words of the apostle Paul, recorded at Hebrews 13:7, can also be translated: “Remember those who are governors of you.” From Pentecost 33 C.E. onward, the faithful apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled this role as a governing body that took the lead in providing direction for the newly founded Christian congregation. (Acts 6:2-4) By about the year 49 C.E., this governing body had been enlarged to include more than Jesus’ apostles. When the circumcision issue was decided, the governing body included “the apostles and elders in Jerusalem.” (Acts 15:1, 2) 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 were obedient and submissive to the direction of the governing body, and as a result, they received Jehovah’s blessing and prospered.—Acts 8:1, 14, 15; 15:22-31; 16:4, 5; Heb. 13:17.

<sup>2</sup>After the death of the apostles, the great apostasy set in. (2 Thess. 2:3-12) As Jesus foretold in his parable about the wheat and the weeds, the wheat (anointed Christians) was oversown with weeds (imitation Christians). Down through the centuries, the groups were allowed to grow side by side until the harvest, “a

conclusion of a system of things.” (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43) Individual anointed Christians continued to enjoy Jesus’ favor during this time, but there was no governing body, no clear channel on earth that Jesus was using to give direction to his followers. (Matt. 28:20) However, he foretold that a change would occur during the harvest.

<sup>3</sup> “Who really is the faithful and discreet slave?” With that question, Jesus Christ introduced a parable, or illustration, as part of “the sign” he gave regarding “the conclusion of the system of things.” (Matt. 24:3, 42-47) Jesus indicated that this faithful slave would be busy providing God’s people with spiritual food “at the proper time.” Just as Jesus used a *group* of men—rather than an individual—to take the lead in the first century, the faithful slave that Jesus uses during the conclusion of the system of things is not one man.

### **IDENTIFYING “THE FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE”**

<sup>4</sup> Whom did Jesus appoint to feed his followers? It is only fitting that he would use anointed Christians on earth. The Bible refers to them as “a royal priesthood” who have been commissioned to “‘declare abroad the excellencies’ of the One who called [them] out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (1 Pet. 2:9; Mal. 2:7; Rev. 12:17) Do *all* anointed ones on earth make up the faithful slave? No. When Jesus miraculously provided physical food to a crowd of some 5,000 men, besides women and young children, he distributed it to the disciples, the disciples in turn to the crowds. (Matt. 14:19) He

fed many through the hands of a few. Today, he is providing spiritual food in a similar way.

<sup>5</sup> So “the faithful steward, the discreet one,” is made up of a small group of anointed brothers who are directly involved in preparing and dispensing spiritual food during Christ’s presence. (Luke 12:42) Throughout the last days, the anointed brothers who constitute “the faithful and discreet slave” have served together at headquarters. Today, these anointed brothers make up the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

<sup>6</sup> Christ uses this body to publish information about the fulfillment of Bible prophecies and to give timely direction regarding the application of Bible principles in daily life. This spiritual food is distributed through the local congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses. (Isa. 43:10; Gal. 6:16) In Bible times, a trusted slave, or steward, was a house manager. Likewise, the faithful and discreet slave has been charged with the responsibility of managing the household of faith. So the faithful slave also oversees material assets, the preaching activity, assembly and convention programs, the appointment of overseers to serve in various capacities in the organization, and the production of Bible literature, all of which benefit the “domestics.”—Matt. 24:45.

<sup>7</sup> Who, then, are the “domestics”? Simply put, they are those who are fed. Initially, all the domestics were

It is vital for us to be submissive to those who keep watch over us for our spiritual well-being

anointed ones. Later, the domestics came to include the great crowd of “other sheep.” (John 10:16) Both groups feed on the spiritual food that is dispensed by the faithful slave.

<sup>8</sup> During the great tribulation, when Jesus comes to pronounce and execute judgment on this wicked system, he will appoint the faithful slave “over all his belongings.” (Matt. 24:46, 47) Those who make up the faithful slave will receive their heavenly reward. Along with the rest of the 144,000, they will share Christ’s heavenly authority. Although there will no longer be a faithful and discreet slave on earth, Jehovah and Jesus will provide direction to the earthly subjects of the Messianic Kingdom through those appointed to serve as “princes.”—Ps. 45:16.

### **WHY “REMEMBER THOSE WHO ARE TAKING THE LEAD”?**

<sup>9</sup> There are many reasons for us to “remember those who are taking the lead” and to demonstrate our trust in them. Why is doing this to our advantage? The apostle Paul stated: “They are keeping watch over you as those who will render an account, so that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you.” (Heb. 13:17) It is vital for us to be obedient and submissive to direction from those taking the lead because they keep watch over us for our spiritual protection and well-being.

<sup>10</sup> As recorded at 1 Corinthians 16:14, Paul said: “Let everything you do be done with love.” Decisions made in behalf of God’s people are based on this superior quality of love. Regarding love, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 states:



“Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous. It does not brag, does not get puffed up, does not behave indecently, does not look for its own interests, does not become provoked. It does not keep account of the injury. It does not rejoice over unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.” Because love is the basis of all the decisions that are made for the benefit of Jehovah’s servants, we have every reason to feel secure under such direction. Moreover, this is simply a reflection of Jehovah’s love.

<sup>11</sup> As was true in the first century, those whom Jehovah is using to govern his people are imperfect men. However, Jehovah has used imperfect humans in the past to accomplish his will. Noah built an ark and preached about the coming destruction of his day. (Gen. 6:13, 14, 22; 2 Pet. 2:5) Moses was appointed to lead Jehovah’s people out of Egypt. (Ex. 3:10) Imperfect men were inspired to write the Bible. (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21) Jehovah’s use of imperfect men today to direct the preaching and disciple-making work does not weaken our confidence in God’s organization. Rather, we are strengthened because we know that without Jehovah’s backing, the organization could never accomplish all that it does. Through much hardship and experience, the faithful slave has demonstrated that God’s spirit is directing matters. Abundant blessings have been poured out on the visible part of Jehovah’s organization today. Therefore, we wholeheartedly give it our full support and put our trust in it.

## **HOW WE DEMONSTRATE OUR TRUST**

<sup>12</sup> Those who are appointed to responsible positions in the congregation demonstrate their trust by gladly accepting and faithfully discharging the obligations of their appointments. (Acts 20:28) As Kingdom proclaimers, we zealously engage in the house-to-house work, make return visits, and conduct home Bible studies. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) In order to benefit fully from the rich spiritual food being dispensed by the faithful slave, we prepare for and attend our Christian meetings, including assemblies and conventions. We greatly benefit from the interchange of encouragement that takes place when we associate with our brothers at these Christian gatherings.—Heb. 10:24, 25.

<sup>13</sup> When we support the organization with our material contributions, we give evidence of our trust in it. (Prov. 3:9, 10) When we see that our brothers are in need materially, we respond without delay. (Gal. 6:10; 1 Tim. 6:18) We do this in a spirit of brotherly love, always on the alert for opportunities to show Jehovah and his organization that we appreciate the goodness bestowed on us.—John 13:35.

<sup>14</sup> We also show that we put our trust in the organization by supporting its decisions. This includes humbly following the direction of those who have been placed in positions of oversight, such as circuit overseers and congregation elders. These brothers are included among “those who are taking the lead,” to whom we should be obedient and submissive. (Heb. 13:7, 17) Even if we do not fully understand the reasons behind certain deci-

sions, we know that upholding them will be for our lasting good. As a result, Jehovah blesses us for our obedience to his Word and his organization. We thus show our subjection to the Master, Jesus Christ.

<sup>15</sup> Yes, we have every reason to put our trust in the faithful and discreet slave. Satan, the god of this system of things, is making an all-out effort to bring reproach on Jehovah's name and organization. (2 Cor. 4:4) Do not fall prey to Satan's wicked tactics! (2 Cor. 2:11) He knows that he has only "a short period of time" before his abyssing, and he is determined to turn as many of Jehovah's people away from God as possible. (Rev. 12: 12) However, as Satan intensifies his efforts, may we draw ever closer to Jehovah. May we put our trust in Jehovah and in the channel that he is using to direct his people today. Our doing so results in a united brotherhood.

## How the Congregation Is Organized and Governed

IN HIS first letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul expressed an important truth about God. Paul wrote: “God is a God not of disorder but of peace.” Then commenting further with regard to congregation meetings, he said: “Let all things take place decently and by arrangement.”—1 Cor. 14:33, 40.

<sup>2</sup> At the very beginning of the same letter, the apostle gave admonition concerning dissensions that existed within the Corinthian congregation. Paul exhorted the brothers there to “speak in agreement” and to be “completely united in the same mind and in the same line of thought.” (1 Cor. 1:10, 11) He then gave them counsel with regard to various matters that were affecting the unity of the congregation. Using the illustration of a human body, he showed the need for unity and cooperation. He urged all in the Christian congregation, regardless of their role, to care for one another in a loving way. (1 Cor. 12:12-26) Such harmonious cooperation among those in the congregation implies that it would be organized.

<sup>3</sup> But how was the Christian congregation to be organized? Who would organize it? What kind of structure would it have? Who would serve in appointed positions? By letting the Bible be our guide, we get clear answers to these questions.—1 Cor. 4:6.

## **ORGANIZED THEOCRATICALLY**

<sup>4</sup>The Christian congregation was established on the day of Pentecost 33 C.E. What can we learn about the congregation in the first century? It was organized and governed theocratically, that is, under God (Greek, *the-os'*) rule (*kra'tos*). These two words appear at 1 Peter 5:10, 11. The inspired account of what took place in Jerusalem nearly 2,000 years ago leaves no doubt that the congregation of anointed Christians was established by God. (Acts 2:1-47) It was his building, his household. (1 Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:19) The pattern of organization and operation that was set during the first century is followed by the Christian congregation today.

<sup>5</sup>The early congregation began with about 120 disciples. Holy spirit was poured out on these first, in fulfillment of Joel 2:28, 29. (Acts 2:16-18) But that same day, about 3,000 others were baptized in water and brought into the congregation of spirit-begotten ones. They had embraced the word about the Christ and “continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles.” After that, “Jehovah continued to add to them daily those being saved.”—Acts 2:41, 42, 47.

<sup>6</sup>The growth of the congregation in Jerusalem was such that the Jewish high priest complained that the disciples had filled Jerusalem with their teaching. The new disciples in Jerusalem came to include many Jewish

priests who became part of the congregation.—Acts 5: 27, 28; 6:7.

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said: “You will be witnesses of me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the most distant part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) And so it was that when 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 was preached successfully among the uncircumcised, non-Jewish people of the nations. (Acts 10:1-48) All this preaching activity resulted in the making of many disciples and in new congregations being formed outside of Jerusalem.—Acts 11:19-21; 14:21-23.

<sup>8</sup> What arrangements were made to ensure that each newly established congregation was organized and governed God’s way—theocratically? Through the operation of God’s spirit, provision was made for undershepherds to care for the flock. In congregations that Paul and Barnabas visited during their first missionary journey, they made appointments of elders. (Acts 14:23) The Bible writer Luke relates information about Paul’s meeting with the elders 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: 17, 28) They qualified to be elders because they met

the Scriptural requirements. (1 Tim. 3:1-7) Paul's fellow worker Titus was authorized to make appointments of elders in the congregations of Crete.—Titus 1:5.

<sup>9</sup> As more congregations were formed, the apostles and elders in Jerusalem continued to serve as the principal overseers of the expanded international Christian congregation of the first century. They served as its governing body.

<sup>10</sup> Writing to the congregation in Ephesus, the apostle Paul explained that by working in accord with God's spirit, the Christian congregation could maintain unity through adherence to the headship of Jesus Christ. The apostle urged Christians there to cultivate humility and to maintain "the oneness of the spirit" in peaceful association with all in 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.

### **CONGREGATIONS TODAY FOLLOW THE APOSTOLIC PATTERN**

<sup>11</sup> Today, a similar pattern of organization is followed in all congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. Collectively, these form a united worldwide congregation built around the nucleus of spirit-anointed ones. (Zech. 8:23) Jesus Christ makes this possible. True to his promise,

he has loyally remained with his anointed disciples “all the days until the conclusion of the system of things.” People brought into the growing congregation embrace the good news of God, dedicate their life unreservedly to Jehovah, and get baptized as disciples of Jesus. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 1:14; Acts 2:41) They recognize “the fine shepherd,” Jesus Christ, as Head of the entire flock, which is made up of anointed Christians as well as “other sheep.” (John 10:14, 16; Eph. 1:22, 23) That “one flock” maintains its unity by loyally recognizing the headship of Christ and by submitting to the organizational channel, “the faithful and discreet slave,” that Christ appointed. May we continue to put our full confidence and trust in this channel today.—Matt. 24:45.

## **THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS CORPORATIONS**

<sup>12</sup> In order to provide spiritual food at the proper time and to get the good news of the Kingdom preached before the end comes, certain corporations have been established. These legal entities are recognized by the laws of various countries, and they cooperate with one another. They facilitate the preaching of the good news worldwide.

## **STRUCTURE OF BRANCH ORGANIZATION**

<sup>13</sup> Whenever a branch office is established, a Branch Committee of three or more elders is appointed to look after the work in the country or countries under the jurisdiction of that particular branch. One member of the committee serves as the Branch Committee coordinator.



<sup>14</sup> Local congregations under each branch are organized into circuits. These vary in size, depending on geographic and language considerations as well as the number of congregations within the area assigned to the branch. A circuit overseer is appointed to serve the congregations in each circuit. The branch office provides the circuit overseer with direction on how to care for his duties.

<sup>15</sup> The congregations acknowledge organizational arrangements, which are outlined for the benefit of all. They accept the appointment of elders, who oversee the work in branches, circuits, and congregations. They look to the faithful and discreet slave for spiritual food at the proper time. The faithful slave today, in turn, adheres strictly to the headship of Christ, holds to Bible principles, and responds to the direction of the holy spirit. As all of us work together in unity, we enjoy results similar to those experienced by Christians in the first century: “Indeed, the congregations continued to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number day by day.”—Acts 16:5.

## Overseers to Shepherd the Flock

DURING his earthly ministry, Jesus proved himself to be “the fine shepherd.” (John 10:11) On viewing the crowds who eagerly followed 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 took note of his loving concern. How different Jesus was from the false shepherds of Israel, who neglected the flock so much that the sheep were scattered and spiritually starved! (Ezek. 34:7, 8) Jesus’ fine example of teaching and caring for the sheep, even to the point of laying down his life for them, taught the apostles how to help those with faith to return to Jehovah, “the shepherd and overseer of [their] souls.”—1 Pet. 2:25.

<sup>2</sup> When speaking to Peter on one occasion, Jesus emphasized the importance of feeding and shepherding the sheep. (John 21:15-17) Peter was no doubt deeply moved by this and later admonished the elders in the early Christian congregation: “Shepherd the flock of God under your care, serving as overseers, not under compulsion, but willingly before God; not for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; not lording it over those who are God’s inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock.” (1 Pet. 5:1-3) Peter’s words also apply to overseers in the congregation today. In imitation of Jesus,

elders serve willingly and eagerly as examples to the flock, taking the lead in Jehovah's service.—Heb. 13:7.

<sup>3</sup> We can be grateful for the spirit-appointed overseers in the congregation. The benefits we receive from their care are many. For example, overseers give encouragement and personal attention to everyone in the congregation. Each week, they preside diligently at congregation meetings, where all in the faith are nourished. (Rom. 12:8) Their efforts to protect the flock from harmful elements, such as wicked men, contribute to our security. (Isa. 32:2; Titus 1:9-11) Their lead in the field ministry encourages us to keep active in preaching the good news regularly each month. (Heb. 13:15-17) Through these "gifts in men," Jehovah has provided for the building up of the congregation.—Eph. 4:8, 11, 12.

### **QUALIFICATIONS FOR OVERSEERS**

<sup>4</sup> To make sure that the congregation is cared for properly, men appointed to serve as overseers must meet the requirements set out in God's Word. Only if they qualify can it be said that they are appointed by holy spirit. (Acts 20:28) Admittedly, the Scriptural standards for Christian overseers are high, since being an overseer is a serious responsibility. But the standards are not so high that they cannot be met by Christian men who have real love for Jehovah and are willing to be used by him. It should be obvious to all that the overseers are individuals who apply Bible counsel in the everyday affairs of life.

<sup>5</sup> The apostle Paul listed the basic Scriptural requirements for overseers in his first letter to Timothy and in his letter to Titus. At **1 Timothy 3:1-7**, we read: “If a man is reaching out to be an overseer, he is desirous of a fine work. The overseer should therefore be irreprehensible, a husband of one wife, moderate in habits, sound in mind, orderly, hospitable, qualified to teach, not a drunkard, not violent, but reasonable, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money, a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having his children in subjection with all seriousness (for if any man does not know how to preside over his own household, how will he care for the congregation of God?), not a newly converted man, for fear that he might get puffed up with pride and fall into the judgment passed on the Devil. Moreover, he should also have a fine testimony from outsiders so that he does not fall into reproach and a snare of the Devil.”

<sup>6</sup> Paul wrote to Titus: “I left you in Crete so that you would correct the things that were defective and make appointments of elders in city after city, as I instructed you: if there is any man free from accusation, a husband of one wife, having believing children who are not accused of debauchery or rebelliousness. For as God’s steward, an overseer must be free from accusation, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not a drunkard, not violent, 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, so that he may be able both to encourage by the teaching that is wholesome and to reprove those who contradict.”

—**Titus 1:5-9.**

<sup>7</sup>Although the Scriptural requirements for overseers may at first seem overwhelming, Christian men should not hold back from reaching out. When they manifest the fine Christian qualities required of overseers, they encourage others in the congregation to do the same. Paul wrote that such “gifts in men” are provided “with a view to the readjustment of the holy ones, for ministerial work, to build up the body of the Christ, until we all attain to the oneness of the faith and of the accurate knowledge of the Son of God, to being a full-grown man, attaining the measure of stature that belongs to the fullness of the Christ.” —Eph. 4:8, 12, 13.

<sup>8</sup>Overseers are **not** mere boys or **newly converted** men. Rather, they are individuals with experience in Christian living, having a broad knowledge of the Bible, a deep understanding of the Scriptures, and a genuine love for the congregation. They have the courage to speak up and correct wrongdoers, thus protecting the sheep from any who would selfishly exploit them. (Isa. 32:2) The overseers are readily recognized by all in the congregation as spiritually mature men, having genuine concern for the flock of God.

In imitation of Jesus, elders serve willingly and eagerly as examples to the flock, taking the lead in Jehovah’s service

<sup>9</sup> Those qualifying for appointment as overseers demonstrate practical wisdom in their lives. If married, an overseer would be adhering to the Christian standard for marriage, namely, being the **husband of one wife** and **presiding over his own household in a fine manner**. If the overseer has **believing children** who are **in subjection with all seriousness** and are **not accused of debauchery or rebelliousness**, the congregation can confidently approach him for counsel and advice on family life and Christian living. The overseer is also **irreprehensible** and **free from accusation** and has **a fine testimony** even **from outsiders**. No valid charge of improper conduct can be brought against him to mar the reputation of the congregation. He would not recently have been reprovved for serious wrongdoing. Others in the congregation are moved to imitate his fine example and are happy to entrust their spiritual life to his care.—1 Cor. 11:1; 16:15, 16.

<sup>10</sup> Such qualified men are able to serve the Christian congregation in a role similar to that of the elders of Israel who were described as “wise, discreet, and experienced.” (Deut. 1:13) Christian elders are not without sin, but they are known in the congregation and in the community as upright and God-fearing men who have demonstrated over a period of time that they conduct their lives in harmony with godly principles. Their blamelessness gives them freeness of speech before the congregation.—Rom. 3:23.

<sup>11</sup> Men qualifying for appointment as overseers show **moderation in personal habits** and in their dealings

with others. They are not fanatics. Instead, their way of life is characterized by balance and **self-control**. Their moderation is demonstrated in such things as eating, drinking, recreation, hobbies, and entertainment. They are moderate in the use of alcoholic beverages so as **not** to leave themselves open to charges of drunkenness or of being a **drunkard**. One whose senses have been dulled by intoxicating drink easily loses self-control and is not in a position to watch over the spiritual interests of the congregation.

<sup>12</sup> Exercising oversight of the congregation requires that a man have a measure of **orderliness**. His good habits are reflected in his personal appearance, his home, and his everyday activities. Such a man avoids procrastination; he sees what is required and plans accordingly. He adheres to godly principles.

<sup>13</sup> An overseer must be **reasonable**. He must be able to work in unity with others within the body of elders and cooperate with them. He should have a proper view of himself and not be overly demanding of others. As a reasonable person, the overseer is not opinionated, considering his views to be superior to those of his fellow elders. Others may excel in qualities or abilities that he may lack. An elder shows reasonableness when he bases his conclusions solidly on the Scriptures and strives to imitate the example of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 2:2-8) An elder is **not quarrelsome or violent** but shows proper respect for others, considering them to be superior. He is **not self-willed**, always insisting that his way or his point of view be accepted. He is

**not quick-tempered**, but he is peaceable in his dealings with others.

<sup>14</sup> Similarly, one qualifying to serve as an overseer in the congregation is **sound in mind**. This means that he is levelheaded, not hasty in judgment. He has a good comprehension of Jehovah's principles and their application. Someone who is sound in mind is receptive to counsel and direction. He is not hypocritical.

<sup>15</sup> Paul reminded Titus that an overseer is **a lover of goodness**. He should be **righteous** and **loyal**. These qualities are reflected in his dealings with others and in his firm stand for what is right and good. He is unwavering in his devotion to Jehovah and is consistent in upholding righteous principles. He can keep a confidence. He is also genuinely **hospitable**, freely giving of himself and his belongings for the benefit of others.—Acts 20:33-35.

<sup>16</sup> In order to serve effectively, an overseer needs to be **qualified to teach**. According to Paul's words to Titus, the overseer would be "holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of teaching, so that he may be able both to encourage by the teaching that is wholesome and to reprove those who contradict." (Titus 1:9) He is able to use reasoning, produce evidence, overcome objections, and apply the Scriptures in such a way that others are convinced and have their faith strengthened. The overseer exercises such teaching ability in favorable times as well as in difficult times. (2 Tim. 4:2) He has the patience needed to reprove with mildness one who is in error or to convince a doubter and motivate



him to do good works on the basis of faith. Being qualified to teach either before an audience or on a one-on-one basis gives evidence that the overseer meets this important requirement.

<sup>17</sup> It is important for elders to have a zealous share in the ministry. It should be apparent that also in this way they are striving to imitate Jesus, who considered the preaching of the good news to be a priority. Jesus took an interest in his disciples, helping them to be effective evangelizers. (Mark 1:38; Luke 8:1) The elders' determination to spend time in the ministry despite their busy schedule stimulates the entire congregation to have similar zeal. And when the elders preach along with members of their own family as well as others in the congregation, "an interchange of encouragement" results.—Rom. 1:11, 12.

<sup>18</sup> All of this may seem to be a great deal to expect of one who serves as an overseer. Certainly no overseer could measure up perfectly to the high standard set forth in the Bible, but none of the appointed elders in the congregation should be so significantly lacking in any one of these qualities that the deficiency could be considered a serious flaw. Some elders may have certain outstanding qualities, whereas others may excel in different areas. The result is that the body of elders as a whole will have all the fine qualities that are necessary for exercising proper oversight of the congregation of God.

<sup>19</sup> When the elders as a body recommend men for appointment as overseers, they will want to keep in mind

the apostle Paul's words: "I tell everyone there among you not to 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 given to him a measure of faith." (Rom. 12:3) Each elder should consider himself a lesser one. No one should prove to be

"overly righteous" when examining the qualifications of another. (Eccl. 7:16) Having clearly in mind the Scriptural requirements for overseers, the body of elders would want to determine whether a brother being considered measures up to those standards to a reasonable degree. Allowing for human imperfections and being free of biased leanings and hypocrisy, elders will make their recommendations in a manner that shows due respect for Jehovah's righteous standards and is for the good of the congregation. They will give prayerful consideration to each recommendation and follow the direction of God's holy spirit. This is one of the serious responsibilities they shoulder, and they must do so in accord with Paul's admonition: "Never lay your hands hastily on any man."—1 Tim. 5:21, 22.

To make sure that the congregation is cared for properly, men appointed to serve as overseers must meet the requirements set out in God's Word

### **FRUITAGE OF THE SPIRIT**

<sup>20</sup> Spiritually qualified men give evidence that they are directed by holy spirit, and they manifest its fruitage

in their life. Paul lists the nine aspects of the fruitage of the spirit as “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control.” (Gal. 5: 22, 23) Such overseers are refreshing to the brothers and help to unite the congregation in rendering sacred service. Their course of conduct and the fruits of their labors show that they are appointed by holy spirit.—Acts 20:28.

### **MEN WHO PROMOTE UNITY**

<sup>21</sup> It is vital that elders work together to promote unity in the congregation. They may have very different personalities, but they preserve the unity of the body by listening respectfully to one another, even though they may not agree on every matter they discuss. As long as no Bible principle is being violated, each should be willing to yield and to support the final decision of the body of elders. Having a yielding spirit shows that one is guided by “the wisdom from above,” which is “peaceable, reasonable.” (Jas. 3:17, 18) No elder should think that he is above the others, and no elder should try to dominate the others. Elders are really cooperating with Jehovah when they cooperate as a body for the good of the congregation.—1 Cor., chap. 12; Col. 2:19.

### **REACHING OUT**

<sup>22</sup> Mature Christian men should desire to become overseers. (1 Tim. 3:1) However, serving as an elder requires work and self-sacrifice. It means making oneself available to serve the needs of the brothers, caring for their spiritual interests. Reaching out to become an overseer

means striving to meet the qualifications set out in the Scriptures.

### **PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES MAY CHANGE**

<sup>23</sup> A brother who has served faithfully for a long time may become physically ill or otherwise incapacitated. Perhaps because of advanced age, he may no longer be able to care for the responsibilities of an overseer. Even so, he should still be respected and viewed as an elder as long as he is appointed. There would be no need for him to resign on account of his limitations. He is still worthy of the double honor given to all hardworking elders who are serving to the best of their abilities in shepherding the flock.

<sup>24</sup> But if a brother should feel that it would be best for him to resign because of changed personal circumstances that limit his ability to serve, he may choose to do so. (1 Pet. 5:2) He should still be respected. He is able to do much good in the congregation, even though he no longer has assignments and duties given to elders.

### **POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CONGREGATION**

<sup>25</sup> Elders care for a variety of responsibilities in the congregation. There is a coordinator of the body of elders, a secretary, a service overseer, a *Watchtower* Study conductor, and a Life and Ministry Meeting overseer. Many elders serve as group overseers. The elders serve in these positions for an indefinite period of time. Of course, if a brother moves, is unable to care for his responsibilities for health reasons, or becomes disqual-

ified for failure to measure up to the 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 other brothers qualify to be appointed as elders.

<sup>26</sup> The **coordinator of the body of elders** serves as chairman at meetings of the body of elders. As such, he humbly works along with the other elders in caring for the flock of God. (Rom. 12:10; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3) He should be a good organizer and able to preside diligently.—Rom. 12:8.

<sup>27</sup> The **secretary** handles congregation records and keeps the elders informed of important communications. If necessary, another elder or a capable ministerial servant may be assigned to assist him.

<sup>28</sup> Arrangements for field service activity and other service-related matters come under the direction of the **service overseer**. He schedules regular visits to all field service groups so that one weekend each month, he visits a different group. In smaller congregations where there are only a few service groups, he may visit each group twice a year. During his visit, he will conduct the meetings for field service, work with the group in the ministry, and assist publishers with their return visits and Bible studies.

## **GROUP OVERSEERS**

<sup>29</sup> One of the outstanding privileges in the congregation is that of serving as a **group overseer**. His responsibilities include (1) taking an active interest in the

spirituality of each person in the field service group; (2) helping each one in the group to have a regular, meaningful, and joyful share in the ministry; and (3) assisting and training ministerial servants in the group to reach out and qualify for congregation responsibilities. The body of elders determines which brothers are most qualified to fulfill all these aspects of the assignment.

<sup>30</sup> Because of the nature of the assignment, group overseers should, if possible, be elders. Or a capable ministerial servant can serve until an elder can take over. A ministerial servant working in this capacity is called a group servant, as he does not function as an overseer in the congregation. Rather, he works under the direction of the elders in caring for his responsibility.

<sup>31</sup> An important feature of the group overseer's work is that of taking the lead in the field ministry. The regularity, zeal, and enthusiasm that he shows will encourage those in his group. Because the publishers appreciate the encouragement and help that come from being together, it would be good to have a group witnessing schedule convenient for the majority. (Luke 10:1-16) The overseer needs to make sure that there is always enough territory. He will generally conduct the meeting for field service and organize the publishers for that day's activity. When he cannot be there, he should arrange for another elder, a ministerial servant or, if neither is available, a qualified publisher to care for these responsibilities so that the publishers have the direction they need.

<sup>32</sup> The group overseer should plan ahead for the visit of the service overseer, informing his group of the visit and building anticipation for its benefits. When all in the group are kept fully aware of the arrangement, they can enthusiastically support it.

<sup>33</sup> Each service group is purposely kept small. This allows the group overseer to become well-acquainted with all assigned to it. As a loving shepherd, he is keenly interested in each one. He tries to give personal help and encouragement for the field ministry and for the support of congregation meetings. He also endeavors to do whatever else is appropriate to help each person keep spiritually strong. Those who become ill or depressed will benefit from a personal visit. An encouraging suggestion or a word of counsel might prompt some to reach out for additional privileges in the congregation and thus be of greater assistance to their brothers. Most of the group overseer's efforts will logically be directed toward helping those in his own group. However, as an elder and a shepherd, he is lovingly concerned about all in the congregation and is ready to help any who are in need.—Acts 20:17, 28.

<sup>34</sup> One responsibility of the group overseer is to assist in collecting field service reports from those in his service group. These reports are forwarded to the secretary. Individual publishers can assist the group overseer by turning in their field service reports promptly. This can be done by giving their reports directly to the group overseer at the end of each month or by placing them in

the box designated for field service reports at the Kingdom Hall.

### **CONGREGATION SERVICE COMMITTEE**

<sup>35</sup> There are certain duties that are cared for by the Congregation Service Committee, which is made up of the coordinator of the body of elders, the secretary, and the service overseer. For example, the service committee approves the use of the Kingdom Hall for weddings and funerals and is responsible for assigning publishers to field service groups. The committee also approves applications for regular and auxiliary pioneering and other avenues of service. The service committee works under the direction of the body of elders.

<sup>36</sup> The specific duties of these brothers—along with those of the *Watchtower* Study conductor, the Life and Ministry Meeting overseer, and others who make up the body of elders—are outlined by the branch office.

<sup>37</sup> The body of elders in each congregation meets periodically to discuss matters related to the spiritual progress of the congregation. In addition to the elders' meeting held during the visit of the circuit overseer, an elders' meeting is held about three months after each visit of the circuit overseer. Of course, the elders may convene at any time that circumstances make it advisable.

### **BE SUBMISSIVE**

<sup>38</sup> The overseers are imperfect men; yet all in the congregation are urged to be submissive to them because it is Jehovah's arrangement. He will hold the overseers



accountable for their actions. They are representing him and his theocratic rule. Hebrews 13:17 says: “Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over you as those who will render an account, so that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you.” Just as Jehovah uses holy spirit to appoint a man, Jehovah will use that same holy spirit to remove a man from serving as an overseer if he fails to manifest the fruitage of the spirit and his pattern of life falls short of the Scriptural requirements.

<sup>39</sup> Do we not truly appreciate the hard work and fine example of the congregation overseers? In writing to the congregation in Thessalonica, Paul urged the brothers: “We request you, brothers, to show respect for those who are working hard among you and presiding over you in the Lord and admonishing you; and to give them extraordinary consideration in love because of their work.” (1 Thess. 5:12, 13) Much of the hard work of the congregation overseers makes our service to God easier and more enjoyable. Also, in his first letter to Timothy, Paul makes mention of the attitude that those in the congregation should cultivate toward the overseers, saying: “Let the elders who preside in a fine way be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in speaking and teaching.”—1 Tim. 5:17.

## **OTHER POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE ORGANIZATION**

<sup>40</sup> At times, selected elders are appointed to serve as members of Patient Visitation Groups. Others serve on

Hospital Liaison Committees and visit hospitals and doctors to encourage continued and expanded treatment of Jehovah's Witnesses without using blood. Other overseers are able to advance Kingdom interests by helping to build and maintain Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls or by serving as members of Convention Committees. The hard work of these brothers

and their willingness to expend themselves in this way are very much appreciated by all in the organization. Indeed, we "keep holding men of that sort dear."—Phil. 2:29.

As we continue submitting ourselves to overseers charged with shepherding the flock, we are drawn into unity with the Head of the congregation, Christ Jesus

### **CIRCUIT OVERSEER**

<sup>41</sup> The Governing Body arranges for the appointment of qualified elders to serve as circuit overseers. These are assigned by the branch office to visit the congregations that make up their circuits, usually twice a year. They also periodically visit pioneers in isolated territories. They plan their routing and notify each congregation sufficiently in advance so that the visit will result in the most benefit.

<sup>42</sup> The coordinator of the body of elders takes the lead in organizing matters so that the visit will prove spiritually refreshing to all. (Rom. 1:11, 12) On receiving noti-

fication of the visit and information about the personal needs of the circuit overseer and (if married) his wife, the coordinator of the body of elders through various brothers will make arrangements for accommodations and other necessary things. He makes sure that all, including the circuit overseer, are informed of these arrangements.

<sup>43</sup> The circuit overseer will contact the coordinator of the body of elders regarding the scheduling of meetings, including meetings for field service. These will be arranged in accord with the circuit overseer's suggestions and direction from the branch office. All need to be informed in advance concerning the time and place of the meetings with the congregation, with the pioneers, and with the elders and ministerial servants, as well as the time and place of the meetings for field service.

<sup>44</sup> On Tuesday afternoon, the circuit overseer examines the *Congregation's Publisher Records*, meeting attendance records, territory records, and the accounts. This will give him some insight into possible needs of the congregation and how he may be of assistance to those responsible for keeping these records. The coordinator of the body of elders should make arrangements for the circuit overseer to receive the records in advance.

<sup>45</sup> During his visit, the circuit overseer takes time to speak with the brothers individually as he is able—at meetings, in field service, at mealtimes, and at other times. Additionally, he meets with the elders

and ministerial servants, sharing appropriate Scriptural counsel, suggestions, and encouragement that will help them shoulder their responsibilities to shepherd 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 to give personal assistance regarding any problems they may be having in the ministry.

<sup>46</sup> If there are other matters that need attention, the circuit overseer will assist to the extent possible during the week. If these cannot be finished during that time, the circuit overseer can help the elders or individuals involved to do research on the Scriptural direction that applies. If the branch office needs to do any follow-up, he and the elders will provide the branch office with a detailed report on the matter.

<sup>47</sup> While visiting the congregation, the circuit overseer attends the regular congregation meetings. These may be adjusted from time to time in harmony with directions from the branch office. He will give talks designed to encourage, motivate, instruct, and fortify the congregation. He strives to engender love for Jehovah, Jesus Christ, and the organization.

<sup>48</sup> One of the objectives of the circuit overseer's visit is to encourage zealous participation in the ministry and provide practical suggestions. Many in the congregation may be able to adjust their schedule so that they can have a full share in field service that week, perhaps by arranging to auxiliary pioneer during the month of his

visit. Any who desire to work with him or his wife can make an appointment. Much good can be accomplished by taking the circuit overseer or his wife on Bible studies and return visits. Your extra effort to give full support to this aspect of the week's visit is deeply appreciated.—Prov. 27:17.

<sup>49</sup> Every year, two circuit assemblies are arranged for each circuit. The circuit overseer is responsible for the operation of the assembly organization on these occasions. The circuit overseer appoints an assembly overseer and an assistant assembly overseer. They are to work closely with him in caring for the assembly organization. This will enable the circuit overseer to give his primary attention to the assembly program. The circuit overseer also designates other capable men to care for various departments. He also arranges for an audit of the circuit accounts after each assembly. One circuit assembly a year will be served by a branch representative, who will be a visiting speaker. Because of distances involved or because the assembly facilities are small, some circuits are divided into sections with a circuit assembly held for each section.

<sup>50</sup> The circuit overseer submits his field service report directly to the branch office at the end of each month. If certain modest expenses are incurred—such as for travel, food, lodging, and other necessary items required to carry out his work—and they have not been covered by the congregation that he is serving, he may submit these to the branch office. Traveling representatives

have confidence that if they put the interests of Jehovah's Kingdom first, material needs will be cared for, as Jesus promised. (Luke 12:31) The congregations will want to be conscious of their privilege to show hospitality to these devoted elders who serve them.—3 John 5-8.

### **BRANCH COMMITTEE**

<sup>51</sup>In each branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the world, three or more spiritually qualified, mature brothers serve as a Branch Committee that oversees the preaching work in the country or countries under its jurisdiction. One of the committee members serves as the Branch Committee coordinator.

<sup>52</sup>Those serving on the Branch Committee handle matters pertaining to all the congregations in the branch territory. The committee oversees the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom throughout the branch territory and ensures that congregations and circuits are set up to give proper oversight to the needs of the field. The Branch Committee also gives attention to the missionary field and to special, regular, and auxiliary pioneer activity. When there are assemblies and conventions, the committee makes arrangements and assignments so that "all things take place decently and by arrangement."—1 Cor. 14:40.

<sup>53</sup>A Country Committee is appointed in some lands that come under the oversight of a Branch Committee in another land. This allows for closer supervision of the work where the Country Committee serves. It cares

for matters in the Bethel Home and office, handles correspondence and reports, and generally cares for the activities in the field. The Country Committee cooperates with the Branch Committee for the advancement of Kingdom interests.

<sup>54</sup> The Governing Body makes all appointments of those who serve on Branch Committees and Country Committees.

### **HEADQUARTERS REPRESENTATIVES**

<sup>55</sup> Periodically, arrangements are made by the Governing Body to have qualified brothers visit each of the branches throughout the earth. A brother serving in this capacity is known as a headquarters representative. His primary work is to encourage the Bethel family and to help the Branch Committee with problems or questions that may arise in carrying out the preaching and disciple-making work. This brother also meets with selected circuit overseers and periodically meets with field missionaries. When doing so, he talks with them about their problems and needs, giving necessary encouragement regarding their most important activity, Kingdom preaching and disciple making.

<sup>56</sup> The headquarters representative is very interested in what is being accomplished in the field as far as the Kingdom-preaching and other congregation activities are concerned. As time allows, he may also visit remote translation offices. When the headquarters representative visits a branch, he also shares to the extent possible in the Kingdom-preaching work.

## **LOVING OVERSIGHT**

<sup>57</sup> We benefit greatly from the hard work and loving care of mature Christian men. As we continue submitting ourselves to appointed overseers charged with shepherding the flock, we are drawn into unity with the Head of the congregation, Christ Jesus. (1 Cor. 16:15-18; Eph. 1:22, 23) As a result, God's spirit permeates the congregations worldwide, and God's Word serves to guide the work throughout the earth.—Ps. 119:105.



# Ministerial Servants Render Valuable Service

TO THE congregation in Philippi, the apostle Paul wrote: “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 that he greeted the ministerial servants. These men evidently played an important role in assisting the elders in the congregation back then. The same is true in our day. Ministerial servants render services that help the overseers and that contribute to the good order of the congregation.

<sup>2</sup> Do you know who the ministerial servants are in your congregation? Are you aware of the work they do for your benefit and for the benefit of the entire congregation? The efforts of such men are certainly appreciated by Jehovah. Paul wrote: “The men who minister in a fine manner are acquiring for themselves a fine standing and great freeness of speech in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”—1 Tim. 3:13.

## **SCRIPTURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MINISTERIAL SERVANTS**

<sup>3</sup> Ministerial servants are expected to lead a wholesome Christian life, to be responsible men, and to care for assignments properly. This becomes obvious when we consider what Paul had to say about their qualifications in his letter to Timothy: “Ministerial servants

should likewise be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in 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 their children and their own households.” **(1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12)** Holding to the high standard set for ministerial servants protects the congregation against accusations raised concerning the kind of men to whom special responsibilities are entrusted.

<sup>4</sup> Whether younger or older, ministerial servants are active in the ministry each month. In imitation of Jesus, they demonstrate zeal for the ministry. By such zeal, they reflect Jehovah’s interest in the salvation of mankind.—Isa. 9:7.

<sup>5</sup> Men who serve as ministerial servants are also exemplary in their dress, grooming, speech, attitude, and conduct. They are sound in mind, which earns them the respect of others. In addition, they take seriously their relationship with Jehovah and their privileges of service in the congregation.—Titus 2:2, 6-8.

<sup>6</sup> These men have been “tested as to fitness.” Even before receiving their appointment, they proved to be truly dedicated men. They have demonstrated that they put Kingdom interests first in their life and are reaching out for whatever service privileges may be open to them. They are indeed examples for others in the congregation to imitate.—1 Tim. 3:10.

## HOW THEY SERVE

<sup>7</sup> Ministerial servants render a variety of practical services in behalf of their brothers and sisters, thus allowing the overseers to spend more time caring for teaching and shepherding responsibilities. When giving them assignments, the body of elders takes into account their individual abilities and the needs of the congregation.

<sup>8</sup> Just consider some of these services: One ministerial servant may be assigned to care for the literature so that we can obtain it for personal use and for the field ministry. Others are assigned to keep congregation accounts or territory records. Some are assigned to handle microphones, to operate sound equipment, to serve as attendants, and to 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 on to assist in caring for these responsibilities.

<sup>9</sup> In some congregations, it may be possible to assign a different ministerial servant to each of these duties. Elsewhere, a ministerial servant may care for several assignments. In some instances, more than one ministerial servant may care for a certain task. If there are not enough ministerial servants to care for some of these responsibilities, the body of elders may arrange for other exemplary baptized brothers to do this necessary work. Thus they will gain experience that will be useful later when they become qualified to be appointed as ministerial servants. If brothers are not available, an exemplary sister could be asked

to assist with some things, even though she would not, of course, be appointed as a ministerial servant. An individual who is exemplary is someone whose conduct and worship are considered worthy of imitation. His or her meeting attendance, share in the ministry, family life, choices of entertainment, dress and grooming, and so forth are good examples for others.

Ministerial servants render a variety of practical services, thus allowing the overseers to spend more time caring for teaching and shepherding responsibilities

<sup>10</sup> In congregations that have very few elders, capable ministerial servants may be called on to review with individuals the questions for baptism dealing with doctrinal matters. These are found in the Appendix “Part 1: Christian Beliefs.” Since “Part 2: Christian Living” involves sensitive personal matters, an elder should consider this section.

<sup>11</sup> If there is good reason, the body of elders may find it beneficial periodically to change some assignments from one ministerial servant to another. However, there is great advantage in having brothers handle the same assignments for some time in order for them to gain experience and proficiency.

<sup>12</sup> Depending on local circumstances, there may be other responsibilities that can be assigned to ministerial servants whose advancement is “plainly seen by all peo-

ple.” (1 Tim. 4:15) If there are not enough elders, a ministerial servant may be assigned to serve as an assistant to a group overseer or, in some cases, as a group servant, working under the close supervision of the elders. Ministerial servants may be assigned to handle certain parts on the Life and Ministry Meeting, including conducting the Congregation Bible Study if needed, and delivering public talks. Other privileges may be extended to ministerial servants when there is a particular need and if they meet the requirements for the assignment. (1 Pet. 4:10) In assisting the elders, ministerial servants should give of themselves willingly.

<sup>13</sup> Though their work differs from that of the elders, it is no less a part of sacred service to God and is important to the smooth functioning of the congregation. In time, if ministerial servants carry out their obligations well and become qualified to serve as shepherds and teachers, they may be recommended to serve as elders.

<sup>14</sup> If you are a brother who is a teenager or is newly baptized, are you reaching out to qualify to become a ministerial servant? (1 Tim. 3:1) With so many people coming into the truth each year, qualified spiritual men are needed to care for congregation responsibilities. You can reach out by cultivating a desire to help others. One way to do this is by meditating on Jesus’ fine example. (Matt. 20:28; John 4:6, 7; 13:4, 5) Your desire will grow as you experience the joy that comes from giving to others. (Acts 20:35) Therefore, volunteer to give practical assistance to others, to help with the

maintenance of the Kingdom Hall, or to handle a substitute student assignment during the Life and Ministry Meeting. Reaching out also includes developing spiritual qualities by having a good routine of personal study. (Ps. 1:1, 2; Gal. 5:22, 23) In addition, a brother who is reaching out demonstrates reliability and faithfulness when given congregation assignments.—1 Cor. 4:2.

<sup>15</sup> Ministerial servants are appointed by holy spirit for the good of the congregation. All in the congregation can show their appreciation for the hard work of the ministerial servants by cooperating with them as they care for their assigned duties. In this way, the congregation will be showing appreciation for Jehovah's provision to maintain an orderly household.—Gal. 6:10.

## Meetings That “Incite to Love and Fine Works”

THROUGHOUT the centuries, Jehovah’s people have met together in an organized way. In ancient Israel, all males traveled to Jerusalem for the three great festivals. (Deut. 16:16) In the first century, Christians congregated regularly, often in someone’s home. (Philem. 1, 2) Today, we enjoy meetings, assemblies, and conventions. Why do God’s servants meet together? Primarily because it is an important part of our worship.—Ps. 95:6; Col. 3:16.

<sup>2</sup> Meetings also benefit those who attend. Regarding every seventh Festival of Booths, the Israelites were told: “Gather the people together, the men, the women, the children, and your foreign resident who is within your cities, in order that they may listen and learn and fear Jehovah your God and take care to carry out all the words of this Law.” (Deut. 31:12) Clearly, an important reason for meeting together is to be “taught by Jehovah.” (Isa. 54:13) Meetings also provide the opportunity to get to know one another, to receive encouragement, and to gain strength through association.

### **CONGREGATION MEETINGS**

<sup>3</sup> Disciples who were gathered together after Pentecost 33 C.E. devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles, and “day after day they were in constant

attendance in the temple with a united purpose.” (Acts 2:42, 46) Later, when Christians came together for worship, they read from inspired writings, including letters written by the apostles and other Christian disciples. (1 Cor. 1:1, 2; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 1:1; Jas. 1:1) There was also congregation prayer. (Acts 4:24-29; 20:36) At times, experiences from the missionary field were related. (Acts 11:5-18; 14:27, 28) Bible doctrines and the fulfillment of inspired prophecies were considered. Instruction was given in matters of approved Christian conduct and godly devotion. All were encouraged to be zealous proclaimers of the good news.—Rom. 10:9, 10; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; 15:58; Eph. 5:1-33.

<sup>4</sup> In our day, Christian meetings follow the pattern set in apostolic times. We heed the inspired exhortation found at Hebrews 10:24, 25: “Let us consider one another . . . , not forsaking our meeting together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you see the day drawing near.” During these difficult last days, we need the added encouragement that comes from meeting together regularly so that we can maintain spiritual strength and Christian integrity. (Rom. 1:11, 12) As Christians, we live among a crooked and twisted generation. We have rejected ungodliness and worldly desires. (Phil. 2:15, 16; Titus 2:12-14) Really, where would we rather be than in association with Jehovah’s people? (Ps. 84:10) And what could be more beneficial than the study and discussion of the Word of God? Consider the various meetings that have been arranged for our benefit.



## **WEEKEND MEETING**

<sup>5</sup> The first part of the weekend meeting consists of a Bible discourse that is especially designed for the general public, some of whom may be attending a meeting for the first time. The public talk plays an important part in filling the spiritual needs of both newly associated ones and congregation publishers.—Acts 18:4; 19:9, 10.

<sup>6</sup> Christ Jesus, his apostles, and their associates conducted public meetings similar to those enjoyed today by the congregations of Jehovah's people. Without question, Jesus was the greatest public speaker ever on earth. It was said of him: "Never has any 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 2:14-36, we read Peter's powerful discourse on the day of Pentecost 33 C.E. Thousands were motivated to act as a result of what they heard. Later, individuals became believers after listening to Paul's discourse in Athens.—Acts 17:22-34.

<sup>7</sup> Similarly in our day, millions have benefited from the weekly public talks held in congregations as well as the public talks presented at assemblies and conventions. Such talks help us to remain alert to Christian teachings and to be steadfast in Kingdom service. By inviting interested ones and the public in general, we may accomplish much to acquaint people with basic Bible teachings.

<sup>8</sup> The subjects considered in public talks are varied. Talks cover Bible doctrine and prophecy, Scriptural principles and counsel regarding family life and marital matters, situations confronting youths, and Christian morals. Some talks center on Jehovah's marvelous works of creation. Others highlight the exemplary faith, courage, and integrity of Bible characters, focusing on lessons for our day.

<sup>9</sup> To benefit fully from public talks, it is essential that we pay close attention, look up the scriptures referred to by the speaker, and follow along as he reads and explains them. (Luke 8:18) As we thus make sure of the things discussed, we will be determined to hold fast to what we learn and to apply it.—1 Thess. 5:21.

<sup>10</sup> If speakers are available, the congregation will no doubt have a public talk every week. This is often accomplished by having speakers visit from nearby congregations. If there is a shortage of speakers, these talks are given as often as possible.

<sup>11</sup> The second part of the weekend meeting is the *Watchtower* Study, a question-and-answer discussion of articles published in the study edition of *The Watchtower*. By means of *The Watchtower*, Jehovah provides us with timely spiritual food.

<sup>12</sup> The study articles frequently deal with the application of Bible principles in daily living. They fortify Christians against "the spirit of the world" and unclean conduct. (1 Cor. 2:12) Through *The Watchtower* comes increased light on Bible doctrine and prophecy, enabling

all to keep abreast of the truth and stay on the path of the righteous ones. (Ps. 97:11; Prov. 4:18) Attending the *Watchtower* Study and participating in it can help us to rejoice in the hope of Jehovah's righteous new world. (Rom. 12:12; 2 Pet. 3:13) Our Christian association helps us to cultivate the fruitage of the spirit and strengthens our desire to serve Jehovah zealously. (Gal. 5:22, 23) We are fortified to endure trials 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.

<sup>13</sup> How can we take full advantage of this provision for spiritual feeding? We should prepare the lesson in advance, either separately or as a family, look up the cited scriptures, and during the meeting comment in our own words. This will sound down the truth into our heart, and others will benefit as they hear our expressions of faith. By listening carefully to the comments of others, we will benefit from the lesson each week.

### **MIDWEEK MEETING**

<sup>14</sup> The congregation meets each week at the Kingdom Hall for a program entitled *Our Christian Life and Ministry*. This meeting has three parts designed to help us to be "adequately qualified" as ministers of God. (2 Cor. 3:5, 6) The schedule and material will be provided in a monthly *Our Christian Life and Ministry—Meeting Workbook*. The *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook* also contains sample conversations for use in the ministry.

<sup>15</sup> The first part of this meeting, called *Treasures From God's Word*, will help us to become familiar with the

background and context of Bible accounts and to learn how they can be applied. The meeting includes a talk, a reading, and a discussion based on the weekly Bible reading. Visual aids and worksheets to help teach these accounts are included in the *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*. This in-depth consideration of the Bible benefits us in our personal life and in our teaching, so that we “may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work.”—2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

<sup>16</sup> The second part of the meeting, Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry, is designed to give all the opportunity to practice for the ministry and to improve in their ability to preach and teach. In addition to student assignments, videos of sample conversations are considered. This section of the meeting helps us to acquire “the tongue of those taught” so that we “may know how to answer the tired one with the right word.”—Isa. 50:4.

<sup>17</sup> The third part, Living as Christians, considers the practical application of Bible principles in day-to-day life. (Ps. 119:105) A primary feature of this part of the meeting is the Congregation Bible Study. Like the *Watchtower* Study, the Congregation Bible Study is a question-and-answer discussion.

<sup>18</sup> Every month when a new *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook* is received, the coordinator of the body of elders, or an elder assisting him, carefully analyzes it and makes a schedule. Each week, an elder who is a capable teacher and approved by the body of elders will serve as the meeting chairman. His duties include ensuring that

the meeting begins and ends on time and giving commendation and counsel to those who have student assignments.

<sup>19</sup> As we regularly prepare for, attend, and participate in the Life and Ministry Meeting, we gain knowledge of the Scriptures, understanding of Bible principles, confidence to preach the good news, and skill in making disciples. Those attending who are not yet baptized Witnesses also benefit from the warm association and spiritually upbuilding discussions. To help us prepare for this meeting and others, we can make use of *Watchtower Library*, *JW Library*<sup>®</sup>, *Watchtower ONLINE LIBRARY*<sup>™</sup> (if available in your language), and the library at the Kingdom Hall. The Kingdom Hall library contains the available publications of Jehovah's Witnesses, the *Watch Tower Publications Index* or the *Research Guide for Jehovah's Witnesses*, as well as a number of Bible translations, a concordance, a dictionary, and other helpful reference works. This library may be used by anyone before or after the meetings.

## **MEETINGS FOR FIELD SERVICE**

<sup>20</sup> At various times during the week and on weekends, groups of publishers will briefly assemble at meetings for field service. These meetings are usually held in private homes or at other convenient places. The Kingdom Hall may also be used for this purpose. Having smaller groups gather in several locations in the territory may make it easier for publishers to travel to the meeting for service and to the territory. Publishers can be

organized quickly and head to the territory without delay. The group overseer may also be able to give closer attention to those in his care. While there are advantages to having groups meet separately, circumstances may dictate that several groups meet together. For example,

if fewer publishers go in the ministry midweek, it may be advantageous to combine groups or to have all meet together at the Kingdom Hall or another suitable location. This way, publishers will have someone to work with. The congregation may also find it convenient to meet at the Kingdom Hall on worldly holidays. Or the congregation may choose to have a combined meeting for field service after the *Watchtower* Study.

<sup>21</sup> If groups meet separately, the group overseer takes the lead in conducting the meeting for field service. Periodically, a group overseer may assign his assistant or another qualified brother to conduct such meetings. The conductor should be prepared to discuss something that will be practical and helpful for the field ministry. Field service arrangements are made, and one of the group offers a prayer. The group will then promptly depart for the territory. Such meetings last from five to seven minutes but should be shorter if they follow a congregation meeting. They should provide encouragement, practical instruction, and direction for those

During these difficult last days, we need the encouragement that comes from meeting together regularly

going out in the preaching work. Newer ones or others who may need assistance can work with experienced publishers to receive training.

### **MEETING ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEW OR SMALL CONGREGATIONS**

<sup>22</sup> As more become disciples, the number of congregations increases. An application for a new congregation is usually submitted by the circuit overseer. However, in some cases, small groups may find it more advantageous to be associated with the nearest congregation.

<sup>23</sup> At times, small congregations may be composed entirely of sisters. When that is the case, a sister who prays in the congregation or conducts meetings does so with her head covered, in harmony with the Scriptural arrangement. (1 Cor. 11:3-16) In most cases, she remains seated, facing the group. Sisters do not give discourses at meetings. Instead, they read the material provided by the organization and comment on it, or for variety, they may consider it by means of a discussion or a demonstration. The branch office will ask one of the sisters to handle correspondence with the office and to care for meetings. In time, when brothers qualify to do so, they will care for these responsibilities.

### **CIRCUIT ASSEMBLIES**

<sup>24</sup> Each year, arrangements are made for congregations assigned to the same circuit to gather for two one-day circuit assemblies. These joyous occasions afford all in attendance opportunities to “open [their] hearts wide” in Christian association. (2 Cor. 6:11-13)

With a special need in mind, Jehovah's organization prepares the Scriptural themes and various parts of these programs. The information is presented by means of discourses, demonstrations, reenactments, soliloquies, and interviews. Such timely instruction builds up all who attend. These assemblies provide an opportunity for new disciples to get baptized in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah.

### **REGIONAL CONVENTIONS**

<sup>25</sup> Once each year, larger gatherings are held. These are usually three-day regional conventions, combining congregations from a number of circuits. Smaller branches may find it more practical for all congregations in the branch territory to assemble at one location. In some lands, arrangements for these gatherings may vary according to circumstances or on the basis of direction from the organization. Periodically, international or special conventions are held in some countries and may be attended by tens of thousands of Witnesses from a number of different lands. Over the years, many have learned about the good news of the Kingdom because of the publicity given to these large gatherings of Jehovah's Witnesses.

<sup>26</sup> For Jehovah's dedicated people, conventions are joyous occasions of united worship. They have provided the setting for revealing increased light on the truth. At some conventions, new publications are released for personal and congregation study or for use in the field ministry. Conventions also feature baptisms. Conven-



tions are of particular importance in promoting spiritual growth. They give evidence that Jehovah's people indeed form an international brotherhood of dedicated Christians who bear the identifying mark of the disciples of Jesus Christ.—John 13:35.

<sup>27</sup> By attending local congregation meetings as well as assemblies and conventions of Jehovah's people, we are strengthened to do Jehovah's will. We are also protected against worldly influences that could undermine our Christian faith. Such gatherings all bring glory and praise to Jehovah. (Ps. 35:18; Prov. 14:28) We can be thankful that Jehovah has provided these occasions of spiritual refreshment for his dedicated people in this time of the end.

### **THE LORD'S EVENING MEAL**

<sup>28</sup> Once each year on the anniversary of the death of Jesus Christ, congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the world observe 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 observe the Memorial.—Luke 22:19.

<sup>29</sup> The date of the Memorial corresponds with the date of the Biblical Passover, which is indicated in the Scriptures. (Ex. 12:2, 6; Matt. 26:17, 20, 26) The Passover was the annual commemoration of the Exodus of the Israelites from 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 to

leave their captivity in Egypt. (Ex. 12:1-51) The date is determined by counting 13 days from the appearance of the new moon nearest the spring equinox as visible in Jerusalem. Generally, the Memorial observance falls at the first full moon following the spring equinox.

<sup>30</sup> Matthew 26:26-28 outlines in Jesus' own words the way that the Memorial is to be observed. It is not a ritual with mystical overtones but a symbolic meal that is shared by those who have been called to be joint heirs with Jesus Christ in his heavenly Kingdom. (Luke 22:28-30) All other dedicated Christians and interested people are encouraged to attend the Lord's Evening Meal as observers. By their attendance, they show their appreciation for the provision Jehovah God has made for the benefit of all mankind through his Son, Jesus Christ. Prior to the Memorial, a special public talk is given that is designed to generate enthusiasm for this event and stimulate further interest in Bible study.

<sup>31</sup> Jehovah's Witnesses joyfully anticipate occasions for assembling together at meetings, where we "consider one another so as to incite to love and fine works." (Heb. 10:24) The faithful and discreet slave is alert to provide such meetings according to our spiritual need. All of Jehovah's servants as well as interested people are urged to take full advantage of the arrangements for regularly assembling together. By showing heartfelt appreciation for Jehovah's provisions through his organization, God's servants are bound together in unity. More important, we praise and glorify Jehovah.—Ps. 111:1.

## Ministers of the Good News

JEHOVAH gave us a perfect model to follow—his Son, Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 2:21) When anyone becomes a follower of Jesus, that person preaches the good news as one of God’s ministers. Indicating that this would be spiritually refreshing, Jesus 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*, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for yourselves.” (Matt. 11:28, 29) His promise has not failed any who have responded to that invitation!

<sup>2</sup> As God’s Chief Minister, Jesus called certain individuals to 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 these disciples forth, he said to them: “Whoever listens to you listens to me. And whoever disregards you disregards me also. Moreover, whoever disregards me disregards also him who sent me.” (Luke 10:16) In this way, Jesus stressed the seriousness of the responsibility that was given to the disciples. They were to represent Jesus and the Most High God! It would be the same today for all others who respond to Jesus’ invitation: “Come be my follower.” (Luke

18:22; 2 Cor. 2:17) 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.

<sup>3</sup> Having responded to Jesus' invitation to follow him, we have been blessed with "coming to know" Jehovah God and Jesus Christ. (John 17:3) We have been taught Jehovah's ways. With his help, we have been able to make our mind over, put on the new personality, and harmonize our conduct with Jehovah's righteous standards. (Rom. 12:1, 2; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9, 10) Our heartfelt appreciation has moved us to dedicate our lives to Jehovah and to symbolize that dedication by water baptism. At our baptism, we are ordained as ministers.

<sup>4</sup> Always keep in mind that service to God must be rendered with innocent hands and a pure heart. (Ps. 24: 3, 4; Isa. 52:11; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1) Through faith in Jesus Christ, we have gained a clean conscience. (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. The apostle Peter pointed out the value of exemplary conduct in winning unbelievers over to the truth. (1 Cor. 10:31, 33; 1 Pet. 3:1) How can you help someone qualify to join us as a minister of the good news?

## **NEW PUBLISHERS**

<sup>5</sup> From the time you begin conducting a Bible study with an interested person, encourage him to tell others about what he is learning. He could speak with relatives,

friends, work associates, and others on an informal basis. This is an important step in teaching new ones to be followers of Jesus Christ as ministers of the good news. (Matt. 9:9; Luke 6:40) As the new one grows spiritually and becomes adept at informal witnessing, he will no doubt express a desire to share in the field ministry.

### **MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS**

<sup>6</sup> Before inviting a person to go from house to house for the first time, you should be sure that he meets certain qualifications. A person who accompanies us in the field ministry identifies himself publicly with Jehovah's Witnesses. It is therefore understood that he has already brought his life into harmony with Jehovah's righteous standards and can be an unbaptized publisher.

<sup>7</sup> As you study with a person and discuss Bible principles with him, you have likely become aware of his circumstances. You may have observed that he is living in harmony with what he has learned. But there are some aspects of the student's life that the elders will want to discuss with the two of you together.

<sup>8</sup> The coordinator of the body of elders will arrange for two elders (one being a member of the service committee) to discuss these matters with you and the Bible student. In congregations that have very few elders, an elder and a capable ministerial servant may do this. The brothers chosen should endeavor to have this discussion without delay. In fact, if they learn of the student's desire at a congregation meeting, it may be possible for them to talk to you and your student after the meeting.

The atmosphere should be relaxed. Before the student can be approved as an unbaptized publisher, the following must be true:

- (1) He believes that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.—2 Tim. 3:16.
- (2) He knows and believes the basic teachings of the Scriptures so that when asked questions, he will answer in harmony with the Bible and not according to false religious teachings or his own ideas.—Matt. 7:21-23; 2 Tim. 2:15.
- (3) He is heeding the Bible's command to associate with Jehovah's people at congregation meetings if he is able to do so.—Ps. 122:1; Heb. 10:24, 25.
- (4) He knows what the Bible teaches about sexual immorality, including adultery, polygamy, and homosexuality, and is living in harmony with those teachings. If the person is living with one of the opposite sex who is not a relative, the two must be properly married.—Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Heb. 13:4.
- (5) He is heeding the Bible's prohibition against drunkenness and is free from all nonmedical use of addictive or mind-altering natural or synthetic substances.—2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:18; 1 Pet. 4:3, 4.
- (6) He sees the value of avoiding unwholesome association.—1 Cor. 15:33.
- (7) He has definitely broken off membership in all false religious organizations with which he may have been affiliated. He has ceased attending their services and sharing in or supporting their activities.—2 Cor. 6:14-18; Rev. 18:4.

- (8) He is free from all involvement in the political affairs of the world.—John 6:15; 15:19; Jas. 1:27.
- (9) He believes and lives in harmony with what Isaiah 2:4 says about the affairs of the nations.
- (10) He really wants to be one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.—Ps. 110:3.

<sup>9</sup> If the elders are *not sure* how the student feels about any of these matters, they should ask him, perhaps using the scriptures here cited as a basis for the discussion. It is important that he understand that those who share with Jehovah’s Witnesses in their preaching activity must be leading a life that harmonizes with these Scriptural requirements. What he says will help the elders determine whether he knows what is expected of him and whether he is qualified to a reasonable degree to begin participating in the field ministry.

<sup>10</sup> The elders should promptly let the student know whether he qualifies. In most cases, this is possible at the conclusion of the discussion. If he is qualified, the elders can warmly welcome the individual as a publisher. (Rom. 15:7) He should be encouraged to begin sharing in the field ministry as soon as possible and to turn in a field service report at the end of the month. The elders can explain that when a Bible student qualifies as an unbaptized publisher and reports field service for the first time, a *Congregation’s Publisher Record* is made out in his name and included in the congregation file. The elders collect this personal information from the publisher so that the organization can care for the religious

activities of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide and so that the publisher may participate in spiritual activities and receive spiritual support. In addition, the elders can remind new publishers that any personal information is handled according to the Global Data Protection Policy of Jehovah's Witnesses found on [jw.org](http://jw.org).

<sup>11</sup> Our getting better acquainted with the new publisher and showing a personal interest in what he has accomplished can have a fine effect on the individual. It may move him to turn in field service reports regularly and to make even greater efforts to serve Jehovah.—Phil. 2:4; Heb. 13:2.

<sup>12</sup> Once the elders have determined that the Bible student qualifies to engage in the field ministry, he is eligible to receive his own copy of *Organized to Do Jehovah's Will*. After he reports field service for the first time, a brief announcement that he is a new unbaptized publisher will be made to the congregation.

## **HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE**

<sup>13</sup> Young children may also qualify as publishers of the good news. Jesus welcomed young children and blessed them. (Matt. 19:13-15; 21:15, 16) Although parents are primarily responsible for their own children, others in the congregation may 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



who is exemplary in conduct is moved from the heart to make a personal expression of his faith to others, what further help can be given?

<sup>14</sup> It would be appropriate for the parent to approach one of the elders on the Congregation Service Committee to discuss whether the child is qualified to become a publisher. The coordinator of the body of elders will arrange for two elders (one being a member of the service committee) to meet with the child and his believing parent(s) or guardian. If the child has a basic knowledge of Bible truth and gives evidence of *wanting* to share in the ministry, this would indicate good progress. After considering these and other factors similar to those that apply to adults, the two elders can determine whether the child may be recognized as an unbaptized publisher. (Luke 6:45; Rom. 10:10) When meeting with a young child, there would be no need to discuss some of the matters that are usually considered with an adult but obviously do not apply to a child.

<sup>15</sup> During the meeting, the elders should commend the child for his progress and encourage him to set the goal of baptism. Since the parents have no doubt worked hard to instill the truth in their child, they too deserve commendation. To help the parents further assist their child, the elders should refer them to “A Message to Christian Parents,” found on pages 179-181.

## **DEDICATION AND BAPTISM**

<sup>16</sup> If you have come to know and love Jehovah by meeting divine requirements and sharing in the field

ministry, you need to solidify your personal relationship with him. How? By dedicating your life to him and symbolizing this by water baptism.—Matt. 28:19, 20.

<sup>17</sup> Dedication signifies a setting apart for a sacred purpose. To make a dedication to God means to approach him in prayer and solemnly promise to use your life in his service and to walk in his ways. It means giving him exclusive devotion forever. (Deut. 5:9) This is a personal, private matter. No one can do it for you.

<sup>18</sup> However, you must do more than privately tell Jehovah that you want to belong to him. You need to show others that you have made a dedication to God. You make it known by getting baptized in water, as Jesus did. (1 Pet. 2:21; 3:21) If you have made up your mind to serve Jehovah and want to get baptized, what should you do? You should make your desire known to the coordinator of the body of elders. He will arrange for several elders to talk with you to make sure that you meet the divine requirements for baptism. For further information, please review “A Message to the Unbaptized Publisher,” found on pages 182-184 of this publication, and “Questions for Those Desiring to Get Baptized,” found on pages 185-207.

## **REPORTING ON THE PROGRESS OF THE MINISTRY**

<sup>19</sup> Over the years, reports on the worldwide expansion of pure worship have been a source of encouragement for Jehovah’s people. From the time Jesus Christ first told his disciples that the good news would be preached throughout all the earth, true Christians have been

keenly interested in how this would be accomplished. —Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 13:10; Acts 1:8.

<sup>20</sup> Early followers of Jesus enjoyed hearing reports about the success of the preaching work. (Mark 6:30) The Bible book of Acts tells us that about 120 were present when holy spirit was poured out on the disciples at Pentecost 33 C.E. Soon the number of disciples grew to about 3,000 and then to about 5,000. The report was made that “Jehovah continued to add to them daily those being saved” and that “a large crowd of priests began to be obedient to the faith.” (Acts 1:15; 2:5-11, 41, 47; 4:4; 6:7) 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 with their divinely commissioned work, in spite of severe persecution instigated by the Jewish religious leaders!

<sup>21</sup> 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 had been “preached in all creation under heaven.” (Col. 1:5, 6, 23) The early Christians were obedient to the Word, and holy spirit empowered them to accomplish a tremendous preaching work before the end of the Jewish system of things in 70 C.E. How encouraging it was for those faithful Christians to hear reports of what was being accomplished!

<sup>22</sup> In like manner, Jehovah’s modern-day organization endeavors to keep records of the work being done in

fulfillment of Matthew 24:14, which says: “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. We must be personally interested in seeing that the ministry is thoroughly accomplished before the end comes. Jehovah will see to it that this work is completed, and if we have a share, we will receive Jehovah’s smile of approval.—Ezek. 3:18-21.

### **YOUR PERSONAL FIELD SERVICE REPORT**

<sup>23</sup> What exactly are we to report? The *Field Service Report* slip provided by the organization indicates what information is to be included. However, the following general comments may prove to be helpful.

<sup>24</sup> In the column titled “Placements (Printed and Electronic),” report the total number of publications—whether printed or electronic—that you shared with individuals who are not baptized Witnesses. Under “Video Showings,” report the number of times you were able to show one of our videos.

<sup>25</sup> In reporting “Return Visits,” count the total number of calls made for the purpose of furthering interest previously shown by someone who is not a dedicated, baptized Witness. A return visit can be made by means of a personal visit, by writing a letter, making a telephone call, sending a text message or an e-mail, or delivering some literature. Each time a home Bible study is conducted, a return visit can be counted. A parent

may count up to one return visit each week when taking the lead during family worship with an unbaptized child present.

<sup>26</sup> Although a Bible study is usually conducted each week, it is reported as only one study each month. Publishers should list the total number of *different* Bible studies conducted during the month. Bible studies reported may include those conducted with people who are not dedicated, baptized Witnesses. You may also count a Bible study conducted with an inactive brother or sister at the direction of a member of the service committee or with a newly baptized person who has not yet completed the *Enjoy Life Forever!* book.

<sup>27</sup> It is important to submit an accurate report of “Hours.” Basically, this is the time you spend participating in the house-to-house ministry, making return visits, conducting Bible studies, or otherwise witnessing formally or informally to people who are not dedicated, baptized Witnesses. If two publishers are working together, both may count the time, but only one would count any return visits that are made or any Bible studies that are conducted. Both parents who share in instructing their children during Family Worship evening may count up to one hour a week. Brothers may count the time spent delivering a public talk. An interpreter for

Are you personally interested in seeing that the ministry is accomplished before the end comes?

a public talk may count the time as well. There are essential activities for which time is not counted, such as getting ready for field service, attending the meeting for field service, running errands, and so forth.

<sup>28</sup> Each publisher must follow his Bible-trained conscience when prayerfully determining what constitutes a witnessing period. Some publishers preach in densely populated areas, whereas others work territories where there are few inhabitants and considerable travel is required. Territories differ; publishers differ in the way they view their ministry. The Governing Body does not impose its conscience on the worldwide congregation as to how time spent in field service is to be counted, nor has anyone else been appointed to make a judgment in this matter.—Matt. 6:1; 7:1; 1 Tim. 1:5.

<sup>29</sup> Time spent in the field service should be reported in full hours. An exception to this is made when a publisher is very limited because of advanced age, is a shut-in, is confined to a nursing home, or is otherwise incapacitated. Such a publisher may report field service in 15-minute increments. Even when he gives a witness for just 15 minutes during a month, he should report this time. He will be counted as a regular Kingdom publisher. This arrangement also applies to a publisher who is temporarily limited, perhaps unable to move about during a month or so because of a serious illness or injury. This provision is only for those who are *very limited* in their activity. The service committee will determine whether a publisher qualifies for this arrangement.

## **CONGREGATION'S PUBLISHER RECORD**

<sup>30</sup> Your individual field service report for each month is recorded on a *Congregation's Publisher Record*. These records belong to the local congregation. If you plan to move to another congregation, be sure to inform your elders. The secretary will ensure that your records are forwarded to your new congregation. In this way, the elders will be in a better position to welcome you and provide spiritual support. If you are away from your congregation for less than three months, please continue to send your field service reports to your home congregation.

## **WHY WE REPORT OUR FIELD SERVICE**

<sup>31</sup> Do you sometimes forget to turn in your field service report? No doubt all of us need occasional reminders. But if we cultivate the right attitude toward reporting and understand why doing so is important, it may be easier for us to remember to report our field service.

<sup>32</sup> Some have asked: "Since Jehovah knows what I am doing in his service, why do I need to put in a report to the congregation?" True, Jehovah knows what we are doing, and he knows whether our service is whole-souled or just a token of what we are really able to do. Remember, however, that Jehovah recorded the number of days that Noah spent in the ark and the number of years that the Israelites journeyed in the wilderness. God kept account of the number of those who were faithful and 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 activities of his servants. He inspired this written record of what took place, making clear to us his view of keeping accurate records.

<sup>33</sup> Historical events recorded in the Bible demonstrate the exactness of reports and records kept by Jehovah's people. In many cases, the full impact of the Bible account could not be conveyed without reporting the specific numbers. Consider the following examples: Genesis 46:27; 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.

<sup>34</sup> Although our reports obviously do not include all that we do in our worship of Jehovah, they serve a practical purpose within Jehovah's organization. In the first century, when the apostles returned from a preaching campaign, they reported to Jesus "all the things they had done and taught." (Mark 6:30) At times, reports may indicate that certain aspects of our ministry need particular attention. The figures may show that while there has been progress in some activities, other areas, such as publisher increase or growth, have slowed down. It could be that encouragement is needed or that problems have 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.

<sup>35</sup> Reports are also beneficial to the organization in determining just where there is a greater need for work-



ers in the field. What areas are more productive? Where is little progress being made? What publications are needed to help people learn the truth? Reports enable the organization to project literature needs for the preaching work in different parts of the world and then to keep ahead of those needs.

<sup>36</sup> For most of us, reports mean encouragement. Are we not thrilled when we hear about the work our brothers are doing in preaching the good news worldwide? Reports of increases help us to get an overall view of the expansion of Jehovah's organization. Experiences warm our hearts and fill us with zeal, moving us to have a fuller share in the preaching work. (Acts 15:3) Our cooperation in turning in field service reports is important and shows our concern for the brothers everywhere. In this small way, we demonstrate our submission to Jehovah's organizational arrangement.—Luke 16:10; Heb. 13:17.

### **SETTING PERSONAL GOALS**

<sup>37</sup> There is no reason for us to compare *our* field service with that of another person. (Gal. 5:26; 6:4) Individual circumstances vary. On the other hand, we can derive much benefit from setting realistic personal goals as a basis for measuring our progress in the ministry. Attaining these goals can give us the satisfaction that comes with accomplishment.

<sup>38</sup> It is obvious that Jehovah is indeed speeding up the ingathering of those whom he will protect through “the great tribulation.” We are living in the time of the

fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy: "The little one will become a thousand and the small one a mighty nation. I myself, Jehovah, will speed it up in its own time." (Rev. 7:9, 14; Isa. 60:22) What a privilege it is to be ministers of the good news during these momentous last days! —Matt. 24:14.

# Methods of Preaching the Good News

AS A vigorous proclaimer of the good news, Jesus set an example for his followers. He took the initiative to go out among the people, speaking and teaching in their homes and in public places. (Matt. 9:35; 13:36; Luke 8:1) Jesus spoke with individuals, taught his disciples privately, and addressed groups numbering into the thousands. (Mark 4:10-13; 6:35-44; John 3:2-21) He took advantage of every appropriate occasion to speak words of encouragement and hope. (Luke 4:16-19) Even when he was in need of rest and refreshment, he did not pass up opportunities to witness. (Mark 6:30-34; John 4:4-34) When we read the inspired accounts of Jesus' ministry, are we not moved to imitate him? Certainly we are, just as the apostles were.—Matt. 4:19, 20; Luke 5:27, 28; John 1:43-45.

<sup>2</sup> 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**

<sup>3</sup> As Jehovah's Witnesses, we recognize the value of preaching the good news of the Kingdom systematically from house to house. We have used this method so extensively that it has become our trademark. The wisdom of using this method to reach millions of people

in a short period of time has been confirmed by gratifying results. (Matt. 11:19; 24:14) The house-to-house ministry has proved to be a practical way for us to demonstrate love for Jehovah and for our neighbor.—Matt. 22:34-40.

<sup>4</sup> House-to-house preaching is not a modern innovation of Jehovah's Witnesses. The apostle Paul refers to his teaching in the homes of people. Describing his ministry to the overseers in Ephesus, he said: "From the first day I stepped into the province of Asia, . . . I did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you . . . from house to house." In this and other ways, Paul "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, Roman emperors encouraged idolatry, and many were "given to the fear of the deities." It was urgent that people seek "the God who made the world and all the things in it," the One who was then "declaring to all people everywhere that they should repent."—Acts 17:22-31.

<sup>5</sup> Today, the need to reach people with the good news is even more urgent. The end of this wicked system of things is rapidly approaching. Seeing this need, we are moved to increase our efforts. No better way has been found than the time-tested method of searching from house to house for those who are hungering for the truth. It is as effective today as it was in the days of Jesus and the apostles.—Mark 13:10.

<sup>6</sup> Are you able to have a full share in the house-to-house ministry? If so, you can be sure that Jehovah is pleased with you. (Ezek. 9:11; Acts 20:35) The house-to-house ministry may not be easy for you. You may have physical limitations, or you may be preaching in a territory where many people are not inclined to listen. There may even be governmental restrictions. Perhaps you are shy, and you find it very difficult to initiate conversations with strangers. Therefore, each time you engage in the house-to-house ministry, you experience a measure of anxiety. Do not be discouraged. (Ex. 4:10-12) Your circumstances are not unlike those of your brothers in many other places.

<sup>7</sup> Jesus promised his disciples: “Look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things.” (Matt. 28:20) That promise fortifies us in the disciple-making work. We feel like the apostle Paul, who said: “For all things I have the strength through the one who gives me power.” (Phil. 4:13) Take full advantage of congregation arrangements for engaging in the house-to-house witnessing. By working with others, you will receive encouragement and personal assistance. Pray for help to overcome whatever obstacles you may face, and exert yourself vigorously as a preacher of the good news.—1 John 5:14.

<sup>8</sup> As you speak to others about the good news, you will have opportunities to give them “a reason for the hope you have.” (1 Pet. 3:15) You will become more and more aware of the contrast between those who have the Kingdom hope and those who are without hope. (Isa.

65:13, 14) You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have been obedient to Jesus' command to "let your light shine," and you may even be privileged to help others come to know Jehovah and the truth that leads to everlasting life.—Matt. 5:16; John 17:3; 1 Tim. 4:16.

<sup>9</sup> Arrangements are made for house-to-house activity on weekends as well as during the week. In areas where it is difficult to find people at home during the day, some congregations arrange for evening witnessing. People may be more inclined to receive visitors in the late afternoon or early evening hours than in the morning.

### **SEARCHING OUT DESERVING ONES**

<sup>10</sup> Jesus instructed his disciples to "search out" deserving ones. (Matt. 10:11) His search for those favorably disposed was not limited to the house-to-house ministry. Indeed, he gave a witness on every appropriate occasion, both formal and informal. (Luke 8:1; John 4:7-15) The apostles also witnessed to people at a variety of locations.—Acts 17:17; 28:16, 23, 30, 31.

<sup>11</sup> Likewise today, our objective is to reach *everyone* possible with the Kingdom message. This means imitating Jesus and his apostles in their approach to the disciple-making work as well as keeping abreast of the changing times and the varying circumstances of the people in our territory. (1 Cor. 7:31) For example, publishers have been successful in calling on people at places of business. Street witnessing has proved effective in many countries, as has witnessing in parks, park-

ing lots, or wherever people can be found. Some congregations have set up tables or mobile displays within their territory. In addition, the branch office may organize special metropolitan public witnessing in high pedestrian traffic areas of a city, using participants from several congregations. As a result, individuals who are not at home when publishers call may be contacted elsewhere with the good news.

<sup>12</sup> When we meet people in public places who show interest in the Bible's message, we can offer an appropriate publication. To cultivate the interest, you may provide your contact information to the interested person and arrange for a return visit, direct him to [jw.org](http://jw.org), or provide him with the address of the nearest place where congregation meetings are held. You may find witnessing to people in public places an enjoyable way to expand your ministry.

<sup>13</sup> However, 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, you will want to make repeated calls on interested ones so that they can progress toward becoming mature Christians.

## **MAKING RETURN VISITS**

<sup>14</sup> 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: "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) Making return visits can be a source of joy in Jehovah's service. People who expressed interest in the good news when you first called on them will likely be happy to see you again. By

sharing additional Bible information with them, you may be able to strengthen their faith in God and help them to become aware of their spiritual need. (Matt. 5:3) If you prepare well and arrange to make the return visit at a time convenient for them, you may be able to start a home Bible study. Doing so will usually be your objective in making return visits. We not only plant the seed of truth but also water it.—1 Cor. 3:6.

<sup>15</sup> Making return visits may be a challenge for some. Perhaps you have become quite proficient in making a brief presentation of the good news, and you enjoy that particular feature of the ministry. But when you think of returning to engage the householder in a discussion of the Bible, the challenge may seem overwhelming. Good preparation will increase your confidence. Be sure to use the practical suggestions shared at the mid-week meeting. You may also wish to invite a more experienced publisher to accompany you.

### **CONDUCTING HOME BIBLE STUDIES**

<sup>16</sup> When speaking to a Jewish proselyte who was reading God's Word, the evangelizer Philip asked him: "Do you actually know what you are reading?" The man re-

Our objective is to reach *everyone* possible with the Kingdom message



sponded: “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 passage of Scripture that the man had been 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 Philip explained the good news to the point that the man became a believer and asked to get baptized. He became a disciple of Jesus Christ.

<sup>17</sup> Many today are not familiar with the Bible, so it may require a number of return visits and a detailed study over a period of weeks, months, or even a year or more before they are able to build faith and qualify for baptism. But your patient and loving assistance in helping honesthearted 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.

<sup>18</sup> You will no doubt want to conduct a home Bible study using one of the publications that is especially designed for that purpose. As you apply the instruction provided at the midweek meeting and work with experienced teachers in the congregation, you will be able to conduct productive studies, helping others to become disciples of Jesus Christ.

<sup>19</sup> If you need assistance in starting and conducting a home Bible study, feel free to speak with one of the overseers or with a fellow Witness who is effective in the Bible study work. The suggestions that appear in the *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook* and

are demonstrated at the meeting will also help you. Rely on Jehovah, and make your desire a matter of prayer. (1 John 3:22) So if at all possible, make it your aim to conduct a home Bible study in addition to any study that you may conduct with your family. By conducting Bible studies, you will increase your joy in the ministry.

### **DIRECTING INTERESTED ONES TO JEHOVAH'S ORGANIZATION**

<sup>20</sup> When we help people to come to know Jehovah God and become disciples of Jesus Christ, they become a part of the congregation. Bible students will make spiritual progress and grow to maturity if they recognize Jehovah's organization and cooperate with it. Teaching them how to do so is important. Videos and the brochure *Who Are Doing Jehovah's Will Today?* have been specifically prepared for this purpose. Some of the information in Chapter 4 of this publication may also be helpful.

<sup>21</sup> From the very beginning of your Bible discussions, help the student to see that Jehovah is using an organization to get the preaching work done on earth today. Point out the value of our Bible study aids, and explain how they are produced and distributed worldwide by volunteer workers who are dedicated to God. Invite your Bible student to accompany you to the meetings at the Kingdom Hall. Explain how the meetings are conducted, and introduce him to the friends there. You will also want to help him get acquainted with other Witnesses at assemblies and conventions. On these and

other occasions, let the new one observe for himself how Jehovah's people display love, the identifying mark of true Christians. (John 13:35) As the interested one grows in appreciation for Jehovah's organization, he will draw closer to Jehovah.

### **USING BIBLE LITERATURE**

<sup>22</sup> The early Christians became zealous publishers of the Word of God. They made copies of the Scriptures for their personal use and for congregation study. They recommended God's 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, Jehovah's Witnesses use modern printing methods to publish hundreds of millions of Bibles and Bible study aids. These include tracts, brochures, books, and magazines in several hundred languages.

<sup>23</sup> As you share the good news with others, be sure to make use of the Bible study aids provided by Jehovah's organization. Knowing how much you have personally benefited from reading and studying the publications of Jehovah's Witnesses will motivate you to share them with others.—Heb. 13:15, 16.

<sup>24</sup> More and more people are using the Internet as their primary source of information. Therefore, in addition to Bible literature, our official website, [jw.org](http://jw.org), is an effective tool for spreading the good news. Individuals around the world can use the computer to read or listen to audio recordings of the Bible and Bible literature in hundreds of languages. Those who hesitate to converse

with us or who live in areas where they have few opportunities to talk to Jehovah's Witnesses are able to investigate our beliefs by using jw.org in the privacy of their home.

<sup>25</sup> Therefore, we publicize jw.org at every appropriate opportunity. If a householder asks a question about our beliefs, we can use a mobile device or a computer to show him the answer right then and there. If we meet someone who speaks another language, including a sign language, we can direct him to our website to find the Bible and Bible literature in his language. Many publishers have used one of the videos on the website to start a Bible discussion.

### **INFORMAL WITNESSING**

<sup>26</sup> To those who were paying attention to his word, Jesus said: "You are the light of the world. . . . Let your light shine before men, so that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens." (Matt. 5:14-16) Those disciples reflected God's ways by imitating Jesus, who said of himself: "I am the light of the world." Jesus set the example for Christians in letting "the light of life" shine for the benefit of all who would listen.—John 8:12.

<sup>27</sup> The apostle Paul likewise set an example for us to follow. (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1) While in Athens, he witnessed every day in the marketplace to those who happened to be on hand. (Acts 17:17) The Christians in Philippi followed his example. For that reason, Paul could write to them that they were living "in the midst of a crooked

and twisted generation,” among whom they were “shining as illuminators in the world.” (Phil. 2:15) We today can let the Kingdom truth shine forth by our words and actions whenever there is an opportunity for us to tell others 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 world. However, if we talk to them about the good news, they will get to know *why* we are different.

<sup>28</sup> Many of Jehovah’s people present the good news to those whom they meet at work, in school, on public transportation, or elsewhere while going about their daily activities. When on a journey, we may have the opportunity to talk with fellow travelers. Individually, we must be alert to opportunities to turn ordinary conversation into a witness. Let us be prepared to speak with others on every appropriate occasion.

<sup>29</sup> We will be motivated to do so if we keep in mind that we are praising our Creator and bringing honor to his name. In addition, 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. Jehovah is pleased by such efforts and considers it sacred service.—Heb. 12:28; Rev. 7:9, 10.

## **TERRITORY**

<sup>30</sup> It is Jehovah’s will that the Kingdom message be preached worldwide, both in cities and in rural areas. To this end, congregations as well as individuals who

serve in isolated places receive territory assignments from the branch office. (1 Cor. 14:40) This is consistent with the God-directed arrangement in the first century. (2 Cor. 10:13; Gal. 2:9) With the rapid expansion of the Kingdom work in these last days, much is accomplished when the arrangement for working congregation territory is well-organized.

<sup>31</sup> This arrangement comes under the direction of the service overseer. A ministerial servant may do the actual assigning of territory. There are two types of territories, group territories and personal territories. Where territory is limited, group overseers will have group territories in which publishers in the group can preach. On the other hand, where territory is plentiful, individual publishers may obtain personal territories.

<sup>32</sup> A publisher who has a personal territory will have somewhere to preach at times when no meetings for field service have been arranged or when it is impractical to meet the group. For example, some publishers obtain a territory near their place of work and preach there during lunch breaks or after work. Some families obtain a personal territory in the neighborhood where they live, and they preach in it on some evenings. Having a conveniently located personal territory may help a publisher to make the most of the time he can devote to field service. Of course, personal territories may also be used for group witnessing. If you wish to have a personal territory, you may request one from the territory servant.

<sup>33</sup> Whether it is a group territory obtained by the group overseer or a personal territory obtained by a publisher, the person who obtained the territory will make reasonable efforts to contact someone at every residence. Arrangements for covering the territory should comply with applicable data protection laws. Any group overseer or publisher who obtains a territory should endeavor to cover it within four months. Once it is completed, he should inform the territory servant. Depending on the circumstances, the group overseer or publisher may either keep the territory to work it again or return it to the territory servant.

<sup>34</sup> When all those associated with the congregation cooperate, the territory can be covered thoroughly. We can also avoid simultaneous coverage of the same area by two or more publishers, something that could irritate the householders. Thus we show consideration for our brothers and for the people in the territory.

### **COOPERATING TO PREACH TO PEOPLE OF ALL LANGUAGES**

<sup>35</sup> Everyone needs to learn about Jehovah God, his Son, and the Kingdom. (Rev. 14:6, 7) We are interested in helping people of all languages to call on the name of Jehovah for salvation and to put on the Christian personality. (Rom. 10:12, 13; Col. 3:10, 11) What are some challenges that arise when presenting the good news in multilanguage areas? How can these be handled in a way that gives as many as possible the opportunity to hear the Kingdom message in the language they understand best?—Rom. 10:14.

<sup>36</sup> The territory assignment for each congregation is according to language. Therefore, in multilanguage areas, publishers from different congregations preach in the same neighborhoods. In such cases, it is best for the publishers from each congregation to concentrate on preaching to the people of their own specific language. This also applies during annual invitation campaigns. When engaging in public and informal witnessing, however, publishers may speak with anyone and offer literature in any language.

<sup>37</sup> In some cases, other-language congregations cannot regularly cover their more distant territory. In such cases, the service overseers of the congregations involved should communicate with one another to work out a mutually acceptable system of covering the territory. This will give everyone an opportunity to hear the Kingdom message and will prevent unnecessary duplication of efforts.—Prov. 15:22.

<sup>38</sup> What should we do if the person who answers the door speaks a language different from ours? We should not assume that publishers who speak his language will call on him. Some publishers have learned a simple presentation in a language that they often encounter in their territory. We can show a person how he may read or download literature in his language from our official website, [jw.org](http://jw.org), or we can offer to bring him literature in his language.

<sup>39</sup> If the individual shows genuine interest, we should try to find someone who is qualified to help him in a lan-



guage he understands. We can also tell him where nearby meetings are held in his language. If he wishes to be contacted by someone who speaks his language, we can show him how to enter his contact information on [jw.org](http://jw.org). In turn, the branch office will endeavor to locate a nearby publisher, group, or congregation that can assist him further.

<sup>40</sup> Until the interested person tells us that he has been contacted by someone who speaks his language, we should continue calling on him. In some cases, the branch office will inform the elders that someone who speaks the person's language could not be located. When this occurs, we should do our best to continue cultivating the householder's interest. If possible, we can study the Bible with him, perhaps with the aid of a publication in his language. If we make good use of the pictures and have the person read the cited scriptures, he will get some basic Bible understanding. A member of his family who knows enough of his language and the local language may be willing to serve as an interpreter.

<sup>41</sup> In order to direct the interested person to God's organization, we should invite him to our meetings, even though he may not fully understand the program. When scriptures are read, we can help him find them by using a Bible in his language if one is available. Associating with others in the congregation can in itself be upbuilding and will help him make further spiritual progress.

<sup>42</sup> **Pregroups:** A pregroup consists of a number of publishers who are preaching in a language other than

the language of the congregation, even though a qualified elder or ministerial servant is not available to conduct a weekly meeting in that language. The branch office may recognize a congregation as hosting a pregroup if the following requirements are met:

- (1) A sizable population in the area speak a language other than the language of the congregation.
- (2) At least a few publishers know the target language or are willing to learn the language.
- (3) The body of elders is willing to take the lead in organizing the preaching in that language.

If the body of elders desires to host a pregroup, the elders will consult with the circuit overseer. He may be aware of other congregations attempting to preach to people of that language and may provide valuable information that would help in determining which congregation would be in the best position to host the pregroup. Once that congregation has been determined, the elders will send a letter to the branch office and request approval to be formally recognized as a congregation hosting a pregroup.

<sup>43</sup> **Groups:** The branch office may recognize a congregation as hosting a group if the following requirements are met:

- (1) There is sufficient interest and potential for growth in a particular language field.
- (2) At least a small number of publishers speak the language or are learning the language.
- (3) A qualified elder or ministerial servant is available to take the lead and conduct at least one weekly

meeting—or one portion of a weekly meeting, such as a public talk or a *Watchtower* Study—in that language.

When these requirements are met to a reasonable degree, the body of elders will send a letter with complete details to the branch office requesting formal recognition as a congregation hosting a group. The elder or ministerial servant taking the lead would be considered the “group overseer” or “group servant” responsible for taking care of the group.

<sup>44</sup> Once the group is established, the body of elders of the host congregation determines whether other portions of congregation meetings should be added and how often the meetings should be held during the month. Meetings for field service may also be arranged for the group. All in the group work under the oversight of the body of elders hosting the group. The elders will provide balanced direction and show initiative in caring for the needs of the group. When a circuit overseer works with the group during the week of his visit to the host congregation, he will provide the branch office with a brief report on the group’s progress and mention any specific needs. In due course, it may be possible for the group to become a congregation. If all involved apply theocratic direction, Jehovah will be pleased.—1 Cor. 1: 10; 3:5, 6.

## **GROUP WITNESSING**

<sup>45</sup> Dedicated Christians have a personal responsibility to share the good news with others. There are many

ways to do this, but most of us appreciate being able to go out in field service with others. (Luke 10:1) For this reason, congregations meet for field service on weekends as well as during the week. Holidays also provide fine opportunities for group witnessing, since many brothers have time off from work. The Congregation Service Committee arranges for meetings for field service at convenient times and locations during the day and in the evenings.

<sup>46</sup> Group witnessing enables publishers to work together and experience “an interchange of encouragement.” (Rom. 1:12) Newer publishers can work along with skilled, experienced publishers and receive training. In some areas, it may be advisable for two or more publishers to work together for safety reasons. Even if you are planning to work by yourself in the territory, meeting with the group can be encouraging for all concerned. Just knowing that others are out in the ministry, working in the same general area, can give you confidence. Pioneers and others should not feel obliged to support every meeting for field service organized by the congregation, especially if such are held each day. However, it will likely be possible for them to support at least some meetings for service each week.

<sup>47</sup> May all of us follow the pattern set by Jesus and his apostles! We can be certain of Jehovah’s blessing on our endeavors to have a full share in the vital work of preaching this good news of the Kingdom.—Luke 9: 57-62.

## Ways to Expand Your Ministry

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

<sup>2</sup> Today, too, there is much to be done in the field ministry. This good news of the Kingdom must be preached before the end comes, and time is running out! (Mark 13:10) Since the field is the world, we are faced with a situation quite similar to that of Jesus and his disciples but on a much larger scale. We are few in number compared with the billions in the world of mankind, but we can be sure that Jehovah will help us. The Kingdom good news *will be preached* throughout the earth, and in Jehovah’s due time, the end *will come*. Will we put God’s Kingdom first in our life in order to accomplish our ministry fully? What theocratic goals can we pursue to that end?

<sup>3</sup> Expressing what Jehovah asks of His dedicated servants, Jesus 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) We are required to be whole-souled in our service to God. This means that we demonstrate the depth of our devotion and the genuineness of our dedication by doing our utmost in Jehovah's service. (2 Tim. 2:15) There are opportunities open to each of us, 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**

<sup>4</sup> 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 to others about the good news as soon as he hears it. That 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 tell 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 house-to-house witnessing is open to him. Also, according to his ability and circumstances, he may share in other features of the field ministry.

<sup>5</sup> After a publisher gets baptized, he is no doubt interested in doing all he can to help others learn the good news. Men and women alike have the privilege of sharing in the preaching work. We are blessed to have even a small part in advancing the interests of God's King-

dom. Anyone who can expand his ministry to include additional features of service will be happy indeed.

### **SERVING WHERE THE NEED IS GREATER**

<sup>6</sup> It may be that your congregation territory is frequently worked and a fine witness is being given. If so, you may feel that you could expand your ministry by moving to an area where there is a greater need in the field. (Acts 16:9) If you are presently an elder or a ministerial servant, there may be another congregation that would appreciate having your assistance. Your circuit overseer may have suggestions about how you can assist another congregation in the circuit. If you wish to serve in another area of the country, the branch office can provide helpful information.

<sup>7</sup> Would you like to serve in a foreign country? If so, you need to consider such a move carefully. Why not discuss the matter with the elders in your congregation? Such a move will certainly have an impact on you and any who accompany you. (Luke 14:28) However, if you do not plan to stay for a long time, it may be best to consider serving in an area within your home country.

<sup>8</sup> In some lands, brothers who are being used in positions of oversight are relatively new in the truth. Humble local brothers are willing to let more experienced elders who move into the congregation take the lead. If you are an elder and are contemplating a move to such a country, keep in mind that your objective is not to serve *in place of* the local brothers. Instead, serve *with* them. Encourage them to reach out and accept congregation

responsibilities. (1 Tim. 3:1) Be patient if some things are not done as they would be done in your home country. Use your experience as an elder to be a real help to the brothers. Then, if at some point you must leave and return to your home country, the local elders will be in a better position to care for the congregation.

<sup>9</sup> Before the branch office can provide you with names of congregations that could benefit from your assistance, your Congregation Service Committee will need to provide a letter of recommendation. This letter is required whether you are serving as an elder, a ministerial servant, a pioneer, or a publisher. The service committee will send the letter of recommendation along with your inquiry directly to the branch office of the country where you desire to serve.

### **PREACHING IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE**

<sup>10</sup> In order to expand your ministry, you may wish to consider learning another language, including a sign language. If you have the goal of learning to preach in another language, why not speak with the elders and the circuit overseer? They can offer suggestions and give you needed encouragement. Under the direction of the branch office, some circuits have organized language classes to train capable publishers and pioneers to preach in another language.

### **PIONEER SERVICE**

<sup>11</sup> All publishers should be acquainted with the general requirements for auxiliary, regular, and special pioneer service as well as other types of full-time service. A



pioneer must be an exemplary baptized Christian whose personal circumstances allow him or her to spend the specified number of hours in preaching the good news. The Congregation Service Committee approves applications for auxiliary and regular pioneer service, whereas special pioneers are appointed by the branch office.

<sup>12</sup> *Auxiliary pioneers* may be appointed for a minimum of one month, for any number of consecutive months, or continuously for an unspecified length of time, according to their circumstances. Many Kingdom publishers enjoy serving as auxiliary pioneers on special occasions, such as during the Memorial season or during the month of the circuit overseer's visit. Some choose vacation months. Baptized school-age publishers may wish to enroll as auxiliary pioneers when they have time off from school. Publishers can choose to auxiliary pioneer with a reduced hour requirement each March and April and during the month of the circuit overseer's visit. Whatever your personal circumstances, if you are of good moral standing and habits, can arrange to meet the specified hour requirement, and believe that you can spend one or more months as an auxiliary pioneer, the elders will be pleased to consider your application for this privilege of service.

<sup>13</sup> To qualify as a *regular pioneer*, you must currently be in a position to reach the yearly hour requirement. As a regular pioneer, you will want to work closely with your congregation. Zealous pioneers are a blessing to a congregation, generating enthusiasm for the field ministry and even encouraging others to take up the pioneer

service. Before you can apply to be a regular pioneer, however, you must be an exemplary publisher who has been baptized for at least six months.

<sup>14</sup> *Special pioneers* are usually selected from among regular pioneers who have demonstrated their effectiveness in the ministry. They must be able to serve wherever the branch office chooses to assign them. Often, this is an isolated area where they can find interest and form new congregations. At times, special pioneers are assigned to congregations that need help in covering their territory. Some special pioneers who are also elders have been assigned to help small congregations, even when there is no particular need for more workers in the field. Special pioneers receive a modest allowance for living expenses. Some special pioneers are appointed on a temporary basis.

## **FIELD MISSIONARIES**

<sup>15</sup> The Service Committee of the Governing Body appoints field missionaries, who are then assigned by the local Branch Committee to serve in densely populated areas. They accomplish much good in stabilizing and strengthening the preaching work and congregation activities. Very often, field missionaries have received training at the School for Kingdom Evangelizers. They are provided housing and receive a modest allowance for living expenses.

## **CIRCUIT WORK**

<sup>16</sup> Those who are appointed as circuit overseers by the Governing Body receive training and gain experience

first by serving as substitute circuit overseers. Such men love the ministry and love their brothers. They are zealous pioneers, diligent students of the Bible, and effective speakers and teachers. They are outstanding in manifesting the fruitage of the spirit, and they demonstrate balance, reasonableness, and discernment. If a brother is married, his pioneer wife is exemplary in her conduct and dealings with others. She is an effective preacher. She also understands her role as a submissive Christian wife, not speaking for her husband or dominating conversations. Circuit overseers and their wives have a rigorous schedule, so those reaching out for this service must be in good health. Pioneers do not apply for the circuit work. Rather, they make their desire to be in the circuit work known to their circuit overseer, who will provide them with suggestions.

### **THEOCRATIC SCHOOLS**

<sup>17</sup> *School for Kingdom Evangelizers:* There is a need for more Kingdom evangelizers to cover seldom-worked territories and to give congregations spiritual support. Therefore, single brothers, single sisters, and married couples may apply to receive specialized training at the School for Kingdom Evangelizers. After attending the school, graduates are sent out to serve as regular pioneers where the need is greater in their home country. However, those who can make themselves available may be given other assignments in their home country or in another country. A few may be sent out as temporary or permanent special pioneers. Pioneers who are interested in attending this school may learn of the

requirements at the meeting arranged for this purpose at the regional convention.

<sup>18</sup> *Watchtower Bible School of Gilead*: Single brothers, single sisters, and married couples who are selected to attend this school speak English and are serving as special full-time servants. They have the potential for strengthening and stabilizing the field or the branch organization. They have already demonstrated that they enjoy serving their brothers and can help others in a kind way to learn and adhere to Scriptural and theocratic direction. The local Branch Committee invites potential students to submit an application. Graduates of this school are assigned to the field or to the branch office in a foreign land or in their home country.

### **BETHEL SERVICE**

<sup>19</sup> Serving at Bethel is a special privilege. The name Bethel means “House of God,” and that designation is certainly appropriate for these centers of theocratic activity. Brothers and sisters in Bethel service do a vital work in connection with producing, translating, and distributing Bible literature. Their service is invaluable to the Governing Body, which provides oversight and direction for congregations throughout the earth. Many Bethelites who are translators live and work in areas of the branch territory where the language they translate is spoken. This enables them to hear the language spoken in everyday life. They can also see firsthand whether people understand the language as it is used in the translated publications.

<sup>20</sup> Much of the work done at Bethel is physically demanding. For this reason, those called to Bethel are mainly dedicated, baptized brothers who are young, in good health, and physically strong. If there is a need in the branch that oversees your country and you would like to serve at Bethel, you can learn more about the requirements from the elders in your congregation.

Having spiritual goals will help you to direct your energies and other resources wisely

### **CONSTRUCTION SERVICE**

<sup>21</sup> The construction of theocratic facilities is a form of sacred service, similar to the work of constructing Solomon's temple. (1 Ki. 8:13-18) Many brothers and sisters show outstanding zeal by volunteering their time and assets to have a part in this work.

<sup>22</sup> Are you in a position to assist? If you are a baptized publisher who is willing to share in such activity, the brothers overseeing construction in your area would appreciate your help and are willing to train you even if you have limited skills. Why not let the local elders know that you are available to help? Some baptized publishers who qualify have even been in a position to volunteer for construction work on theocratic facilities in other countries.

<sup>23</sup> There are many opportunities to share in construction service. Exemplary baptized publishers with some

measure of skill who can support projects near their home may serve as *Local Design/Construction volunteers*. Others are able to support more distant projects for a limited period of time and are appointed by the branch office to serve as *construction volunteers* for from two weeks to three months. Those who are appointed to serve on a long-term basis are called *construction servants*. A construction servant who is given a foreign assignment serves as an *expatriate construction servant*. A *Construction Group* made up of construction servants and construction volunteers takes the lead on each project and is assisted by Local Design/Construction volunteers and volunteers from congregations involved in the project. Construction Groups move from one project to the next within a branch territory.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR SPIRITUAL GOALS?**

<sup>24</sup> If you have dedicated your life to Jehovah, your desire is to serve Jehovah forever. But what are your spiritual goals along the way? Having spiritual goals will help you to direct your energies and other resources wisely. (1 Cor. 9:26) Setting such goals promotes spiritual growth and will help you to concentrate on the more important things as you reach out for additional service privileges.—Phil. 1:10; 1 Tim. 4:15, 16.

<sup>25</sup> The apostle Paul set a fine example for us to imitate in our service to God. (1 Cor. 11:1) Paul exerted himself vigorously in Jehovah's service. He recognized that Jehovah had provided him with many opportunities. To

the brothers in Corinth, Paul wrote: “A large door that leads to activity has been opened to me.” Is this not also true in our case? Yes, there are many opportunities for us to serve Jehovah in association with the congregation, especially in preaching the Kingdom good news. But as in Paul’s case, going through that “large door” involves contending with “many opposers.” (1 Cor. 16:9) Paul was willing to discipline himself. Notice what he said: “I pummel my body and lead it as a slave.” (1 Cor. 9:24-27) Are we of that same mind?

<sup>26</sup> Each one is encouraged to work toward theocratic goals according to his personal circumstances in life. Many are engaged in some form of full-time service today because they set theocratic goals early in life. Even while they were yet children, they were encouraged by their parents and others to do so. Thus, they have enjoyed a very rich career in Jehovah’s service—with no regrets. (Prov. 10:22) Other worthy goals might be that we participate in field service each week, start and conduct a home Bible study, or take more time to prepare for meetings. The important thing is that we remain steadfast and fully accomplish our ministry. If we do, we will honor Jehovah and reach our ultimate goal, that of serving him forever.—Luke 13:24; 1 Tim. 4:7b, 8.

## Arrangements for Places of Worship

TRUE worshippers of Jehovah are commanded to assemble together to receive instruction and to encourage one another. (Heb. 10:23-25) The first place of worship for God's chosen people, the Israelites, was "the tabernacle, the tent of meeting." (Ex. 39:32, 40) Later, David's son Solomon built a house, or temple, for God's glory. (1 Ki. 9:3) After that temple was destroyed in 607 B.C.E., the Jews arranged to meet in buildings called synagogues to worship God. In time, the temple was rebuilt, and once again it served as a center of true worship. Jesus taught both in synagogues and in the temple. (Luke 4:16; John 18:20) Jesus even held a meeting on a mountain.—Matt. 5:1–7:29.

<sup>2</sup> After Jesus' death, Christians assembled in public places and in private homes to teach the Scriptures and to enjoy association with fellow believers. (Acts 19:8, 9; Rom. 16:3, 5; Col. 4:15; Philem. 2) Sometimes it was necessary for the early Christians to meet in isolated places to avoid detection by persecutors. Indeed, faithful servants of God in the past had a sincere desire to assemble in places of worship in order to be "taught by Jehovah."—Isa. 54:13.

<sup>3</sup> Today, too, public places and private homes are used for Christian meetings. Private homes often serve as



places to meet for field service. Those who offer their home for such gatherings view this as a privilege. Many feel that they have benefited spiritually by opening their home in this way.

## **KINGDOM HALL**

<sup>4</sup>The principal meeting place of Jehovah's Witnesses is the Kingdom Hall. Generally, property is purchased, and a new Kingdom Hall is constructed or an existing building is renovated. In order to save on costs and optimize the use of our facilities, several congregations may be able to share the use of a Kingdom Hall when practical. In some localities, it is necessary to rent a hall. For new Kingdom Halls and those that have had major renovations, it is appropriate to have a dedication program. However, if only minor renovations are made to an existing Kingdom Hall, there is no need to have a dedication program.

<sup>5</sup>The Kingdom Hall should not be an elaborate building made to impress others. While the design may vary from place to place, the purpose is always functional. (Acts 17:24) In accord with local circumstances, it should be a comfortable and convenient place for holding Christian meetings.

<sup>6</sup>All congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses contribute toward the use, operation, and maintenance of the Kingdom Hall to which they are assigned. No collections are taken; nor are funds solicited. A contribution box is provided so that those attending meetings may contribute for necessary expenses in connection with the

use of the hall. They do so willingly and from the heart.  
—2 Cor. 9:7.

<sup>7</sup> All in the congregation consider it a privilege to support the Kingdom Hall financially and to volunteer their services in keeping it clean and well-maintained. An elder or a ministerial servant is usually assigned to schedule this work. Generally, cleaning is handled by field service groups, with the group overseer or his assistant taking the lead. Both inside and out, the Kingdom Hall should properly represent Jehovah and his organization.

<sup>8</sup> Where more than one congregation meets in a hall, the elders of the congregations involved set up a Kingdom Hall Operating Committee, which will coordinate matters involving the building and property. The bodies of elders choose a brother to serve as the operating committee coordinator. Working under the direction of the bodies of elders, the operating committee monitors the hall cleaning, making sure that the hall is well-maintained and that sufficient supplies are on hand. This calls for close cooperation among the congregations involved.

<sup>9</sup> When several congregations use one Kingdom Hall, the schedule of meeting times may involve rotation. The elders will work out this schedule in a spirit of mutual concern and brotherly love. (Phil. 2:2-4; 1 Pet. 3:8) No one congregation would take it upon itself to make decisions on behalf of the other congregations. When the circuit overseer visits one of the congregations using the Kingdom Hall, the other congregations will adjust their meeting times as needed for that week.

<sup>10</sup> The Kingdom Hall may be used for weddings and funerals with the permission of the Congregation Service Committee. These elders carefully consider what is requested and base their decision on direction provided by the branch office.

<sup>11</sup> Those who are granted use of the Kingdom Hall for such purposes are expected to conduct themselves in a way that befits genuine Christians. Nothing should be done at the Kingdom Hall that would offend the congregation or bring reproach on Jehovah and the good name of the congregation. (Phil. 2:14, 15) Under the direction of the branch office, the Kingdom Hall may be used for other spiritual functions, such as the Kingdom Ministry School and the Pioneer Service School.

<sup>12</sup> The congregation will always treat its meeting place with respect. Dress, grooming, and decorum should reflect the dignity associated with the worship of Jehovah. (Eccl. 5:1; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10) By applying counsel in this regard, we show appreciation for our Christian meetings.

<sup>13</sup> Maintaining order during meetings is important. It is recommended that children sit with their parents. Parents with young children can be encouraged to sit where they will cause the least disturbance if it becomes necessary to take the children out to discipline them or to care for other needs.

<sup>14</sup> Qualified brothers are assigned to serve as attendants at meetings in the Kingdom Hall. They should be alert and friendly and use good judgment. Their responsibilities include greeting newcomers and making them

feel welcome, helping late-comers to find seats, recording attendance figures, and giving necessary attention to proper heating and ventilation of the hall. Where necessary, attendants will remind parents to give proper supervision so that children will not run around before and after the meetings or play on the platform. In a kind and tactful way, an attendant might ask the parent of an unruly child to take the child out so that the audience will not be overly distracted. The work of the attendants contributes much to everyone's enjoyment of the meetings. It is preferable that elders and ministerial servants be used as attendants.

All in the congregation consider it a privilege to support the Kingdom Hall financially and to volunteer their services in keeping it clean and well-maintained

### **KINGDOM HALL CONSTRUCTION**

<sup>15</sup> In the first century, some Christians were better off materially than were others, so the apostle Paul wrote: "By means of an equalizing, your surplus at the present time might offset their need, so that their surplus might also offset your deficiency, that there may be an equalizing." (2 Cor. 8:14) Today, a similar "equalizing" takes place. Funds contributed by congregations worldwide are pooled to provide financial assistance to build and renovate Kingdom Halls. The generous support of the worldwide brotherhood is greatly appreciated by the

organization and by the congregations that benefit from these contributions.

<sup>16</sup> Based on a region-wide plan, the branch office assigns congregations to specific Kingdom Halls. The branch office also determines when and where to construct new Kingdom Halls and renovate existing halls in the branch territory. When disasters occur, arrangements are made for needed repairs to damaged Kingdom Halls and, on occasion, to the homes of the brothers.

<sup>17</sup> The branch office coordinates the use of volunteers to help with property acquisition, Kingdom Hall design, building permits, construction, and maintenance. Because of the great need for Kingdom Halls in most lands, many volunteers are needed. All baptized publishers who qualify and desire to help are encouraged to complete an application and give it to their local Congregation Service Committee. Even unbaptized publishers may assist with the building or renovating of their own Kingdom Hall.

### **ASSEMBLY HALLS**

<sup>18</sup> Early Christians generally met in small groups. However, sometimes “quite a crowd” assembled. (Acts 11:26) Similarly, Jehovah’s people today meet in large gatherings for circuit assemblies and regional conventions. Local facilities are often rented for this purpose, but where such are not suitable or available, a place of worship called an Assembly Hall may be acquired.

<sup>19</sup> At times, a building is purchased, renovated, and used as an Assembly Hall. More often, though, property

is obtained and a new hall is built. Assembly Halls vary in size, depending on local needs. The branch office makes the decision to purchase or construct such a building only after the cost has been carefully analyzed and the amount of use determined.

<sup>20</sup> The branch office appoints brothers to care for the operation and maintenance of the Assembly Hall. Arrangements are made for the circuits to do the regular cleaning, the semiannual cleaning, and the preventive maintenance. It is beneficial for the brothers to volunteer to do this work. Therefore, congregations are encouraged to support these arrangements wholeheartedly.—Ps. 110:3; Mal. 1:10.

<sup>21</sup> At times, the Assembly Hall may also be used for other theocratic functions, such as Bible schools and special meetings for circuit overseers. Like the Kingdom Hall, an Assembly Hall is a dedicated place of worship. When we are meeting at an Assembly Hall, our conduct, dress, and grooming should be dignified, just as when we are meeting at the Kingdom Hall for worship.

<sup>22</sup> Many new ones are hastening to be part of God's organization during the final part of these last days. This is evidence of Jehovah's blessing. (Isa. 60:8, 10, 11, 22) Thus, we want to support the arrangements to obtain and maintain clean and comfortable places of worship. In doing so, we show our appreciation for the role that such facilities play in helping us to encourage one another all the more so as we see Jehovah's day drawing near.

## Supporting Kingdom Activity Locally and Worldwide

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) To do this, they have freely given of their time and energy in sharing spiritual things. Trusting in Jehovah to provide for his fellow workers, they continue to put God's Kingdom first in their life. (Matt. 6:25-34; 1 Cor. 3:5-9) The results are clear evidence of Jehovah's approval and blessing.

### **CARING FOR KINGDOM INTERESTS WORLDWIDE**

<sup>2</sup>When noting our preaching methods and realizing that we distribute Bibles and Bible literature without charge to the public, some will ask: "How is all of this possible?" True, printing and producing Bibles and Bible literature costs money. Constructing and maintaining Bethel homes for ministers who operate printing presses, oversee the preaching work, and serve in other ways to advance the good news also costs money. In addition, circuit overseers, field missionaries, special pioneers, and others in special full-time service are given some material assistance to help them continue in the work. Clearly, the work of preaching the good news in our day, whether locally or worldwide, involves the outlay of large sums of money. Where does it all come from?

<sup>3</sup> Many who appreciate the Bible educational work of Jehovah's Witnesses are happy to donate to the worldwide work. However, our work is primarily supported by the Witnesses themselves, some of whom send voluntary contributions to local branch offices of Jehovah's Witnesses. They demonstrate a willing spirit like that of God's ancient servants who generously supported the building of Jehovah's place of worship. (Ex. 35:20-29; 1 Chron. 29:9) Some gifts are received from estates through wills, while other contributions come from individuals, congregations, and circuits and are usually given in small amounts. Added together, these gifts provide the funds that keep the ministry going.

<sup>4</sup> Jehovah's Witnesses consider it a privilege to use their money and other resources to advance the preaching work. Jesus and his disciples maintained a money box from which funds were taken to care for expenses. (John 13:29) The Bible tells us of women who ministered to Jesus and his disciples. (Mark 15:40, 41; Luke 8:3) The apostle Paul gratefully accepted material assistance lovingly provided by those who were interested in advancing the good news and who wished to have a share in his ministry. (Phil. 4:14-16; 1 Thess. 2:9) Jehovah's Witnesses continue to follow these ancient patterns of zealous service and generous giving. Thus, it is possible for honesthearted ones everywhere to be offered "life's water free."—Rev. 22:17.

### **CARING FOR THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL CONGREGATION**

<sup>5</sup> The expenses of the local congregation are also covered by voluntary contributions. No collections are tak-



en; nor is there an assessment of dues or a solicitation of money. Contribution boxes are provided at meeting places so that each person can have a part in giving “just as he has resolved in his heart.”—2 Cor. 9:7.

<sup>6</sup> Money contributed is first of all used to pay for the operation and upkeep of the Kingdom Hall. The body of elders may decide that some of the money could be sent to the local branch office of Jehovah’s Witnesses for use in furthering the worldwide work. A resolution to this effect would be adopted by the congregation. In this way, many congregations make regular contributions to the worldwide work. When all are alert to local needs that arise from time to time, frequent announcements regarding contributions should not be necessary.

### **HANDLING CONTRIBUTIONS**

<sup>7</sup> After each meeting, two brothers remove any money that has been deposited in the contribution boxes and make a record of it. (2 Ki. 12:9, 10; 2 Cor. 8:20) The body of elders will make appropriate arrangements for safeguarding these funds until they can be forwarded to the branch office or used for congregation needs. The brother handling the congregation accounts prepares a monthly statement to inform the congregation, and every three months the coordinator of the body of elders arranges for an audit of the accounts.

### **CIRCUIT EXPENSES**

<sup>8</sup> Expenses incurred for assemblies, as well as other circuit expenses, are covered by contributions from the Witnesses making up the circuit. Contribution boxes are

provided at assembly facilities so that voluntary contributions can be made to the circuit. Additionally, to care for ongoing expenses, congregations may provide contributions at other times.

<sup>9</sup> Ideally, circuits should be able to cover any necessary expenses, with surplus funds being donated to the worldwide work. If there are not enough funds in the circuit account to pay expenses for the assembly or to meet initial expenses for the next assembly, such as a deposit to secure the use of a facility, the circuit overseer may direct that congregations be advised of the privilege to contribute. Each body of elders will discuss the matter and determine what contribution the congregation would be able to make to the circuit fund. They would then handle this contribution by means of a resolution.

<sup>10</sup> When financial matters arise that require the attention of the circuit elders, a circuit elders' meeting will be held on the day of a circuit assembly. All decisions other than those involving selected circuit expenses should be handled as resolutions adopted by the elders. These resolutions must be written in exact amounts and presented for approval each time circuit funds are dispensed.

<sup>11</sup> Arrangements are made for a periodic audit of the circuit accounts.

### **CARING FOR THE POOR**

<sup>12</sup> One purpose of the money box maintained by Jesus and his disciples was to help the poor. (Mark 14:

3-5; John 13:29) That Christian responsibility has continued, for Jesus said: “You always have the poor with you.” (Mark 14:7) How do Jehovah’s Witnesses care for this responsibility today?

<sup>13</sup> 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. Family members, relatives, and others who become aware of such a need may feel moved to help. This is in harmony with the words of the apostle John: “Whoever has the material possessions of this world and sees his brother in need and yet refuses to show him compassion, in what way does the love of God remain in him? Little children, we should love, not in word or with the tongue, but in deed and truth.” (1 John 3:17, 18; 2 Thess. 3:6-12) True worship includes looking after faithful ones who may be in need of material assistance.—Jas. 1:27; 2:14-17.

<sup>14</sup> In his first letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul explained how material assistance may be provided to deserving ones. You can read his counsel at 1 Timothy 5:3-21. The primary responsibility rests with 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

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or social programs, so relatives or others may help the needy one to apply for such assistance. A situation might arise in which it becomes 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 and no adequate assistance from government agencies is available, the body of elders can make appropriate recommendations to provide some help. Christians consider it a privilege to share their material possessions with those in need.

<sup>15</sup> Many brothers and sisters may come to be in need because of persecution, wars, earthquakes, floods, famines, or other calamitous occurrences that are common in these critical times. (Matt. 24:7-9) Local congregations may not have anything to share with one another, so the Governing Body coordinates the efforts of brothers elsewhere to provide what is needed. This is similar to the way Christians in Asia Minor provided food for the brothers in Judea 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 show ourselves to be genuine disciples of Jesus Christ.—John 13:35.

### **LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION**

<sup>16</sup> Bibles and Bible literature play an important role in spreading the Kingdom message. Usually a ministerial servant is assigned by the body of elders to look after the congregation's supply of literature. The brothers as-

signed to look after these supplies take their responsibilities seriously. They keep good records so that adequate supplies are on hand to care for the needs of the congregation.

<sup>17</sup> As dedicated Christians, we recognize that our time, mental and physical assets, talents and material possessions, 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 depth of our love for Jehovah. It is our desire to honor Jehovah with our valuable things, knowing that he is pleased with any gift that is given as an expression of whole-souled devotion. (Prov. 3:9; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 21:1-4; Col. 3:23, 24) Jesus said: “You received free, give free.” (Matt. 10:8) As we give of ourselves and our resources in Jehovah’s service, we in turn receive the greater joy.—Acts 20:35.

## “Do All Things for God’s Glory”

AS God’s dedicated servants, we are under obligation to reflect Jehovah’s glory in all that we say and do. The apostle Paul offered a guiding principle when he wrote: “Whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God’s glory.” (1 Cor. 10:31) This involves our holding to Jehovah’s 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.

<sup>2</sup> Calling this to the attention of Christians, the apostle Peter wrote: “As obedient children, stop being molded by the desires you formerly had in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, become holy yourselves in all your conduct, for it is written: ‘You must be holy, because I am holy.’” (1 Pet. 1:14-16) As in Israel of old, all in 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 sacred service.—Ex. 20:5.

<sup>3</sup> Holiness is maintained by adhering to Jehovah’s laws and principles, which are clearly set out in the Holy Scriptures. (2 Tim. 3:16) Through a study of the Bible, we were taught about Jehovah and his ways, and we were drawn to him. Our study convinced us of the need to seek first God’s Kingdom and to make the doing of

Jehovah's will paramount in our life. (Matt. 6:33; Rom. 12:2) This required that we put on the new personality. —Eph. 4:22-24.

## **SPIRITUAL AND MORAL CLEANNESS**

<sup>4</sup> Holding to Jehovah's righteous standards is not always easy. Our adversary, Satan the Devil, seeks to turn us aside from the truth. This world's wicked influences and our own sinful tendencies make things difficult at times. Living up to our dedication requires a spiritual fight on our part. The Scriptures tell us not to be surprised when we encounter opposition or trials. We will have to suffer for the sake of righteousness. (2 Tim. 3:12) We can be happy when undergoing trials, knowing that such trials are proof that we are doing God's will. —1 Pet. 3:14-16; 4:12, 14-16.

<sup>5</sup> Though Jesus was perfect, he learned obedience by the things he suffered. At no time did he yield to Satan's temptations or develop worldly aspirations. (Matt. 4:1-11; John 6:15) Not once did Jesus even give thought to a compromise. Although his faithful course incurred the world's hatred, he held to Jehovah's righteous standards. Shortly before his death, Jesus warned his disciples that the world would hate them too. From that time forward, Jesus' followers have experienced tribulation, but they have taken courage in knowing that the Son of God conquered the world.—John 15:19; 16:33; 17:16.

<sup>6</sup> In order to be no part of the world, we need to uphold Jehovah's righteous standards, as our Master did. In addition to avoiding involvement with the world's

political and social issues, we must resist its degraded moral climate. We take seriously the counsel found at James 1:21: “Put away all filthiness and every trace of badness, and accept with mildness the implanting of the word that is able to save you.” Through study and meeting attendance, we can experience “the implanting of the word” of truth in our mind and heart, and we will not even begin to desire what the world offers. The disciple James wrote: “Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is making himself an *enemy* of God.” (Jas. 4:4) For this reason, the Bible contains strong admonition that we hold to Jehovah’s righteous standards and remain separate from the world.

<sup>7</sup> God’s Word warns us against sharing in shameful and immoral conduct. It tells us: “Let sexual immorality and every sort of uncleanness or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as is proper for holy people.” (Eph. 5:3) So we must refuse to allow our mind to dwell on things that are obscene, shameful, or base, and we would certainly not allow such things to creep into our conversation. Thereby we give proof of wanting to hold to Jehovah’s clean and righteous standards of morality.

### **PHYSICAL CLEANLINESS**

<sup>8</sup> Along with spiritual and moral cleanness, Christians recognize the importance of being physically clean. In ancient Israel, the God of holiness required



that the camp be kept clean. We too must be clean so that Jehovah “does not see anything indecent” in us.—Deut. 23:14.

<sup>9</sup>Holiness and physical cleanliness are closely linked in the Bible. For example,

Paul wrote: “Beloved ones, let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Cor. 7:1) Christian men and women, therefore, should strive to keep their bodies clean by regularly bathing and by washing their clothes. While conditions vary from country to country, we can generally find enough soap and water to keep our bodies clean and to make sure that our children are kept clean.

<sup>10</sup>Because of our witnessing activity, we are usually well-known in the community where we live. Keeping a neat, clean, and orderly home, inside and out, is in itself a witness to the neighbors. This is something in which the whole family can be involved. Brothers should take particular interest in the home and its surroundings, knowing that a tidy yard and well-kept home make a favorable impression on others. This, along with their taking the lead in spiritual matters, is an indication that family heads are presiding well over their own household. (1 Tim. 3:4, 12) Sisters too have a responsibility to care for things, especially inside the home. (Titus 2: 4, 5) Well-trained children do their part in keeping themselves as well as their rooms neat and clean. Thus the

As God’s dedicated servants, we are under obligation to reflect Jehovah’s glory in all that we say and do

family works together in developing patterns of cleanliness that will fit in with the new world under God's Kingdom.

<sup>11</sup> Many of Jehovah's people today use automobiles for transportation to meetings. In some areas, a car is practically indispensable for the ministry. The car should be kept clean and in good repair. Our homes and automobiles should testify that we are part of Jehovah's clean and holy people. The same principle applies to our witnessing case and Bible.

<sup>12</sup> Our dress and grooming should be in keeping with godly principles. We would not think of appearing before a prominent person if we were slovenly dressed or our clothes were too casual. How much more concerned we should be when representing Jehovah in the field ministry or on the platform! Our grooming and clothing styles can influence how others view the worship of Jehovah. It would certainly 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 are getting ready to go in service or to go to congregation meetings, circuit assemblies, or conventions, we should have in mind what the Scriptures say about physical cleanliness and modest appearance. We always want to honor and glorify Jehovah.

<sup>13</sup> The same would apply when we visit world headquarters or a branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses. Remember, the name Bethel means "House of God." Therefore, we should dress and conduct ourselves as we would when we attend meetings at the Kingdom Hall.

<sup>14</sup> Even when engaging in leisure activities, we want to give attention to our dress and grooming. We might ask ourselves, ‘Would I be embarrassed to witness informally because of the way I am dressed?’

### **WHOLESOME RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT**

<sup>15</sup> Rest and recreation are necessary for staying balanced and healthy. Once Jesus invited his disciples to come with him to a lonely place to “rest up a little.” (Mark 6:31) Rest as well as wholesome recreation or entertainment can provide some pleasant diversion. It can refresh us so that we can press ahead with our normal work.

<sup>16</sup> With so many forms of recreation available today, Christians need to be selective, exercising godly wisdom in what they do. While recreation has its place, it is not the big thing in life. We are warned that in “the last days,” men would be “lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God.” (2 Tim. 3:1, 4) Much of what is called recreation and entertainment is objectionable to those who desire to hold to Jehovah’s righteous standards.

<sup>17</sup> The early Christians had to resist the unwholesome environment in the pleasure-seeking world around them. At the Roman circus, spectators were entertained by viewing the sufferings of others. Violence, bloodshed, and sexual immorality were staged for the amusement of the populace, but the early Christians stayed away from such things. Today, much of the world’s entertainment features similar elements and caters to base human appetites. We need to “keep strict watch” on how

we walk, turning away from demoralizing entertainment. (Eph. 5:15, 16; Ps. 11:5) And even if the entertainment itself may not be objectionable, the general atmosphere may be unacceptable.—1 Pet. 4:1-4.

<sup>18</sup> There are wholesome forms of recreation and entertainment that Christians can enjoy. Many have benefited from following the Scriptural counsel and balanced suggestions that can be found in our publications.

<sup>19</sup> At times, several families may be invited to a home for Christian fellowship. Or brothers and sisters may be invited to attend a wedding reception or a similar social occasion. (John 2:2) The hosts should feel personally responsible for what takes place. Clearly, there is need for caution when large groups get together. The relaxed atmosphere at such gatherings has led some to go beyond the limits of proper Christian conduct, becoming involved in excessive eating and drinking and even other serious wrongdoing. With this in mind, discerning Christians have seen the wisdom of limiting the size and duration of such gatherings. If alcoholic beverages are served, they should be used in moderation. (Phil. 4:5) If every effort is made to ensure that get-togethers are wholesome and spiritually refreshing, food and drink will not be the most important consideration.

<sup>20</sup> It is a fine thing to be hospitable. (1 Pet. 4:9) When inviting other Christians to our home for a meal, refreshments, relaxation, and fellowship, we want to keep in mind those who may be disadvantaged. (Luke 14:12-14) If we are guests on such occasions, our conduct

should be in line with the counsel found at Mark 12:31. It is always good to show appreciation for the kindness of others.

<sup>21</sup> Christians rejoice in God's bounteous gifts and in knowing that they can "eat and drink and find enjoyment for all [their] hard work." (Eccl. 3:12, 13) When we "do all things for God's glory," hosts as well as guests can look back on social gatherings with the satisfaction of having been spiritually refreshed.

### **SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

<sup>22</sup> Children of Jehovah's Witnesses benefit from getting a basic secular education. While attending school, they are interested in learning to read and write well. Other subjects taught in school can be of value to young people as they pursue spiritual goals. During their school years, they will want to make a diligent effort to 'remember their Grand Creator' by putting spiritual things first.—Eccl. 12:1.

<sup>23</sup> If you are a Christian youth attending school, take care not to associate unnecessarily with worldly youths. (2 Tim. 3:1, 2) Because Jehovah has provided the necessary protection, there is much you can do to ward off worldly influences. (Ps. 23:4; 91:1, 2) So to safeguard yourself, take advantage of Jehovah's provisions.—Ps. 23:5.

<sup>24</sup> To keep separate from the world while they are in school, most young Witnesses choose not to participate in extracurricular activities. This may be difficult for classmates and teachers to understand. However,

pleasing God is what counts. It means that you will exercise your Bible-trained conscience and be resolved not to become involved in worldly competition or nationalism. (Gal. 5:19, 26) By listening to the Scriptural counsel of godly parents and taking advantage of the good association in the congregation, you young ones can hold to Jehovah's righteous standards.

### **SECULAR WORK AND ASSOCIATES**

<sup>25</sup> Family heads have a Scriptural obligation to provide for their household. (1 Tim. 5:8) Even so, as ministers they recognize that their secular work is secondary to the pursuit of Kingdom interests. (Matt. 6:33; Rom. 11:13) By practicing godly devotion and being content with food and clothing, they avoid the anxieties and snares of a materialistic way of life.—1 Tim. 6:6-10.

<sup>26</sup> All dedicated Christians who work secularly should have Scriptural principles in mind. Making honest provision for ourselves means that we refuse to engage in practices that violate God's law or the law of the land. (Rom. 13:1, 2; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10) We keep in mind the dangers of bad associations. As soldiers of Christ, we refrain from engaging in commercial endeavors that violate godly standards, compromise our Christian neutrality, or jeopardize our spirituality. (Isa. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:4) And we do not have connections with God's religious enemy, "Babylon the Great."—Rev. 18:2, 4; 2 Cor. 6:14-17.

<sup>27</sup> Adhering to God's righteous standards will prevent us from using our theocratic association to promote

business ventures or other personal interests. The purpose of our association with others at Christian meetings, assemblies, and conventions is exclusively to worship Jehovah. We are feeding at his spiritual table and enjoying “an interchange of encouragement.” (Rom. 1: 11, 12; Heb. 10:24, 25) Such association should be kept on a spiritual level.

### **DWELLING IN CHRISTIAN UNITY**

<sup>28</sup> Jehovah’s righteous standards also require that his people “maintain the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace.” (Eph. 4:1-3) Rather than seeking to please himself, each one seeks to pursue what is good toward others. (1 Thess. 5:15) This is no doubt the spirit you have found in your congregation. No matter what our racial, national, social, economic, or educational background may be, all of us are governed by the same righteous standards. Even outsiders have observed this outstanding characteristic of Jehovah’s people.—1 Pet. 2:12.

<sup>29</sup> Further emphasizing the basis for unity, the apostle Paul wrote: “One body there is, and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” (Eph. 4: 4-6) This calls for unity in understanding basic Bible doctrines as well as more advanced Bible teachings in recognition of Jehovah’s sovereignty. Truly, Jehovah has given his people the pure language of truth, enabling them to serve shoulder to shoulder.—Zeph. 3:9.

<sup>30</sup> The unity and peace of the Christian congregation is a source of refreshment for all who worship Jehovah. We have experienced the fulfillment of Jehovah's promise: "In unity I will place them, like sheep in the pen." (Mic. 2:12) We want to maintain that peaceful unity by holding to Jehovah's righteous standards.

<sup>31</sup> Happy are those who have been accepted into the clean congregation of Jehovah! To be called by Jehovah's name is worth every sacrifice we may have to make. As we maintain our precious relationship with Jehovah, we will diligently strive to hold to his righteous standards and to recommend them to others.—2 Cor. 3:18.



## Maintaining the Peace and Cleanness of the Congregation

EACH year thousands of people flock to Jehovah's house of pure worship, in fulfillment of Bible prophecy. (Mic. 4:1, 2) How happy we are to receive them into "the congregation of God"! (Acts 20:28) They appreciate the opportunity to serve Jehovah with us and to enjoy the clean and peaceful environment of our spiritual paradise. God's holy spirit and the wise counsel found in his Word help us to maintain peace and keep the congregation clean.—Ps. 119:105; Zech. 4:6.

<sup>2</sup> By applying Bible principles, we put on "the new personality." (Col. 3:10) We put aside petty disputes and personal differences. Viewing matters as Jehovah does, we overcome divisive worldly influences and work unitedly as an international brotherhood.—Acts 10:34, 35.

<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, from time to time, difficulties arise that affect the peace and unity of the congregation. What is the cause? In most cases, it is a failure to apply Bible counsel. We still have to cope with our imperfect human tendencies. Not one of us is without sin. (1 John 1:10) Someone may take a false step that could introduce moral or spiritual uncleanness into the congregation. We may offend someone by our thoughtless words or deeds, or we may be stumbled because of what someone has said or done. (Rom. 3:23) At times like these, what can we do to set matters straight?

<sup>4</sup> Jehovah has lovingly taken all of this into consideration. His Word provides counsel on what to do when difficulties arise. Personal assistance is available from loving spiritual shepherds, the elders. By applying their Scriptural counsel, we can regain a fine relationship with others and maintain a good standing with Jehovah. If we receive discipline or reproof because of some wrongdoing on our part, we can be sure that such correction is an expression of our heavenly Father's love for us.—Prov. 3:11, 12; Heb. 12:6.

### **SETTLING MINOR DIFFERENCES**

<sup>5</sup> There may be times when personal disputes or difficulties of a minor nature arise between those in the congregation. These should quickly be settled in a spirit of brotherly love. (Eph. 4:26; Phil. 2:2-4; Col. 3:12-14) Very likely, you will find that problems of a personal nature involving your relationship with a fellow Christian can be resolved by applying the apostle Peter's counsel to "have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins." (1 Pet. 4:8) The Bible says: "We all stumble many times." (Jas. 3:2) By applying the Golden Rule, doing to others all things that we want them to do to us, we can usually forgive and forget minor offenses.—Matt. 6:14, 15; 7:12.

<sup>6</sup> If you discern that someone was offended by what you said or did, you should take the initiative to make peace without delay. Remember, your relationship with Jehovah is also affected. Jesus counseled his disciples: "If, then, you are bringing your gift to the altar and there

you 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 come back and offer your gift.” (Matt. 5:23, 24) There may have been a misunderstanding. If so, open up the lines of communication. Good communication among all in the congregation goes a long way toward preventing misunderstandings and solving problems that arise because of human imperfection.

### **PROVIDING NEEDED SCRIPTURAL COUNSEL**

<sup>7</sup> At times, overseers may find it necessary to give counsel in order to readjust a person’s thinking. This is not always easy. To the Christians in Galatia, the apostle Paul wrote: “Brothers, even if a man takes a 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.

<sup>8</sup> By shepherding the flock, overseers can protect the congregation from many spiritual dangers and may prevent serious problems from developing. Elders strive to make their service to the congregation measure up to what Jehovah promised through Isaiah: “Each one will be like a hiding place from the wind, a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water in a waterless land, like the shadow of a massive crag in a parched land.”—Isa. 32:2.

### **MARKING DISORDERLY ONES**

<sup>9</sup> The apostle Paul warned of certain ones who could exert an unhealthy influence on the congregation. Paul

said: “We are giving you instructions . . . to withdraw from every brother who is walking disorderly and not according to the tradition that you received from us.” He clarified that statement by writing: “If anyone is not obedient to our word through this letter, keep this one marked and stop associating with him, so that he may become ashamed. And yet do not consider him an enemy, but continue admonishing him as a brother.” —2 Thess. 3:6, 14, 15.

<sup>10</sup> Occasionally, someone not guilty of practicing a grave sin for which he could be expelled from the congregation shows flagrant disregard for God’s standard that should govern Christians. This could include such things as being extremely lazy, critical, or dirty. He could be “meddling with what does not concern [him].” (2 Thess. 3:11) Or he might be one who schemes to take material advantage of others or indulges in entertainment that is clearly improper. The disorderly conduct is serious enough to reflect badly on the congregation, and it has the potential to spread to other Christians.

<sup>11</sup> The elders will first try to help a disorderly person by giving him Bible-based counsel. However, if the individual persists in disregarding Bible principles in spite of repeated admonition, the elders may decide that a warning talk should be given to the congregation. Elders will use discernment in determining whether a particular situation is sufficiently serious and disturbing to others to warrant a warning talk. The speaker will provide appropriate counsel concerning disorderly conduct, but he

will not name the disorderly one. Consequently, those who are aware of the situation described in the talk will take care to avoid socializing with such an individual, although they will continue spiritual association, “admonishing him as a brother.”

By maintaining the peace and cleanness of the congregation, we continue to let our light of Kingdom truth shine

<sup>12</sup> Hopefully, the firm stand taken by faithful Christians will help the disorderly one to become ashamed of his ways and will move him to change. When it is clearly evident that the individual has abandoned his disorderly course, it is no longer necessary to treat him as a marked individual.

### **RESOLVING CERTAIN SERIOUS WRONGS**

<sup>13</sup> Willingness to overlook offenses and to forgive does not mean that we are unconcerned about wrongdoing or that we approve of it. Not all wrongs can be charged to inherited imperfection; nor is it proper to overlook wrongs that go beyond minor offenses. (Lev. 19:17; Ps. 141:5) The Law covenant recognized that some sins are more serious than others, and the same is true in the Christian arrangement.—1 John 5:16, 17.

<sup>14</sup> Jesus outlined a specific procedure for solving serious problems that may arise between fellow Christians. Note the steps that he set out: “If your brother commits a sin, [1] go and reveal 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, so that on the testimony 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.

<sup>15</sup> In view of the illustration that Jesus subsequently gave, recorded at Matthew 18:23-35, it appears that one of the sins considered at Matthew 18:15-17 involves financial or property matters, such as failing to repay a loan or committing fraud. Or the offense might be slander, which seriously affects someone’s reputation.

<sup>16</sup> If you have evidence that someone in the congregation has committed such a sin against you, do not be hasty to turn to the elders, asking them to intervene on your behalf. As Jesus counseled, speak *first* with the one against whom you have the complaint. Try to resolve the matter between just the two of you without involving anyone else. Keep in mind that Jesus did not say ‘*go only once* and reveal his fault.’ Therefore, if the person did not admit the wrong and ask forgiveness, it may be good to consider approaching him again later. If the matter can be resolved in this way, the one who sinned will certainly appreciate that you have not told others about his sin or marred his good reputation in the congregation. You will have “gained your brother.”

<sup>17</sup> If the one who committed the offense accepts responsibility, seeks forgiveness, and takes steps to right

the wrong, there is no need to carry the matter further. Although the sin was serious, an offense of this kind can be settled between the individuals involved.

<sup>18</sup> If you are not able to gain your brother by revealing his fault “between you and him alone,” then you may do as Jesus said, “take along with you one or two more,” and speak with your brother again. Those whom you take with you should also have the objective of gaining your brother. Preferably, they would be witnesses of the alleged wrongdoing, but if there are no eyewitnesses, you may choose to ask one or two more to be witnesses to the discussion. They may have experience in the matter at issue and may be able to establish whether what occurred was truly a wrong. Elders chosen to act as witnesses do not represent the congregation, since the body of elders has not specifically assigned them to do so.

<sup>19</sup> If the matter has not been resolved after repeated efforts—you spoke with him alone and you went to him with one or two others—and you feel that you cannot let it pass, then you should report the matter to the overseers of the congregation. Remember that their goal is to maintain the peace and cleanness of the congregation. Having approached the elders, you will want to leave the matter in their hands and trust in Jehovah. Never should you allow the conduct of someone else to stumble you or to rob you of your joy in Jehovah’s service.—Ps. 119:165.

<sup>20</sup> The shepherds of the flock will investigate the matter. If it becomes evident that the person has indeed

committed a serious sin against you and is unrepentant and unwilling to make reasonable and appropriate amends, it may be necessary for a committee of overseers to expel the wrongdoer from the congregation. Thus they protect the flock and safeguard the cleanness of the congregation.—Matt. 18:17.

### **HANDLING CASES OF SERIOUS WRONGDOING**

<sup>21</sup> Some serious offenses, such as sexual immorality, adultery, homosexuality, blasphemy, apostasy, idolatry, and similar gross sins, require more than forgiveness from an offended individual. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:19-21) Because the spiritual and moral cleanness of the congregation are threatened, such serious sins must be reported to the elders and handled by them. (1 Cor. 5:6; Jas. 5:14, 15) Some individuals may approach the elders either to confess their own sin or to report what they know regarding the wrongdoing of others. (Lev. 5:1; Jas. 5:16) Regardless of the manner in which the elders first hear reports of serious wrongdoing on the part of a baptized Witness, an initial investigation will be made by two elders. If it is established that there is substance to the report and that evidence is available showing that a serious sin has been committed, the body of elders will assign a judicial committee of at least three elders to handle the matter.

<sup>22</sup> The elders exercise watchful care over the flock, seeking to protect it from any elements that would be spiritually damaging. They also endeavor to use God's Word skillfully to reprove any who have erred and to re-



store them to spiritual health. (Jude 21-23) This is in harmony with instructions given to Timothy by the apostle Paul, who wrote: “I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, . . . Reprove, reprimand, exhort, with all patience and art of teaching.” (2 Tim. 4:1, 2) Doing so may take much time, but this is part of the hard work of the elders. The congregation appreciates their efforts and considers them “worthy of double honor.”—1 Tim. 5:17.

<sup>23</sup> In every situation where guilt is established, the primary endeavor of the overseers is to restore the wrongdoer to spiritual health. If he is genuinely repentant and they are able to help him, their administering of reproof, either in private or before any possible witnesses who testified during the judicial hearing, will serve to discipline him and instill wholesome fear in the onlookers. (2 Sam. 12:13; 1 Tim. 5:20) In all cases of judicial reproof, restrictions are imposed. Thus the wrongdoer may be helped to make “straight paths” for his feet thereafter. (Heb. 12:13) In due course, the restrictions are removed as the individual’s spiritual recovery becomes manifest.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF REPROOF**

<sup>24</sup> If a judicial committee determines that an individual is repentant but that the matter is likely to become known in the congregation or in the community or if the congregation needs to be on guard concerning the repentant wrongdoer, a simple announcement will be made during the Life and Ministry Meeting. It should read: “[Name of person] has been reproved.”

## **IF THE DECISION IS TO DISFELLOWSHIP**

<sup>25</sup> In some cases, the wrongdoer will have become hardened in his course of sinful conduct and will thus fail to respond to efforts to help him. Sufficient “works that befit repentance” may not be in evidence at the time of the judicial hearing. (Acts 26:20) What then? In such cases, it is necessary to expel the unrepentant wrongdoer from the congregation, thus denying him fellowship with Jehovah’s clean people. The bad influence of the wrongdoer is removed from the congregation, thereby safeguarding its moral and spiritual cleanness and protecting its good name. (Deut. 21:20, 21; 22:23, 24) Upon becoming aware of the shameful conduct of someone in the Corinthian congregation, the apostle Paul admonished the elders to “hand such a man over to Satan . . . , so that the spirit [of the congregation] may be saved.” (1 Cor. 5:5, 11-13) Paul also reported the disfellowshipping of others who had rebelled against the truth in the first century.—1 Tim. 1:20.

<sup>26</sup> When it has been determined that an unrepentant wrongdoer should be disfellowshipped, a judicial committee should let the person know of the decision, clearly stating the Scriptural reason(s) for the disfellowshipping. Upon informing the wrongdoer of the decision, the judicial committee will tell him that if he believes that a serious error in judgment has been made and he wishes to appeal the decision, he should do so in a letter, clearly stating the reasons for his appeal. Counting from the time he was notified of the committee’s decision, he will

be given seven days for this. If an appeal is received, the body of elders will contact the circuit overseer, who will select qualified elders to serve on an appeal committee to rehear the case. They will make every effort to conduct the appeal hearing within one week after the letter is received. If there is an appeal, announcement of the disfellowshipping will be postponed. In the meantime, the accused person will be restricted from commenting and praying at meetings and from special privileges of service.

<sup>27</sup> An appeal is granted as a kindness to the accused and allows him a further hearing of his concerns. Thus, if the wrongdoer deliberately fails to appear at the appeal hearing, the disfellowshipping will be announced after reasonable efforts have been made to contact him.

<sup>28</sup> If the wrongdoer does not wish to appeal, the judicial committee will explain to him the need for repentance as well as what steps he can take toward being reinstated in due time. This would be both helpful and kind and should be done in hopes that he will change his ways and in time qualify to return to Jehovah's organization.—2 Cor. 2:6, 7.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF DISFELLOWSHIPPING**

<sup>29</sup> When it is necessary to disfellowship an unrepentant wrongdoer from the congregation, a brief announcement is made, stating: “[Name of person] is no longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses.” This will alert faithful ones in the congregation to stop associating with that person.—1 Cor. 5:11.

## **DISASSOCIATION**

<sup>30</sup> The term “disassociation” applies to the action taken by a person who is a baptized Witness but deliberately repudiates his Christian standing by stating that he no longer wants to be recognized as, or known as, one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Or he might renounce his place in the Christian congregation by his actions, such as by becoming part of a secular organization that has objectives contrary to Bible teachings and therefore is under judgment by Jehovah God.—Isa. 2:4; Rev. 19:17-21.

<sup>31</sup> 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.

<sup>32</sup> When a person disassociates himself, his situation before Jehovah is far different from that of an inactive Christian, one who no longer shares in the field ministry. A person may have become inactive because he failed to study God’s Word regularly. Or perhaps he experienced personal problems or persecution and lost his zeal for serving Jehovah. The elders as well as others in the congregation will continue to render appropriate spiritual assistance to an inactive Christian.—Rom. 15:1; 1 Thess. 5:14; Heb. 12:12.

<sup>33</sup> In contrast, if a person who is a Christian chooses to disassociate himself, a brief announcement is made to inform the congregation, stating: “[Name of person]

is no longer one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.” Such a person is treated in the same way as a disfellowshipped person.

## **REINSTATEMENT**

<sup>34</sup> A disfellowshipped person or one who has disassociated himself from the congregation may be reinstated when he gives clear evidence of repentance and over a reasonable period of time demonstrates that he has abandoned his sinful course. He shows that he is desirous of having a good relationship with Jehovah. The elders are careful to allow sufficient time—many months, a year, or even longer, depending on the circumstances—for the person to prove that his repentance is genuine. When the body of elders receives a letter requesting reinstatement, a reinstatement committee will speak with the individual. The committee will evaluate the evidence of “works that befit repentance” on his part and decide whether to reinstate him at that time or not.—Acts 26:20.

<sup>35</sup> If the person requesting reinstatement was disfellowshipped from another congregation, a local reinstatement committee will meet with the person and consider the plea. If the members of the local reinstatement committee believe he should be reinstated, they will forward their recommendation to the body of elders in the congregation that originally handled the matter. The involved committees will work together to make sure that all the facts are gathered to arrive at a just decision. However, the decision to reinstate is made by a

reinstatement committee of the congregation that originally handled the matter.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF REINSTATEMENT**

<sup>36</sup> When the reinstatement committee is convinced that the disfellowshipped or disassociated person is genuinely repentant and should be reinstated, an announcement of the reinstatement is made in the congregation that originally handled the matter. If the person is now in another congregation, the announcement will be made there as well. It should simply state: “[Name of person] is reinstated as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.”

### **CASES INVOLVING MINOR BAPTIZED CHILDREN**

<sup>37</sup> Serious wrongdoing on the part of minor children who are baptized should be reported to the elders. When the elders handle cases of serious sins involving a minor, it is preferable that the baptized parents of the young person be present. They will want to cooperate with the judicial committee, not attempting to shield the erring child from necessary disciplinary action. Just as when dealing with adult offenders, the judicial committee endeavors to reprove and restore the wrongdoer. However, if the young person is unrepentant, disfellowshipping action is taken.

### **WHEN UNBAPTIZED PUBLISHERS ARE WRONGDOERS**

<sup>38</sup> What should be done when unbaptized publishers become involved in serious wrongdoing? Since they are not baptized Witnesses, they cannot be disfellowshipped. However, they may not fully understand the

Bible's standards, and kind counsel may help them to make "straight paths" for their feet.—Heb. 12:13.

<sup>39</sup> If an unbaptized wrongdoer is unrepentant after two elders have met with him and have tried to help him, then it is necessary to inform the congregation. A brief announcement is made, stating: "[Name of person] is no longer recognized as an unbaptized publisher." The congregation will then view the wrongdoer as a person of the world. Although the offender is not disfellowshipped, Christians exercise caution with regard to any association with him. (1 Cor. 15:33) No field service reports would be accepted from him.

<sup>40</sup> In time, an unbaptized person who was removed as a publisher may wish to become a publisher again. In that situation, two elders would meet with him and ascertain his spiritual progress. If he qualifies, a brief announcement is made, stating: "[Name of person] is again recognized as an unbaptized publisher."

### **JEHOVAH BLESSES PEACEFUL AND CLEAN WORSHIP**

<sup>41</sup> All who are associated with the congregation of God today can rejoice in the rich spiritual estate that Jehovah has given to his people. Our spiritual pastures are indeed lush, and we have an abundance of refreshing waters of truth. We also have Jehovah's protective care through his theocratic arrangement under the headship of Christ. (Ps. 23; Isa. 32:1, 2) Being in the spiritual paradise in these troublesome last days has given us a feeling of security.

<sup>42</sup> By maintaining the peace and cleanness of the congregation, we continue to let our light of Kingdom truth shine. (Matt. 5:16; Jas. 3:18) With God's blessing, we will have the joy of seeing many more people come to know Jehovah and serve with us in doing his will.



## Benefiting From Theocratic Subjection

BEING in subjection to God, the Universal Sovereign, is essential if we are to be organized to do Jehovah's will. We recognize his Son's headship over the Christian congregation and also observe the headship principle in other areas of life. Such theocratic subjection benefits everyone concerned.

<sup>2</sup>The idea of subjection to constituted authority was introduced to mankind in the garden of Eden. It is embodied in God's commands found at Genesis 1:28 and 2:16, 17. Lower creatures were to be in subjection to humans, and Adam and Eve were to submit to God's will and authority. Obedience to this divine authority would result in peace and good order. The headship principle is later highlighted at 1 Corinthians 11:3. The apostle Paul wrote: "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." This indicates that in this overall arrangement, everyone except Jehovah is subject to headship.

<sup>3</sup>Most people today do not recognize or observe the headship principle. Why? The trouble started in Eden when mankind's parents deliberately chose to take themselves out from under God's sovereign headship. (Gen. 3:4, 5) However, they did not obtain greater

freedom. Instead, they became subject to a wicked spirit creature, Satan the Devil. The first rebellion alienated mankind from God. (Col. 1:21) As a result, the majority of mankind today remain in the power of the wicked one.—1 John 5:19.

<sup>4</sup> By learning the truth of God's Word and acting on it, we have come out from under Satan's influence. As dedicated, baptized Witnesses, we accept Jehovah as the Sovereign of our life. We agree with King David, who acknowledged Jehovah as "head over all." (1 Chron. 29:11) Yes, we humbly confess: "Know that Jehovah is God. He is the one who made us, and we belong to him. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture." (Ps. 100:3) We recognize that Jehovah is great and is worthy of our total submission, since he created all things. (Rev. 4:11) As ministers of the true God, we follow Jesus Christ, who set the perfect example of subjection to God.

<sup>5</sup> What did Jesus learn from the things he suffered while on earth? Hebrews 5:8 answers: "Although he was a son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered." Yes, Jesus remained in loyal subjection to his heavenly Father, even when facing adversity. 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 him opposition and persecution. (John 15:20) Nonetheless, Jesus showed subjection to God. Jesus "humbled himself"

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

Theocratic  
subjection affects  
all aspects of life

### **AREAS OF THEOCRATIC SUBJECTION**

<sup>6</sup> When we subject ourselves to God by doing his will, 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 devour us. We will experience deliverance from that wicked one if we take a stand against him and humble ourselves before Jehovah in willing subjection.—Matt. 6:10, 13; 1 Pet. 5:6-9.

<sup>7</sup> Within the Christian congregation, we recognize Christ’s headship and the authority he has given to “the faithful and discreet slave.” This affects our attitude and conduct toward one another. Godly subjection in the congregation will move us to be obedient to God’s Word in all aspects of our worship. This obedience involves our ministry, our meeting attendance and participation, our relationship with the elders, and our cooperation with organizational arrangements.—Matt. 24:45-47; 28:19, 20; Heb. 10:24, 25; 13:7, 17.

<sup>8</sup> Our subjection to God contributes to the peace, security, and good order of the Christian congregation. Jehovah’s qualities are reflected in his godly subjects.

(1 Cor. 14:33, 40) Our own experiences with Jehovah's organization have led us to express sentiments similar to those of King David. After noting the contrast between Jehovah's servants and the wicked, David joyfully exclaimed: "Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!"—Ps. 144:15.

<sup>9</sup> Within the marriage arrangement and the family structure, "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) Peace results when each family member follows the headship principle.

<sup>10</sup> A husband is to exercise headship in a loving way, imitating Christ. (Eph. 5:25-29) When he does not abuse or abdicate his headship, his wife and children are delighted to be in subjection to him. The wife's role is that of a helper, or complement. (Gen. 2:18) By patiently supporting and respecting her husband, she gains his favor and brings praise to God. (1 Pet. 3:1-4) When husbands and wives follow the Bible's counsel on headship, they set an example for their children in showing subjection to God.

<sup>11</sup> Our being in subjection to God also affects how we view "the superior authorities," which "stand placed in their relative positions by God." (Rom. 13:1-7) As law-abiding citizens, Christians pay taxes, paying back "Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God." (Matt. 22:21) Additionally, arrangements for covering

territory comply with applicable data protection laws. Being submissive and obedient to the duly constituted authorities in everything that is not in conflict with Jehovah's righteous law, we are able to direct our efforts and energies to the preaching work.—Mark 13:10; Acts 5:29.

<sup>12</sup> Theocratic subjection affects all aspects of life. With eyes of faith, we see the day when all mankind will be subject to Jehovah God. (1 Cor. 15:27, 28) How blessed and favored will be those who joyfully acknowledge Jehovah's sovereignty and remain in subjection to him for all eternity!

## A United Brotherhood

FOR some 1,500 years, Jehovah God dealt with the nation of Israel as his name people. Then Jehovah “turned his attention to the nations to take out of them a people for his name.” (Acts 15:14) People for Jehovah’s name would be his witnesses, united in thought and action regardless of where they lived on earth. Uniting a people for God’s name would be the result of the commission that Jesus gave to his followers: “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.

<sup>2</sup> By dedicating yourself to Jehovah and getting baptized, you have become a disciple of Jesus Christ. You are part of a united, worldwide brotherhood of Christians, who do not allow national, tribal, or economic differences to divide them. (Ps. 133:1) As a result, you love and respect your Christian companions in the congregation. Some of them may be of a different race or nationality or educational background and may formerly have been socially unacceptable to you because of these differences. You share a bond of brotherly love that is far stronger than any other relationship, be it social, religious, or family.—Mark 10:29, 30; Col. 3:14; 1 Pet. 1:22.

## ADJUSTMENTS IN THINKING

<sup>3</sup> If some have difficulty overcoming racial, political, social, or other ingrained prejudices, they might think of the early Jewish Christians, who had to break free from Jewish religious prejudices against people of all other nations. When Peter was instructed to go to the home of the Roman centurion Cornelius, Jehovah kindly prepared Peter for the assignment.—Acts, chap. 10.

<sup>4</sup> In a vision, Peter was told to kill and eat certain animals that were ceremonially unclean for Jews. When Peter objected, a voice from heaven told him: “Stop calling defiled the things God has cleansed.” (Acts 10:15) It took this divine intervention for Peter to condition his mind for the assignment he was about to receive, namely, to visit a man of the nations. When obeying Jehovah’s direction, Peter declared to those gathered: “You well know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or approach a man of another race, and yet God has shown me that I should call no man defiled or unclean. So 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.

<sup>5</sup> Saul of Tarsus, a highly educated Pharisee, had to humble himself and associate with those who had formerly been socially unacceptable to him. He even had to take direction from them. (Acts 4:13; Gal. 1:13-20; Phil. 3:4-11) 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**

<sup>6</sup>No doubt the love of the brothers and sisters in the congregation helped draw you to Jehovah and his organization. You observed the unmistakable mark of love that characterizes true disciples of Jesus Christ, as he expressed it: “I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, 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) And you came to appreciate Jehovah and his organization even more when you realized that the love in the congregation is only a reflection of the love that exists in the worldwide brotherhood. You are experiencing the fulfillment of Bible prophecy about the gathering of people in the last days to worship Jehovah in peace and unity.—Mic. 4:1-5.

<sup>7</sup>In view of the many divisive factors that exist today, who would ever have thought it possible to unite people “out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues”? (Rev. 7:9) Consider the differences between the people of a high-tech society and those who hold to ancient tribal customs. Look at the religious rival-

You are part of a united, worldwide brotherhood of Christians, who do not allow national, tribal, or economic differences to divide them



ries between people of the same race and nationality. With nationalism coming to the fore, people have become more divided politically than ever. And if you consider economic differences as well as countless other divisive factors, the uniting of people out of all nations, languages, groups, and classes in an unbreakable bond of love and peace is a miracle that only Almighty God can bring about.—Zech. 4:6.

<sup>8</sup> But such unity is a reality, and when you became a dedicated, baptized Witness of Jehovah, you became part of it. Benefiting from that unity, you have the responsibility to help maintain it. This is done by heeding the apostle Paul's words found at Galatians 6:10: "As long as we have the opportunity, let us work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith." We also follow this counsel: "Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with humility consider others superior to you, as you look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others." (Phil. 2:3, 4) As long as we train ourselves to see our brothers and sisters as Jehovah sees them and not according to what they are in the flesh, we will continue to enjoy peaceful and happy relationships with them.—Eph. 4:23, 24.

### **CONCERN FOR ONE ANOTHER**

<sup>9</sup> As the apostle Paul illustrated for us, the congregation is not divided but all in it have mutual concern for one another. (1 Cor. 12:14-26) We may be separated by great distances from some of those in our worldwide

brotherhood, but we are not less concerned about their welfare. If some of our brothers are being persecuted, the rest of us are greatly distressed. If some are in need or have become victims of disaster or war or civil strife, the rest are eager to find ways to render spiritual as well as material assistance.—2 Cor. 1:8-11.

<sup>10</sup> All of us should pray for our brothers every day. Some are facing temptation to do what is bad. Others experience suffering that may be publicly known. Still others face opposition from workmates and from within divided households that is relatively unknown. (Matt. 10: 35, 36; 1 Thess. 2:14) This is of concern to us because we are a worldwide brotherhood. (1 Pet. 5:9) Among us are those who are working hard in Jehovah's service, taking the lead in the preaching work and in the congregations. Also, there are those who are charged with the oversight of the worldwide work. All need our prayers, by which we demonstrate our love and genuine interest, even when there may not be anything else that we can personally do to be of assistance.—Eph. 1:16; 1 Thess. 1:2, 3; 5:25.

<sup>11</sup> With all the turmoil on earth during these last days, Jehovah's people must be prepared to come to the aid of one another. At times disasters, such as earthquakes and floods, call for conducting extensive relief efforts and arranging for large amounts of material assistance. First-century Christians set a fine example in this regard. Remembering Jesus' counsel, the disciples in Antioch gladly sent material gifts to the brothers in Judea. (Acts 11:27-30; 20:35) The apostle Paul later encour-

aged the Corinthians to support relief efforts that were carried out in an orderly manner. (2 Cor. 9:1-15) In modern times, when our brothers become victims of circumstances and need material relief, the organization and individual Christians are quick to respond and supply what is needed.

### **SET APART TO DO JEHOVAH'S WILL**

<sup>12</sup> Our united, worldwide brotherhood is organized to do Jehovah's will. At this 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 conduct ourselves in accord with his high moral standards. (1 Pet. 1:14-16) We should be willing to subject ourselves to one another and to work for the advancement of the good news. (Eph. 5:21) As never before, this is a time, not to seek our own personal interests, but to put God's Kingdom first in our life. (Matt. 6:33) Keeping this in mind as we work together for the sake of the good news brings joyful satisfaction now and will lead to everlasting blessings.

<sup>13</sup> As Jehovah's Witnesses, we are unique, set apart from the rest of mankind as a clean people, zealous in service to our God. (Titus 2:14) Our worship of Jehovah makes us different. Not only do we work shoulder to shoulder with our brothers around the earth but we speak the one language of truth and act in harmony with the truth we speak. This was foretold when Jehovah declared through his prophet Zephaniah: "I will change

the language of the peoples to a pure language, so that all of them may call on the name of Jehovah, to serve him shoulder to shoulder.”—Zeph. 3:9.

<sup>14</sup> Then Jehovah inspired Zephaniah to describe the worldwide brotherhood that has become a reality today: “Those remaining of Israel will practice no unrighteousness; they will not speak a lie, nor will a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths; they will feed and lie down, and no one will make them afraid.” (Zeph. 3:13) Having gained an understanding of Jehovah’s Word of truth and made over our mind and conformed our way of life to Jehovah’s standards, we are able to work in unity. We accomplish what appears to be impossible in the eyes of those who view matters from a human standpoint. Yes, we are indeed a distinct people, God’s people, bringing honor to him in all the earth.—Mic. 2:12.

## Stay Close to Jehovah's Organization

THE disciple James wrote: “Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you.” (Jas. 4:8) Yes, Jehovah is not too lofty nor too far removed to hear our expressions to him, despite our imperfections. (Acts 17:27) How can we draw close to God? We can do this by building a close personal relationship with Jehovah that includes earnest prayer. (Ps. 39:12) We can also cultivate intimacy with God by regularly studying his Word, the Bible. In this way, we get to know Jehovah God, his purposes, and his will for us. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) Thus, we learn to love him and develop a wholesome fear of displeasing him.—Ps. 25:14.

<sup>2</sup>Closeness with Jehovah, however, is possible only through his Son, Jesus. (John 17:3; Rom. 5:10) No human could ever give us better insight into the mind of Jehovah than Jesus did. He was so intimately acquainted with his Father that he could say: “No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son is willing to reveal him.” (Luke 10:22) So when we study the Gospels to learn about the way Jesus thought and felt, we are, in effect, learning how Jehovah thinks and feels. Such knowledge enables us to draw closer to our God.

<sup>3</sup> Under the headship of God's Son, we cultivate intimacy with Jehovah by staying close to the visible channel that helps us learn how to do God's will. As foretold at Matthew 24:45-47, the Master, Jesus Christ, has appointed "the faithful and discreet slave" to provide "food at the proper time" for the household of faith. Today, the faithful slave supplies us with an abundance of spiritual food. Through this channel, Jehovah counsels us to read his Word daily, to attend our Christian meetings regularly, and to have a meaningful share in preaching the "good news of the Kingdom." (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20; Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:1-3) Never would we want to have a fleshly viewpoint of the faithful slave. We should endeavor to stay close to the visible part of Jehovah's organization and respond to its direction. This will draw us closer to our God, Jehovah, and will serve to strengthen and protect us despite trials.

### **WHY TRIALS ARE INCREASING**

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps you have been in the truth for many years. If so, you certainly know what it means to endure tests of integrity. But even if you have only recently come to know Jehovah and associate with his people, you are aware that Satan the Devil opposes anyone who submits to Jehovah's sovereignty. (2 Tim. 3:12) So whether you have endured little or much, there is no reason for you to become fearful or discouraged. Jehovah promises that he will sustain you and reward you with deliverance and future life.—Heb. 13:5, 6; Rev. 2:10.

<sup>5</sup> All of us may yet be subjected to trials during these remaining days of Satan's system. Ever since God's

Kingdom was established in 1914, Satan has not been permitted access to Jehovah's heavens. He was hurled down to the earth, where he and his wicked angels are confined. The increased woe on the earth, including the intensified persecution of Jehovah's dedicated servants, is a result of Satan's anger and is proof that we are living in the last days of his wicked rule over mankind. —Rev. 12:1-12.

<sup>6</sup> Infuriated by his debased condition, Satan knows that his time is short. With his demons, he makes every effort to interfere with the Kingdom-preaching work and to destroy the unity of Jehovah's servants. This puts us at the battle lines of the spiritual warfare described as "a struggle, 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." 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. We must "stand firm against the crafty acts" of the Devil. (Eph. 6:10-17) This calls for endurance on our part.

### **CULTIVATING ENDURANCE**

<sup>7</sup> Endurance means "the ability to withstand hardship or adversity." In a spiritual sense, endurance refers to a quality of firmness in doing what is right in the face of hardship, opposition, persecution, or any other factor designed to turn us away from our 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 that come at the beginning of our Christian course, we become stronger, able to endure more difficult trials that are sure to come. (Luke 16:10) 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, the apostle Peter wrote: “Put forth all earnest effort to 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.

<sup>8</sup> The importance of cultivating endurance is called to our attention by James in his letter: “Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials, knowing as you do that this tested quality of your faith produces endurance. But let endurance complete its work, so that you may be complete and sound in all respects, not lacking in anything.” (Jas. 1:2-4) James says that Christians should welcome trials and be joyful about them because they help us to produce 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. Endurance, in turn, produces other desirable qualities that we need.



<sup>9</sup> Our endurance is pleasing to Jehovah; it will move him to grant us the reward of everlasting life. James further stated: “Happy is the man who 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 forced back into the world. Without endurance, we will not continue to have Jehovah’s spirit and therefore we will not produce its fruitage in our life.

<sup>10</sup> 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.” That may not be easy to do, inasmuch as physical suffering or mental anguish may be involved. But remember that future life is at stake. An experience of the apostles helps us to see how we can rejoice during sufferings. The account is found in the book of Acts, and it reads: “They summoned the apostles, flogged them, and ordered them to stop speaking on the basis of Jesus’ name, and let them go. So they went out from before the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name.” (Acts 5:40, 41) The apostles understood that their suffering was proof that they had been obedient to Jesus’ command and that they had received Jehovah’s

Our endurance is built up day by day as we face and overcome trials

approval. Years later, when writing his first inspired letter, Peter commented on the value of such suffering for righteousness' sake.—1 Pet. 4:12-16.

<sup>11</sup> Another experience involves Paul and Silas. When carrying on their missionary work in Philippi, they were arrested and charged with disturbing the city and proclaiming 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, and the prisoners were listening to them.” (Acts 16:16-25) Paul and his companion rightly viewed their sufferings for Christ not only as 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 life of others was involved. That very night, the jailer and his household listened and became disciples. (Acts 16:26-34) Paul and Silas trusted in Jehovah, in his power, and in his willingness to sustain them in their sufferings. They were not disappointed.

<sup>12</sup> Today, too, 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 the opportunity to associate with fellow believers and to render sacred service. We also have the privilege of maintaining close association with Jehovah himself through prayer. He listens to our expressions of praise and our earnest requests for help to

keep 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; Heb. 6:18; Rev. 21:1-4.

### **ENDURING VARIOUS TRIALS**

<sup>13</sup> The trials we face today are much like 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 opposers. Just as in the days of the apostles, much of the opposition is instigated by religious fanatics whose false teachings and practices are exposed in God's Word. (Acts 17:5-9, 13) At times, Jehovah's people have found relief by claiming legal rights that are guaranteed by political governments. (Acts 22:25; 25:11) However, rulers have also imposed official bans on our work, endeavoring to put an end to our Christian ministry. (Ps. 2:1-3) Under such circumstances, we boldly follow the example of the faithful apostles, who said: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

<sup>14</sup> As the spirit of nationalism intensifies throughout the earth, greater pressures are put on preachers of the good news to abandon their God-given ministry. All of God's servants appreciate more fully the warning found at Revelation 14:9-12 concerning the worship of "the wild beast and its image." We realize the significance of John's words: "Here is where it calls for endurance on the part of the holy ones, those who keep the commandments of God and hold fast to the faith of Jesus."

<sup>15</sup> Tests that come because of wars, revolutions, or outright persecution and official bans may make it impossible for you to carry on Christian worship openly. You may not be able to meet as a congregation. Contact with the branch office may be cut off. Visits by circuit overseers may be interrupted. Publications may not arrive. If any of these things happen, what should you do?

<sup>16</sup> The answer is, do whatever you can and as much as you can under the circumstances. Personal study should be possible. Small groups can usually meet for study in private homes. Publications studied in the past and the Bible itself can be used as a basis for meetings. Do not worry or get excited. The Governing Body will generally be able to establish some form of communication with responsible brothers in a short time.

<sup>17</sup> Even if you do 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. Therefore, make good use of opportunities to witness. Jehovah will bless your efforts, and others may soon join you in true worship.—Acts 4:13-31; 5:27-42; Phil. 1:27-30; 4:6, 7; 2 Tim. 4:16-18.

<sup>18</sup> If, however, like the apostles and others, you are faced with the very threat of death, put your 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 can be a source of strength to your brothers in a similar way.—John 16:33; Heb. 12:2, 3; 1 Pet. 2:21.

<sup>19</sup> Besides persecution and opposition, you may have to endure other difficult situations. For example, some have become discouraged because of the apathy of people in their territory. Others have had to cope with their own physical or emotional illnesses or have had to endure limitations imposed by human frailty. The apostle Paul likewise had to endure a trial of some sort that interfered with his service or made it difficult at times. (2 Cor. 12:7) Also, Epaphroditus, a first-century Christian from Philippi, became “depressed because [his friends] heard he had fallen sick.” (Phil. 2:25-27) Our human imperfections and those of others may pose problems particularly difficult to endure. There may be personality conflicts with fellow Christians or even within one’s family. But such obstacles can be endured successfully and can be overcome 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.

### **DETERMINED TO REMAIN FAITHFUL**

<sup>20</sup> We must hold fast to the one whom Jehovah has appointed as Head of the congregation, Jesus Christ. (Col. 2:18, 19) We need to work closely with “the faithful and discreet slave” and those appointed as overseers. (Heb.

13:7, 17) By adhering closely to theocratic arrangements and cooperating with those taking the lead, we will be organized to do Jehovah'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 our loving heavenly Father or disrupt the unity we have with fellow worshippers.

<sup>21</sup> With determination and endurance, let us do all we can to carry out our commission to preach, persevering in the work the resurrected Jesus Christ set out for his followers to do: "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 Jesus, let us endure. May we keep the Kingdom hope and the prospect of everlasting life clearly before us. (Heb. 12:2) As baptized disciples of Christ, we have the privilege of sharing in the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy regarding "the conclusion of the system of things." He said: "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) If we apply ourselves wholeheartedly to that work during this time, we will have the joy of entering into an eternity of life in Jehovah's righteous new world!

## A Message to Christian Parents:

As a parent, you desire to help your precious children come to love Jehovah and dedicate themselves to him. What can you do to help prepare them for baptism? At what point will they be ready for this important step?

Jesus instructed his followers: “Make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them.” (Matt. 28:19) According to this, the primary requirement for baptism is to be a disciple—one who not only understands and believes Christ’s teachings but also follows them closely. This is something that even the relatively young can do.

Set a good example for your children, and inculcate Jehovah’s teachings in them. (Deut. 6:6-9) This includes using the information in the *Enjoy Life Forever!* book to teach them basic Bible truths and prepare them to reason on and live by Bible principles. Help your children to be able to explain their beliefs in their own words. (1 Pet. 3:15) The knowledge and encouragement they receive from you and from personal study, family worship, congregation meetings, and good associates will help them progress to baptism and beyond. Keep spiritual goals before them.

Proverbs 20:11 says: “Even a child is known by his actions, whether his behavior is pure and right.” What are

some actions that would indicate that a child, either a boy or a girl, has become a disciple of Jesus Christ and is ready to get baptized?

A child who is progressing toward baptism should obey his parent(s). (Acts 5:29; Col. 3:20) Regarding Jesus when he was 12 years old, the Bible says: “He continued subject to [his parents].” (Luke 2:51) Of course, you cannot expect your child to be perfect. But one who desires to get baptized will strive to follow Jesus’ example and be known for his subjection to his parents.

He will also demonstrate an interest in learning Bible truths. (Luke 2:46) Does your child want to attend meetings and participate? (Ps. 122:1) Does he have an appetite for regular Bible reading and personal study?—Matt. 4:4.

A child progressing toward baptism endeavors to put Kingdom interests first. (Matt. 6:33) He recognizes his responsibility to share his faith with others. He participates in various aspects of the ministry and is not ashamed to let his teachers and schoolmates know that he is one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. He takes his assignments for the Life and Ministry Meeting seriously.

He will also strive to remain morally clean by avoiding bad associations. (Prov. 13:20; 1 Cor. 15:33) This will be reflected in his preferences regarding music, movies, television programs, video games, and use of the Internet.

Many have responded to the diligent efforts of their parents, made the truth their own, and qualified for



baptism in their youth. May Jehovah bless you as you help your children reach this important milestone in their relationship with Jehovah.

## A Message to the Unbaptized Publisher:

It is a privilege to serve with the congregation as an unbaptized publisher. You are to be commended for the spiritual progress you have made. You have come to know God through a study of his Word and have exercised faith in his promises.—John 17:3; Heb. 11:6.

Before you started to study with Jehovah's Witnesses, you may have associated in some way with a different religious organization or you may have had no religious affiliation at all. Perhaps you engaged in another activity out of harmony with Bible principles. But now you have manifested your faith by repentance, which means deep regret over past wrongdoing, and by conversion, which means rejecting a wrong course and determining to do what is right in God's sight.—Acts 3:19.

On the other hand, perhaps you have known the holy writings "from infancy." You have thereby been safeguarded from involvement in unchristian conduct and serious wrongdoing. (2 Tim. 3:15) You have learned to resist peer pressure and other inducements to do what is bad in Jehovah's eyes. You have demonstrated faith by upholding true worship and sharing your beliefs with others. You have been trained in the Christian ministry. Now you have made a personal decision to serve Jehovah as an unbaptized publisher.

In either case, whether you came to know Jehovah later in life or learned Jehovah's ways from infancy, you

may now be contemplating two further steps in your spiritual progress—dedication and baptism. You make a dedication to Jehovah by approaching him in prayer and expressing your personal decision to give him exclusive devotion forever. (Matt. 16:24) In symbol of that dedication, you then undergo water baptism. (Matt. 28: 19, 20) Through dedication and baptism, you become an ordained minister of Jehovah God. What a wonderful privilege!

As your study of the Bible has indicated, though, you may encounter various challenges. Remember that shortly after baptism, “Jesus was led by the spirit up into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil.” (Matt. 4:1) Following your baptism as a disciple of Christ, you can expect further tests. (John 15:20) They will come in various forms. You may face opposition from family. (Matt. 10:36) You may be ridiculed by schoolmates, workmates, and former associates. Always remember Jesus’ words found at Mark 10:29, 30: “Truly I say to you, no one has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the good news who will not get 100 times more now in this period of time—houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the coming system of things, everlasting life.” So continue working hard to stay close to Jehovah and to live up to his righteous standards.

When you desire to get baptized, make this known to the coordinator of the body of elders. The questions that follow this message provide the basis for discussions

that the elders will have with you in order to determine whether you qualify for baptism. You may begin reviewing these questions privately as a part of your regular personal study program.

In preparation for these discussions, take time to read and reflect on the quoted Scripture references. You may wish to make personal notes in this book or elsewhere. You may use those notes and have this book open during your discussions with the elders. If you have difficulty understanding any of the questions, feel free to ask for assistance from the one who is studying the Bible with you or from the elders.

In your discussions with the elders, do not feel that you have to give lengthy or complicated answers to the questions. A simple, direct answer in your own words will be best. For many of the questions, it is also beneficial to refer to one or two Bible texts that show the Scriptural basis for your answer.

If you have not yet gained sufficient knowledge of basic Bible teachings, the elders will arrange for you to receive assistance so that you will be able to express in your own words a proper understanding of the Scriptures and qualify for baptism at a later time.

**[Note to congregation elders:** Instructions for handling discussions with baptism candidates appear on pages 208-212.]

# Questions for Those Desiring to Get Baptized

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## **PART 1 CHRISTIAN BELIEFS**

Your study of the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses has acquainted you with the truth. What you have learned has no doubt helped you to have a good relationship with God and has given you the hope of future life and blessings on a paradise earth under God's Kingdom. Your faith in God's Word has been strengthened, and through association with the Christian congregation, you have already experienced many blessings. You have come to appreciate how Jehovah is dealing with his people today.—Zech. 8:23.

As you now prepare for baptism, you will benefit from a review of basic Christian beliefs, conducted by the congregation elders. (Heb. 6:1-3) May Jehovah continue to bless all your endeavors to come to know him, and may he grant you the promised reward.—John 17:3.

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1. Why do you want to get baptized?

2. Who is Jehovah?

- “Jehovah is the true God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. There is no other.”—Deut. 4:39.
- “You, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth.”—Ps. 83:18.

3. Why is it important for you to use God’s personal name?

- “You must pray, then, this way: ‘Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified.’”—Matt. 6:9.
- “Everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved.”—Rom. 10:13.

4. What are some terms used in the Bible to describe Jehovah?

- “Jehovah, the *Creator* of the ends of the earth, is a God for all eternity.”—Isa. 40:28.
- “Our *Father* in the heavens.”—Matt. 6:9.
- “God is *love*.”—1 John 4:8.

5. What can you give Jehovah God?

- “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.
- “It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.”—Luke 4:8.

## **6. Why do you want to be loyal to Jehovah?**

- “Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, so that I can make a reply to him who taunts me.”  
—Prov. 27:11.

## **7. To whom do you pray, and in whose name do you pray?**

- “Most truly I [Jesus] say to you, if you ask the Father for anything, he will give it to you in my name.”—John 16:23.

## **8. What are some of the things you can pray about?**

- “You must pray, then, this way: ‘Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your Kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also on 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.
- “This is the confidence that we have toward him, that no matter what we ask according to his will, he hears us.”—1 John 5:14.

## **9. Why might Jehovah not listen to a person’s prayer?**

- “They will call to Jehovah for help, but he will not answer them . . . because of their wicked deeds.”—Mic. 3:4.
- “The eyes of Jehovah are on the righteous, and his ears listen to their supplication, but the face of Jehovah is against those doing bad things.”  
—1 Pet. 3:12.

## **10. Who is Jesus Christ?**

- “Simon Peter answered: ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’”—Matt. 16:16.

## **11. Why did Jesus come to earth?**

- “The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his life as a ransom in exchange for many.”—Matt. 20:28.
- “I [Jesus] must also declare the good news of the Kingdom of God to other cities, because for this I was sent.”—Luke 4:43.

## **12. How can you show your thankfulness for Jesus’ sacrifice?**

- “He died for all so that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised up.”—2 Cor. 5:15.

## **13. What authority does Jesus have?**

- “All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth.”—Matt. 28:18.
- “God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name.”—Phil. 2:9.

## **14. Do you believe that the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses is “the faithful and discreet slave” appointed by Jesus?**

- “Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domes-



tics, to give them their food at the proper time?”  
—Matt. 24:45.

### **15. Is the holy spirit a person?**

- “In answer the angel said to her: ‘Holy spirit will come upon you, and power of the Most High will overshadow you. And for that reason the one who is born will be called holy, God’s Son.’”  
—Luke 1:35.
- “Therefore, 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.

### **16. How has Jehovah used his holy spirit?**

- “By the word of Jehovah the heavens were made, and by the spirit of his mouth everything in them.”—Ps. 33:6.
- “You will receive power when the holy spirit comes upon you, and you will be witnesses of me . . . to the most distant part of the earth.”—Acts 1:8.
- “No prophecy of Scripture springs from any private interpretation. For prophecy was at no time brought by man’s will, but men spoke from God as they were moved by holy spirit.”—2 Pet. 1:20, 21.

### **17. What is the Kingdom of God?**

- “The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. And this kingdom

will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it alone will stand forever.”—Dan. 2:44.

#### **18. How will God’s Kingdom benefit you?**

- “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.

#### **19. How do you know that Kingdom blessings will soon be here?**

- “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?’ In answer Jesus said to them: ‘. . . Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another. 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.’”—Matt. 24:3, 4, 7, 14.
- “In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having an appear-

ance of godliness but proving false to its power.”  
—2 Tim. 3:1-5.

**20. How do you show that the Kingdom is important to you?**

- “Keep on, then, seeking first the Kingdom and his righteousness.”—Matt. 6:33.
- “Jesus said to his disciples: ‘If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and keep following me.’”  
—Matt. 16:24.

**21. Who are Satan and the demons?**

- “You are from your father the Devil . . . That one was a murderer when he began.”—John 8:44.
- “Down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him.”—Rev. 12:9.

**22. Of what has Satan accused Jehovah and those who worship Him?**

- “The woman said to the serpent: ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But God has said about the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden: “You must not eat from it, no, you must not touch it; otherwise you will die.”’ At this the serpent said to the woman: ‘You certainly will not die. For God knows that in the very day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and

you will be like God, knowing good and bad.’”  
—Gen. 3:2-5.

- “Satan answered Jehovah: ‘Skin for skin. A man will give everything that he has for his life.’”—Job 2:4.

**23. How can you prove that Satan’s accusations are false?**

- “Serve [God] with a complete heart.”—1 Chron. 28:9.
- “Until I die, I will not renounce my integrity!”  
—Job 27:5.

**24. Why do people die?**

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

**25. What is the condition of the dead?**

- “The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing at all.”—Eccl. 9:5.

**26. What hope is there for those who have died?**

- “There is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.”—Acts 24:15.

**27. How many people go to heaven to rule with Jesus?**

- “Look! the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who have his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads.”  
—Rev. 14:1.

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## **PART 2 CHRISTIAN LIVING**

In your study of the Bible, you have gained knowledge about what Jehovah asks of you and how to measure up to his righteous standards. Responding to what you have learned, you may have made a number of adjustments in your personal conduct and in your attitude toward life itself. Now that you have resolved to live by Jehovah's righteous standards, you are in a position to render acceptable service as a minister of the good news.

A review of the following questions 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 be one of his approved servants. This information will impress on 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.

Having reached this point in your study, you are no doubt eager to be submissive to Jehovah's rule and to become part of his organization. The questions and Scripture references will help you to examine your own understanding of submission to Jehovah's arrangement, whether in the congregation, in the family, or in regard to the political elements of this system of things. You will no doubt deepen your appreciation for Jehovah's arrangements to educate and build up his people spiritually. These include congregation meetings that you will want to attend and participate in as your circumstances allow.

Additionally, this section will consider the importance of 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) Finally, it will impress on your mind the seriousness of your dedication to Jehovah God and your baptism. You can be certain that Jehovah appreciates your sincere response to his undeserved kindness expressed in your behalf.

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### 1. What is the Christian standard for marriage? What is the only basis for a Scriptural divorce?

- “Have you not read that the one 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. . . . Whoever divorces his wife, except on the grounds of sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery.”—Matt. 19:4-6, 9.

### 2. Why should those living together as husband and wife be legally married? If you are married, are you sure that your marriage is legal and recognized by the government?

- “Continue reminding them to be in subjection and to be obedient to governments and authorities.”—Titus 3:1.
- “Let marriage be honorable among all, and let the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge sexually immoral people and adulterers.”—Heb. 13:4.

### 3. What is your role in the family?

- “Listen, my son, to the discipline of your *father*, and do not forsake the instruction of your *mother*.”—Prov. 1:8.
- “A *husband* is head of his wife just as the Christ is head of the congregation . . . Husbands, continue

loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation.”—Eph. 5:23, 25.

- “*Fathers*, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and admonition of Jehovah.”—Eph. 6:4.
- “You *children*, be obedient to your parents in everything, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.”—Col. 3:20.
- “You *wives*, be in subjection to your husbands.”—1 Pet. 3:1.

#### 4. Why should we show respect for life?

- “[God] gives to all people life and breath and all things. . . . By him we have life and move and exist.”—Acts 17:25, 28.

#### 5. Why should we not kill anyone, including an unborn baby?

- “If men should struggle with each other and they hurt a pregnant woman and . . . if a fatality does occur, then you must give life for life.”—Ex. 21:22, 23.
- “Your eyes even saw me as an embryo; all its parts were written in your book regarding the days when they were formed, before any of them existed.”—Ps. 139:16.
- “Jehovah hates . . . hands that shed innocent blood.”—Prov. 6:16, 17.

#### 6. What is God’s command regarding blood?

- “Keep abstaining . . . from blood [and] from what is strangled.”—Acts 15:29.



## **7. Why must we love our Christian brothers and sisters?**

- “I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, 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.

## **8. To avoid transmitting an infectious, potentially fatal disease to others: (a) Why should an infected person not initiate displays of affection, such as hugging and kissing? (b) Why should he not react negatively if some choose not to invite him into their home? (c) Why should a person who may have been exposed to an infectious disease voluntarily choose to have a blood test before beginning a courtship? (d) Why should a person with an infectious disease inform the coordinator of the body of elders before getting baptized?**

- “Do not owe anything to anyone except to love one another. . . . ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does not work evil to one’s neighbor.”—Rom. 13:8-10.
- “Look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others.”—Phil. 2:4.

## **9. Why does Jehovah expect us to forgive others?**

- “Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely even if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Just as Jehovah freely forgave you, you must also do the same.”—Col. 3:13.

**10. What should you do if a brother slanders or defrauds you?**

- “If your brother commits a sin, go and reveal 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, so that on the testimony 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.

**11. How does Jehovah view the following sins?**

- Sexual immorality
- Use of images in worship
- Homosexuality
- Stealing
- Gambling
- Drunkenness
- “Do not be misled. Those who are sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, men who submit to homosexual acts, men who practice homosexuality, thieves, greedy people, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners will not inherit God’s Kingdom.”—1 Cor. 6:9, 10.

**12. Regarding sexual immorality, which includes a variety of sexual acts outside of marriage, what are you determined to do?**

- “Flee from sexual immorality!”—1 Cor. 6:18.

**13. Why should we abstain from the nonmedical use of addictive or mind-altering substances?**

- “Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, a sacred service with your power of reason. And stop being molded by this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, so that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”—Rom. 12:1, 2.

**14. What are some of the demonic practices that God forbids?**

- “There should not be found in you . . . anyone who employs divination, anyone practicing magic, anyone who looks for omens, a sorcerer, anyone binding others with a spell, anyone who consults a spirit medium or a fortune-teller, or anyone who inquires of the dead.”—Deut. 18:10, 11.

**15. If a person commits a serious sin and wants to be restored to Jehovah’s favor, what should he immediately do?**

- “I confessed my sin to you; I did not cover my error. I said: ‘I will confess my transgressions to Jehovah.’”—Ps. 32:5.
- “Is there anyone sick among you? Let him call the elders of the congregation to him, and let them pray over him, applying oil to him in the name of Jehovah. And the prayer of faith will make the sick one well, and Jehovah will raise him up. Also, if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”—Jas. 5:14, 15.

**16. If you know that a fellow Christian has committed a serious sin, what should you do?**

- “If someone sins because he has heard a public call to testify and he is a witness or has seen or learned about it and he does not report it, then he will answer for his error.”—Lev. 5:1.

**17. If an announcement is made that someone is no longer one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, how should we treat him?**

- “Stop keeping company with anyone called a brother who is sexually immoral or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man.”—1 Cor. 5:11.
- “If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your homes or say a greeting to him.”—2 John 10.

**18. Why should your close friends be those who love Jehovah?**

- “The one walking with the wise will become wise, but the one who has dealings with the stupid will fare badly.”—Prov. 13:20.
- “Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits.”—1 Cor. 15:33.

**19. Why are Jehovah’s Witnesses politically neutral?**

- “They are no part of the world, just as I [Jesus] am no part of the world.”—John 17:16.

**20. Why should you obey the government?**

- “Let every person 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.

**21. If there is a conflict between a human law and God’s law, what would you do?**

- “We must obey God as ruler rather than men.”  
—Acts 5:29.

**22. What scriptures can help you to remain separate from the world when choosing a job?**

- “Nation will not lift up sword against nation, nor will they learn war anymore.”—Mic. 4:3.
- “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.

**23. What kind of entertainment and recreation will you choose, and what kind will you reject?**

- “Jehovah . . . hates anyone who loves violence.”  
—Ps. 11:5.
- “Abhor what is wicked; cling to what is good.”  
—Rom. 12:9.
- “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 things are virtuous, and whatever things are praiseworthy, continue considering these things.”—Phil. 4:8.

**24. Why do Jehovah’s Witnesses not worship with other religious groups?**

- “You cannot be partaking of ‘the table of Jehovah’ and the table of demons.”—1 Cor. 10:21.
- “‘Separate yourselves,’ says Jehovah, ‘and quit touching the unclean thing’; ‘and I will take you in.’”—2 Cor. 6:17.

**25. What principles will help you decide whether to participate in a celebration?**

- “They mingled with the nations and adopted their ways. They kept serving their idols, and these became a snare to them.”—Ps. 106:35, 36.
- “The dead know nothing at all.”—Eccl. 9:5.
- “They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world.”—John 17:16.
- “The time that has passed by is sufficient for you to have done the will of the nations when you carried on in acts of brazen conduct, unbridled passions, overdrinking, wild parties, drinking bouts, and lawless idolatries.”—1 Pet. 4:3.

**26. How do Bible examples help you decide whether to celebrate birthdays?**

- “The third day was Pharaoh’s birthday, and he made a feast for all his servants, and he brought

out both the chief cupbearer and the chief baker in the presence of his servants. And he returned the chief cupbearer to his post of cupbearer . . . But he hanged the chief baker.”—Gen. 40:20-22.

- “When Herod’s birthday was being celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced for the occasion and pleased Herod so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. Then she, at her mother’s prompting, said: ‘Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.’ So he sent and had John beheaded in the prison.”—Matt. 14:6-8, 10.

**27. Why do you want to follow the guidance of the elders?**

- “Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over you as those who will render an account, so that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you.”—Heb. 13:17.

**28. Why is it important for you and your family to set aside time regularly to read and study the Bible?**

- “His delight is in the law of Jehovah, and he reads His law in an undertone day and night. He will be like a tree planted by streams of water, a tree that produces fruit in its season, the foliage of which does not wither. And everything he does will succeed.”—Ps. 1:2, 3.

**29. Why do you love attending and participating in the meetings?**

- “I will declare your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”—Ps. 22:22.
- “Let us consider one another so as to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking our meeting together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you see the day drawing near.”—Heb. 10:24, 25.

**30. What is the most important work that Jesus has given us to do?**

- “Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them . . . , teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.”—Matt. 28:19, 20.

**31. When we make donations to the Kingdom work or help our brothers and sisters, what attitude pleases Jehovah?**

- “Honor Jehovah with your valuable things.”—Prov. 3:9.
- “Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”—2 Cor. 9:7.

**32. What difficulties do Christians expect to experience?**

- “Happy are those who have been persecuted for righteousness’ sake, since the Kingdom of the



heavens belongs to them. Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake. Rejoice and be overjoyed, since your reward is great in the heavens, for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you.”  
—Matt. 5:10-12.

### **33. Why is it a special privilege to be baptized as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses?**

- “Your word became to me the exultation and the rejoicing of my heart, for your name has been called on me, O Jehovah God.”—Jer. 15:16.

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## **CONCLUDING DISCUSSION WITH BAPTISM CANDIDATES**

Baptisms are usually held at assemblies and conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses. At the conclusion of the baptism talk, the speaker will ask the baptism candidates to stand and answer the following two questions in a loud voice:

- 1. Have you repented of your sins, dedicated yourself to Jehovah, and accepted his way of salvation through Jesus Christ?**
- 2. Do you understand that your baptism identifies you as one of Jehovah's Witnesses in association with Jehovah's organization?**

Affirmative answers to these questions constitute a "public declaration" by the baptism candidates that they have put faith in the ransom and have unreservedly dedicated themselves to Jehovah. (Rom. 10:9, 10) Baptism candidates will want to give prayerful thought to these questions in advance so that they can answer in harmony with their personal convictions.

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**Have you dedicated yourself to Jehovah in prayer, promising to worship only him and to make the doing of his will the most important thing in your life?**

**Are you now thoroughly convinced that you should get baptized at the earliest opportunity?**

**What is appropriate attire for baptism?** (1 Tim. 2:9, 10; John 15:19; Phil. 1:10)

We should dress with “modesty and soundness of mind” so as to show our “devotion to God.” Thus, those getting baptized would not wear revealing swimwear or clothing with sayings or slogans. They should dress in a way that is neat, clean, in good taste, and appropriate for the occasion.

**How should a person conduct himself when getting baptized?** (Luke 3:21, 22)

Jesus’ baptism set the example for Christian baptisms today. He appreciated that baptism is a serious step, and this was reflected in his attitude and actions. Hence, the baptism site would not be the place for inappropriate humor, playing, swimming, or other conduct that would detract from the seriousness of the occasion; nor would a new Christian carry on as though he had won a great victory. While baptism is a joyful occasion, that joy should be expressed in a dignified manner.

**How will meeting regularly and associating with the congregation help you to carry out your dedication to Jehovah?**

**After you get baptized, why will it be vital for you to maintain a good schedule of personal study and to share regularly in the ministry?**

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## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONGREGATION ELDERS**

When an unbaptized publisher makes known his desire to get baptized, he should be encouraged to review carefully the “Questions for Those Desiring to Get Baptized,” found on pages 185-207 of this book. His attention should be directed to “A Message to the Unbaptized Publisher,” beginning on page 182, which explains how he can prepare for the discussions with the elders. As noted there, the prospective baptism candidate may use his personal notes and may have this book open during the discussions. However, there is no need for someone to review the questions with him before he meets with the elders.

Anyone desiring to get baptized should inform the coordinator of the body of elders. After the person requesting baptism has had time to read the “Questions for Those Desiring to Get Baptized,” the coordinator of the body of elders will ask the person if he has made a personal dedication in prayer to Jehovah to do His will. If the person has made a dedication, then the coordinator of the body of elders will make arrangements for two of the elders to discuss with the person the “Questions for Those Desiring to Get Baptized.” A different elder should be assigned to handle each of the two parts. It is not necessary to wait until an assembly or a convention is announced before having these discussions.

The two parts can usually be covered in two sessions of about one hour each, although there is no objection

to using more time if that is necessary. Each session should be opened and closed with prayer. Neither the candidate nor the elders should be rushed when going through the questions. The assigned elders will want to make this discussion a priority in their schedule.

It is usually best to review the questions with each baptism candidate individually, not with a group of candidates. By having the candidate comment on every question, the elders will get a clear picture of his depth of understanding, leaving no doubt as to whether he is ready for baptism. Additionally, the one requesting baptism may be more inclined to express himself in this setting. A husband and wife may have these sessions together.

When the baptism candidate is a sister, the discussions should be held in such a way that they are held in plain view of others but out of earshot. If it is necessary to take along another person, he should be an elder or a ministerial servant, depending on the section being reviewed, as outlined in the next paragraph.

In congregations that have very few elders, capable ministerial servants who have demonstrated good judgment and discernment may review with individuals the questions for baptism outlined in “Part 1: Christian Beliefs.” Only elders should consider “Part 2: Christian Living.” If the congregation does not have sufficient qualified brothers, the circuit overseer may be contacted to determine if a nearby congregation may be able to assist.

When the baptism candidate is a minor, his believing parent(s) should be present for the sessions. If the parent(s) cannot be present, then two elders (or an elder and a ministerial servant, depending on the section being reviewed) should be involved in each session.

The elders will make sure that a person desiring baptism has acquired a *reasonable* understanding of basic Bible teachings. Additionally, they will want to ascertain whether he deeply appreciates the truth and demonstrates proper respect for Jehovah's organization. If the person does not understand basic Bible teachings, the elders will arrange for him to receive personal assistance so that he can qualify for baptism at a later time. Others may need to be given time to demonstrate more appreciation for field service or submissiveness to organizational arrangements. It will be up to the elders to use discretion in apportioning the hour or so spent in each session in order to discern fully whether the person is ready for baptism. Although more time may be spent on certain questions and less time on others, *all* the questions should be reviewed.

The elders assigned to review these questions will meet after the second session and decide whether the person should be accepted for baptism or not. Elders will take into consideration the background, ability, and other circumstances of each person. Our interest is in those who have turned their heart to Jehovah and who understand fundamental Bible truths. With your loving assistance, those getting baptized will be adequately

prepared to accomplish their important assignment as ministers of the good news.

Thereafter, one or both of the assigned elders should meet with the person and tell him whether he qualifies for baptism or not. If the person qualifies, the elders should review with him the “Concluding Discussion With Baptism Candidates,” found on pages 206-207. **If the candidate has not yet completed his study of the *Enjoy Life Forever!* book, the elders should encourage him to do so after baptism.** Inform the candidate that his baptism date will be added to the *Congregation’s Publisher Record* held in his name. Remind him that the elders collect this personal information from him so that the organization can continue to care for the religious activities of Jehovah’s Witnesses worldwide and so that he may participate in spiritual activities and receive spiritual support. In addition, the elders can remind new publishers that any personal information is handled according to the Global Data Protection Policy of Jehovah’s Witnesses, found on [jw.org](http://jw.org). This discussion should usually take only ten minutes or less.

**One year after the publisher’s baptism, two elders should meet with him to provide encouragement and helpful suggestions.** One of the elders should be the person’s group overseer. If the new one is a minor, his believing parent(s) should be present. The spirit of the meeting should be very warm and encouraging. The elders will discuss his spiritual progress and offer practical suggestions on how he can continue in a good routine of personal study and daily Bible reading, weekly

family worship, faithful meeting attendance and participation, and weekly field service activity. (Eph. 5:15, 16) If he has not completed his study of the *Enjoy Life Forever!* book, the elders should make arrangements for someone to help him do so. The elders should be generous with loving commendation. Usually, counsel and suggestions on one or two points are sufficient.

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Note: The location of most references below is indicated by the chapter number followed by the paragraph number. For example, the first reference under “Announcements” is “contributions: 12:6.” This means that the information regarding announcements about contributions is found in Chapter 12, paragraph 6.

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