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## 1974 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses

### Part 1—Germany

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### Part 1—Germany

GERMANY has exercised a profound influence on history. Its people have a reputation for being hard workers and obedient to authority. These qualities have been a major factor in the nation's economic growth, so that today West Germany, with its population of over sixty million, is one of the industrial giants of the world. It carries on trade in all parts of the earth. And to meet the needs of its thriving economy, in recent years it has been necessary to bring into the country more than three million "guest workers" from Greece, Yugoslavia, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Turkey and other lands.

The influence of Germany has also been felt in other ways. During the first world war, from 1914 to 1918, German armies pushed eastward into Russia, and west through Belgium into France. Before the conflict ended, they were engaged in warfare against an alliance of twenty-four nations around the globe. Germany was defeated. But it was only a short time until a veteran of that war, Adolf Hitler, began his rise to power. By 1933, as head of the National Socialist Party, he was made chancellor of Germany. In short order he subjected the German people to a reign of terror, and in 1939 he plunged the world into another global war, far more extensive and destructive than the first.

What were the churches doing while all this was taking place? Every Sunday, in harmony with a concordat signed between the Vatican and Germany in 1933, the Catholic clergy prayed for Heaven's blessing on the German Reich. Did the Protestant clergy make any protest? To the contrary, in 1933 they unitedly pledged unqualified support to the Nazi State. And in 1941, long after World War II was under way, the Protestant Evangelical Church in Mainz, Germany, thanked God for having given the people an Adolf Hitler.

## EARLIER RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENTS

Interestingly, it was here in Germany, on October 31, 1517, that Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses on the church door in Wittenberg, in protest against practices that he believed to be out of line with the Word of God. But the religious protest soon got intertwined with political interests, and long before the twentieth century, not only the Catholic Church, but also the Protestant organizations had clearly identified themselves as part of the world.

However, as the time drew near for “the kingdom of the world” to be given by God to a heavenly king, the Lord Jesus Christ, there was a work to be done in Germany, as in other parts of the world. ([Rev. 11:15](#)) It was a work that called for people with genuine faith in the Bible as the Word of God. It required that they appreciate that to be true disciples of Christ they must be “no part of the world.” ([John 17:16](#); [1 John 5:19](#)) Why? Because, instead of giving their support to any government of men, they were to proclaim the Messianic kingdom of God as the only hope for humankind. ([Matt. 24:14](#); [Dan. 7:13, 14](#)) Who would seize hold of this opportunity?

In the 1870's, in America, Charles Taze Russell had begun to gather together a group of Bible students who were keenly interested in the second coming of Christ. They saw the need to share with others the marvelous things that they were learning from God's Word. As the work progressed, and distribution of Bible literature took on enlarged proportions, it became necessary to form the legal corporation that is known today as Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, and Brother Russell was its first president.

Recognizing the importance of spreading the good news to the most distant parts of the earth, in 1891 the Watch Tower Society made arrangements for Brother Russell to travel abroad to determine the possibilities for expanding the work.

(Acts 1:8) During this trip Brother Russell visited Berlin and Leipzig. But he later reported: "We see . . . nothing to encourage us to hope for any harvest in Italy or Austria or Germany." Nonetheless, after his return, arrangements were made to publish several books and leaflets in German. Persons who had emigrated from Germany to the United States and had read the Society's literature sent it to their relatives and friends in Germany, encouraging them to use it in their Bible study.

It was after a number of years, in 1897, that the first German issue of *The Watch Tower*, entitled *Zions Wacht-Turm und Verkündiger der Gegenwart Christi*, was published in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. Charles T. Russell was editor in chief; his assistant editor was Otto A. Kötitz. By that time the first three volumes of *Millennial Dawn*, in German, had already been printed in the United States.

To simplify shipping to Germany and other European territories, a literature depot was opened in Berlin at Nürnberger Strasse 66. Sister Margarethe Giesecke had oversight and cared for the regular mailing of 500 copies of each issue of *Zions Wacht-Turm*. At the beginning of 1899 the literature depot was moved from Berlin to Bremen-W.

## A SLOW BEGINNING

Despite increased efforts during 1898 the situation was such that the Society felt it appropriate to issue this statement: "Although we recognize the interest and zeal of our dear readers, we must inform them that orders for copies of *The Watch Tower* this past year were less than expected, causing us to ask: Should we stop printing *The Watch Tower* either completely or perhaps print it just once every two or three months?" For a while it was printed only every three months, although with twice as many pages.

Although no especially outstanding results had been attained, the efforts put forth were definitely not in vain. For the sake of efficiency an office was opened in Elberfeld (Wuppertal) in 1902, Brother Henninges being in charge. In October of 1903 Brother Russell sent Brother Kötitz to Germany to take over supervision, and Brother Henninges was sent to Australia on a special assignment. Brother Kötitz had emigrated with his parents to America from Germany and had entered Jehovah's service there in the spring of 1892. With only one short interruption he had served as assistant editor of the German *Watch Tower* until Brother Russell

sent him to Germany. Yet—as viewed by the main office—the results for 1903 were still unsatisfactory. The annual report covering this period read: “The German Branch has opened under fairly prosperous conditions, yet not what we had hoped for. The oneness of the ‘body’ and of the ‘harvest’ work does not seem to be sufficiently appreciated by the German brethren. . . . It is proposed, however, to continue the mission during 1904, giving the field a fair trial and looking to the Lord for guidance as to whether or not there are more favorable fields for the use of consecrated time and money.”

These were difficult years for the preaching of the good news in Germany. Religious and political enemies had already appeared on the scene. Nationalism had blossomed forth with the founding of the German Kaiser Reich in 1871 and was being promoted, not only by the politicians, but also by the religious leaders. “We want a German, not an American, Christianity,” and other suchlike slogans, could be heard in the churches. The tender plants of truth, which had only begun to grow, were being subjected, as it were, to a sudden spring frost. Happily, however, the first evidences that the efforts put forth had not been in vain were forthcoming.

## THE FIRST CONGREGATIONS

In 1902 a Christian sister moved to Tailfingen, located east of the Black Forest. She had learned the truth in Switzerland and now endeavored to pass it on to the residents of Tailfingen. Her name was Margarethe Demut, but, in acknowledgment of the fact that she was always speaking of a new “golden age,” she was termed “Golden Gretle” by the local residents. Her activity brought her in contact with a man, who, together with his sister and two men of their acquaintance, was searching for the truth. They had already tried to find it in the Methodist Church. After reading a tract she had left at their home, they immediately wrote to request the available *Millennial Dawn* volumes. They were known to the entire community as devout men, highly thought of because of their proper conduct. One of the first congregations in Germany was formed there and became known among the community residents as the “Millennial Congregation.”

These Christian brothers were zealously supported by another sister, Rosa Möll. Since she so freely spoke to everyone in the community about the “Millennium,” she was soon given the nickname “Millennial Rösle.” This sister, now eighty-nine,

has been serving Jehovah for more than sixty years, including eight years in Hitler's concentration camp at Ravensbrück.

The seeds of truth also began to sprout in the Bergische Land northeast of Cologne. A representative of the Watch Tower Society from Switzerland moved into this region around 1900. His name was Lauper. In Wermelskirchen he met eighty-year-old Gottlieb Paas, also Otto Brosius, presbyter and a member of the church's board of directors, and his wife Mathilde. All of them were looking for the truth and, after studying the Watch Tower literature, they realized they had found it. They soon organized meetings in a restaurant in Wermelskirchen. Many members of the Paas and Brosius families attended the meetings; seventy to eighty persons were often present. Soon thereafter Gottlieb Paas died, but on his deathbed he held up *The Watch Tower* and said: "This is the truth; hold on to it."

Meanwhile, in the county of Lübbecke, Westphalia, an average of twenty-five men and women from various localities were gathering together to consider God's Word. They belonged to the Protestant Church but were not diligent churchgoers, as they often returned home dissatisfied, especially so when the minister preached about hellfire. One of their neighbors, while traveling to Saarbrücken to attend an auction, found a tract in the train that mentioned that there is no fiery hell. Thinking this should be something for his neighbors, whom he called the "pious people," he gave it to them upon his return. They immediately ordered all the available literature, which then became their study material. Although it took considerable time before they left the Protestant Church and were baptized, they enjoyed regular visits from the traveling pilgrim brothers sent out by the Watch Tower Society. Thus the foundation was laid for a congregation in Gehlenbeck, the "mother congregation" for a number of others.

Growth was also taking place in other areas. In 1902 a landowner and dairy farmer by the name of Cunow got the truth and laid the foundation for congregations in the area east of Berlin. In Dresden, Brother Miklich, a shop supervisor for the railway, and his wife learned the truth about this same time. The congregation there grew so rapidly that, with more than 1,000 brothers and sisters, in the 1920's it was by far the largest in Germany.

## **HASTENING THE SPREAD OF THE GOOD NEWS**

Although expensive, the brothers decided to try inserting eight-page sample copies of *Zion's Watch Tower* into newspapers. How greatly this undertaking was blessed is shown by some of the letters received. Here is an example:

"I have read completely the sample copy of your *Watch Tower*, which came today as an insert in the *Tilsiter Zeitung*. My interest . . . has been aroused and I would like to receive further explanation through your publications on the subjects death and hell. Please send me the book mentioned in your folder . . . P. J., East Prussia."

This is what *The Watch Tower* issue of April 1905 had to say about this:

"More than one and a half million copies of *Watch Tower* samples have been distributed, thereby getting the work started. We rejoice over the results. Many hungry souls have responded and the number of those regularly receiving *The Watch Tower* has increased to 1,000."

As the seed, the word about God's kingdom, continued to be scattered by every possible means, more and more results began to be seen. Some, like Brother Lauper, started working as colporteurs so as to cover much territory in a short time.

## **SOME WERE SEARCHING FOR THE TRUTH**

It was in 1905 while working near Berlin distributing issues of *The Watch Tower* that Brother Lauper left his last copy in the home of an elderly Baptist gentleman named Kujath. His son Gustav had recently returned from a Baptist convention quite upset over the emphatic warning given there against a Baptist preacher named Kradolfer, who suddenly had begun teaching that the soul is mortal. Taking note of this, Gustav began to investigate the Bible, inviting his father and his friends to search out the truth of the matter with him. In August of 1905 Gustav Kujath visited his father, who lived about an hour's traveling time away, and his father drew his attention to this single copy of *The Watch Tower* that Brother Lauper had left. This was just what they both had been looking for. It was "food at the proper time."—[Matt. 24:45](#).

Kujath immediately subscribed for a number of copies of *The Watch Tower* and started loaning five sets of them out to others. After a certain time his children would pick up the single copies again, and he then gave them to other interested



persons. Thus many came in contact with the message. He naturally came into disfavor with the Baptists, and he was disfellowshipped by them on New Year's Eve, 1905, with the words: "You are going the way of the Devil." Later, more than ten of his relatives left the Baptist Church.

The younger Kujath had also understood that Christians are not to neglect meeting together. For that reason, he wrote the Watch Tower Society's branch office in Elberfeld requesting addresses of others with whom he could meet together and study. Brother Kötitz was able to give him only the address of nineteen-year-old Bernhard Buchholz in Berlin, whom Kujath immediately contacted. At that time Buchholz belonged to a group called the "Saviour Congregation." He had just burned the *Millennial Dawn* volumes, being of the opinion that he, an orphan and jobless because of a minor delinquency, could not possibly be the only worthy person in Berlin into whose hands the truth should fall. But Kujath encouraged him to study the books with him, and even encouraged him to become a colporteur. A short time later Kujath took him into his home.

So as to be able to finance the spreading of the good news in this territory, Kujath gave up plans for building a new home. He sold the property where the house was to have been built and used the funds thus made available to convert two rooms in his father's house into a room where meetings could be held. By 1908 it was possible to form a small group of from twenty to thirty persons.

About the same time a baron named von Tornow with large estates in Russia began searching for the truth. Disgusted with the licentious living among the Russian nobility, he had decided to go to Africa by way of Switzerland and serve there as a missionary. On the evening before his departure, he made a final visit to a small mountain chapel in Switzerland. As he was leaving, someone offered him one of the Watch Tower Society's tracts. Now, instead of setting off for Africa, he set out next day to obtain more of this literature. This was in about 1907.

In 1909 he appeared in the Berlin congregation decked out in his best attire and accompanied by his personal servant. He was disappointed upon seeing how simple the meeting place was and how unpretentious and unassuming the people were he met there, for he was of the opinion that such priceless truths also deserved an appropriate outward appearance. But what he heard impressed him.

Months later, having overcome his feelings, he returned; his appearance now, however, was considerably less conspicuous, for he came without his servant and was dressed more modestly. He later admitted that he probably would not have returned had he not read in the Bible: "For you behold the calling of you, brothers, that not many wise in a fleshly way were called, not many powerful, not many of noble birth; but God chose the foolish things of the world . . . in order that no flesh might boast in the sight of God."—[1 Cor. 1:26-29](#).

Now convinced that he had found the truth, he returned to Russia, sold his entire estate, and settled in Dresden. Willing to live a modest life, he was prepared to devote all his wealth to Jehovah's service.

## **WELL-ORGANIZED LECTURE TOURS**

In 1913 Brother Tornow had the branch office in Barmen arrange three lecturing trips, which he, for the most part, personally financed. Brother Hildebrandt, a baker from Golnow, Pommern, sold his house and also helped in covering the expenses. A traveling group composed of five brothers and four young sisters was formed and appropriately divided into two smaller groups.

Brother Hildebrandt, who functioned as "quartermaster" and "publication supervisor," traveled ahead with three or four sisters, two of whom today in old age are still endeavoring to further Kingdom interests. After the matter of accommodations for them and for the group that would arrive some days later had been settled, they picked up the cartons of tracts and other literature that had been sent to the post office and brought them to their accommodations. After stamping the tracts with the hall address and the time when the talk would be held (the tracts thereby also serving as invitations), they were folded in such a way that at least 1,200 to 1,600 large tracts could be put into the leather cases that Brother Tornow had bought for this purpose. The brothers and sisters worked hard distributing them, for they tried to be at the first door by 8:30 in the morning and usually worked through until 7:00 in the evening, taking only an hour off at noon. There was no time for coffee breaks.

A few days later Brothers Buchholz, Tornow and Nagel followed. Brother Buchholz delivered the talks. The halls were usually packed out, and so many persons handed in their addresses that three brothers were kept busy the next day visiting



them all.

The second trip took our lecturing team through Wittenberg and Halle on up to Hamburg. The third trip led clear up to the Russian border, thus permitting a good witness to be given in these eastern sections before World War I began.

## **HOLDING FIRMLY TO THE TRUTH**

By 1908 things began to move along in Siegerland. Otto Hugo Lay, now ninety years old, came in contact with the truth back in 1905 through a professional acquaintance. Two years later he, together with both his children, withdrew from the church and refused to pay church taxes, which were then nonetheless sequestered. The sequestering official wanted to paste his stamp on the back of one of the cabinets where it would not be noticed, but Brother Lay protested, saying that everyone could and should see it; he wanted to tell everyone seeing it the truth of the matter. In 1908 he was baptized in a bathtub at Weidenau and began associating with the congregation in Siegen.

Hermann Herkendell became acquainted with the truth in 1905 through a tract he had found in a train compartment. He was a young schoolteacher and was on his way to Jena to continue his education at the university there. The contents of this tract, however, impressed him so greatly that he soon resigned from the Lutheran Church. This resulted in his being at once suspended from giving religious instruction at school. Soon thereafter he was fired from his teaching position.

In 1909 Brother Herkendell was already serving as substitute for Brother Kötitz in visiting the congregations, and, at the end of the year, his name appeared for the first time in *The Watch Tower* in connection with a proposed trip representing the Society as one of its traveling “pilgrims.” In 1911 he married the daughter of Brother Jander, wealthy owner of a casting factory. As a dowry, young Sister Herkendell requested her father to give them money for a most unusual honeymoon trip. They wanted to spend it preaching the Kingdom message to the German-speaking people in Russia. The Barmen office supplied them with available addresses of German-Russians. The trip lasted many months and was indeed strenuous, since it often took many hours to get from the railroad station to where the brothers and interested persons lived. They had no personal means of transportation, and communication by letter and telegram was undependable,

so it was seldom that they were picked up at the railroad station. How many young married couples of today would take such a honeymoon trip?

For a short time during World War I Brother Herkendell was privileged to take over the responsibilities of the Barmen Office. Then after the war he once again served as a traveling pilgrim, passing away in 1926 during a pilgrim trip.

When the 1908 annual report was compiled, it was encouraging to see that for the first time most of the tracts distributed had been personally put out by *Watch Tower* readers themselves and only a comparatively few by means of newspapers. It was, however, as a result of this last-mentioned method that a young man, eighteen years of age, came in contact with the truth in Hamburg. After finishing school he began to read the Bible daily, with a sincere desire to understand it. Several years passed and in 1908 he got ahold of a tract entitled "Sale of the Birthright." This interested the young man very much. Paying no attention to the ridicule of his workmates, he immediately wrote the Society in Barmen for the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*. Shortly thereafter he had the opportunity to meet Brother Kötitz, who invited him to come to Barmen sometime. The young man accepted the invitation, remarking at the time that such a visit to Barmen would also be the day of his baptism. This took place, then, at the start of 1909. The branch overseer took the young friend, now our brother, to the railroad station and asked him before he boarded the train whether he would like to take up pioneering. Our young brother said that the Society would hear from him when he was that far along.

This young brother was named Heinrich Dwenger. He soon arranged his affairs so that he could begin pioneering on October 1, 1910. In the following decades he has had the privilege of serving in nearly every department of almost every Bethel home of the Watch Tower Society in Europe. Periodically he enjoyed traveling for the Society and often substituted for branch overseers during trying times. Many have grown to love him and recognize him as a helpful worker. At present he is eighty-six years old and rejoices in being in good health both spiritually and physically after an uninterrupted period of full-time service of more than sixty years.

## **BROTHER RUSSELL AGAIN VISITS GERMANY**

In 1909 a further organizational improvement was made when the office was moved to larger quarters in Barmen. This naturally meant increased expenses. Without hesitation Brother Cunow sold his property and used the money in furnishing the Bethel home. Much was also done in 1909 in the way of spiritual upbuilding. In February the brothers in Saxony arranged for Brother Kötitz to give a number of public lectures. Six times he was able to witness to an audience of at least 250 to 300 persons.

But the crowning feature of 1909 was beyond doubt Brother Russell's long-awaited visit to Germany. After a brief stop in Hamburg, he arrived in Berlin and was met by a group of brothers. They immediately went to the beautifully decorated assembly room, where fifty to sixty brothers had been patiently waiting for Brother Russell's arrival. Brother Russell spoke about the restoration of that which Adam had lost, especially pointing out the privilege those would receive who had prospects of becoming members of Christ's body. After having a snack together, they went to the Hohenzollern Hall, where the public lecture was to be held. It was packed out! A crowd of 500 listened to the talk "Where Are the Dead?" About a hundred persons had to stand. An additional 400 were turned away due to lack of space, but were given tracts outside the hall. Later, in Dresden, at least 900 to 1,000 persons heard Brother Russell's two-hour public talk. The trip continued on to Barmen, where approximately a thousand persons heard his talk. The following afternoon 120 brothers assembled at the Bible House, and that evening some 300 came together to hear Brother Russell answer Biblical questions. This concluded Brother Russell's visit to Germany, and shortly after 11:00 that evening he boarded the train for Switzerland, where a two-day assembly was to be held in Zurich.

During the year the brothers in Germany were encouraged to use their resources in trying to support the Kingdom work in Germany without outside help. But by the end of the year printing costs, postage, freight, fees for inserts, public lecture and travel expenses, rent, light, heating, and other expenses, had amounted to a total of 41,490.60 marks, whereas contributions amounted to only 9,841.89 marks, leaving a deficit of 31,648.71 marks, which was covered by money advanced from Brooklyn headquarters. This prompted Brother Russell to say the following in his annual report: "What great amounts of money the Society has spent in Germany to make the truth known. . . . The efforts put forth in Germany are comparatively

greater than in any other country. We should expect corresponding results—unless it should be that the majority of consecrated Germans have already immigrated to the United States.”

Brother Russell made a brief stopover of some ten hours in Berlin on his 1910 world trip and addressed two hundred persons waiting for him when he arrived.

About this time Emil Zellmann, a streetcar conductor from Berlin, began to attract considerable attention. He took advantage of every opportunity to read the Bible or to witness to his passengers, sometimes even between streetcar stops; once while busy reading he contributed to the amusement of his passengers by calling out, not the next streetcar stop, but, rather, “[Psalm 91](#),” which he had just been reading. Soon more than ten fellow streetcar conductors and their families were attending the meetings. This small but very active group did much in spreading the good news in Berlin. Although these brothers started to work at 5:00 a.m., their exemplary zeal often caused them to go to the streetcar depot two hours earlier to place tracts on the seats of the streetcars being put into service.

The year 1911 was marked by talks given by Brother Russell on the subject “Zionism and Prophecy,” which called forth angry responses from audiences in some cases. For example, in Berlin there was a disturbance, and nearly 100 persons left the hall early in the talk, whereas approximately 1,400 remained and attentively followed Brother Russell’s lecture through to the conclusion.

Brother Russell again referred in his travel report to the development of the work in Germany, mentioning that, although ‘the number of brethren and their interest had increased, he was disappointed with the number of interested persons, considering the large population as well as the efforts put forth and the amount of money spent.’ The years had truly indicated that the prerequisites for growth in Germany were at first not as favorable as in America, for example. A large percentage of the German population were Catholics, a further group Socialists, a majority antagonistic toward the Bible and a majority of the better educated estranged from God.

Brother Russell’s trip to Europe in the summer of 1912 took him to Munich, Reichenbach, Dresden, Berlin, Barmen and Kiel. For his public talk he had chosen the very promising subject ‘Beyond the Grave.’ It was advertised by means of

large banners upon which several churches noted for their teaching the doctrines of immortality of the soul and hellfire were depicted. In the foreground a large Bible was enclosed in a chain, which, however, was burst asunder at one point. In the background Brother Russell could be seen pointing to the Bible. These banners created quite a stir in many cities and some police officials prevented their being displayed. But despite this, audiences of from 1,500 to 2,000 came to hear the discourse in Munich, Dresden and Kiel.

The public talk was also well advertised in Berlin. Exceptionally large newspaper advertisements had highlighted the event several times and everywhere billboards displayed our placards. Additionally, the “messenger boys” of all the leading newspapers had been hired to help advertise the talk. These were boys dressed in blue-and-white pants and with caps held by a chin band cocked at a jaunty slant. They wore placards, both front and back, and sped through the city streets on roller skates. Whenever these boys appeared on the scene everyone in Berlin knew something big was in the making.

It is, therefore, understandable that early in the afternoon great crowds of people were already streaming to the Friedrichshain, the city's largest hall, accommodating about 5,000 persons, to hear Brother Russell's speech. Hours before the hall was opened the entire vicinity was besieged. The unprecedented throng grew from hour to hour, and transportation facilities could no longer handle the crowds. Many, financially able to do so, came in hansom cabs. Many others did not get there at all due to the overtaxed transportation facilities. The section was blocked off by the police and it was variously estimated that some 15,000 to 20,000 persons were turned back at the doors of the completely packed-out hall. Zealous brothers and sisters, taking advantage of the situation, distributed thousands of tracts, as well as large numbers of *Studies in the Scriptures* and other publications, among the many thousands who could not get into the hall. Brother Russell was, therefore, able to leave satisfied that an impressive witness had been given during this his last visit to Berlin.

The next year, 1913, was marked by a sincere desire to devote, if possible, even more energy, time and money toward acquainting still more persons with the Kingdom good news. Arrangements were made for publishing Brother Russell's sermons in the weekly magazine called “Der Volksbote,” thereby reaching

additional persons with the message. Literature was also put out in braille for the benefit of the blind. The Society even expressed its willingness to supply the brothers with literature free of charge for distribution.

Brother Russell's crowded schedule did not allow him to visit Germany in 1913, but the brothers were overjoyed when he sent Brother Rutherford, at that time the Society's legal counselor. His talks were well attended and the halls were filled to capacity everywhere. Persons had to be turned away repeatedly. In Dresden, for example, the hall seated about 2,000, whereas 7,000 to 8,000 were turned away for lack of room. At his talk in Berlin, attended by 3,000, there was a disturbance when troublemakers made so much noise that it was difficult for Brother Kötitz, who was translating the talk for Brother Rutherford, to make himself heard. It must be remembered that at this time there were no loudspeaker systems, so keeping command of the situation under such difficulties required a powerful voice. Brother Kötitz, although putting forth a tremendous effort, was not up to the situation and was silenced completely when he tore his lung in the process. Immediately a brother jumped atop a table and shouted with a strong voice: "What will the Americans think of us Germans?", which seemed to quiet down the troublemakers. Brother Kötitz completed the talk, but brothers who knew him report that he never completely recuperated from this overexertion.

Especially gratifying at the end of the year was the fact that expenses of the work could be covered by voluntary contributions, with even a small surplus remaining. Thus the brothers in Germany came to the end of a year full of bountiful blessings convinced that another year of zealous activity lay ahead, a year many considered would be the 'last year of the harvest.'

## **1914—A LONG-AWAITED YEAR**

Now the year 1914 had arrived, a history-making year that many *Watch Tower* readers had looked forward to for several decades. The first half of the year passed just as quietly as the previous year had. It is true that an atmosphere of tension existed in Europe, but since this did not erupt into violence, opposers of the Kingdom began to make negative comments, not a few being too hasty in gloatingly announcing defeat for the "Millennial Dawnites." But this could not shake the faith of those who had shared in the witness work for many years.



In the meantime the wheel of time continued to turn. Military maneuvers were carried on in several European countries “just in case.” Things still appeared quiet, but the strutting steps of drilling soldiers were like the muffled rumble of a volcano ready to erupt at any moment. Suddenly the entire world held its breath. A shot rang out in Sarajevo. In large cities the world over newsboys hit the streets calling out “Extra! Extra!” and the most murderous war in mankind’s history up until that time had begun, a war that historians termed for the first time a “world war.” For many the war struck like a bolt out of the blue, and just as suddenly the scoffers became silent. Brother Grabenkamp from Lübbecke told his sons, “Well, my lads, the time has now come!” and his brothers throughout the world thought and spoke similar words. They had been awaiting these events, yes, not only that, they had been ordained by Jehovah to announce them to others. They knew that these things would merely be forerunners of indescribable blessings from Jehovah for mankind.

Now with their own eyes they could look back and see how the witness they had given had been verified. An example is Brother Dathe, who was baptized with his wife in 1912, and who, years later, wrote the following to his good friend and brother Fritz Dassler:

“During the last two hours that I spent at the side of my dear sick wife on June 23, 1954, two and a half hours before she fell asleep in death, we recalled the long past day of June 28, 1914, which was always so important to us. It was a Sunday. We had beautiful summer weather. That afternoon we drank a cup of coffee on the balcony and marveled at the deep-blue heaven. The air was clean and dry. There was not a cloud to be seen. I mentioned the daily newspaper. There appeared to be no tension anywhere on earth; it was serenely peaceful everywhere. And, nonetheless, we were awaiting visible signs of the beginning of Christ’s rule in this year. The newspapers already triumphed and published one defamatory article after another against the true believers that had prophesied the end of the world in 1914. On Monday, June 29, 1914, however, we opened our daily newspaper early that morning and read the headlines: ‘Austrian Heir to Throne Murdered in Sarajevo!’ Overnight the political heavens had blackened. Four weeks later World War I broke out. Now in the eyes of our opposers we were suddenly the greatest of prophets.”

The willingness of these faithful servants to do Jehovah's revealed will helped them to realize that a still greater work lay ahead of them even when 1914 had come and gone. Jehovah was guiding his people so that his purpose could be carried out. The preparation work for the tremendous witness given through the "Photo-Drama of Creation" is a good example. The necessary equipment, film, slides and instructions arrived in Germany shortly before the outbreak of the war. Some parts had arrived even earlier and had already been shown on April 12, 1914, at an assembly in Barmen and at an assembly in Dresden, attended, by the way, by a number of brothers from Russia and Austria-Hungary, from May 31 to June 2.

When the rest of the film arrived in Germany three weeks before the outbreak of the war, the Society immediately made arrangements to show the Drama at the city auditorium in Elberfeld. Considering public interest in the Drama, the hall was much too small and it had to be shown twice. The big debut was in Berlin, however, where it was shown twice a day to overflow audiences. The series (shown in four parts on four consecutive days) had to be shown five times from November 1 to November 23, 1914.

But the war brought problems, the first of which was when contact with America was temporarily broken.

## **PROBLEMS AS REGARDS THE WORK'S OVERSIGHT**

God's people in Germany were now entering a period of great stress, marked by problems as regards the work's oversight. Toward the end of 1914, about eleven years after Brother Russell had authorized Brother Kötitz to come to Germany to take oversight of the work here, he was suddenly attacked from various sides and accused of improprieties. This led to uneasiness among the brothers and caused Brother Russell to relieve him of his service position.

The need for additional pilgrim brothers in Germany had caused Brother Russell to send a brother from the United States named Conrad Binkele, formerly a Methodist preacher who had been acquainted with *The Watch Tower* for only about a year, to serve in this capacity, although Brother Russell had done this only hesitantly. Brother Binkele arrived in Germany just as the problems among the servants began to take on serious proportions, and in 1915 he was entrusted with oversight of the work in Germany.

However, Brother and Sister Binkele soon returned to the United States. Their farewell words were prominently displayed in bold type on the last page of the October *Watch Tower*, with the comment that 'conditions had taxed their resources to the extremity.' These "conditions" were probably the difficulties that continued to increase during 1915. In October Brother Russell felt compelled to give special attention to the problem and to take necessary measures to deal with it. A letter entitled "A Personal Letter from Brother Russell to German Bible Students" read as follows:

"Brooklyn, October 1915

"Dear Brethren:

"I think of you often in my prayers and my earnest desire is that the Lord may bless you. We sympathize with you in the tribulations of war affecting you either directly or indirectly. We also want to express our sympathy for you as regards the tribulations suffered in the interests of the truth in Germany. It is not for us to judge one another or to punish by pronouncing final judgment. If erring brothers repent, we must be content to leave the final judgment and punishment up to the Lord who has said: 'The Lord will judge his people.' [Heb. 10:30](#).

"Nonetheless in the interests of truth, righteousness and proper conduct, and for the sake of the influence exercised by the Society's representatives, it appears to be necessary to appoint new representatives for the Society in Germany. The war has caused certain inconveniences, postal and telegraph service are irregular and it is understandable that certain misunderstandings regarding the leadership in Barmen arose for a time. We believe that our dear Brother Binkele did his best and handled matters correctly under the circumstances. But as you know Brother Binkele has returned to America.

"We want to inform the German brethren that from now on all Society matters are to be regulated by a committee of three brothers: Ernst Haendeler, Fritz Christmann and Reinhard Blochmann. . . .

"Dear Brethren, I recommend that you in every respect cooperate with and support the new leadership in Barmen. The Body of Christ is one, do not permit divisions in the body, even as the Apostle admonishes us."

But this arrangement did not work out as planned either, for Brother Blochmann had been forced to leave Barmen, and Brother Haendeler had died before Brother Russell's letter even reached Germany. Since tension did not let up during the following months, in February of 1916 Brother Russell appointed an "overseeing committee" composed of five brothers, H. Herkendell, O. A. Kötitz, F. Christmann, C. Stohlmann and E. Hoeckle.

This "overseeing committee" arrangement did not last long, however. Only a few months after the committee had once again been regrouped, Brother Binkele, who in the meantime had returned to Europe and taken up residence in Zurich, Switzerland, was appointed to serve as the Society's legal representative for Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands, whereas Brother Herkendell was made responsible for editorial work.

Brother Kötitz, who had been replaced in 1914 by Brother Binkele, had been showing the Photo-Drama since that date. He remained the target of attack from brothers, however, intent upon realizing their own selfish desires, rather than contributing to the internal peace of the organization. Elisabeth Lang, who for years had worked with Brother Kötitz, once found him sorrowfully seated on a park bench near the hall where the Photo-Drama was being shown. He told her that he had once again received an accusing letter clearly designed to rob him of his last remaining privileges of service. He recounted how he had had the privilege of working at Brother Russell's side for some ten years before being assigned the responsibility of the work in Germany. He often made a scrutiny of himself now, however, as to whether he had been worthy of this trust. He comforted himself, however, with the thought: "If due to my 24 years of activity I have helped only a single person to prove worthy of belonging to the 144,000, then I will have had the privilege of having done 1/144,000th part of the work."

It is understandable that these continual assaults gnawed at his health, which had been severely weakened by the torn lung he had suffered in Berlin. Thus it was that on September 24, 1916, at the age of 43, he died. The Society's announcement in *The Watch Tower* made mention of his "faithfulness" and said that "his zeal, his endurance, his steadfastness, his strong faith and will, his dedication and faithful fulfillment of obligations are acknowledged and appreciated by all the dear brethren."

A short time later the German brothers received word that on October 31, about five weeks after Brother Kötitz had died, Brother Russell had also completed his earthly course. Some were so depressed by this that they discontinued their course and fell away. But the majority took the news of Brother Russell's death as an encouragement to devote their energies and time even more intensively to continuing the work they had begun.

The war necessitated repeated changes in oversight. From October 1916 until February 1917, Paul Balzereit served in this capacity; from February 1917 until January 1918, Brother Herkendell; and from January 1918 to January 1920, Brother M. Cunow, who was then replaced by Brother Balzereit.

## **NEUTRALITY**

The outbreak of World War I offered the Devil an opportunity to raise uncertainty among the brothers on the question of neutrality, an uncertainty that even manifested itself in Barmen at the Bible House where Brothers Dwenger, Basan and Hess all were of draft age. Whereas Brothers Dwenger and Basan were determined not to take an oath of allegiance or to take up arms, Brother Hess was undecided. Off he went to the front in Belgium, a companion of those not placing their hope in God's kingdom. He never returned. A later draft call resulted in the conscription of Brothers Dwenger and Basan. Brother Basan was soon able to return home, whereas Brother Dwenger was not released, but, rather, was forced to file records in a military office. This he was willing to do, it being compatible with his understanding of the matter at that time. Brother Balzereit, a pilgrim brother, disagreed with Brother Dwenger, however, when he told him that in case of emergency he would refuse induction and the taking up of arms. Brother Balzereit expressed this disagreement by asking: "Do you realize what the results to the work will be if you take such a stand?"

Because of the uncertainty that prevailed among them, not all the brothers followed a course of strict Christian neutrality toward the affairs of the nations. A considerable number of brothers performed military service and fought at the front. Others refused to perform combatant military service but were willing to serve in the army medical corps. Some, however, taking a firm stand, refused to participate in any way, and were sentenced to prison. As a result of the stand that he took Hans Hölterhoff was subjected to cruel deception when he was led onto

the grounds under the pretense of being placed before a firing squad. Finally, he was sentenced to two years in prison by a military court.

In view of the uncertainty among God's people on such an important matter as Christian neutrality, we can certainly thank Jehovah that he continued to deal mercifully with them.

## **FURTHER EXPANSION DESPITE UNFAVORABLE CONDITIONS**

The Photo-Drama of Creation contributed greatly to expansion during these years. It was now being shown in smaller cities such as Kiel, where a very rich lady, who soon became our sister, was so impressed that she immediately donated the large sum of 2,000 marks to the congregation, now some forty-five or fifty persons, so that they could obtain a better hall.

It was the book *The Divine Plan of the Ages* that caused Christian Könninger to take note. A family crisis moved him to ask a well-known Bible Student named Ettel to visit him, and a study was started, which his wife later joined. Their next step was to ask for the addresses of other interested persons and *Watch Tower* readers in nearby towns. Together they invited their neighbors, friends and acquaintances to talks given at Brother Ettel's home. Brother Könninger and the other brothers took advantage of every opportunity afforded them to invite speakers to Eschweiler and Mannheim, later also to Ludwigshafen, where their talks were advertised orally as well as by newspaper, billboard and placards placed in store windows.

In 1917 Brother Ventzke from Berlin was endeavoring to spread the truth out beyond the boundaries of this city. He would take a knapsack full of books and walk to Brandenburg, about fifty kilometers west of Berlin, returning several days later only after first having placed all his literature. At the same time pilgrim brothers visited the city of Danzig and laid the foundation for a congregation there in Brother Ruhnau's home.

## **NO HALT TO THE WORK**

The brothers had various expectations regarding the year 1918. Some had been certain it would mark the end of their earthly course and they had repeatedly expressed this hope to their friends and acquaintances. Sister Schünke in Barmen, for instance, had explained to her workmates that, should she fail to show up for



work someday, it would be because she had been “taken home.” When their expectations went unfulfilled, however, some withdrew in disappointment, even as some had done in 1914. Others asked what would happen now.

There was still work to be done. Most of the brothers were happy about this, as it was their heart's desire to render sacred service to Jehovah. These continued to work. They found that in the critical times now upon Germany there were more hearing ears than before. This is confirmed by Fritz Winkler's experience (from Berlin).

In 1919 he was employed in Halle (Saale) and traveled by train each Saturday to his parents in Gera. One Saturday a man and his daughter got onto the train at a station stop, he with a packed knapsack and his daughter with a bag also full of something. The train had hardly begun to move before the man, a brother from Zeitz, opened his knapsack filled to the brim with the book *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, and gave a talk to the travelers by using the “Chart of the Ages” located on the first page of the book. In conclusion he offered all of them the first volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*. When he left the train a few stops later his knapsack was empty and his daughter's nearly half empty. This experience caused Fritz Winkler to attend a public talk, through which he came to a knowledge of the truth.

## A SIFTING WORK

But not everyone was in agreement with the manner in which the good news was being published. Especially among some of the ‘elders’ elected democratically by the congregations there were those who did more to hinder the work than to promote it. It became necessary to warn the brothers not to argue with them. It was better to let them go their own way and to use in the Kingdom ministry the time that would otherwise be lost in useless debating. *The Watch Tower* left no doubt that such sifting would come, for which reason Christians had been admonished to watch those who caused divisions and controversies and to turn away from them. This necessitated some changes in neighboring countries during 1919, and these affected the brothers and the work in Germany. In the course of the year, for example, Brother Lauper began to work according to his own concept of matters. He was, therefore, requested to return his stock of books and magazines, belonging to the Watch Tower Society but which he had supervised for a number of years.

Toward the end of 1919 the brothers were informed of a still greater problem. Brother Russell had some years before appointed A. Freytag to care for the French-Belgian work from the Society's office in Geneva. His authorization included publishing a French translation of the English *Watch Tower* as well as the *Studies in the Scriptures*. He misused this authorization, however, and began publishing his own literature, thereby causing considerable confusion among the brothers. Freytag was dismissed from his position and the Society's office was dissolved, a new office being opened in Bern under the direction of Brother E. Zaugg and under the overall supervision of Brother Binkele.

Meanwhile, Freytag supporters had begun to hold separate meetings and to work among the brothers in Germany, some of whom lost their clear vision due to Freytag's criticizing and defaming the Society and accusing it of spreading false teachings. Brother Binkele found it necessary in September of 1920 to refute Freytag's false accusations and to answer the many questions from Germany in a four-page circular letter. Nonetheless, the seeds of doubt that had been sown by Freytag began to sprout, and a number of those not steadfast followed him and founded their own congregations. This group is still in existence in Germany until the present day.

## **IN EXPECTATION OF FURTHER SERVICE ASSIGNMENTS**

Beginning in January of 1919 *The Watch Tower* again was published in a sixteen-page issue and with a title page (which had been omitted during the war years to save on expenses). The pilgrim work was strengthened, four brothers visiting the congregations regularly. At the same time they worked feverishly on translating the seventh volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*, the book *The Finished Mystery*. Additionally, a four-page tract entitled "The Fall of Babylon" was prepared, which was an epitome of the book.

Elaborate preparations were made. Beginning on August 21 and during the following months a virtual flood of tracts and the book *The Finished Mystery* were distributed. It was an immense campaign, although not all participated in it, especially not the 'elective elders,' who, rather, preferred just to deliver speeches. Even some otherwise willing brothers and sisters hesitated after becoming aware of the book's contents.

Brother Richard Blümel, from Leipzig, who was baptized in 1918, had not given thought to the fact that, although baptized, he was still a formal member of a church of Christendom. He had been of the opinion that “if I do not attend, then I no longer belong to the church.” But upon reading the tract and realizing that he should invite others to leave Babylon, he knew that he could only rightfully share in this work after having left the church himself. Early on the morning of August 21, he had his name officially removed from the church membership roll and in the afternoon he went about distributing *The Fall of Babylon* tract with a clear conscience.

Later that year, at an assembly in Leipzig, Brother Cunow, who at that time had the oversight of the work in Germany, spoke of the expansion of the work—almost 4,000 brothers were now active—and announced that the magazine *The Golden Age* would be published in Germany as soon as instructions were received from the main office. Those present were truly enthusiastic and all of them expressed their determination to support the work financially.

## **RIPE FIELD FOR HARVESTING**

How Germany had changed in just a few years! Before World War I comparatively few had been willing to listen to the good news of the Kingdom. But the kaiser, who in 1914 had triumphantly proclaimed a glorious future for Germany, had now fled to Holland into exile. Germany's army, sent out to conquer France, had returned to its homeland in humiliation. The adage on their belt buckle “God with us!” had proved to be a fallacy. The returning soldiers had seen the futility of war, a war never backed by God, as the clergy had repeatedly attempted to persuade them.

Many brothers still alive confirm that it was this very futile and meaningless war that caused them to wake up to the truth. Many refused to believe that God had had anything to do with this senseless destruction of human life; rather, they held the clergy responsible, who, during their so-called “field religious services,” promised those losing their life in battle a heavenly reward. Others, upon receiving notification that their husband, father or son had fallen on the “field of honor,” began wondering whether they really were in heaven or perhaps in a fiery hell as preached by the clergy. For these the talk “Where Are the Dead?” was very timely. The brothers were able to distribute books as never before. Two colporteur

sisters together are said to have placed an average of 400 volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures* a month. Jehovah's faithful servants were making the most of their opportunities. Within a comparatively short time healthy congregations blossomed forth in many locations.

In Berlin, on Thursday, May 27, 1920, seven speakers addressed between 8,000 and 9,000 truth-hungry individuals in seven large halls in various sections of the city on the subject "The End Is Near! What Next?" The interest was so great that 1,500 persons requested to be called on, and 2,500 books, plus other literature, were placed.

Now the Photo-Drama really came into its own. One of the most impressive showings was held in the Gustav-Siegle-Haus in Stuttgart for a thousand persons. So much interest was shown that the brothers gave up their seats to interested persons. A special showing for them was held on Sunday with only a small intermission for lunch, whereas the entire program was normally presented in four evenings.

The Photo-Drama was accepted with great appreciation in Saxony, a stronghold of socialistic thinking, where congregations now began springing up like sprouting mushrooms after a gentle rain. Among these was a congregation in Waldenburg with upward of a hundred persons soon meeting together regularly to study God's Word at a large farm, whose owner had only a short time previously been a member of the church's board of directors.

## **IMPORTANT STEPS ON THE WAY TO THEOCRATIC ORGANIZATION**

Brother Rutherford, who wanted to visit Germany personally at this time but failed to get entry permission, now invited twenty-six brothers from Germany to Basel, Switzerland, on November 4 and 5, 1920, to discuss ways and means of more effectively carrying on the work in Germany. The "German branch" was dissolved and a new office termed "Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Central European Office," was opened, its headquarters temporarily remaining in Zurich, but which was to be transferred to Bern as soon as possible. This office, under the direction of a main overseer fully devoted to the Lord and appointed by the president, was to have oversight of the work in Switzerland, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Germany and Italy. Each of the above-mentioned countries was to have a

local overseer, also appointed by the president. The purpose of this arrangement was to unite the work in central Europe so that it might be done in the most advantageous manner.

The two-day conference with the twenty-six brothers from Germany, including Brothers Hoeckle, Herkendell and Dwenger, was especially for the purpose of finding ways and means of most effectively carrying on the work in Germany and of determining who the local overseer should be. The committee that had served in Germany for many years was dissolved. Brother Cunow, who until then had directed the work for some years, requested that he be relieved of this office and be put in pilgrim work, so it was necessary to find a new overseer. Paul Balzereit was chosen to be the local overseer for Germany and Brother Binkele was appointed as main overseer of the Central European Office.

### **“MILLIONS” CAMPAIGN**

The booklet *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, in German, was announced for release in February of 1921, and a lecturing campaign that was to last for several years was officially planned to start on February 15. The best speakers were assigned to deliver the talks and, where none were available, the congregations could write the Society to arrange for such speakers.

The door was thereby opened for giving a mighty witness, the like of which most of our brothers had not dreamed possible a year before. The Society's annual report stated: “Never before has so much interest been shown in Germany as at present. Great crowds are coming and, although the opposition is increasing, the truth is spreading.”

This was true in Constance. Sister Berta Maurer, who has been serving Jehovah for more than fifty years, still remembers how the public talk “The World Is Ending—Millions Now Living Will Never Die!” was advertised on huge placards and then delivered in the city's largest hall, the hall in which John Huss was condemned to be burned at the stake. Follow-up talks were given, and on May 15, 1921, fifteen persons were baptized—the beginning of the congregation in Constance.

In Dresden the talk was an outright sensation. The congregation rented three large halls, but in some instances two hours before the talks were to be given,

streetcar service was suspended because the huge crowd had brought traffic to a standstill. The overcrowded halls could not accommodate any more. The speakers had difficulty in making their way through the crowds to reach the halls. Only after being promised that the talk would be repeated for the benefit of those waiting was the crowd willing to open the way.

On the street in Wiesbaden, Mrs. Elisabeth Pfeiffer found a handbill advertising the “Millions” talk. She said to herself: “Such nonsense! I will go nonetheless, as I would like to see what kind of people would believe such a thing.” She went and was astonished to see a large crowd of people on the street vainly trying to gain entrance into the already overcrowded high-school auditorium where the talk was to be given. At that time the French were still occupying the country and they kindly took care of ushering. When they saw that the hall was full and that hundreds more were standing on the street, they spoke to Brother Bauer, the speaker, and told the waiting crowd that he would be willing to speak to them too after he had finished his talk. Some three to four hundred persons, including Mrs. Pfeiffer, patiently waited. What she heard that evening impressed her so deeply that she thereafter attended all the meetings and soon became a zealous sister.

At another time Brothers Wandres and Bauer had made arrangements for the talk, but contrary to the experiences they had been having with overcrowded halls, on this evening at first no one at all came. As the time to begin approached they both went out into the street to see if anyone could be expected. They found some who were interested in hearing the talk but who, for some reason unknown to the brothers, hesitated to enter the building. When asked why, they said that since it was April first they were uncertain as to whether it was just some jesters making an April fool's joke. Nonetheless, in about half an hour thirty to forty people had arrived to listen to the talk.

Brother Erich Eickelberg from Remscheid was distributing the *Millions* booklet in Solingen when he had the following interesting experience: He introduced himself to a man he met by saying: “I am bringing you the good news that millions now living will never die but will live in peace and happiness forever upon the earth. This booklet proves this and costs only ten pfennigs.” The gentleman rejected the offer but the small boy standing beside him said: “Daddy, why don't you buy it? A



casket costs a whole lot more.”

## **ORGANIZATION EQUIPPED FOR NEW ACTIVITY**

The postwar years of 1919 to 1922 proved to be years of real development and preparation for the brothers in Germany.

The Society, interested in strengthening the work both internally and externally, now took necessary steps legally to establish the work as regards its status with the government. The results were that the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, formed in Allegheny, U.S.A., in 1884, was recognized on December 7, 1921, in Germany as a legal foreign corporation.

The message published during 1922 was concentrated chiefly around the theme “Millions Now Living Will Never Die.” The Society set aside February 26, 1922, as a day for worldwide “Millions” lectures. In Germany the talk was delivered on that day in 121 different towns and was attended by some 70,000 persons. A second great worldwide witnessing day was June 25, when 119 lectures were held in Germany, with an attendance of about 31,000. Two more such “worldwide lectures” were delivered during the year, attended in Germany by 75,397 persons on October 29 and by 66,143 on December 10. So thousands of persons were being reached with the good news.

## **BROTHER RUTHERFORD AGAIN VISITS EUROPE**

Brother Rutherford undertook an extensive trip through Europe in 1922, during which time he visited Hamburg, Berlin, Dresden, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Munich, Barmen, Cologne and Leipzig. In Hamburg some 500 brothers showed up for a one-day assembly—a fine increase since his visit just eight years earlier! In Stuttgart a hall seating only 1,200 was available for the public lecture; hundreds had to be turned away at the doors. And in Munich Brother Rutherford spoke to 7,000 persons in the packed-out “Zirkus Krone.” Before the talk began it became known that a group of anti-Semites and also a number of Jesuit priests were among those present and that they had come with the purpose in mind of disturbing and, if possible, breaking up the assembly. Brother Rutherford stated: “It has been stated in this city (Munich) and other places that the International Bible Students Association is financed by the Jews.” He had barely got these words

out when cries of “That is true,” and so forth, were heard. But Brother Rutherford spoke with conviction and emphasis and soon closed the mouths of those causing unrest, although they attempted to take over the speaker’s stand to prevent him from completing his talk.

The biggest event in Germany during 1922 was the convention in Leipzig on June 4 and 5. The Society had chosen the city of Leipzig as a fitting location for the German convention. The brothers, most of whom lived in Saxony, were very poor and would have been unable to finance a long trip. So Leipzig was really the most appropriate place.

For Monday morning a question-and-answer session with Brother Rutherford was planned. Among the questions, which had been submitted in writing in advance, was one of particular interest. It had to do with the “Völkerschlachtdenkmal” (“Battle of the Nations Monument”) in Leipzig, dedicated with appropriate ceremonies in 1913 in commemoration of the uprising near Leipzig a hundred years earlier. The question dealing with this monument was, briefly, as follows: “Does [Isaiah 19:19](#) refer to this monument when it says: ‘In that day there will prove to be an altar to Jehovah in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to Jehovah beside its boundary?’”

Let it be noted here that three years earlier—namely, at the Leipzig convention held in 1919—a number of brothers had gone to see this Battle of the Nations Monument one morning. That afternoon a talk was delivered by Brother Alfred Decker, an ‘elective elder’ who later became a bitter opposer of the truth, who attempted to prove that this Battle of the Nations Monument was indeed the pillar mentioned in [Isaiah 19:19](#). The monument’s builder, privy councillor Thieme, was also invited to this festive occasion and he and his architects were invited to offer appropriate explanations.

Before Brother Rutherford answered the question he went to see this tremendous project. Later, in addressing the entire assembled group, he minced no words in declaring that [Isaiah 19:19](#) did not refer to this monument. It had been erected solely due to the burning ambition of a man standing under the influence of the great adversary. There would be no reason for Jehovah to have such a monument erected on the earth at the end of the gospel age. The giant monument’s every part indicated its origin as being from the Devil and of being his work and that of

his allies and accomplices, the demons, who had influenced humans to erect this “monument of folly.” The German kaiser had once hoped to be able to say: “There is where Napoleon who attempted to conquer the world once stood, but his plan failed completely—and here is where the German kaiser, who likewise set out to conquer the world and whose plan was a great success, now stands, for which reason the entire world should bow down before him.”

## **“THE HARP OF GOD”**

To prepare the way for a rapid distribution of the new book *The Harp of God*, which had now become available in German, the Society prepared and printed five million copies of a pamphlet entitled “Why?” Unfortunately the printing plants given the job of printing *The Harp of God* were continually behind schedule, resulting in several delays in the date of publication. The book’s price referred to in the Society’s pamphlet could not be kept, due to the rapidly worsening inflation; and at the beginning of January 1923 the price of 100 marks had to be raised to 250, the equivalent of a quarter pound of margarine, although at this time the cost of publishing the *Harp* had already reached 350 marks. The book’s contents stirred up tremendous enthusiasm, not only among the brothers, but also among friends of the truth.

In Langenchursdorf, which belonged to the Waldenburg congregation, a young brother named Erich Peters, quite talented as far as speaking was concerned, was so enthused with the contents of the book and the suggestion to start studies with it that he asked his father for permission to invite his friends and neighbors to the parental home once a week on a certain evening so that he might discuss *The Harp of God* with them. This study evening was later attended by so many persons that seating had to be arranged for in every room on the ground floor. This young brother, speaking with enthusiasm about Jehovah’s kingdom and its blessings, stood in the doorway between the rooms so that he could be heard and seen by all. This example was quickly followed by other congregations and the so-called “*Harp* study” soon became part of the normal program.

## **THE FIRST FACTORY**

From April 1897 to December 1903 *The Watch Tower* (German edition) had been printed in Allegheny (U.S.A.), and from January 1904 to July 1, 1923, in worldly

firms in Germany. For decades the Society's books and other publications had been printed by worldly firms, unless sent direct from America. In time, in order to cut down on expenses, two large flatbed presses, along with other equipment, were set up in Barmen, even though space was extremely limited.

Since, at first, there were no brothers experienced in the setting of type or in the binding of books, Brother Ungerer, an experienced book printer and typographer from Bern, Switzerland, was sent to Barmen to train the first volunteer workers. Their willingness to work and the determination with which they attempted to put out fine printed material, despite the humble equipment they had at their disposal, were amazing.

Since all the rooms were being used as bedrooms, and so forth, the printing machines were placed in the two-story home on the staircase landing and in a 20-by-8-meter woodshed. Brother Hermann Görtz still remembers printing an additional 100,000 copies of the first issue of the magazine *The Golden Age* (October 1, 1922). They had to feed each sheet of paper into the machine twice, since it was manually operated. Since the brothers could hardly keep up with the demand for printed material, for almost a whole year they often worked until as late as midnight.

## HOW SOME LEARNED THE TRUTH

Strange circumstances were sometimes responsible for turning someone's attention to the truth, such as was the case with Brother Eickelberg, who attended a showing of the Photo-Drama. Speaking of "reformation," the speaker stated that 'the Protestants have stopped protesting,' whereupon someone in the audience cried out, "We are still protesting!" The speaker asked that the lights be turned on, and everyone present turned to see who this "brave" person was. Who should it be but a Protestant clergyman sitting between two Catholic clergymen! The audience was indignant and demanded that the clergyman be expelled from the hall. Brother Eickelberg realized that the truth was not to be found in the church systems.

Eugen Stark went to see the Photo-Drama in Stuttgart. The hall was already packed out with 3,000 persons when it was announced that the projector had some sort of defect and could not be repaired that evening. All were invited to

return the following evening. Eugen Stark left disappointed and went to see his mother, who belonged to the New Apostolic Church. Both concluded that the Bible Students could not have the truth, otherwise such a thing would not have happened. Brother Stark decided not to go back the following evening, but to visit his sister instead. His streetcar went right by the hall where the lecture was to be given, however, and he was amazed to see that there were just as many persons trying to get into the hall as there had been the previous evening. Without thinking twice, he sprang from the streetcar, almost falling beneath its wheels. But despite his bruises he got up and went into the hall. He was so enthused afterward that he obtained the Bible study aids offered and left his address so that he could be called on. No one could stop him from studying the Bible now.

Kurt Diessner became disgusted with religion due to a song his preacher taught him at school during the war year of 1915. It spoke about destroying the enemy nations, and said that the German armies should force them back into the lakes, into the swamps, into Vesuvius or into the ocean. Later, in 1917, the church bells were taken down and melted to be used as grenade rings, and a church paper published a picture of a large bell being blessed by a clergyman with outstretched arms. Underneath was the following caption: "And now go forth and tear into bits the bodies of our enemies." Kurt Diessner now made his decision. It was early in the 1920's that he identified and embraced the true worship of Jehovah, and he is still able from time to time to serve in temporary pioneer service.

## **WHOLEHEARTED IN THE EXPANSION WORK**

Some of those who fifty or more years ago heard and responded to Jehovah's call to serve are still among us and eagerly speak about their activity back then when they were still "young and strong." Poor materially, they were rich spiritually.

Minna Brandt from Kiel reports that she used to walk long distances to preach the Kingdom message and, when unable to get back the same day, would spend the night in the fields sleeping in a haystack. Later, she hitchhiked up to the northernmost cities of Schleswig-Holstein, often traveling by truck. In those days the brothers were equipped with large loudspeakers that they would use in delivering a public lecture at the marketplace or some other appropriate place in the afternoon after having preached in the village during the morning.

Ernst Wiesner (who was later in circuit work) and others would travel by bicycle a distance of from 90 to 100 kilometers from Breslau to preach. The brothers in Leipzig, where Erich Frost and Richard Blümel served, were very ingenious in their attempts to direct the attention of the people to the Kingdom message. For a time they made use of a small musical group composed of brothers, who would play while marching through the streets. Those accompanying them would give a short witness at the houses along the way and then hurry on to keep up with the marching musical group.

In 1923 attention was focused on full-time preaching, with the urgent call: "We are looking for one thousand pioneers." This created quite a stir among God's people, for this meant that almost every fourth person of the 3,642 "workers" then reporting was being called upon to pioneer. The call did not go unheeded.

Willy Unglaube, for example, realized that he was meant, so he took up pioneering, as he said, "not just for one or two years, but for as long as Jehovah can use me in this capacity." He worked in various sections of Germany and later was in Bethel in Magdeburg for a number of years. In 1932 he followed the call for pioneers in foreign fields. He was first sent to France, then to Algeria, Corsica, southern France, later on back to Algeria, and on to Spain. From there he went to Singapore, then to Malaysia, on to Java and, in 1937, to Thailand, where he stayed until returning to Germany in 1961. He was twenty-five years old when he answered the pioneer call and now, although approaching seventy-seven, is still among our most willing and successful pioneers.

On February 1, 1931, Konrad Franke took up pioneering. He started early in his youth to remember his Creator. Now, as a member of the Bethel family, he is happy to be able to look back on forty-two years of uninterrupted full-time service, fourteen of which he spent as branch overseer in Germany.

## **PILGRIM SERVICE**

The encouraging talks given by the pilgrim brothers during the twenties doubtless did much in building up the brothers. Transportation was at that time quite limited and not particularly comfortable. Since the pilgrim brothers had much rural territory to cover, it was not seldom that a horse-drawn farm wagon was their means of transport. Walking long distances was at times unavoidable.



Emil Hirschburger was once assigned to deliver a talk in southern Germany. He was traveling by train and found himself seated in the same compartment with six men whose clothing clearly identified them as Catholic clergymen. They were busy discussing the talk that Brother Hirschburger was to give, not knowing, of course, that Brother Hirschburger was right there among them. It seems that they had been at a religious conference and that the clergyman living in the city where Brother Hirschburger's talk was to be delivered had been advised to challenge him to a public debate. This clergyman was interested in getting advice from his colleagues as to how to carry on his argumentation so as not to be defeated by "this Bible Student" during the public confrontation. But evidently nothing his colleagues recommended satisfied him. One by one they left the train, each wishing the others well. As the last one was getting ready to leave, the worried clergyman asked his departing colleague in a confidential tone what he thought about the matter and whether he thought it would be wise to go to the meeting. The answer was forthcoming and was spoken in a thick Schwaben dialect: "Well, if you think you are up to him, then go." Brother Hirschburger failed to see him at the talk.

## CREATION DRAMA

At the beginning of the twenties the Photo-Drama films were almost worn out. However, the Society was able to purchase newsreel film, as well as Biblical films, from several worldly film companies, and, after revising them by either deleting certain inappropriate parts or by adding others, was able to show these. In this way completely new films of between 5,000 and 6,000 meters were put together. In addition to this, the slides that had been shown were also replaced by new pictures taken either from the book *Creation* or from other books published by the Watch Tower Society or by slides obtained on the public market. There was no color photography at the time, but Wilhelm Schumann of the Magdeburg Bethel was untiring in his efforts to touch up the black-and-white photographs with color. The beautifully colored pictures always made a lasting impression on the viewers and, since many of the pictures were of Jehovah's wonderful creation, the title of the film was changed to "Creation Drama." Under this subheading the 1932 German *Yearbook* said:

"Nothing is left over from the earlier creation drama except the name and the

usage of slides. The text . . . is taken from the book *Creation* and from others, and the name 'Creation Drama' is likewise from the book *Creation*."

In 1928, when a showing was to begin in Stettin, Erich Frost, a professional musician and conductor of a worldly orchestra up until that time, was called to Stettin to provide musical accompaniment for the film, which, of course, was silent. More musicians soon joined the group. Later they even used their instruments to imitate the singing of the birds and the rustling of the trees. During a showing in Munich in the summer of 1930, Heinrich Lutterbach, an excellent violinist, met with the musical team and was at once invited to travel along. He joyfully accepted, thereby completing the orchestra, which was enjoyed everywhere. Two years later the Society gave Brother Frost a second set of the film and slides and instructed him to go to East Prussia. After that Brother Lutterbach took over the baton for the small orchestra.

A showing of the film was planned for Munich in 1930. The Creation Drama had already been shown there before with great success, so the religious leaders were naturally very much disturbed. In their despair they instructed hundreds of persons in their Munich congregations to obtain tickets for the drama at the publicly announced ticket offices, but then not to attend. The result would be an empty hall. The brothers discovered this soon enough, however, so that they were able to plan countermeasures. As it turned out, the whole action boomeranged on the troublemakers.

## **SOCIETY MOVES**

The brothers in charge soon began to realize that the factory equipment available in Barmen was insufficient. Evidently directed by Jehovah's spirit, their attention was drawn to Magdeburg where property became available for immediate purchase. Though forced to decide quickly, the Society purchased property there on Leipziger Street. Official transfer from Barmen to Magdeburg took place on June 19, 1923. Suddenly French troops occupied the Rhine and Ruhr areas, including Barmen and Elberfeld. This meant, of course, that the post office, the railroad station and the German bank were also taken over, which would have made it very difficult to look after the interests of the congregations from Barmen. The 1923 annual report stated regarding this event: "Brooklyn headquarters received notification one morning that the German branch had safely moved to

Magdeburg. The very next morning the newspapers reported that the French had occupied Barmen. We thank our precious Lord for his protection and blessing.”

It was now possible to print *The Watch Tower* in our own factory. The first issue printed was that of July 15, 1923. Some three or four weeks later a large flatbed press with automatic feed was set up and work began on the first volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*. Right afterward the book *The Harp of God* was printed on the same machine.

But more equipment was needed. For that reason Brother Balzereit asked Brother Rutherford for permission to buy a rotary press. Brother Rutherford saw the necessity and agreed, but on one condition. He had noticed that over the years Brother Balzereit had grown a beard very similar to the one that had been worn by Brother Russell. His example soon caught on, for there were others who also wanted to look like Brother Russell. This could give rise to a tendency toward creature worship, and Brother Rutherford wanted to prevent this. So during his next visit, within hearing of all the Bible House family, he told Brother Balzereit that he could buy the rotary press but only on the condition that he shave off his beard. Brother Balzereit sadly agreed and afterward went to the barber. During the next few days there were several cases of mistaken identity and some funny situations because of the “stranger” who was sometimes not recognized by his fellow workers.

A year later it was possible to set up the first part of the press on the basement floor, and the second part was delivered shortly thereafter. A person could now speak of a well-equipped printing shop and book bindery capable of turning out 400-page books to the tune of 6,000 copies a day.

There was a large increase in literature distribution in 1923 and 1924. To keep up with the demand, in 1925 the Society bought property adjacent to their first building. The factory equipment, as well as that in the bookbindery, was added to and improved. A solid cement building was constructed on the newly acquired property to house the bookbindery and the flatbed presses, with room for two rotary presses, on the ground floor, with the typesetting department as well as the other preparatory departments on the second story and the office on the third floor. Despite this, much overtime work was necessary, for literature distribution continued to grow. A second rotary press was obtained in 1928, but the need was

so great that the brothers ran the machines in two shifts of twelve hours each, even on Sundays. This meant that the machines ran day and night without interruption for several years. In the bookbindery it was similar, of course, since the brothers there had to finish up the work after the literature had been printed. In this way they were able to turn out 10,000 books a day.

It also became possible now to erect a dignified assembly hall on the newly acquired property. It was tastefully decorated and seated some 800 persons. The brothers named it the “Harp Hall,” no doubt out of appreciation for the book *The Harp of God*.

Those of the Bible House family who were able to get away on Sundays would travel with a large truck, holding temporary seating for fifty-four persons, or go by bus, train, car or bicycle out into the territory in and around Magdeburg to share in the preaching work. They worked within a radius of several hundred kilometers and were able to lay the foundation for many congregations.

In time the number of Bible House workers increased to over 200.

## **1924 CONVENTION IN MAGDEBURG**

The biggest event of 1924 was the Magdeburg convention, attended by Brother Rutherford. Approximately 4,000 brothers and sisters from all over Germany came, some on bicycles. The most were unable to bring anything other than an inadequate box lunch along, for the entire nation was destitute. Many had no funds to pay for the trip and thousands had to stay home. Those traveling by bicycle had to reckon with a trip of several days. They also had only meager means available for food and accommodations. Many brought food along consisting primarily of dry bread. When during the talks the hunger pangs became severe, the brothers would pull out a piece of dry bread and take a bite. Brother Rutherford was so moved by this that he immediately made arrangements to provide each of the approximately 4,000 in attendance the next day with a pair of warm frankfurters, two buns and a bottle of mineral water free of charge. We can easily imagine the joy of those in attendance when suddenly large kettles full of frankfurters appeared at both ends of the auditorium where the assembly was being held. The brothers lined up to be served. Refreshed by the meal they had enjoyed together, they returned to their seats in the auditorium feeling like guests

at a banquet.

In his welcoming speech at the assembly Brother Rutherford asked all those who had already made a dedication and symbolized it by water baptism to raise their hands. As he saw the large number, he added: "Five years ago there were not this many in all of Europe."

Later, during the public talk, an unfortunate incident occurred in the main hall. Due to someone's carelessness a small emergency lamp fell to the floor, whereupon an even more careless person cried out "fire," thereby causing some to panic. Since this was all taking place at the back of the hall, no one on the stage knew exactly what was happening, and at first the brothers supposed that disturbers were trying to break up the meeting. When the disturbance failed to subside, Brother Rutherford motioned to the orchestra to start playing. They responded with the song "I Worship the Power of Love" and, lo and behold, the thousands in the hall began to sing. The waves of hysteria soon subsided and Brother Rutherford was able to continue his discourse without further interruption.

### **"ECCLESIASTICS INDICTED"**

This was the title of a resolution prepared in 1924 for worldwide distribution. The brothers in Germany shared in this, especially in the spring of 1925. It was an extremely important resolution unsparingly exposing the clergy, resulting in a reaction similar to that from poking a stick into a hornets' nest. Especially in Bavaria the clergy began to attack and hinder our brothers in their work. The first German president of the Weimar Republic had just died and a new election was scheduled. Politicians were saying, 'No Catholic dare become president,' so Catholic Bavaria was responding to this by considering with the greatest mistrust all publications unfriendly to Rome. Not only in Bavaria, but also in other sections of Germany, the clergy fought back with every means available.

Brother Balzereit's life was threatened. An anonymous letter sent to him read in part:

"You Devil in Sheep's Clothing!

"The charges you are making against the clergy are your downfall! Before you

know it the world will have seen the last of you and your death will frighten your followers into restraint . . . Judgement has been passed upon you!

“We demand the following within three weeks: Public withdrawal of your publication ‘Ecclesiastics Indicted’. If this is not done . . . you will be a candidate for death.

“This is no empty threat . . .”

But this was no reason to compromise either. To the contrary, the small but courageous army of anointed remnant undertook countermeasures. A tract entitled “True or Untrue?” was distributed, informing the public of these threats. The question was asked as to whether the charges contained in the “Ecclesiastics Indicted” pamphlet were “True or Untrue.” Statements made by clergymen and excerpts from religious magazines were then presented.

In desperation, a clergyman in Pommern filed charges with the public prosecutor’s office against the Watch Tower Society and its officers. A court trial then ensued in Magdeburg. But the public prosecutor made the mistake of reading the entire resolution during the trial, thereby refuting his own claim that the resolution was directed against the consistory in Stettin. Everyone in the courtroom realized that the resolution was denouncing not only the consistory in Stettin, but the clergy throughout the world. The court, taking note of this, acquitted Brother Balzereit, but felt itself obliged to counsel against publication of such sharp attacks in the future.

## INFLATION

The publishers had already been advised in August of 1921 to be thrifty in distributing the tract *Bible Students Monthly* in view of the high cost involved in printing. Copies should not be indiscriminately distributed, but given only to those showing genuine interest.

At the beginning of 1922 the Society was forced to announce that the price of a year’s subscription for *The Watch Tower*, at that time still printed only monthly, would be set at 16 marks. One month later it was necessary to raise it to 20 marks, and in July of the same year up to 30 marks. Inflation took place at such a rate during the following months, however, that, in October, the Society was forced to



announce that in the future subscriptions could be accepted only on the basis of a three-month period. The price for three months in the meantime had risen to 70 marks. For the first three months of 1923 the brothers had to pay 200 marks, and for the second period of three months 750 marks. By June 15 a year's subscription cost 3,000 marks, and a month later it was 40,000 marks. On August 1 the Society was forced into stopping subscription service altogether, individual copies being available on immediate payment only. But by September 1 a single copy already cost 40,000 marks. One month later a single copy cost 1,660,000 marks, and by October 25 inflation had reached such heights that a single copy cost two and a half billion marks. Money was of no value whatsoever.

This short consideration of the critical years of inflation may show under what difficult conditions the Lord's work had to be carried on at that time. In fact, during the last three months of 1923 distribution of the Society's publications almost came to a complete standstill. It was possible to continue only with Jehovah's help.

### **'ELECTIVE ELDERS'**

The democratic arrangement for electing elders was something that could have been sufficient to slow down the forward march of the work during the 1920's. There was a variety of opinions as to how such elections should be held. Some required that the candidates be able to answer at least 85 percent of the V.D.M. questions correctly. (V.D.M. means *Verbi Dei Minister*, or Minister of the Word of God.) This was the case in Dresden, for example. But the brothers in Halle had an experience that shows us to what kind of difficulties such arbitrary requirements led. There were brothers in the congregation whose attitude toward the work was not good, but who, on the other hand, wanted to be leaders in the congregation. When they were finally told that they had not even answered the V.D.M. questions, for which reason they were not eligible for leading positions in the congregation, they immediately made up for this apparent oversight. When they afterward still failed to get the position for which they had striven, a rebellion broke out resulting in the congregation's breaking up, with only about 200 to 250 publishers remaining from an original 400.

In some congregations there were often severe controversies at election time. In Barmen, for example, in 1927 when a vote on certain candidates was to be taken

by a showing of hands. An eyewitness reports that before long everyone was shouting, all at the same time, and the brothers were forced to change over to taking the vote by means of a secret ballot, which, by the way, was the method used by many congregations. In Kiel it was even necessary to carry on an election of elders under police protection.

These things occurred because some of the candidates were not mature Christians. In fact, some among them either directly or indirectly opposed the Kingdom work.

For example, when the Society encouraged regular congregational study of *The Watch Tower*, it was especially a number of 'elective elders' who opposed this suggestion and caused divisions in numerous congregations. The director in Remscheid stated that in the future only those would be used in conducting the *Watch Tower* study who went out on Sunday mornings in the field service, whereupon one of the 'elective elders' picked up a chair and, after threatening the director with it, walked out of the congregation, taking forty persons with him. Something similar happened in Kiel, where, despite efforts of the Bible House, 50 of the 200 brothers and sisters in the congregation left.

Looking back, we can certainly say that the second half of the 1920's was a time of sifting here in Germany. Some who had gone along with us up until that time became overt enemies of the Kingdom. Their departure was certainly no loss for God's organization because the 1930's proved to be a real time of testing for those remaining faithful!

## LEGAL PROBLEMS

From 1924 to 1926 the State Revenue Department had considered the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society strictly charitable in nature and had demanded no taxes on literature placement receipts, but this exemption was retracted in 1928. A trial resulting in a good deal of publicity was the outcome, since the Society had seen to it that the public was notified by means of *The Watch Tower* and *The Golden Age* of this attack instigated by the leaders of the two large church systems. That this attack had come from the churches was later openly admitted by them with the explanation that it was 'to hinder the Bible Students in their distribution of Biblical information.' The brothers urged all righteously disposed persons to sign a

petition against this unjust action. It is understandable that the court was deeply impressed when a petition with no less than 1,200,000 signatures was presented. The courts later ruled in our favor.

Another means by which the religious leaders tried to halt the tremendous progress of the work was to get the publishers into conflict with the laws of the land. As early as 1922 came the first cases of “illegal peddling and refusal to pay peddling taxes.” In 1923 there were additional legal cases, and once again the accusation was “violation of peddling regulations.” Severe sentences were meted out. In 1927, 1,169 brothers were arrested and brought to trial for “violation of peddling laws” and “peddling without a license.” In 1928 there were 1,660 court cases, and in 1929 there were 1,694. But the clergy kept searching for a law that could be used as a weapon to silence the Bible Students. Finally, they thought they had found that for which they had been looking. The *Saarbrücker Landes Zeitung* of December 16, 1929, referred to this:

“Unfortunately the police have been powerless in doing anything about the work of the Bible Students. Arrests made up until now . . . have all ended up in acquittal . . . Now, however, the Court of Justice in Berlin in a similar case has upheld a sentencing, laying down the principle that the offering of religious literature from house to house and on the streets comes under the police ordinances regarding keeping the sabbath rest of Sunday and holidays in those cases where physical effort is involved, thus putting it under the jurisdiction of work, and where the public takes notice of such.

“Fortunately several courts in the Saar territory have been able to sentence defendants in similar cases since hearing about this ruling. This offers an opportunity to now put an end to the work of the Bible Students.”

## **ACTION IN BAVARIA**

Attempts to do this took place all over Germany, but Bavaria held a predominant position, more arrests being made there than any place else. For a time local laws even succeeded in banning the work briefly. In 1929 the Society decided to make a concerted “one-day attack” on the section south of Regensburg by sending in some 1,200 publishers to preach on a single Sunday. Arrangements were made with the railroad company for two special trains, one to start in Berlin and pick up

brothers from Leipzig, and a second from Dresden to pick up brothers from Chemnitz and other cities in Saxony. Each passenger would pay a fare of some 25 marks, which, at that time, was a goodly sum. But the brothers were more than willing to make this sacrifice. They only wanted to make sure that they would be able to take part in this action, for the enemy was not sleeping.

While arrangements were being made for this campaign the brothers were convinced that the clergy would make use of their influence to prevent it should they hear about it beforehand. For that reason the brothers did all they could to keep it secret. Despite this, they were unable to prevent the clergy from finding out, in some way or another, about a week before. Suddenly the railroad was unwilling to let us have the two special trains. Immediately all the congregations involved were instructed to rent buses. The clergy heard about this too, and arranged for all the roads leading out of Saxony to be heavily policed on the coming weekend. These police officials would find some reason for stopping all the cars filled with Bible Students, delaying them long enough so that they would have to return home with their mission unaccomplished.

In the meantime the railroad company had heard about our bus arrangements and, deciding that they were losing a great deal of business, agreed at the last minute to permit the two special trains to run after all. The brothers at once canceled the buses. This last change in plans, just two days before time of departure, went undiscovered by the clergy. So, while they were out in force watching all the highways, the two special trains were joined together at Reichenbach (Vogtland) and entered the Regensburg vicinity as one single special train about 2:00 o'clock in the morning. From there on, the train stopped at every railroad station to let some of the brothers off, some of whom had brought their bicycles along so that they could go out into the countryside and work there too.

A tremendous witness was given that day, for everyone had been provided, not only enough literature to place on a contribution, but also plenty to give away free. The brothers had decided to try to leave something at every home. A number of brothers were arrested and were unable to return home with the special train, but those who had the privilege of taking part in this campaign never tired of talking about it thereafter. We are certainly not mistaken in assuming that our adversaries also long remembered this weekend.

## **BANK FAILURE**

In the midst of increasing unemployment and economic instability, the bank, in which most of the funds for financing the work in Germany and in central Europe were deposited, went bankrupt. The German branch alone suffered a loss of 375,000 marks.

The Society was forced to notify the congregations that the convention planned for the summer of 1930 in Berlin would have to be canceled. In their letter, mention was also made of a possible “interruption in production.” But this announcement was like an alarm bell. Even though the brothers’ financial situation was very poor, for many of them were unemployed, yet in order to ensure an uninterrupted flow of publications they were immediately willing to contribute the money they had already saved for the Berlin convention, as well as anything else they were able to raise from their limited financial resources. In fact, many sacrificed their wedding rings and other jewelry.

As a result, plans for expanding the work made before the bank problem arose were not hindered, no, not even postponed. In the spring of 1930 an additional piece of property bordering on our former property was purchased. The old buildings that had stood on the newly purchased property were torn down and, as far as possible, the material was used by the brothers in constructing a new large Bethel building of seventy-two rooms, accommodating two persons each, and a large dining room.

## **MORE COURT CASES**

During 1930 another 434 court cases were instituted. That meant that, together with the cases already pending, there were now 1,522 cases up before the courts for settlement.

But our religious enemies had a difficult time attempting to brand us as lawbreakers in 1930, because a circular directed to all police officials from the Ministry of the Interior, dated April 19, contained the following sentence: “The association at present pursues solely religious objectives and is not politically active . . . in the future the introduction of criminal proceedings, especially as regards violations of the Reich’s Peddling laws, is to be avoided.”

## CONVENTIONS IN PARIS AND BERLIN

In 1931 Brother Rutherford once again planned a trip to Europe. A convention was to be held in Paris from May 23 to 26, and one in Berlin from May 30 to June 1. Because of the poor economic situation in Germany, Brother Rutherford suggested that arrangements be made for inviting brothers from southern Germany and the Rhineland to Paris, since it would be cheaper for them to go there than to travel to Berlin. Special trains were organized to leave from Cologne, Basel and Strassburg. The brothers appreciated this very much and, as it turned out, of the some 3,000 persons gathered in Paris, 1,450 were from Germany.

The convention in Berlin was held in the Sports Palace. Attendance was not expected to be large, first, because of the economic crisis and, secondly, due to the fact that almost 1,500 had gone to Paris. So, what a joy to see almost 10,000 persons present, a quite unexpected number!

Brother Rutherford, who took advantage of every opportunity to get rid of worldly religious customs among the brothers, had already provoked a minor revolution at an earlier convention by his clothing. He had noticed that the brothers in Europe—and this included Germany—were especially fond of wearing black at the assemblies. The men not only wore black suits—at funerals even top hats—but also wore black ties, just as was the custom in false religious organizations. This observation led Brother Rutherford to buy an extremely light-colored suit and a dark-red tie to wear along with it. After he had come to Germany dressed this way, many began to get rid of their black clothes.

Now at the Berlin assembly he called attention to the many pictures of himself and of Brother Russell that were being sold in the form of postcards or pictures, some of which were even framed. After discovering these pictures at the numerous tables in the corridors around the hall, he mentioned them in his next talk, urging those in attendance not to buy any of them and asking the servants in charge in plain words to remove the pictures from their frames and to destroy them, which was then done. He wanted to avoid anything that could lead to creature worship.

In connection with the Berlin convention Brother Rutherford naturally visited the branch office in Magdeburg. Like earlier visits, this one proved to be like a refreshing, liberating breeze. Shortly before Brother Rutherford's visit, pictures of



him and of Brother Russell had been hung up in all the rooms. Now all of these were removed, just as soon as Brother Rutherford discovered them.

Brother Rutherford had not failed to see several other things during the course of the years either. Not only he, but a large number of those in Bethel had recognized the danger in which Brother Balzereit stood. It is an undeniable fact that he was a good organizer and that the work in Germany made good progress under his direction. His big mistake, however, was in attributing the enormous growth more to his own personal ability than to Jehovah's spirit. During a meal at the Bethel table Balzereit requested the Bethel family no longer to address him as "brother" in the presence of worldly people. In such cases they were to address him as "Mr. Director," and he even had a sign placed on his office door reading "director."

During this time Balzereit's integrity to Jehovah was threatened from another direction. He had evidently always been afraid of persecution. As the responsible leader of the German office he had been prosecuted in connection with the distribution of the resolution "Ecclesiastics Indicted." It is true that he was acquitted, but when the judge pleaded with him to avoid making such strong statements in our literature in the future, he evidently was determined to follow this advice, for when expressions and statements in *The Watch Tower* or in other publications from Brooklyn seemed to be too strong for him, he would "water them down."

Materialistic desires also began to grow. Balzereit had enjoyed writing poetry and having it published in the magazine *The Golden Age* under the pseudonym of Paul Gerhard, and now he had written a book and had it published in Leipzig. This book was then added to the list of literature to be distributed by the congregations, who, unaware of the true circumstances, ordered it, thereby bringing Brother Balzereit considerable financial profit. He also had a tennis court built at Bethel at one time, not so much for the benefit of the whole family as for his own use.

In an attempt to finish the new building in time for dedication ceremonies during Brother Rutherford's visit, Brother Balzereit had increased the number of Bethel workers from 165 at the end of December 1930 to 230 persons, but he was not honest about this. Fearing that Brother Rutherford would not approve of the number of workers, Balzereit arranged for fifty brothers to be sent out on a

“preaching trip” to keep them out of sight. On their return they were asked whether they would prefer returning home or taking up the pioneer service. A number of the brothers, realizing that it was Jehovah’s work that was involved and not a matter of human personalities, grasped this opportunity to start pioneering, whereas others left embittered.

## **PERSECUTION INCREASES**

In 1931, it was once again the officials in Bavaria who took the lead in the fight against God’s people. By misapplying the emergency ordinance of March 28, 1931, dealing with political disturbances, they suddenly saw an opportunity to ban the Bible Students’ literature. In Munich, on November 14, 1931, our books were confiscated. Four days later the Munich police officials issued a statement, applicable throughout Bavaria, placing a ban on all literature put out by the Bible Students.

Naturally the brothers at once took action to appeal. In February 1932 the government of Upper Bavaria upheld this ban. Immediately this was appealed to the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior, which rejected the appeal on March 12, 1932, as being “without foundation.”

In line with that court decision, Magdeburg’s police president came out in our defense on September 14, 1932, saying: “We hereby verify that the International Bible Students Association is solely involved in Biblical and religious matters. It has not been politically active up until this time. No tendencies have been seen which would indicate enmity against the state.”

But difficulties continued to increase from month to month, even in the other German states. Paul Köcher had come to Simmern with six special pioneers in order to show the shortened Photo-Drama there on two evenings. He was forced to interrupt the showing, however, for when David was shown with his harp and one of his psalms was quoted the entire hall went into a frenzy. It was quickly discovered that almost everyone in attendance belonged to the SA, Hitler’s storm troopers.

Similar experiences were had in the Saar. In December of 1931 an appeal to the government was made to instruct police officials there not to hinder the work.

This instruction was issued, but it so enraged the clergy that warnings against the Bible Students were issued weekly from the pulpit. Hostilities were steadily increasing, and by the end of 1932 no fewer than 2,335 court cases were pending. Despite this, 1932 proved to be the best year ever as far as the publication of literature was concerned.

On January 30, 1933, Hitler took over the position of Reich's chancellor. On February 4 he issued a decree permitting the police to confiscate literature 'endangering public order and security.' This decree also restricted freedoms of assembly and press.

### **REMNANT'S THANKSGIVING TESTIMONY PERIOD**

The Memorial fell on April 9 that year and in connection with it the "Remnant's Thanksgiving Testimony Period" was planned for April 8 to 16. A worldwide witness using the booklet *Crisis* was to be given.

The brothers in Germany were unable to end this eight-day testimony period in peace, however. The campaign with the *Crisis* booklet led to a ban in Bavaria on April 13. This was followed by bans in Saxony on April 18, in Thüringen on April 26, and in Baden on May 15. Other German states followed. Brother Franke, pioneering in Mainz at the time, reports that the congregation of over 60 publishers there had 10,000 booklets for distribution. The brothers realized that they must act quickly in order to distribute them. They had organized their time in such a way that 6,000 of the booklets had already been put out within the first three days of the campaign. But on the fourth day a number of brothers were arrested and their homes were searched. The police were able to find only a few copies of the booklet, however, since the brothers had reckoned with this action and had hidden the other 4,000 booklets in a safe place.

All the arrested brothers were released the same day. At once they arranged for a campaign whereby the 4,000 booklets would be distributed among all the brothers in the congregation who could participate. That evening they rode their bicycles to Bad Kreuznach, a city about forty kilometers away, where they distributed the rest of the booklets among the populace, giving some of them away free. The next day brought proof that this action had been correct, for in the meantime the Gestapo had searched the homes of all those persons known to be

Bible Students. But all the 10,000 booklets had been put out.

In Magdeburg, government officials had notified the office that the picture on the title page (a warrior holding a sword dripping blood) was unacceptable and demanded that it be removed. Brother Balzereit, who had repeatedly shown his willingness to compromise, gave immediate instructions to remove the colored covers from the booklets.

It was a testimony week filled with suspense. The enemy daily revealed ever more clearly his determination to strike with unrelenting force. So it was just that much more encouraging when the report was compiled and it was found that 24,843 persons had attended the Memorial celebration, to compare with 14,453 the year before. The number of publishers active during the testimony period was likewise a cause for rejoicing: 19,268, in contrast to 12,484 during the *Kingdom* booklet campaign a year before. During the eight days of the campaign 2,259,983 of the *Crisis* booklet had been distributed.

### **THE GESTAPO SEARCH THE BETHEL HOME**

The Nazis were hoping to find some kind of material connecting us with Communism when they occupied the Society's office and factory on April 24. In such a case they could have applied a new law and confiscated the entire property and given it to the state, something that had already been done with the buildings belonging to the Communists. After searching the building the police called up government officials one evening telling them that they had found nothing incriminating. The command was: "You *must* find something!" But their attempt to do so failed and the property had to be returned to the brothers on April 29. The Brooklyn office had protested the unlawful seizure of the property (owned by an American corporation) through the American government on that same day.

### **BERLIN CONVENTION ON JUNE 25, 1933**

By the summer of 1933 the work of Jehovah's witnesses had been banned in the majority of German states. The brothers' homes were being searched regularly and many brothers had been arrested. The flow of spiritual food was partially hampered, although only for a time; still many brothers were asking how long it would be possible to continue the work. In this situation the congregations were

invited on very short notice to a convention to be held in Berlin on June 25. Since it was expected that many would be unable to attend because of the various bans, the congregations were encouraged to send at least one or several delegates. But, as it turned out, 7,000 brothers got there. For many of them it took three days, some riding bicycles the entire distance, whereas others went by truck, since the bus companies refused to rent buses to a banned organization.

Brother Rutherford, who, together with Brother Knorr, had come to Germany just a few days before in order to see what could be done to ensure the safety of the Society's property, had prepared a declaration with Brother Balzereit to be presented to the convention delegates for adoption. It was a protest against the meddling of the Hitler government into the preaching work we were doing. All high government officials, from the Reich's president on down, were to receive a copy of the declaration, if possible, by registered mail. Several days before the convention started Brother Rutherford returned to America.

Many in attendance were disappointed in the "declaration," since in many points it failed to be as strong as the brothers had hoped. Brother Mütze from Dresden, who had worked closely with Brother Balzereit up until that time, accused him later of having weakened the original text. It was not the first time that Brother Balzereit had watered down the clear and unmistakable language of the Society's publications so as to avoid difficulties with governmental agencies.

A large number of brothers refused to adopt it just for this reason. In fact, a former pilgrim brother by the name of Kipper refused to offer it for adoption and another brother substituted. It could not be rightfully said that the declaration was unanimously adopted, even though Brother Balzereit later notified Brother Rutherford that it had been.

The conventioners returned home tired and many were disappointed. They took 2,100,000 copies of the "declaration" home with them, however, and made fast work of distributing them and sending them to numerous persons in positions of responsibility. The copy sent to Hitler was accompanied by a letter that, in part, read:

"The Brooklyn presidency of the Watch Tower Society is and always has been *exceedingly friendly to Germany*. In 1918 the president of the Society and seven

members of the Board of Directors in America were sentenced to 80 years' imprisonment for the reason that the *president refused to let two magazines in America, which he edited, be used in war propaganda against Germany.*"

Even though the declaration had been weakened and many of the brothers could not wholeheartedly agree to its adoption, yet the government was enraged and started a wave of persecution against those who had distributed it.

## **MAGDEBURG OFFICE ONCE AGAIN OCCUPIED**

The distribution throughout Germany of the declaration adopted in Berlin just one day after the work had been banned in Prussia was a signal for Hitler's police to go into action. On June 27 all police officials were ordered to 'make immediate search of all local groups and business places and to confiscate any material hostile to the state.' A day later, June 28, the building in Magdeburg was occupied by thirty SA men, who closed down the factory and hoisted the swastika over the building. According to the official decree of the police officials, it was even forbidden to study the Bible and to pray on the Society's property. On June 29 this action was reported to the entire German nation by radio.

Despite the energetic attempts of Brother Harbeck, the branch overseer in Switzerland, to prevent it, books, Bibles and pictures weighing a total of 65,189 kilograms were taken from the Society's factory on August 21, 23 and 24, loaded into twenty-five trucks and then publicly burned at the edge of Magdeburg. The printing costs for the material amounted to some 92,719.50 marks. Additionally, there were numerous publications confiscated and then burned or otherwise destroyed in the various congregations, such as, for example, in Cologne, where publications worth at least 30,000 marks were destroyed. *The Golden Age* in its June 1, 1934, issue reported that the probable total value of property (furniture, literature, etc.) destroyed was between two and three million marks.

The loss would have been even greater had steps not been taken to move most of the literature from Magdeburg, in some cases by ship, and to store it in other appropriate places. In this way it was possible to keep great quantities of literature hidden from the eyes and hands of the secret police for many years. Much of this was made use of in underground preaching activity during the following years.



As a result of the intervention of the American government, the Society's building in Magdeburg was returned to the Society in October. The release document, dated October 7, 1933, said that 'the Society's property was released and returned in its entirety for its free usage, although it was still forbidden to carry on any activity there, to print literature or to hold meetings.'

## **"FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD"**

Christendom's clergy were not ashamed at openly showing their support of Hitler and his efforts to persecute Jehovah's witnesses. As reported in the *Oschatzer Gemeinnützige*, of April 21, 1933, Lutheran minister Otto in a radio address on April 20, in honor of Hitler's birthday, said:

"The German Lutheran Church of the State of Saxony has consciously come to terms with the new situation and will attempt in closest cooperation with the political leaders of our people once again to make available to the entire nation the strength of the ancient gospel of Jesus Christ. The first results of this cooperation can already be reported in the ban today placed upon the International Association of Earnest Bible Students and its subdivisions in Saxony. Yes, what a turning point through God's direction. Up until now God has been with us."

## **BEGINNING OF UNDERGROUND ACTIVITY**

Although in the first year of the Nazis' coming to power the underground witness activity went practically unorganized and meetings in small groups were not held everywhere, yet the Gestapo found new reasons to arrest the brothers.

Soon after the first brothers had been arrested and their homes searched, those objective in their thinking began to realize that these measures were simply the beginning of a more severe campaign of persecution. They knew that it would be completely senseless to try to settle these questions at the conference table. The only proper course was to fight for the truth.

But a large number hesitated, feeling it best to wait, for Jehovah would surely do something to prevent this persecution of his people. Whereas this group was wasting time in hesitation, and anxiously trying not to make matters worse by any action on their part, the other publishers were determined to continue the work.

Courageous brothers soon began holding meetings in small groups in their homes, although they knew that this could lead to arrests and severe persecution.

In some places the brothers began to mimeograph copies of *Watchtower* articles, a few copies of which were always smuggled in from neighboring countries. Karl Kreis from Chemnitz was one of the first to make arrangements for doing this. After writing the stencils he would take them to Brother Boschan in Schwarzenberg, where they would make mimeographed copies. Among those especially active at the time were Hildegard Hiegel and Ilse Unterdörfer. As soon as the ban was issued they were determined to let nothing prevent them from carrying out their God-given commission. Sister Unterdörfer bought herself a motorcycle and traveled back and forth between Chemnitz and Olbernhau bringing brothers the mimeographed copies of *The Watchtower*. Those living closer she would visit on her bicycle so as not to attract undue attention.

Brother Johann Kölbl arranged for 500 mimeographed copies of *The Watchtower* to be made in Munich and these were then distributed among the brothers there as well as in the far-flung territories of the Bavarian Forest.

In Hamburg it was Brother Niedersberg who immediately took the initiative. He had been a pilgrim brother for a number of years before coming down with multiple sclerosis. Despite this hindrance he had done what he could. Now during this time of testing the brothers enjoyed visiting him, for this always resulted in their faith being strengthened. His love for the brothers soon moved him to take steps to ensure their regularly receiving spiritual food again. He began mimeographing *The Watchtower* in his home. He taught Helmut Brembach to write the stencils and showed him how to operate the mimeograph machine. Then, seeing that the work could be carried on without him, he advised the others that he was planning a trip to visit the congregations on the west coast of Schleswig-Holstein to encourage them and to arrange for getting *The Watchtower* to them. Once again he carefully discussed with the brothers how the magazines could be sent and worked out a code with them whereby they would know from what he wrote how many copies to send to each congregation.

It was on January 6, 1934, that Brother Niedersberg, despite his poor health, left home. He could walk only with the greatest of effort and with the help of a cane, but he left trusting in Jehovah. After visiting several congregations his first coded

messages arrived in Hamburg and the mimeographed copies of *The Watchtower* began to be sent. He arrived in the vicinity of Meldorf just as a well-known brother in the community died. Since many brothers from neighboring congregations would be present for the funeral, Brother Niedersberg was asked to deliver the funeral discourse. He took advantage of this opportunity to give a forceful talk, his purpose being to strengthen the brothers present, who had been unable to attend any meeting for many months. As was expected, a great many attended and returned to their assigned territories greatly encouraged by what they had heard.

Others were, of course, also in attendance, even officials of the Gestapo. After Brother Niedersberg's discourse they asked for his name and address, but did not arrest him, evidently not daring to do so because of the occasion. So he was able to continue his trip, which was getting progressively more difficult for him. Upon arriving at Brother Thode's place in Hennstedt he was suddenly stricken with a severe headache and died shortly thereafter of a stroke. So his last strength had been used in getting things arranged so that the brothers would be provided with upbuilding spiritual food. Two weeks later the Gestapo appeared at his home in Hamburg-Altona to arrest him.

In addition to mimeographed copies of *The Watchtower* produced in Germany, some were sent to Germany from Switzerland, France, Czechoslovakia, yes, even from Poland, and it appeared in various forms, often in changing sizes. At first many *Watchtower* articles were sent from Zurich, Switzerland, bearing the title "The Jonadab." After the Gestapo discovered this method, all post offices in Germany were instructed to confiscate all envelopes bearing this title and to take appropriate action against those to whom the magazines were addressed. In most cases this led to their arrest.

Later the title and also the manner of wrapping *The Watchtower* were changed with practically every issue. In most cases the title of the *Watchtower* article was used, this generally appearing only once, such as, for example, "The Three Feasts," "Obadiah," "The Fighter," "The Time," "Temple Singers," and so forth. But even some of these copies fell into the Gestapo's hands, in which case a circular would be sent to every police station in Germany informing them that this particular magazine was banned. But in most cases this information came too late, because

another *Watchtower* article with a completely different makeup and a completely different title had by then already appeared. The Gestapo soon had to admit with bitter anger that Jehovah's witnesses were one ahead of them on war strategy.

It was similar with *The Golden Age*. For a time it was not listed among banned magazines. Later, after it had been officially banned, it was sent privately to German brothers, generally from brothers in foreign countries, especially from Switzerland. Those sending the magazines always made sure that the address was written by hand and by a different person each time.

The more unsuccessful the Gestapo were in their attempts to cut off these sources of supply, just that more brutal they became when dealing with the brothers. They generally arrested them after searching their homes, although often without any reason. At police headquarters the brothers were generally cruelly mistreated in an attempt to squeeze some kind of admission of guilt out of them.

## **"FREE" ELECTIONS**

Another weapon used to intimidate the populace, and especially directed against Jehovah's witnesses to force them to compromise, was the so-called "free" elections. Those who refused to let themselves be forced into voting were denounced as "Jews," "traitors to the Fatherland" and "scoundrels."

Max Schubert from Oschatz (Saxony) was called on five times by election workers who wanted to take him to the polls on election day. His wife was visited by women with the same intent. Brother Schubert told his visitors each time, however, that he was one of Jehovah's witnesses and had voted for Jehovah, which was sufficient and made a further voting for someone else unnecessary.

He had a difficult time of it the next day. He was a ticket agent for the railroad and continually came in contact with people. On that day they made a particular point of greeting him with "Heil Hitler." He returned the greetings with "Good day" or something similar. He felt that something was "in the air," however, and he discussed it with his wife at lunch, telling her to be ready for any eventuality. After finishing his service that afternoon he was picked up at around five o'clock by a policeman and taken to the home of the National Socialist Party's local director. A small wagon drawn by two horses stood before the door. Brother Schubert was

forced to stand in the middle with a number of SA men seated around him, each with a burning torch in his hand. At the front stood one with a horn and at the back one with a drum, and they took turns sounding the alarm so that everyone would look out to see the procession. Two SA men on the wagon held a large sign reading: "I am a scoundrel and a traitor to the Fatherland, because I did not vote." Soon someone behind the procession had formed a group that continually chanted the words on the sign. At the end of the sentence they would ask: "Where does he belong?" whereupon the children in the crowd would call out in unison: "In a concentration camp!" Brother Schubert was driven through the streets of the city of some 15,000 population for two and a half hours. The Luxembourg radio station reported on this the next day.

Some of the brothers were engaged in civil service work. Since they did not give "the German greeting" or participate in elections and political demonstrations, the government had been making plans since the summer of 1934 to pass a law banning the Bible Students nationally so that they could be expelled from civil service work. This required a national law banning their activity, rather than just local state laws. Such a law was passed on April 1, 1935. But some individual offices had already acted on their own authority.

Ludwig Stickel was city accountant in Pforzheim. On March 29, 1934, he received a letter from the mayor, stating: "I am opening criminal proceedings against you with the purpose in mind of dismissing you from your position. You are being charged with refusing to vote in the Reichstag elections on November 12, 1933. . . ." In a long letter Brother Stickel explained his position, but since judgment had in reality already been passed, he was notified that he had been fired on August 20.

Their goal was to rob Jehovah's witnesses of their means of earning a living—firing them from their jobs, driving them away from their places of work, closing their places of business and forbidding them to carry out their professions.

Gertrud Franke from Mainz found this out after her husband had been arrested for the fifth time in 1936 and the secret police had assured her that they had no intention of ever releasing him again. After Sister Franke was let free—she had been held in prison some five months—she went to the employment office to find a job. She discovered, however, that since she had been in prison no one wanted

to hire her. Finally a cement factory was forced to accept her. Two weeks later she had her next surprise when she discovered that without her consent she had been enrolled in the German Labor Front and that the dues had been withheld from her paycheck. Recognizing the political aims of this organization, she immediately went to the office and complained that money had been withheld from her paycheck for an organization that she in no way recognized, and she requested that the matter be taken care of. This resulted in her immediate dismissal. Upon appearing at the employment office again she was told that the employment office would neither find her a job nor would it give her any kind of unemployment assistance. If she refused to join the Labor Front, it was her problem to see how she got by.

## **YOUTHS FACE TRIALS**

In numerous cases the children of Jehovah's witnesses were robbed of the opportunity of getting an education. Let Helmut Knöller tell his experience in his own words:

"At the very time that Jehovah's witnesses' activity in Germany was banned, my parents were baptized in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah! For me the time of decision came when I was thirteen and the ban was announced. In school there were often decisions to make in connection with the flag salute, which I decided in favor of faithfulness and dedication to Jehovah. Under these circumstances, going on to get a higher education was unthinkable and so I began to learn the mercantile trade as an apprentice in Stuttgart; this included attendance twice a week at a commercial school where flag-raising ceremonies were held daily. Since I was taller than any of my classmates, I, of course, attracted undue attention when I refused to salute the flag.

"When the teacher entered the room, the students were required to stand up, greet with the words 'Heil Hitler' and raise the right hand. This I did not do. The teacher naturally directed his attention only to me and there were often scenes like: 'Knöller, come here! Why don't you greet with "Heil Hitler?"' 'It is against my conscience, sir.' 'What? You pig! Get away from me—you stink—farther away. Shame! A traitor!' etc. I was then transferred to another class. My father spoke to the principal and received the following characteristic explanation: 'Can your God, in whom you trust, even give you a piece of bread? Adolf Hitler can, and this he



has proved.' This meant people were to honor him and to greet him with the words 'Heil Hitler.'"

After he had served his apprenticeship, World War II broke out and Brother Knöller was called up for military service. He reports about this as follows:

"I was drafted for military service on March 17, 1940. For a long time I had reckoned with what would happen. I figured that upon reporting to the induction center but then refusing to take the oath I would be brought before a war court and shot. In fact, I preferred this to being put into a concentration camp! But it did not turn out that way. I was not tried before a military court, but was imprisoned with rations of bread and water. Five days later the Gestapo came and took me along to a hearing that lasted several hours where every sort of threat was made. That night I was returned to the prison. I was so happy; there was no trace of fear anymore, but only of joy and of expectation of what the future held and how Jehovah would once again help me. Three weeks later top Gestapo agents read me an order saying that because of my attitude of enmity to the state and the danger that I might be active for the banned International Bible Students, I must remain in protective custody. That meant 'concentration camp.' So it came about just opposite to what I had hoped. Together with other prisoners, I was dumped into the Dachau concentration camp on June 1."

Brother Knöller became acquainted with life not only in Dachau but also in Sachsenhausen. He was later transferred, together with a number of other prisoners, to the English Channel island of Alderney. A dramatic trip took him to Steyr, Austria, where he and those with him were finally released on May 5, 1945. The turbulence of those years can be seen in the fact that Brother Knöller, who had been the object of so much persecution, had not yet had an opportunity to symbolize his dedication to Jehovah by means of water baptism, although his years of faithfulness under the most difficult of circumstances were proof that he had made such a dedication. In the small group of survivors with whom he returned home there were nine other brothers, all of whom had faithfully endured between four and eight years in concentration camps and who now gratefully took the opportunity in Passau to be baptized.

## **CHILDREN TORN AWAY FROM THEIR PARENTS**

Brother and Sister Strengé experienced just how little chance Jehovah's witnesses had during those turbulent years of receiving their legal rights. Brother Strengé was arrested and sentenced to three years' imprisonment, whereupon Sister Strengé, now left alone with her children, was thrown into a situation calling for every bit of strength she could muster. She reports:

"At school my son was to learn a patriotic song and patriotic poem by heart. Being unable to harmonize this with his religious convictions, he refused. His teacher had two young boys lead him like a prisoner to the principal, a certain Mr. Hanneberg, who told him his finger should be beaten until it was so bloody and swollen and black and blue that 'he could no longer stick it up his [rectum].' He continued to threaten him and said he would never see his father again. Finally he asked this ten-year-old youngster if he would refuse to do military service. Günter referred to the Bible and said, 'He who takes up the sword will perish by the sword,' whereupon the principal instructed Günter's teacher to 'punish him as is customary.' Afterward the principal sent him home, saying that he would instruct the police to pick him up at home five minutes later to put him into a reform house. My son had hardly got home when the police drove up in front of our house in a large car. Several officers stormily demanded entrance, but I refused to open the door. After a while the police withdrew to my neighbor's, demanding from her incriminating evidence against me. Unable to offer any such incriminating evidence, she was pressured so long until she finally admitted having heard us sing a song and offer prayer each morning. Then the police left.

"The next morning at about 10:30 the police returned. Since I was unwilling to open the door, the Gestapo officials cried: 'You damned Bible Student! Open up!' Then they went to a locksmith who lived nearby and had him break in.

"Holding a revolver to my chest, one of the Gestapo agents cried: 'Give us the children.' But I held them close and they clung to me in search of protection. Out of fear that they would forcibly separate us, we screamed for help at the top of our lungs.

"The window was open and a large group of persons gathered in front of the house and heard my loud screams of despair: 'I bore my children under the most severe labor pains and I will never give them to you. You will have to beat me to death first.' Then overcome by excitement, I fainted. After coming to, I was

questioned by the Gestapo for three hours. They tried to get me to incriminate my husband. The questioning was interrupted several times by my fainting spells. Meanwhile, the ever-growing crowd in front of the house increasingly began to indicate by their noise that they were not in agreement with what was going on. Finally the Gestapo withdrew once again, not having accomplished what they had set out to do. Now they went about taking the children away secretly. Apparently in pursuit of this plan I was requested to appear before a special court in Elbing some days later. On the same day my children were to report to the guardian who had been appointed over them. I suspected the worst and visited the guardian with both children the day before. He said my fifteen-year-old daughter was to be put into a work camp and ten-year-old Günter given to a family who would train him along the lines of Nationalist Socialism. In the event of refusal they were both to be placed in a reform school. In my excitement I asked: 'Tell me, are we already living in Russia, or are we still in Germany?' whereupon he answered: 'Mrs. Strenge, I will ignore what you have just said. I too come from a religious family; my father is a minister!' When I requested that my daughter at least be permitted to accept an apprenticeship somewhere, this attorney retorted: 'I want no trouble out of you. I would rather deal with twenty other children than with one Bible Student.'

"Saturday arrived, the day I was to go to court in Elbing to defend my faith in Jehovah and his promises. To strengthen myself and so that I could once again pour out my heart, I visited my imprisoned husband before I went. When he was brought in, I collapsed sobbing into his arms. All the grief and all the terrible events of the past few days once again welled up within me: my husband sentenced to three years in prison, the children torn away from me and separated from one another at that. My spirit was broken and I was at the limit of endurance. But like words of angels were the words of my husband, who comforted me by depicting Job's experiences and his sufferings and yet his unbreakable faithfulness to God, so that even after he had lost everything, he did not accuse God of wrongdoing. He related how he too had been richly blessed by Jehovah after the severe test brought about by the numerous hearings and the trial. This gave me renewed strength. I now went to the hearing with raised head to hear proudly with what zeal my children had borne witness to Jehovah and his Kingdom and to their faith in front of their teachers and other high officials. The 'German court' ruled: Not having reared my children in the sense of National

Socialism, and because of having sung songs with them in praise of Jehovah, I would have to be sentenced to eight months' imprisonment."

## **OSTRACIZED BY CLASSMATES**

Twelve-year-old Brother Willi Seitz from Karlsruhe had a different kind of experience. He himself reports:

"I can hardly describe what I have had to bear up until now. My fellow students at school have beaten me; when we take hikes, I must go alone, if permitted to go along at all, and I may not speak to my school friends, such as I still have. In other words: 'I am hated and mocked like a mangy dog.' My only comfort has been that God's kingdom will soon come. . . ."

On January 22, 1937, Willi was expelled from school "because of refusal to give the German greeting, to sing patriotic songs and to take part in school celebrations."

## **CONDEMNED FOR PRAYING AND SINGING**

Max Ruef from Pocking also discovered how systematic attempts were made to force Jehovah's witnesses to break their integrity. His means of livelihood was completely ruined. A mortgage he had taken out for the purpose of making building changes was canceled. He being unable to pay the mortgage back immediately, all his property was put up for auction in May of 1934.

"The persecution did not stop at that," Brother Ruef relates. "On the contrary, at the instigation of the political leadership I was falsely charged and hauled into court. Since there was nothing they could accuse me of, I was sentenced to six months' imprisonment by a special court in Munich *because of having engaged in the banned praying and singing in my home*. I began to serve my sentence on December 31, 1936. My wife, expecting her third child, received, other than rent amounting to 12 Reich marks, no kind of support for herself and the two children aged nine and ten. The time came for her to bear the child. We both petitioned that the serving of my sentence be interrupted for a few weeks so that I could look after certain necessary things. About a week before the child was to be born our petition was denied as being 'inappropriate.'

"On March 27 I was notified that my wife had died and that I was to be released

for three days in order to transact necessary business. I at once went to the clinic where my wife had been brought after bearing the child, although she had died before getting there. The doctor and one of the nurses, who were still unaware of my being one of Jehovah's witnesses, strongly urged me to 'file charges against the doctor and the midwife, for your wife was healthy and there was nothing wrong with her,' but I only answered tiredly: 'Then I would have a lot to do.' At home, with the dead child lying in the bedroom, I found the other two children, nine and ten years of age, in a frame of mind one can easily imagine. Should I leave them alone now with no one to look after them, perhaps never to see them again?"

Brother Ruef's parents-in-law requested that his wife's body be sent to Pocking, where no one outside of the immediate family was permitted to speak at the graveside. Thus it was that Brother Ruef himself delivered his wife's funeral discourse, Jehovah giving him the strength to do so.

The thought of now having to leave his two children alone without anyone to look after them was impossible for Brother Ruef to bear. With just a few more hours left of his respite from imprisonment, he took one of the two children to his parents-in-law, although they were not Jehovah's witnesses, and the other he took to brothers living near the Swiss border. Finally, he made a dramatic escape across the border into Switzerland, where he received asylum with his child.

### **FIRST PUNISHMENT, THEN "FRIENDLINESS," TO BREAK INTEGRITY**

There were cases where children who were separated from their parents became weak in faith for a time and actually stood in danger of being drawn into the Nazi camp, just as the movement's leaders figured they would be. Take, for example, Horst Henschel from Meissen, who, in 1943, was baptized at twelve years of age with his father. He writes:

"My childhood was filled with ups and downs. I withdrew from the Hitler Youth—at least as far as this was possible—and was happy and strong. When I refused to give the Hitler greeting, which was daily required at school, I would be struck, but I rejoiced to know, strengthened by my parents, that I had remained faithful. But there were times when either because of physical punishment or out of fear of the situation I would say 'Heil Hitler.' I remember how I would then go home, my eyes

full of tears and how we would pray together to Jehovah and how I would once again take courage to resist the enemy's attacks the next time. Then the same thing would happen again.

"One day the Gestapo came and searched our house. 'Are you one of Jehovah's witnesses?' one of the broad-shouldered SS men asked my mother. As if it were today, I can see her leaning against the door frame and saying firmly 'Yes,' although she knew this meant she would be arrested sooner or later. She was, two weeks later.

"She was busy taking care of my little sister, who would be a year old the following day, when the police came with a warrant for her arrest. . . . Since my father was at home at the time we remained under his jurisdiction. . . . Two weeks later my father was arrested too. I can still see him crouching down in front of the kitchen stove gazing into the fire. Before leaving for school I had hugged him as tightly as I could, but he had not turned around to look at me. I have often thought about the hard fight he had and I am grateful to Jehovah to this day that God provided him with the necessary strength to give me such a good example. I came home and found I was alone. My father had been ordered to do military service and had gone to the town's draft board to explain his refusal. He was arrested immediately. My grandparents and our other relatives—all of whom were opposed to Jehovah's witnesses and some of whom were members of the Nazi party—had taken steps to gain custody of me and my little one-year-old sister so that we would not be put into a juvenile home or perhaps even into a reform school. A second sister of mine, already twenty-one years old, was arrested just two weeks after my father, and died three weeks later in prison from diphtheria and scarlet fever.

"My little sister and I were now with my grandparents. I remember kneeling down before my little sister's bed to pray. I was not allowed to read the Bible, but after secretly obtaining one from a neighbor lady, I did.

"My grandfather, not in the truth, once visited my father in prison. He returned home highly indignant and terribly angry. 'This criminal, this good-for-nothing! How can he desert his own children?' Chained hand and foot, my father was led before my grandfather, who, together with the others, tried to argue him into taking up military service for the sake of the children. But he continued faithful and firmly turned the suggestion down, whereupon an officer remarked to my



grandfather: 'Even if this man had ten children, he would not act differently.' Though terrible in my grandfather's ears, for me it was proof that my father was remaining faithful and that Jehovah was helping him.

"Some time later I received a letter from him. It was his last. Since he did not know where my mother was imprisoned, he wrote it to me. I went up to my attic bedroom and read the first words: 'Rejoice when you receive this letter, because I have endured. In two hours my sentence will be executed. . . .' I was sad and I cried, although I did not grasp the depth of the matter then as I do today.

"In the face of all these decisive events I remained relatively strong. Without doubt Jehovah gave me the necessary strength to solve my problems. But Satan has many ways to entice one into his trap and I was soon to experience this. One of my relatives approached my teachers asking them to be patient with me. Suddenly they all became very, very friendly to me. The teachers did not punish me, even when I did not greet with 'Heil Hitler,' and my relatives became especially friendly and nice to me. Then it happened.

"On my own initiative I rejoined the Hitler Youth, though no one tried to force me to do so, and though it was only some months before the end of World War II. What Satan had failed to accomplish with severity, he was able to accomplish with flattery and craftiness. Today I can say that severe persecution from without may test our loyalty, but that Satan's sneaky attacks from other angles are not less dangerous than the brutal attacks. Today I realize what difficult tests of faith my mother had to go through while in prison. I had received my father's last letter in confirmation of his faithfulness and dedication until death and this strengthened me immensely. She, on the other hand, was sent his clothing and suits, on which bloodstains were still clearly visible, silent witnesses to the harassments of his death. My mother later told me that all these things were very difficult for her to bear, but that her most difficult test during this time were my letters indicating I had stopped serving Jehovah.

"The war quickly ended. My mother came home and helped me return to the way of dedication. She continued to rear me in the love of Jehovah and in dedication to him. Looking back, I see that I had many of the same problems then that many of our young brothers have today. But my mother never stopped fighting to help me stay on the path of dedication. Due to the undeserved kindness of Jehovah I have

now had the privilege of being in full-time service for twenty-two years, six years and four months of this time being spent in prison in East Germany, imprisoned even as my parents were.

"I have often asked myself what I did to deserve to have been so richly blessed by Jehovah in the past. Today I believe that the prayers of my father and my mother have been responsible. They could not have given a better example in Christian conduct than they did through their own course of action."

There are 860 known cases where children were taken from their parents, although the exact number may be quite a bit higher. In view of such inhumanity it is not strange that in the course of time the authorities went so far as to make it impossible to bear children by simply stating that one of the parents had a "hereditary disease." He could then be sterilized under provisions of the law.

## **METHODS AT HEARINGS**

One of the cruel tactics employed was letting the marriage mate and other family members experience the torments their loved ones had to go through during questioning. Emil Wilde describes the cruelty of this, he being forced to listen from his cell as his wife was being literally tortured to death.

"On September 15, 1937," he begins, "early in the morning around 5:00 o'clock, two Gestapo officials came and searched our home, after first questioning my children. Afterward my wife and I were taken to police headquarters and immediately locked up in prison cells. Our first hearing took place some ten days later. I was told my wife was also to have her first hearing that same day, and this proved to be the case.

"From noon on, about 1:00 o'clock, I heard a woman's loud cries. She was being beaten and as the cries continued to get louder and I could hear them more clearly, I recognized them as coming from my wife. I rang the bell and asked why the woman, my wife, was being beaten; I was told that it was not my wife, but another, who deserved the beatings because of misbehavior. Late that afternoon the screaming started again and grew so in intensity that I once again rang to complain about the treatment being meted out to my wife. The Gestapo continued to deny that it was my wife. Around 1:00 o'clock that night I could stand

it no longer and rang once again, this time resulting in the police official, whose name I do not know, saying: 'If you ring just one more time, we will do the same thing to you that we have done to your wife!' There followed silence throughout the entire prison, for in the meantime they had taken my wife to the nerve clinic. Early on the morning of October 3, the Gestapo head guard, Classin, came to my cell and told me my wife had died in the nerve clinic. I told him right to his face that they were to blame for my wife's death, and on the day of her funeral I filed murder charges against the Gestapo. This resulted in the Gestapo charging me with libel.

"This meant there was to be a further trial in addition to my first one. When it was held, two sisters arose during the special court hearing and testified: 'We heard Mrs. Wilde crying, "You devils, you are beating me to death."' The judge responded: 'But they did not see it, they only heard it. I sentence you to one month's imprisonment.' Several sisters, who saw my wife after her death, confirmed that she was terribly disfigured with large stripes around her throat and across her face. I was refused permission to attend the funeral."

In other instances attempts were made to hypnotize the brothers. Some of them were given food that had been drugged, so that for a time they lost control over what they said. In an attempt to force others to confess, their hands and feet were tied behind their backs for the entire night. Since some were unable to hold up under such terrible forms of torture, the Gestapo was able to obtain information about how the work of Jehovah's witnesses was organized and carried out.

## **FRIENDLY OFFICERS AND EMPLOYERS**

Although officials used the 'new powerful and loud language,' which especially characterized all the leaders in the new state, based as it was on the so-called 'Führer principle,' yet it was gratifying that here and there some police officials, in their dealings with Jehovah's witnesses both in and outside of prison, showed they were still capable of having compassion for their fellowman.

Carl Göhring, because of his refusal to give the "German greeting" and to join the Working Front Organization, was fired from his job with the private railway company of the Leuna Works in Merseburg. The employment office refused to find him a job and the welfare office refused to give him any kind of support. But

Jehovah, who knows the needs of his people, directed the matter so that Brother Göhring soon found a job with the paper factory in Weissenfels. Its director, a Mr. Kornelius, hired all the brothers in the vicinity who had been fired from their jobs and demanded nothing of them that would have conflicted with their consciences.

As it later developed, there were other employers like this too, although not many. Quite a few brothers were thereby saved from the clutches of the Gestapo.

There were also individual judges who inwardly were not at all in agreement with the violent methods used by the Hitler government. Especially at the beginning, a number of judges presented the brothers with a harmless paper for signing, one that simply stated that they would refrain from engaging in any political activity. Since the brothers could sign this without any reservations, it saved many of them from losing their freedom.

House searches often indicated that not all the officials were as hateful against Jehovah's witnesses as it may have appeared outwardly. Brother and Sister Poddig experienced this when their home was searched. They had just received mail, including copies of *The Watchtower* along with other publications, from Sister Poddig's fleshly sister, who lived in Holland. Before they had a chance to read anything, however, the doorbell suddenly began to ring.

"Quick," Sister Poddig cried, "put everything in the pantry and close the door." Since this might have attracted attention, however, she decided at the last minute to leave the door open. In the meantime the Gestapo agent, accompanied by an SA man, had entered the house. "So," he began, "let's begin right here." By this he meant the pantry with its door standing open. Brother Poddig's little boy suddenly said: "You can look a long time before you'll find anything in the pantry," whereupon the agent laughed and replied: "Well, then, let's go into the other room." The entire search was unsuccessful. In fact, Brother Poddig and his family got the impression that they—at least the Gestapo agent—did not want to find anything. It was apparent that the SA man did not think the search was being carried on thoroughly enough and wanted to continue the search. But the Gestapo agent reprimanded him and forbade him to look farther. Upon leaving he suddenly returned alone and whispered to Sister Poddig: "Mrs. Poddig, listen to what I say. They will take your children away because they are not in the Hitler

Youth. Please send your children, even if it is only for appearance' sake." "Then both of them left and we were able to read our mail from Holland in peace," Brother Poddig writes. "We thanked Jehovah for the many new things and for *The Watchtower* that was once again included."

## OUTWITTED

There are, of course, numerous cases where Gestapo officials were apparently struck with blindness when they conducted their searches and where they were frequently outwitted by the lightning-quick actions of the brothers, clearly indicating Jehovah's protection and angelic help.

Sister Kornelius from Marktredwitz tells an experience: "One day another policeman appeared to make a search. We had several publications in the house, including several mimeographed *Watchtowers*. At the moment, I saw no other possibility than to stick them all into an empty coffee pot, which just happened to be standing on the table. After their looking through everything, it was only a matter of time before this hiding place would be found. Just at that moment my fleshly sister unexpectedly dropped into the apartment. Without any preliminaries I said to her, 'Here, take your coffee along with you.' She looked a little startled at first, understood what I meant, however, and left at once, taking the coffee pot along. The literature was out of danger and the officials had not noticed that they had been outwitted."

Amusing is the story that Brother and Sister Kornelius tell about their five-year-old son Siegfried, who at the time had no difficulties with the "German greeting" and similar things because he was not yet of school age. But since his parents were raising him in the truth, he knew that his parents' literature, which they always hid after reading, was very important and that the Gestapo was not to be allowed to find it. One day when he saw two officials coming through the yard to his parents' place, he immediately realized they would be looking for hidden literature and at once knew what he should do to prevent them from finding anything. Although not yet of school age, he grabbed his older brother's schoolbag, emptied everything out and stuffed all the literature into it. He hung the bag on his back and went out onto the street with it. There he waited until the officials left, after making an unsuccessful search. Afterward he returned to the house and rehid the literature where he had found it.



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## 1974 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses

### Part 2—Germany



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### Part 2—Germany

#### “SHEEP” ARE FOUND IN PRISON

The brothers contacted persons of all kinds while in prison and naturally, as far as possible, told them about their hope. How great their joy when one of their fellow prisoners accepted the truth! Willi Lehmbecker tells us of such an experience. He was incarcerated with a number of other prisoners in a room where smoking was allowed:

“My bunk was above, but the prisoner who slept below me smoked so much I could scarcely breathe. While all the others were asleep I was able to witness to him from the Bible about God’s purpose for mankind. I found him to be an attentive listener. This young man was active in politics and had been taken into custody for distributing illegal magazines. We promised each other that, once we were free again, if still alive, we would try to visit each other. But it turned out differently. In 1948 I met him again at one of our circuit assemblies. He recognized me at once, greeted me joyfully and then told me his story. After serving his time and being released, he had been drafted into the military and served at the front in Russia. Here he had an opportunity to think over all the things I had told him. . . . Finally he said to me: ‘Today I became your brother.’ Can you imagine how

moved I was and how I rejoiced?"

Hermann Schlömer had a similar experience. It was likewise at a circuit assembly where a brother approached him and asked: "Do you recognize me?" Brother Schlömer answered: "Your face is familiar, but I don't know who you are." The brother then introduced himself as having been the prison guard in charge of Brother Schlömer in the Frankfurt-Preungesheim prison during his five-year prison term there. Brother Schlömer had told the guard a great many things about the truth. He had also asked him for a Bible, which the prison clergyman had refused to get for him. The prison guard was humane and obtained a Bible for Brother Schlömer. So that he would have something to do in solitary confinement he also brought him the family stockings for mending. Yes, Brother Schlömer really had cause for rejoicing, realizing that in this case Jehovah's word had fallen on fertile soil.

## **SPIRITUAL FOOD BECOMES SCARCE**

The spiritual menu in Germany continued to shrink. How dangerous it was for individuals, as well as groups, when they lost contact with the organization and no longer had an opportunity to obtain spiritual food, is reported on by Heinrich Vieker:

"When the Nazis seized power, we were between thirty and forty publishers in our congregation. The challenging position taken by this system soon caused many brothers to 'move over into the shade,' thus becoming inactive, about half of the publishers no longer making an appearance. This meant we had to be very careful in dealing with those who had drawn away, greeting them when we would meet, but not supplying them with magazines when available. During a discussion, we once discovered that all the brothers, with the exception of about fourteen, had voted in an election held."

Naturally there was the danger that some brothers would be deprived of spiritual food simply because of some unhappy circumstance causing suspicion that they had drawn away from Jehovah's organization. This is what happened to Grete Klein and her mother in Stettin. Let us hear from her:

"We met together in small groups in the homes of various brothers. Our

congregation overseer gave me *The Watchtower* so that I could make stencils for it to be mimeographed. But only for a short time, and then this privilege, which I so treasured, was over. The brothers had become frightened and were afraid that they might be discovered after they found out that my father was opposed to the truth. We, my mother and I, did not even get a copy of *The Watchtower*. In fact, the brothers' fear went so far that they did not even greet us when meeting us on the streets. Both of us were completely cut off from the organization. In Stettin a congregation of Bible Students ceased to exist because, although still free, we were without leadership and without spiritual food. . . .

"Standing still actually means going backward; this we soon saw from our spiritual attitude. After the war began, I continued to pray for our spiritual brothers in concentration camps; soon, however, I was also praying for my fleshly brothers who were carrying on war with literal weapons in Russia and Greece. At the time it did not even dawn on me that what I was doing was wrong. The thought often came up in my mind as to whether it was at all possible to set up a new order under God's kingdom.

"Besides me, there were many other young persons in the Stettin congregation who did not know where they stood. Several young men, such as Günter Braun, Kurt and Artur Wiessmann, were in military service fighting with fleshly weapons. Kurt Wiessmann was even killed in action. An important reason for our negative stand was undoubtedly the fact that our leadership in the Stettin congregation had fallen victim to the fear of man. . . .

"On the other hand, these brothers who grew weak during that time are an example of Jehovah's patience, love and forgiveness, since, as I later found out, some of them sincerely repented of their actions after the work began again and were restored to Jehovah's favor. Some of them are still in full-time service today, as, for example, the former congregation overseer in Stettin, who due to fear of man broke off all contact with me and my mother and moved with his wife to a place where they were completely unknown. But how I rejoiced when I met them again in Wiesbaden when I began serving at Bethel and have been able to see both of them continue in full-time service up into old age. Because of his course of action some of the brothers suffered a great deal in concentration camps and prisons, and many had a difficult time forgiving him. But Jehovah's mercy helped

them do so and served as a wonderful example for them.”

## **UNCERTAINTY IN MAGDEBURG AND ELSEWHERE**

Going back in the account to 1933 when Hitler became chancellor, we find that Brother Rutherford soon realized that the German government had its eye on our building in Magdeburg and the valuable printing presses there. Strong efforts were made to prove to the responsible officials that the Wachtturm Bibel- und Traktat-Gesellschaft was a subsidiary of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania and that, since the Magdeburg property to a great degree consisted of gifts from America, it was in actuality American property. Under these circumstances Brother Balzereit as a German citizen was only partially effective in fighting for the release of American property. Brother Rutherford, therefore, asked Brother Harbeck, the branch overseer in Switzerland, to step into the controversy, making use of his American citizenship.

Brother Balzereit, who had chosen to move to Czechoslovakia for safety, now felt that his authority was being restricted, and his pride was hurt. Yet he himself showed little desire of wanting to return to Germany and personally direct the negotiations going on for retaining possession of the Society's property and to support his brothers in their fight for the faith. At the same time, Brother Balzereit and several brothers who had taken his side of the controversy accused Brother Harbeck of being negligent in looking after German interests, while others went so far as to telegraph Brother Rutherford in behalf of Balzereit.

Brother Rutherford answered Balzereit as follows: “Return to Magdeburg and stay there and take charge of matters and do what you can, but notify Brother Harbeck about everything. . . . In fact it should not be necessary for you to ask permission to return to Germany, since, as far as I am concerned, and this you know, you could have stayed there right from the beginning. You tried to lead me to believe, however, that your personal safety was dependent upon your taking refuge outside the country.”

The year 1933 drew to a close without any unity being achieved as regards the holding of regular meetings and the carrying on of the preaching work. Brother Poddig describes the situation: “Two groups developed. The fearful ones maintained that we were disobedient and were endangering both them and

Jehovah's work." A letter written by Brother Harbeck in August 1933 was given wide distribution among the German brothers and was used by the fearful ones in their discussions as proof of the rightness of their stand. Meanwhile the Society published a *Watchtower* article entitled "Fear Them Not," which supported the action of those who, despite increasing persecution and mistreatment, had followed the voice of their conscience and had continued to meet together in small groups and carry on the preaching work underground. It showed them that their action had been in harmony with the divine will.

Negotiations for release of the Magdeburg property had broken down, so that Brother Rutherford wrote to Brother Harbeck on January 5, 1934: "I have little hope that we will get anything at all from the German government. I am of the opinion that this wing of Satan's organization will continue to oppress our people until the Lord intervenes."

In the meantime, additional letters from brothers in Germany had reached Brother Rutherford, giving him a more accurate idea of the condition of the work in Germany and also of the spiritual attitude of the brothers. One of these, from Brother Poddig, dealt with the *Watchtower* article "Fear Them Not." It explained that some of the brothers were refusing to accept this *Watchtower* as "food in due season." Some were even trying to prevent the brothers from carrying on any underground preaching. Brother Rutherford's answer was passed on to the brothers everywhere. It said, in part: "The article 'Fear Them Not' which appeared in the December 1 *Watchtower* was written especially for the benefit of our brothers in Germany. It is surprising that any of the brothers would oppose those interested in finding opportunities to bear witness to the Lord. . . . The above-mentioned article applies to Germany just as much as it does to any other part of the earth. It especially applies to the remnant wherever the individual members happen to be. . . . This means that neither literature servant, the service director, the harvest work leader nor anyone else has the right to tell you what to do or to refuse to provide you with such literature as is available. Your activity in the service of the Lord is not illegal, for you do it in obedience to the Lord's command . . ."

## **PLANS FOR UNITED ACTION MADE AT BASEL**

A convention was arranged to be held at the fairgrounds in Basel, Switzerland, from September 7 to 9, 1934. Brother Rutherford hoped to meet a number of

brothers from Germany there, to hear from them firsthand about the actual situation in the country. Under most adverse conditions almost a thousand brothers from Germany were able to attend. They later reported how distressed Brother Rutherford was when he personally heard what the brothers had already been forced to suffer.

On the other hand, he was forced to recognize that even the traveling overseers present were not of one mind as regards the preaching work. He spoke to them about steps to be taken in Germany after the convention. Plans for united action were made.

October 7, 1934, will forever remain something special in the memories of all those who had the privilege of participating in the events of that day. On that day Hitler and his government were confronted by the fearless action of Jehovah's witnesses—in his eyes a ridiculous minority.

Details were spelled out in a letter from Brother Rutherford, a copy of which was to be taken by special messenger to every congregation in Germany. At the same time these messengers were instructed to make preparations for meetings to be held throughout Germany on this particular day. Brother Rutherford's letter said, in part:

"Every group of Jehovah's witnesses in Germany should gather together at a convenient place in the city where they live, on Sunday morning, October 7, 1934, at 9:00 o'clock. This letter should be read to all present. You should join together in prayer to Jehovah asking him through Christ Jesus, our Head and King, for his guidance, protection, deliverance and blessing. Immediately thereafter send a letter to German government officials which text will have been prepared beforehand and will then be available. A few minutes should be spent discussing [Matthew 10:16-24](#), keeping in mind that by doing as this text says, you are 'standing for your lives.' ([Esther 8:11](#)) The meeting should then be closed and you should go out to your neighbors giving them a witness about Jehovah's name, about our God and his Kingdom under Christ Jesus.

"Your brothers throughout the world will be thinking of you and will direct a similar prayer to Jehovah at the same time."



## UNITED DECLARATION OF DETERMINATION TO OBEY GOD

The preparations had to be made in complete secrecy, of course. Every brother who had anything to do with them was required to agree not to speak even to his own wife or other family members about what was being planned for October 7. Despite these precautions, a situation arose at the last minute which, had it not been for Jehovah's powerful and protecting arm, could have had terrible consequences. Concerning what took place in Mainz, Konrad Franke reports:

"I had been arrested early in 1933 for the first time and put in a concentration camp, so after my release I often had to appear before the Gestapo, who accused me each time of being in charge of organizing the work in this city, the continual number of arrests bearing witness to an organized preaching campaign going on. I, therefore, had my mail sent to a cover address, an address which Brother Franz Merck, our regional service director, knew. But for some unexplainable reason he had not delivered Brother Rutherford's letter containing the necessary instructions to me personally as had been agreed upon in Basel, but sent it to me by mail and this to my normal address and literally 'at the last minute.' Happily my attention had already been called to the campaign by Brother Albert Wandres, with whom I worked very closely, and so I was acquainted with all the details set out in the letter. Since the days until October 7 were passing by very quickly and I still had not received this important information from Brother Merck, I went ahead without his help and made arrangements for the meeting to be held at a brother's house in a suburb of Mainz, to which meeting almost twenty persons were invited.

"Two days before the meeting was to take place an abrupt change had to be made, since the home where we were to have met turned out to be a dangerous place. After all the brothers and sisters had been notified of a new address, it was suddenly discovered that a family in this house had also expressed great enmity and had threatened to have anyone they knew to be one of Jehovah's witnesses arrested immediately if they at any time in the future should set foot in their house. So the brothers who owned the house, in whose apartment the meeting was to have been held the next morning, asked to have it somewhere else. Therefore, it became necessary on October 6 to visit all the brothers again, notifying them of a third location for the meeting at 9:00 o'clock the next morning. But where? There seemed to be no possibilities left. After prayerful consideration I

decided to invite the brothers to my small pioneer apartment, although this was dangerous.

"I returned home tired out on the evening of October 6 and was handed a letter by my wife which had been delivered late in the evening outside of the normal postal delivery times, and this despite the fact that it was just a normal letter rather than special delivery, which would have called for the postal authorities to have delivered it at that time. I opened it and discovered it was Brother Rutherford's letter. Brother Merck had sent it to me probably because he had no possibility of getting it to me personally in time.

"The manner of delivery was proof to me, however, that the letter had first gone to the Gestapo—as was true of all my private mail—and that they had then arranged to deliver it, evidently thinking that I did not yet know anything about the campaign. They figured I would then make the necessary arrangements in harmony with the letter's contents sometime during the night, so that they could find all of us together and arrest us without any special effort on their part the next morning. In fact, there had been sufficient time to warn officials all over Germany. It would be a simple matter to arrest all of Jehovah's witnesses gathered together in the various cities the next morning.

"What should I do? My apartment, located in a building also housing a tavern, was anything but safe. All those living in the house, with the exception of the sister who owned the building and whose bedroom adjoined our apartment, were bitterly opposed. On the other hand, there were no other possibilities of where we could meet. Trusting in Jehovah's help, I decided not to make any more changes nor to excite unduly the brothers and sisters, who, for the most part, lived in divided families and who had not the slightest idea of what the purpose of the meeting was. Inwardly I prepared myself for being arrested again.

"At 7:00 o'clock the morning of October 7, the first brothers had already arrived, arrangements having been made for everyone to come individually over a period of two hours so that it would not be so noticeable. The brothers appeared one by one, all very expectant of what would come, although in harmony with instructions they had not been informed of the real reason for the meeting. But there was no one among them who did not feel that this was to be an extremely meaningful day. Everyone, including the sisters whose husbands in most cases

were opposers and most of whom had small children to look after, impressed me as being determined and willing to do anything they were asked to do in the interests of the vindication of Jehovah's name.

"By ten minutes to 9:00 everyone was gathered in our one-room pioneer apartment. I fully expected to see the Gestapo drive up in a large car at any minute and to arrest us all. I, therefore, felt called upon to explain the situation to the brothers and to give them an opportunity to withdraw from participation in the meeting in case they feared the possible consequences. I told them: 'The situation is such that we could all be arrested within the next ten minutes. I do not want any of you to be able to accuse me later of having got you into this situation without having informed you of its seriousness. I, therefore, ask you to open your Bibles to Deuteronomy 20.' I read verse 8: [De 20:8](#) 'Who is the man that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, that he may not cause the hearts of his brothers to melt as his own heart.' After reading this to those present, I said: 'Anyone who feels that the situation is too dangerous now has the opportunity of withdrawing from participation in the meeting.'

"But not one, not even the sisters with opposing husbands and small children, considered drawing back in fear. What now followed is something one can hardly express in words. During the few minutes remaining until 9:00 o'clock there was a festive silence in the room. It was apparent that all in attendance were entrusting the matter in silent prayer into Jehovah's protective hand. It was 9:00 o'clock. And while the thought kept wanting to creep into my mind that 'the Gestapo will pull into the yard at any moment now' I opened the meeting with prayer. Suddenly we all had the feeling that a strong, protective ring had been placed around us, enclosing not only the endangered brothers in Germany but the brothers throughout the world who, in harmony with instructions, had assembled in many countries at the same hour and who naturally also began their meetings with prayer, all of this for the purpose of protesting to Hitler against the inhuman treatment of their brothers in Germany.

"Afterward I delivered a talk to the brothers repeating the main thoughts of Brother Rutherford's noteworthy talk in Basel for the encouragement of the German brothers. It presented Biblical proofs that, despite changed conditions, we had not been freed of our responsibility before Jehovah to assemble together

regularly to study his Word and to praise him, nor from our obligation to serve as his witnesses and to publicly make known the Kingdom.”

In harmony with the action being taken by Jehovah's witnesses throughout Germany, everyone in the group enthusiastically agreed that the following letter should be sent to the government on that day by registered mail:

“TO THE OFFICIALS OF THE GOVERNMENT:

“The Word of Jehovah God, as set out in the Holy Bible, is the supreme law, and to us it is our sole guide for the reason that we have devoted ourselves to God and are true and sincere followers of Christ Jesus.

“During the past year, and contrary to God's law and in violation of our rights, you have forbidden us as Jehovah's witnesses to meet together to study God's Word and worship and serve him. In his Word he commands us that we shall not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. ([Hebrews 10:25](#)) To us Jehovah commands: 'Ye are my witnesses that I am God. Go and tell the people my message.' ([Isaiah 43:10, 12](#); [Isaiah 6:9](#); [Matthew 24:14](#)) There is a direct conflict between your law and God's law, and, following the lead of the faithful apostles, 'we ought to obey God rather than men,' and this we will do. ([Acts 5:29](#)) Therefore this is to advise you that at any cost we will obey God's commandments, will meet together for the study of his Word, and will worship and serve him as he has commanded. If your government or officers do violence to us because we are obeying God, then our blood will be upon you and you will answer to Almighty God.

“We have no interest in political affairs, but are wholly devoted to God's kingdom under Christ his King. We will do no injury or harm to anyone. We would delight to dwell in peace and do good to all men as we have opportunity, but, since your government and its officers continue in your attempt to force us to disobey the highest law of the universe, we are compelled to now give you notice that we will, by his grace, obey Jehovah God and fully trust Him to deliver us from all oppression and oppressors.”

In full support of their German brothers, Jehovah's witnesses throughout the earth met on October 7 and, after united prayer to Jehovah, sent a cablegram warning the Hitler government:

“Your ill-treatment of Jehovah’s witnesses shocks all good people of earth and dishonors God’s name. Refrain from further persecuting Jehovah’s witnesses; otherwise God will destroy you and your national party.”

Surprisingly, few brothers were arrested that day, although the Gestapo—if only at the last minute—had found out what was going to be done. Let us return to Brother Franke’s report:

“Despite the fact that more than an hour had passed since we had closed the meeting with prayer, still no one from the Gestapo had put in his appearance. Now the first ones began to leave again, as before, at intervals. About eight brothers were still there when I left to ride my bicycle to the adjoining city of Wiesbaden to deliver the letter to the postal authorities myself. The letter had been written during the night and left in Wiesbaden, where the brothers were to have mailed it if I, as I fully expected, had been arrested. As I rode through the garden gate, a Gestapo agent rode up on his bicycle but failed to recognize me. The other eight brothers were warned and fled into Sister Darmstadt’s adjoining bedroom, the sister to whom the house belonged. The questions the Gestapo agent directed to my wife as he searched our apartment indicated that the Gestapo knew all about our meeting. Despite this, neither I nor any of the other brothers were arrested that day. It was only several months later when I was rearrested by the Gestapo that they told me they were in possession of Brother Rutherford’s letter.”

While some of the brothers were busy visiting their neighbors right after the meeting and calling their attention to God’s kingdom, there was great consternation in many of the post offices outside Germany. Especially on the European continent, the postal authorities in many places refused to accept the telegram. This was the case in Budapest. Martin Pötzinger attended the meeting there and was asked to take the telegram to the post office. He reports: “The telegram was accepted, but the next day I was notified by the main post office that I should appear personally there. We all thought that the Gestapo would take me into custody, expel me from the country, and thereby put an end to my activity . . . but this did not happen. I was only told that Hungary would not transmit the telegram and I was given my money back.” In Doorn (Holland), where the German Kaiser Wilhelm II lived in exile, the post office at first refused to send the telegram, but later notified Hans Thomas, who had turned it in, that it had been sent and

that its arrival in Berlin had been confirmed.

The effect that the letters, and especially the telegrams, had upon Hitler can be seen by a report written by Karl R. Wittig, attested by a notary public in Frankfurt (Main) on November 13, 1947:

“DECLARATION—On October 7, 1934, having been previously summoned, I visited Dr. Wilhelm Frick, at that time Minister of the Interior of the Reich and Prussia, in his home office of the Reich, located in Berlin, 6 am Königsplatz, since I was a plenipotentiary of General Ludendorff. I was to accept communications, contents of which were an attempt to persuade General Ludendorff to discontinuance of his objection to the Nazi regime. During my discussion with Dr. Frick, Hitler suddenly appeared and began taking part in the conversation. When our discussion obligatorily dealt with the action against the International Bible Students Association [Jehovah's witnesses] in Germany up until now, Dr. Frick showed Hitler a number of telegrams protesting against the Third Reich's persecution of the Bible Students, saying: 'If the Bible Students do not immediately get in line we will act against them using the strongest means.' After which Hitler jumped to his feet and with clenched fists hysterically screamed: 'This brood will be exterminated in Germany!' Four years after this discussion I was able, by my own observations, to convince myself, during my seven years in protective custody in the hell of the Nazis' concentration camps at Sachsenhausen, Flossenbürg and Mauthausen—I was in prison until released by the Allies—that Hitler's outburst of anger was not just an idle threat. No other group of prisoners of the named concentration camps was exposed to the sadism of the SS soldiery in such a fashion as the Bible Students were. It was a sadism marked by an unending chain of physical and mental tortures, the likes of which no language in the world can express.”

After we had sent our letters to Hitler, a wave of arrests took place. Hardest hit was Hamburg where, just a few days after October 7, the Gestapo arrested 142 brothers.

## **UNDERGROUND WORK ORGANIZED**

Having now notified Hitler in our letter of October 7 that, despite his ban, we would continue to obey God's commands exclusively, we endeavored to organize



all the courageous and willing brothers and sisters into small groups under the direction of a mature brother, whose obligation it was wholeheartedly to care for and shepherd the Lord's sheep.

The country was divided into thirteen regions, and a brother with good shepherding qualities was appointed in each region to serve as regional service director, as he was then called. These had to be brothers who, regardless of the dangers involved, were willing to contact the small groups to provide them with spiritual food, support them in their preaching activity and strengthen them in their faith. Except for just a few, the positions were filled by servants completely unknown to the brothers heretofore. They had proved, however, since Hitler's coming to power, that they were willing to subjugate their own personal interests to those of the Kingdom.

### **MIMEOGRAPHING AND DISTRIBUTING "THE WATCHTOWER"**

The brothers mimeographed and distributed copies of *The Watchtower* in many different locations throughout Germany. In Hamburg, for example, Helmut Brembach continued to supply the brothers in Schleswig-Holstein and Hamburg with copies that he and his wife made at night. Sister Brembach relates the following experience from the many she and her husband had:

"It was forenoon as the doorbell suddenly rang but much louder than usual. When I opened the door I found three men standing there. I suspected who they were. 'Gestapo' one of them said and all three were already inside the apartment. My heart leaped into my throat as I thought of all the things hidden in the house. Trembling inwardly for fear, I prayed to Jehovah.

"From a human standpoint it would have been no problem to find the packed *Watchtowers* and the entire equipment we used in making them. Since our house was one in which several families lived, including those of two police officers, there was no place to hide anything, especially in view of the fact that the necessary materials—paper, mimeograph machine, typewriter and ink, as well as packing materials—were all large. Not knowing how to hide these things from the eyes of those who should not see them—we needed them every two weeks—we decided to pack everything into our potato bin, which stood in the middle of the basement and which any of the other occupants of the house could have got into.

Each time we had finished making *The Watchtower*, we carefully put everything back into this bin, covered it with empty sacks and then piled empty tomato boxes on top up to the ceiling, hoping that, if worse came to worse, those trying to find something would either fail to notice it or would be too indifferent and lazy to want to move everything away from atop the potato bin. We trusted in Jehovah; there was nothing else we could do.

“The officer asked me if we had any banned literature in the house. To avoid lying, I said: ‘Please look around for yourself.’ They searched the apartment, opening the cabinet door in such a way that they failed to see the typewriter, which we had forgotten to pack away in the bin and which they would have recognized as being the machine needed for writing *The Watchtower*, had they discovered it. But Jehovah blinded them. After finding nothing in the apartment, they asked if they could check the basement. I felt now that discovery of all the materials and records was unavoidable. I tried to hide my fear from them although my heart was beating ever louder. To make matters worse, a suitcase filled with mimeographed *Watchtowers*, which my husband was to take on a trip the next day, stood directly behind the bin. But what happened? The three officers stood in the middle of the room, mind you, right there where the bin stood with the suitcase full of *Watchtowers* behind it. But none of them seemed to notice it; it was as though they had been struck blind. None of them made any efforts of any kind to look through the bin or even to see what was in the suitcase. Finally one of the officers asked about our attic; there they found several older publications, which seemed to satisfy them, and so they left. But the most important things, thanks to Jehovah’s help and that of his angels, had remained hidden from their eyes.”

Many similar cases could be related showing Jehovah’s guidance in keeping these mimeograph operations intact for long periods of time and thus supplying his people with literature.

## **ORGANIZED PREACHING WORK**

Not everyone associated with us engaged in the preaching activity. To the contrary, in some congregations only half did so. In Dresden, for example, at one time the congregation had reached a peak of some 1,200 publishers, but after the ban this dropped rapidly to 500. Nevertheless, there may have been at least ten thousand throughout Germany who declared themselves willing to preach

regardless of the danger involved.

At first most worked just with the Bible, whereas older booklets and books that had been rescued from the claws of the Gestapo were placed when making return visits. Others made up witnessing cards. Still others wrote letters to persons they knew, taking advantage of some special occasion. Door-to-door activity continued, though great dangers were involved. Every time someone opened the door it could be an SA or SS man. After calling at a door, the publishers generally skipped over to another apartment house or, in cases where it was extremely dangerous, even to another street.

For at least two years it was possible almost everywhere in Germany—in some places even longer—to preach from house to house. There is no doubt that this was possible only because of Jehovah's special protection.

The small amounts of literature available for the preaching activity were soon used up. We therefore checked the possibilities of getting literature from foreign countries. Ernst Wiesner from Breslau acquaints us with some interesting details as to how it was done:

"Literature was sent to us from Switzerland by way of Czechoslovakia. It was stored at the border with outsiders and then brought from there over the Riesen Mountains into Germany. The work, which was done by a team of mature, willing brothers, was very dangerous and extremely fatiguing. We crossed the border at midnight. The brothers were well organized and were equipped with large knapsacks. They made the trip twice a week, although they had to be at their jobs every day besides. In winter they used toboggans and skis. They knew every path and byway, had good flashlights, binoculars and hiking shoes. Being cautious was the supreme law. Upon arriving at the German border around midnight and even after crossing it no one dared speak a word for a long time. Two brothers went ahead and, whenever they met anyone, at once signaled with their flashlights. This was a sign for the brothers with their heavy knapsacks following about 100 meters behind to hide in the bushes along the way until the two brothers ahead of them came back and gave a certain password, which was changed from week to week.

"This could happen several times a night. Once the way was clear again, the

brothers would proceed to a certain house in a village on the German side where the books were put into small packages that same night or early the next morning, addressed, and then taken by bicycle to the post office in Hirschberg or other nearby towns. Brothers throughout Germany received their literature in this way. . . . This team of brothers, zealous and extraordinarily skillful, was able to bring a large amount of literature into Germany over a period of two years without getting caught, thereby strengthening many throughout the whole country." Similar arrangements were also used at the French, Saar, Swiss and Dutch borders.

Of interest in this connection is a letter written by a sister: "When you read the *Yearbook* report from Germany you will ask yourself how it is possible that so much literature could be placed under such conditions. We ask ourselves the same question. If Jehovah were not with us, it would be impossible. Many of the brethren are being watched by the police constantly whenever they leave their homes. . . . But Jehovah is aware of this and, despite it, he permits us to be strengthened over and over again by the bountiful food we are enjoying."

We had sufficient time to hide the literature in various places before the ban was announced. In order to understand what took place, however, it is important to keep in mind that the brothers had never had any experience in storing literature when under ban. So instead of dividing it among many brothers, the tendency at the beginning was to deposit it in large depots, thinking this to be safer, especially in view of the fact that those in charge felt the ban would be only temporary. Some of the depots had storage space for thirty to fifty tons of literature. As time went on, however, some of the brothers began to worry, wondering what would happen if the enemies should find and confiscate these large depots. For that reason the brothers in charge of the depots began giving the books out for use in the ministry regardless of whether they could be placed on a contribution or not.

Once it became apparent that persecution would continue and that keeping the hiding places was becoming ever more dangerous, the brothers started giving away as many books and booklets as possible. As they shared in field ministry they simply laid them inside the door when no one was watching or shoved them under the doormat, hoping that in some cases they would fall into the hands of sincere persons desirous of the strength and hope they could give.

## MEMORIAL

Since we were determined not to neglect meeting together, in harmony with Jehovah's command, it is obvious that we would be extremely conscientious about celebrating the Memorial. On such days the Gestapo were especially active, having in most cases determined the date of the Memorial either from publications printed outside Germany or from the mimeographed *Watchtower*, which sometimes fell into their hands. Their anger was particularly concentrated upon the anointed, who were mentioned, not only in connection with the Memorial, but also in connection with special campaigns. They saw in them the "heads" of the organization who would have to be crushed first in order to destroy the organization.

The Memorial on April 17, 1935, was especially exciting. Several weeks before, the Gestapo had already learned the date and had plenty of time to alert all their offices. A secret circular dated April 3, 1935, said:

"A surprise attack launched at this time against the known leaders of the Bible Students would be quite successful. Please report any information regarding success by April 22, 1935."

But there could be little talk of "information regarding success," for the majority of officers, like the one in Dortmund, was able to report only that the homes of those believed to be leaders of the Bible Students Association had been placed under surveillance but that in no case were meetings held. As a pacifier they added that "the leading and active members of the Bible Students in this district are already in custody so there is no one left to organize such meetings."

However, the secret police were mistaken, for shortly after this secret circular was sent out, we received a copy of it from a friend of the truth who had access to such secret information. The regional service directors warned all the servants in plenty of time and gave them proper counsel as to how to avoid detection and yet still obey the instructions of our Lord and Master.

So it was that many met together immediately after 6:00 o'clock, whereas others waited until the Gestapo had come and gone before they left to meet with their brothers in small groups, some celebrating the Memorial in the middle of the

night. In any case, the majority of Gestapo departments sent in reports similar to the one sent in from Dortmund.

Willi Kleissle reports that the brothers in Kreuzlingen celebrated the Memorial right at 6:00 o'clock. They had been instructed that before leaving the building they should go into the store located in the same building and which was owned by a brother, where they could buy sugar, coffee or similar items. Then they could leave by the regular store exit. The "cudgel corps," as Brother Kleissle called them, did show up, but only after the brothers had all gone into the store, so they were unable to prove anything. But the questions asked by the Gestapo as well as various comments made by the police indicated clearly that they had got information through *The Watchtower* as to the date of the Memorial.

The brothers were always prepared for surprises, however, and this was good. They tried to connect, not only their attendance at the weekly meetings, but, above all, their attendance at the Memorial with some inoffensive everyday activity, and this often saved them from arrest. Franz Kohlhofer from near Bamberg reports:

"On this particular day the spies were especially active in watching the homes of Jehovah's witnesses in the hope of being able to catch some of them in illegal activity and then to arrest them. . . . We had decided several days before to meet together for the celebration at the home of a brother who raised swine. Everyone was to bring along a basket full of potato peelings and other garbage. This all had to take place in a hurry, because the Gestapo could make an appearance at any moment. Just in case, we also took along our playing cards so that we could deceive the police should they surprise us. And guess what happened! Just as the brother had completed his final prayer there was a knock at the door. But by then the four of us were sitting around the table harmlessly involved in a card game. They could hardly believe their eyes, as we gazed at them quietly and naïvely. Since they had failed to catch us at the right time, they were forced to leave without having accomplished what they had set out to do."

## **BAPTISM**

Not a few of those who learned the truth during this time were baptized under the most trying circumstances. Soon many of these newly baptized ones were thrown



into prison or into concentration camps, and a number of them lost their lives the same as those who had brought them the good news.

Paul Buder had already had his attention called to the “Millions” lecture as far back as 1922, but did not come into close contact with the truth until 1935 when a young girl employed at the same place he was, and of whom he had been warned by the others, gave him the *Creation* book. “That was May 12, 1935,” he writes in his memoirs, “and it was what I had been looking for. On May 19, 1935, I withdrew membership from the church and told the young girl I would like to become one of Jehovah’s witnesses. How happy she was! She had already been in prison for six weeks accused of being a colporteur. Then I contacted Brother and Sister Woite from the Forst congregation. Despite the fact that I was considered as a spy for the Nazis in that congregation, I went regularly from house to house in all villages with my little Luther Bible. On July 23, 1936, I was baptized in the Neisse River in Forst with Brother and Sister Woite present and also an older brother who delivered the talk.”

Baptisms were often held in small groups in private homes. From time to time they were held out in the open, sometimes with only a few candidates, at other times with more. Heinrich Halstenberg tells us about a baptism in the Weser River.

“In 1941 a number of interested persons expressed their desire to be baptized. When we found that there were a number with the same desire in the neighborhood we began to look for an appropriate location and this we found in Dehme on the Weser River. After everything had been well thought through and carefully planned, the baptism was set for May 8, 1941. The brothers and baptismal candidates were already there early in the morning. To others it looked as though we were a group enjoying a swim. Then so that no one could surprise us some were sent to keep watch and after speaking of the importance of baptism we prayed to Jehovah. Then sixty candidates for baptism were baptized in the river. Others, who were either too old or sickly to take the cold water, were baptized privately in a bathtub, making a total number of eighty-seven baptized that day.”

## **A MANHUNT GETS UNDER WAY**

Albert Wandres had been one of the regional service directors even before

October 7, 1934, and his name soon became well known to the Gestapo, especially through the steady stream of court trials in the various cities of the Ruhr where he was working. In answer to the question as to where the defendants had got their literature, the name "Wandres" was often heard. The Gestapo put forth every effort to take him into custody. Cleverly, however, he had asked all the brothers who had pictures of him either to return them or to destroy them. The result was that, although the Gestapo knew his name, they had no idea what he looked like. He did not fall into the hands of his persecutors until after a three-and-a-half-year manhunt. Let us listen as Brother Wandres tells us some of his experiences in his underground activity.

"For a time I met several brothers in Düsseldorf at a brother's grocery store. We thought that if we entered and departed from the store shortly before closing time it would be least noticed. Once we had been together for about an hour, when the Gestapo suddenly demanded entry. Just in time I fled from the storage room, where we had had our discussion, into the store, which was just a few steps away. Fortunately the lights had already been turned off. A moment later they stormed into the storage room and arrested all the brothers present. They searched the whole room, and found my briefcase full of *Watchtowers*. Suddenly one of the agents cried out joyfully: 'This is what we are looking for! Who does the briefcase belong to?' No one responded. Now he demanded to know where the store owner's living quarters were. 'On the third floor,' was the reply. 'Out,' the Gestapo agent shouted, and all the brothers took off up the stairs to the apartment with the Gestapo agents in hot pursuit, hoping to find the one they were looking for in the brother's apartment.

"I then reentered the storage room cautiously, put on my coat and hat, picked up my briefcase and checked to make sure that no one was on the street outside. Then I hurriedly left. When the gentlemen returned from upstairs they discovered to their chagrin that the bird had flown the coop, and was already on its way to Elberfeld-Barmen." Brother Wandres adds: "This is all very entertaining and nice to tell, but to go through it yourself is another story."

"Once," Brother Wandres continues, "I was taking two heavy suitcases full of *Preparation* books to Bonn and Kassel. They had been sent across the border near Trier. I arrived in Bonn late in the evening and left the suitcases in a safe place in

the congregation servant's basement. The next morning about 5:30 the doorbell rang. The Gestapo had come once again to search the apartment. Brother Arthur Winkler, at that time congregation servant, knocked on my door and called my attention to the fact that unwanted guests were coming. Since there was no possibility of escaping we decided to take things as they came. When the police entered my room, they asked what I was doing there and I answered briefly that I was taking a tour of the Rhine River and wanted to visit the Bonn Botanical Gardens. They checked my papers carefully and, although a little uncertain, returned them to me then. Brother Winkler had to go with them to police headquarters where one of the agents told his superior—as Brother Winkler later told me—'There was another one there.' 'You didn't bring him along? You were certainly the right ones to send.' 'Why?' one asked. 'Should we go back and get him?' 'Get him? Do you think he's waiting for you to return?' Actually the agents had scarcely left the house when I also made my departure with one of the two suitcases (they had not found them), which I took along to Kassel.

"Arriving in Kassel, the congregation servant, Brother Hochgräfe, told me: 'You can't stay here. You must leave at once. The Gestapo has been coming to the house every morning for a whole week.' We agreed that he should walk some 50 meters ahead of me and show me the way to a place where I could leave the literature. We had scarcely gone more than two hundred meters along the beautiful Kastanienallee when Gestapo agents well acquainted with the congregation servant approached us. Since I was following some fifty meters behind, I could see their scornful grin but they did not stop him. A few minutes later the literature by means of which the brothers could be strengthened in their faith had once again been brought into safety.

"Another time I was taking two heavy suitcases with literature at Burgsolms near Wetzlar. It was 11:00 o'clock at night and pitch black. Hardly anyone could have seen me but still I had the strange feeling of being watched. After arriving at my destination, I advised the brothers to hide the suitcases in a safe place. Around 5:30 the next morning the town's police sergeant came. I was standing in the middle of the room just getting ready to wash when he turned to the sister and said: 'Yesterday evening a man with two heavy suitcases came here. No doubt you have got literature again. Where do you have it?' The sister answered: 'My husband has already gone to work. And I don't know what happened last evening

because I was not at home!’ The sergeant replied: ‘If you do not surrender the suitcases willingly, then we will have to search the house for them. I will get the mayor, for without him I cannot conduct a search. But until I return you are forbidden to leave the house.’ During this whole discussion I had been standing in the middle of the room wondering why the agent had such a glassy look in his eye and why he had not even spoken to me. I could only surmise that it was as though he had been struck blind. After he left to get the mayor, I got ready to leave at once. I went outside and waited behind the house until the mayor and the police sergeant entered the house from the front. At that moment I slipped out the back. Neighbors who happened to see this were evidently happy that I had escaped. I finished dressing in the woods and then ran as fast as I could to the next railroad station and traveled on.”

The other regional service directors had similar experiences.

## **A TRIAL OF ANOTHER SORT**

During the years 1934 to 1936 faithful shepherds were supporting their brothers throughout Germany, encouraging them to share in meeting attendance and, if possible, in all branches of service, despite persecution. Meanwhile a trial was held in Halle on December 17, 1935, against Balzereit, Dollinger and seven others viewed as “prominent” brothers. For at least half of them it was the end of their Christian race.

Many brothers at the numerous trials taking place in Germany at the time openly admitted what they had done in furthering Kingdom interests under trying conditions. In contrast, these men on trial in Halle denied ever having done anything forbidden by the government. Balzereit, when asked by the chairman what he had to say for himself, said that just as soon as the ban had been announced in Bavaria he had issued instructions not to work there, and that the same was true in all the other states. He said that he had never issued instructions encouraging anyone to disregard the ban.

When asked by the chairman about the annual Memorial celebration, Balzereit answered that he too had heard that the brothers were planning on meeting together to celebrate it despite the ban. He had warned them about this, however, since he knew the police were planning special action on that day.

Naturally the defendant's personal attitude as regards military service came up, even as it did at all the trials held at that time. He declared himself completely satisfied with the Führer's explanation, namely, that war in itself was a crime, but that every country had the right and duty to protect the lives of its citizens.

Shortly thereafter Brother Rutherford wrote the following letter to the German brothers:

"To Jehovah's faithful people in Germany:

"In spite of the wicked persecution upon you, and the great opposition put forth by Satan's agents in that land, it is gratifying to know that the Lord still has a few thousand in that country who have faith in Him and who persist in proclaiming the message of His kingdom. Your faithfulness in standing out against the persecutors and remaining true to the Lord is in striking contrast to the action taken by the one who formerly was the manager for the Society in Germany, and others associated with him. Recently a copy of the testimony taken at the trial of those men at Halle has been furnished to me and I am astounded to find therein not one of those on trial at that time gave a faithful and true testimony to the name of Jehovah. It was especially incumbent upon the former manager Balzereit to hold high the banner of the Lord and declare himself for God and his kingdom amidst all opposition, but not one word was uttered showing his complete reliance upon Jehovah. Time and again I had called his attention to the fact of things that could be done in Germany and he assured me that he was putting forth every effort to encourage the brethren to get on with the testimony. But at the trial he emphatically stated that nothing was done. It is needless for me to here discuss that further. Suffice it to say that the Society will henceforth have nothing to do with him, nor any of those who on that occasion had an opportunity to bear testimony to the name of Jehovah and His kingdom and failed to do so. The Society will put forth no effort looking to release them from prison, even if it had the power to do anything.

"Let now all those who love the Lord turn their faces to Him, Jehovah and His King, and remain true and steadfast on the side of the kingdom, regardless of all opposition that may come to you. . . ."

The matter was handled in the German issue of the July 15, 1936, *Watchtower*, as a

warning to those sincerely desiring to be faithful witnesses for Jehovah under all circumstances.

In contrast to many of the faithful brothers in Germany who had been sentenced to terms of up to five years' imprisonment, Balzereit was sentenced to two and a half years and Dollinger to two years. After serving his term in prison Balzereit was put in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, where he was forced to play an extremely inglorious role. He had signed the declaration abdicating association with the brothers and avoided all contact with them. Because of his conduct he was released about a year later, but meanwhile he was forced to put up with many a humiliation, for, basically, the SS hated traitors too. It was the SS themselves who gave him the name "Beelzebub," and once an SS man required him to stand in front of all his brothers—there were some 300 in the camp at the time—and repeat his signed declaration abdicating association with Jehovah's witnesses, and this he did!

In 1946, by which time Balzereit had become a violent opposer of the truth, he wrote a letter to reparations authorities revealing the hostile attitude that he had even before the trial was held. Thus ended a dark chapter in the history of God's people in Germany, the first lines of which had already been written in the 1920's.

### **THE GESTAPO STRIKE—AUGUST 28, 1936**

Two years of zealous activity had passed, during which time the Gestapo had failed to have any real influence upon the organized underground activity despite their careful shadowing of all known Jehovah's witnesses. But with time they learned more and more about our activity and were soon well informed of what we were doing. To help fight against us a "special Gestapo Command" was formed, according to a confidential notification to the Prussian Secret State Police dated June 24, 1936.

During the first half of 1936 the Secret State Police compiled a large file containing the addresses of persons who were either suspected of being Jehovah's witnesses or, at least, of being friendly to them. This file was based to a great degree on the addresses found in the book *Daily Heavenly Manna*, confiscated during house searches. Special courses were even conducted for the Gestapo agents. They were instructed in conducting the *Watchtower* study; they had to study carefully the



newest *Watchtower* articles so that they could answer questions as though they were brothers. Finally, they even had to learn to pray. This all for the purpose of, if possible, getting right into the midst of the organization and destroying it from within.

Anton Kötgen from Münster reports that, after delivering literature to a “friendly” lady, he was promptly arrested and put into prison. At the same time, Brother Kötgen goes on to say, “Gestapo agents called on my wife who was outside in the garden. They introduced themselves as brothers, but only for the purpose of finding out the names of other brothers. My wife saw through their scheme, however, and showed them up to be Gestapo agents.” But not in every case were the Gestapo recognized in time.

Meanwhile, Brother Rutherford was planning a trip to Switzerland and wanted, if possible, to speak with brothers from Germany. Arrangements were made for a convention in Lucerne from September 4 to 7, 1936. The central office in Switzerland had suggested that we compile a number of reports from brothers throughout Germany regarding their arrests, their mistreatment by the Gestapo, their being fired from their jobs because of refusing to give “the German greeting,” also reports of cases where brothers had died as the result of mistreatment, and so forth. These reports were to be secretly taken to Switzerland before the convention started so that Brother Rutherford might have opportunity to examine them.

But suddenly, on August 28, 1936, the Gestapo struck a concerted merciless blow, setting into operation a campaign during which Jehovah’s witnesses were hunted down like wild beasts. All available forces were mobilized for action both day and night, but chiefly at night, in an attempt to capture Jehovah’s witnesses. All the information the Gestapo had gathered over the preceding months now proved to be a great help to them. Unsuspecting persons, including some who had never claimed to be Jehovah’s witnesses, were caught up in the web. Such persons naturally were more than willing to tell the Gestapo all they knew about Jehovah’s witnesses so that they might regain their freedom; and even though it often appeared to be very little that they knew to tell, yet these little pieces of information helped to fill out the picture that the Gestapo had until now been able to construct. At later hearings the Gestapo often boasted that such information

had helped them to capture thousands of persons, the majority of whom were put into prison and afterward into concentration camps.

When the Gestapo's campaign was finally running at top speed, a grand offensive succeeded in taking into custody Brother Winkler, who was at that time in charge of the entire work in Germany, and the majority of the regional service directors, whose names and territories had, in most cases, already been known. The Gestapo judged this "campaign" as being of such importance that the entire police net was involved in striking at Jehovah's witnesses, leaving criminal elements of the underworld unmolested.

The Gestapo's detailed work over a period of months had led to the discovery that important meetings were being held between Brother Winkler and other responsible servants from all over Germany in the Berlin zoological gardens. This was especially true during the warmer part of the year. These meetings could long be camouflaged by means of Brother Varduhn's chair-renting agency there. He could inconspicuously tell the brothers arriving where a brother was waiting for them in the zoological gardens and direct them to a safe spot where the discussion could then take place. Whenever danger hovered in the air he would warn them simply by going up to the brothers and collecting payment for the chairs they had "rented." But this wonderful arrangement was not long to remain a secret. In some way or other the Gestapo had found out the details, and it proved to be a help to them in their cunning plan of attack. Brother Klohe, who himself was involved, tells us what took place during those exciting days in Berlin:

"I was looking forward to the Lucerne convention; I had good chances of being able to attend, since I already had been able to obtain a Swiss visa. But before, I wanted to go to Leipzig to discuss organizational matters with Brother Frost whose territory I was to take over as regional service director, since an opening had come about through Brother Paul Grossmann's arrest. I was unable to reach Brother Frost, however, and where I had expected to meet him I was met by the Gestapo instead. I was completely numb at first, for just as I was able to start such a gratifying service I was to be torn away from association with my brothers and taken by the Gestapo to Leipzig. [From there he was taken to Berlin.]

"Meanwhile the Gestapo had learned that we had a meeting place in the zoological gardens and they had found out many other things about our

organization. This information had been obtained in a number of ways, including blackmail.

“A few days later five officers armed with loaded pistols suddenly appeared, told me to put on my civilian clothes, and led me to the place near the goldfish pond where Brother Varduhn rented his garden chairs. They did not suspect him of being one of Jehovah’s witnesses, however. Now I was to serve as ‘bait’ for my brothers who would eventually show up for the planned meeting about which the Gestapo had now got information.

“I had scarcely sat down where I was told to before I saw our Sister Hildegard Mesch approaching me. She had wondered why I had not come to them, since I had been expected, and she now wanted to see why I had not come. Since my festering shins were very painful due to the blows I had received, the officers did not suspect anything when I suddenly bent over grimacing with pain just at the very moment she was passing by on the other side of the path and attempting at the same time to signal to her with my eyes that the Gestapo were in the zoological gardens. She understood, hesitated for just a second and then returned to Brother Varduhn, whom she informed of this new situation. This meant the greatest of danger for Brother Winkler, who actually did come shortly thereafter and unsuspectingly seated himself on an empty chair. Very shortly Brother Varduhn approached him, asked for payment of the chair rent and at the same time warned him of the Gestapo agents in the zoological gardens. Brother Winkler soon rose, leaving his briefcase behind and escaped—as it appeared—through the ring of Gestapo agents. I found out later that late that night he appeared at Brother Kassing’s apartment, where a group of Gestapo agents waiting for him immediately took him into custody.”

Within a few days at least half of the regional service directors in Germany, along with thousands of other brothers and friends, had been arrested. This included Brother Georg Bär, who reports:

“Every evening at about 10:00 o’clock I would hear prisoners being taken from their various cells. Shortly thereafter I would hear them being beaten downstairs in the basement; I heard their cries and their sobs. Every evening when I heard the cell doors being opened I would think, Now it is my turn. But I was not bothered until finally on the fourth or fifth day around 6:00 o’clock when I was called to be

questioned. This time it was an SS man who directed me into his room and told me to sit down. Then he said: 'We know that you could tell us more than you want to.' He stood up, picked up a pencil that he sharpened on the edge of a wastepaper basket, and continued his little speech: 'I won't make it difficult for you; come here.' He asked me to step to his desk, showed me several typewritten pages and let me read them. It was a list of all the traveling servants in Germany, with my name at the bottom. I read the names of the congregations we had visited, as well as the names of the brothers there. In black and white I read how many pieces of literature, phonographs and records we had ordered. Also contributions and other monies we had turned in were listed. I could hardly believe it. Here our entire underground organization lay in the hands of the Gestapo. Truly I needed a few minutes before I could completely grasp the situation. Where had the Gestapo been able to get ahold of these records? I asked myself. Had my own activity not been accurately listed, I would have doubted the report's veracity. The Dresden SS-Gestapo man, Bauch, who was conducting the hearing, gave me time to collect my thoughts. I'm afraid I must have had a rather stupid look on my face when I sat back down. He then said, 'Now, really, there is no reason to remain silent.'

"For months the thought tormented me as to where the Gestapo could have got ahold of our records. Later I found out that all our orders, reports and monies that we had turned in had been carefully kept track of in a file and kept in Berlin. Later this was found and confiscated by the Gestapo."

## **BOLD ACTIVITY CONFOUNDS POLICE**

The carefully planned convention for Lucerne from September 4 to 7, 1936, suddenly took on a new aspect as a result of the mass arrests that had taken place two weeks before. Perhaps the convention, about which the Gestapo also had information, determined the date for their campaign against us. At least they did everything they could to make it impossible for the German brothers to attend. This can be seen from a confidential circular of the Secret State Police dated August 21, 1936, which says as regards the brothers traveling to the convention: "Such persons are to be prevented from leaving the country. The passport is to be confiscated in such cases."

Actually, of the more than a thousand persons who had planned on taking the

trip, only some three hundred were able to do so. But most of these had to cross the border illegally and many were arrested upon their return.

Brother Rutherford naturally took advantage of the opportunity to speak to the servants from Germany who were present about their problems. He was especially interested in how to care for the brothers spiritually. Heinrich Dwenger was present and reports concerning the further discussion:

“The regional service directors were now called upon to make suggestions. They recommended that Brother Rutherford send me back to Germany. They had asked me to make the suggestion myself, but I had told them that I could not do so since I had been sent to Prague and could not say that I wanted to return to Germany. It would appear as though I were dissatisfied with my assignment. So it was that, for the time being, Brother Frost was appointed to take over the responsibility. Then Brother Rutherford asked: ‘What happens if you are arrested?’ In the case of Brother Frost’s arrest, Brother Dietschi was recommended by the brothers to take over.”

A resolution was adopted and about two to three thousand copies were sent to Hitler and his government offices in Germany. An additional copy was sent to the pope in Rome. Confirmation of delivery to both the Vatican in Rome and to the Reichs Chancellory in Berlin was received by Franz Zürcher from Bern, who, at the direction of the convention, had sent the resolutions on September 9, 1936. The resolution, which was some three and a half typewritten pages long, included the following thoughts:

“We raise strong objections to the cruel treatment of Jehovah’s witnesses by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy and their allies in Germany as well as in all other parts of the world, but we leave the outcome of the matter completely in the hands of the Lord, our God, who according to his Word will recompense in full. . . . We send heartfelt greetings to our persecuted brethren in Germany and ask them to remain courageous and to trust completely in the promises of the Almighty God, Jehovah, and Christ. . . .”

Arrangements were made to distribute the resolution adopted there to a large number of persons in Germany by means of a blitz campaign. Of the 300,000 copies printed in Bern, 200,000 were sent to Prague, from where they were taken

across the border near Zittau and other places in the Riesen mountains. The other 100,000 copies were to have been brought into Germany from the Netherlands, but, sad to say, they were confiscated in the Netherlands. So several regional service directors had to make their own for Berlin and northern Germany. The date for distribution was to be December 12, 1936, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

According to later reports, some 3,450 brothers and sisters took part. Each had twenty or, at the most, forty copies, and the idea was to get rid of them as quickly as possible in the territory one had been assigned. They were simply to be stuck in mailboxes or shoved under the doors.

One copy was left in each house; in large apartment houses, generally not more than three copies. Then those distributing the leaflets would hurry into a neighboring street and do the same there so that the copies would be distributed over as large an area as possible.

The effect on the opposers was devastating! Erich Frost, who was in close contact with the office in Prague during the eight months that he was in charge of the work in Germany, delivered the following report about this campaign during one of his trips to Prague:

“The distribution of the resolution proved to be a tremendous blow to the government and the Gestapo. It was delivered in one sudden burst of activity, on December 12, 1936. Everything was prepared down to the minutest detail, all faithful fellow workers were notified and each one was given his territory and his pack of resolutions twenty-four hours before the work was to begin at 5:00 o'clock p.m. sharp. Within an hour the police and the SA and SS men were racing around patrolling the streets in an attempt to catch some of the courageous distributors. But they caught only a very few, scarcely more than a dozen in the entire country. On the following Tuesday, however, officers appeared at many of the brothers' homes and accused them point-blank of having participated in the distribution work. Our brothers, of course, knew nothing about it, and very few arrests were made.

“Now, according to the press, there is a feeling not only of horrified anger because of our boldness, but also of increased fear. They are completely amazed that after four years of terror by Hitler's government it is still possible to carry out such a



campaign in such secrecy and on such a wide scale. And, above all, they are afraid of the populace. Many complained to the police, but when the police officers and other uniformed officials went to the homes and asked the inhabitants whether they had received such a leaflet or not, they denied it. This is because, in fact, only two or, at the most, three families in each house received such a resolution. The police did not know that, of course, but assumed that one was left at every door.

“So they feel the populace got our resolution but for certain reasons has refused to admit it under questioning by the police, and this is causing them extreme confusion and fear.”

The Gestapo was sorely disappointed, for they thought they had completely crushed our activity with their extensive campaign of August 28. And now the distribution of our resolution, which they considered to have been even more extensive than it, in reality, was! It was an undeniable fact that the enemy had succeeded in making serious breaches in the ranks of God's people, but they never succeeded in bringing the work to a complete standstill. The brothers continued to carry out their preaching commission, as can be seen from the regional service directors' report compiled for Brother Rutherford, covering the period from October 1 to December 1, 1936. The results were as follows: (all figures are approximate) 3,600 workers, 21,521 hours, 300 Bibles, 9,624 books and 19,304 booklets. This compared favorably with the last monthly report before the wave of arrests (May 16 to June 15): 5,930 workers, 38,255 hours, 962 Bibles, 17,260 books and 52,740 booklets.

## **EXPOSÉ BY AN “OPEN LETTER”**

At practically every hearing and trial held after the resolution was distributed on December 12, 1936, mention was made of it. Officials made it even more difficult for many of our brothers because, they claimed, these statements were untrue and we could offer no proofs for our claims. The brothers in charge, therefore, suggested to Brother Rutherford that an “open letter” be distributed in a “blitz campaign” such as had been conducted with the resolution itself. It would present the Gestapo with an answer proving their claims untrue. Brother Rutherford agreed and asked Brother Harbeck in Switzerland to write the “open letter,” since he had access to all the material gathered up until 1936 about the persecution.

The following paragraph quoted therefrom clearly shows the kind of unsparing argumentation the brothers used in answering their enemy publicly:

“Christian patience and shame have held us back long enough from calling the public’s attention, both in Germany and elsewhere, to these outrages. We have in our possession a crushing amount of documentation showing that the above-mentioned cruel mistreatment of Jehovah’s witnesses has taken place. Especially prominent in responsibility for such mistreatment have been a certain Theiss from Dortmund and Tennhoff and Heimann from the Secret Police in Gelsenkirchen and Bochum. They have not shrunk back from mistreating women with horsewhips and rubber clubs. Theiss from Dortmund and a man from the State Police in Hamm are especially noted for their sadistic cruelty in the mistreatment of Christian women. We are in possession of names and details of some eighteen cases where Jehovah’s witnesses have been violently killed. At the beginning of October 1936, for example, one of Jehovah’s witnesses named Peter Heinen, Neuhüller Street, Gelsenkirchen, Westfalen, was beaten to death by officials of the Secret Police in the Gelsenkirchen city hall. This tragic incident was reported to Reich’s Chancellor Adolf Hitler. Copies were also sent to Reich’s Minister Rudolf Hess and the chief of the Secret Police, Himmler.”

After the “open letter” had been finished, the entire text was written on aluminum stencils in Bern and sent to Prague. From time to time Ilse Unterdörfer, who was working closely with Brother Frost in the underground activity, was instructed by him to take reports and to pick up information there. On one of these trips to Prague, Sister Unterdörfer was given the stencils with which the “open letter” was to be printed on a Rotaprint-mimeograph machine that had just been purchased. On March 20, 1937, Sister Unterdörfer arrived in Berlin with her precious package.

“I accepted the package,” Brother Frost reports, “and then passed this ‘dangerous’ material on to another sister who saw to it that it was put in a safe place. That night I and Sister Unterdörfer, who had brought these valuable stencils, were both arrested at the place where we were staying. As hard as it was for us to accept the fact that we had lost our freedom for the remainder of the Nazi dictatorship, it still made us happy to know that we had ensured the safety of the new pamphlet campaign.”

But Brother Frost was mistaken. While being transported to prison he discovered

the Rotaprint-mimeograph machine right next to him in the police car. The Gestapo had found it during one of their searches. Besides, the stencils, which could not be used on any other machine, had apparently disappeared and were never found again.

Ida Strauss, to whom Brother Frost had given the stencils and who was well acquainted with the details of the campaign, thought likewise. "I had the aluminum stencils in my bag," she recalls, "and was taking them to the place where the machine was located. It was late at night and dark; the owner of the house, an interested person, stood on the stairs and called: 'Go away immediately, get yourself into safety. The Gestapo has confiscated the machine, have arrested the brothers and up until just a little while ago were waiting for you, but then the agents finally gave up.' What would happen now? During the next few days I discovered that many brothers had been arrested that night and I found no one among the brothers who had any connection with the organization."

I now began looking for a brother and several sisters fearless enough to dedicate themselves further to the interests of Jehovah's work. I knew that I was on the Gestapo's blacklist and that I had to reckon with being arrested at any time. When it did happen I was happy that the interests of the work were in faithful hands."

As far as the stencils for the "open letter" were concerned, Sister Strauss was also mistaken. The stencils could no longer be used, since the machine had been confiscated and another one was not available.

Now that Brother Frost had been arrested, Heinrich Dietschi took charge of the work, as had been decided upon in Lucerne at the discussion with Brother Rutherford. His first objective was to get out this "open letter." He, therefore, got in touch with Brother Strohmeyer in Lemgo. Both Brother Strohmeyer and Brother Kluckhuhn had just been released from prison after serving six months for printing the *1936 Yearbook*. But Brother Strohmeyer agreed to help out.

The problem was to get stencils from Switzerland again. This time we got cardboard mats, which first of all had to be stereotyped by the brothers so that they could make the plates for the press. Brother Dietschi had obtained the mats from Switzerland after 200,000 copies of the "open letter" had been printed there, but attempts to get them across the border into Germany had failed.

After the matter of printing had been settled, it was decided that the “open letter” was to be distributed in a “blitz campaign” to be held on June 20, 1937. Sister Elfriede Löhr reports: “Brother Dietschi organized the campaign. We were all courageous, everything had been wonderfully arranged and each region had sufficient letters. I picked up a large suitcase of them at the train station for the territory around Breslau and took them to the brothers in Liegnitz. I also had my own, which at the appointed time I distributed like all the other brothers.”

The distribution of the “open letter” must have struck the Gestapo unawares, because they had boasted for months that they had completely destroyed the organization. This only increased their excitement. It was as though someone had suddenly stirred up an anthill. As though in a frenzy with no clear goal before them, they ran around in the greatest of confusion, especially persons like Theiss in Dortmund.

But Theiss’ time of triumph had also reached its end. Since Theiss believed he should show no mercy in his treatment of Jehovah’s witnesses, he called for a search to be made one day of a house owned by a former brother by the name of Wunsch, who, in the meantime, however, had turned away from the truth and was serving as a sergeant major in Hitler’s air force. When Wunsch came home, his wife told him that the house had been searched. He immediately went to Theiss in Dortmund and asked him why he had done this. Startled to see a sergeant major in the air force standing before him, Theiss stammered: “Are you with the Bible Students?” Replied Wunsch: “I heard some of their talks, but I went everywhere I could hear something.” Now Mrs. Theiss interrupted. Excited, Theiss now broke in and said: “If I had only known, I would never have started trying to destroy the Bible Students. It can drive a person crazy. You think you’ve imprisoned one of the beasts and suddenly there are ten others rushing forth. I am sorry that I ever started the whole thing.”

It is not to be supposed that the conscience of this agent of the Devil ever settled down. To the contrary, the book *Kreuzzug gegen das Christentum* (Crusade Against Christianity) under the subtitle “You have won, Galilean!” concluded by saying:

“We hear that Theiss from Dortmund, who has repeatedly been mentioned, has for some time now been experiencing frightful pangs of conscience because of his criminal acts and that the demons are driving him slowly to insanity. Several

months ago he boasted of having 'broken to pieces' 150 of Jehovah's witnesses. He it was who defiantly said: 'Jehovah, I pronounce upon you everlasting scorn; long live the king of Babylon.'"

Now, however, he has looked these people up, has promised not to torment them anymore and pleads with them to tell him what he must do to escape the threatening punishment and to rid himself of the terrible mental torment he is suffering. He says that he had received the 'command to mistreat from above' and he now wants to stop, because new Jehovah's witnesses keep popping up all the time. Like Judas after he had betrayed the Master to the enemy, Theiss is looking for repentance and cannot find it. Even though few, yet there are cases where Gestapo agents and other party members have been so shaken by the steadfastness of Jehovah's witnesses that they have seen the error of their ways and have quit their jobs."

The distribution of the "open letter" caused the Gestapo great anxiety, and right afterward they laid down a dragnet. After only a matter of a few days a clue led them directly to Lemgo and Brothers Strohmeyer and Kluckhuhn who had printed the "open letter." They were able to prove that they had printed at least 69,000 copies. Both were sentenced to three years' imprisonment, and after they had served their time the Gestapo took them into protective custody, calling them "incorrigible."

Since the majority of the regional service directors had been arrested, sisters were called on to fill the breaches and maintain contact between Brother Dietschi and the congregations. One of these was Elfriede Löhr, who tried to get in touch with Brother Dietschi after Brother Frost and Sister Unterdörfer had been arrested. She traveled to Württemberg and, after searching, found Brother Dietschi in Stuttgart. He took her along to acquaint her with the various methods of maintaining contact with the brothers. Extensive preparations were also made for a transportable radio transmitter to be built in the Netherlands and put into operation sometime in the fall of 1937. The Gestapo had already got wind of this and were furious with Brother Dietschi, whose name they knew but who proved to be just as elusive as Brother Wandres.

It must have been about this same time that Sister Dietschi was arrested by the Gestapo and taken to the infamous "Steinwache" in Dortmund. They tried to force

her to tell where her husband was hiding, but she refused to talk. She was so badly mistreated that one of her legs was thereafter shorter than the other. Besides that, she had to be completely wrapped in bandages soaked in alcohol for several weeks after her release.

## **AFTERMATHS OF THE 1937 PARIS CONVENTION**

The 1937 convention in Paris, like the one the year before in Lucerne, was to be attended by Brother Rutherford. This time there were only a few brothers who were able to go from Germany. The enemy had created large gaps in the ranks of the brothers. Brother Riffel, one of the few able to attend, later told that in Lörrach and its vicinity alone forty brothers and sisters had been imprisoned, ten of whom had been hanged, gassed or shot, or had starved to death or died due to the results of the concentration camp “medical experiments.”

Another resolution was adopted at Paris, once again setting out our clear and unbreakable position as regards Jehovah and his kingdom under the rulership of Jesus Christ and openly calling attention to the brutal persecution in Germany, warning those responsible of God’s righteous judgment.

During the two-week absence of Germany’s last regional service director, things had been taking place. Sister Löhr, who was generally present at the weekly meetings held by Brother Dietschi with some fifteen brothers and sisters for discussion of service problems, had been arrested. It happened like this:

Since the meetings in most cases began about 9:00 in the morning and often lasted until 5:00 o’clock in the afternoon, the brothers and sisters had asked if they could not eat their noon meal together. Sister Löhr had been invited to do the cooking. For reasons of safety, the brothers changed the meeting place from week to week, thereby making it necessary to transfer from one place to the next the large stew pot used in preparing the meal. Whether the Gestapo found out from recently arrested brothers or in some other way, no one knows, but they did find out where the last meeting before the Paris convention had been held. The Gestapo kept this apartment under observation, and when Sister Löhr came to pick up the stew pot some three or four days before the next meeting was to be held, she was followed by the Gestapo to the new meeting place and promptly arrested. The Gestapo soon realized that they had not only found the new meeting



place but also Brother Dietschi's secret hiding place. After the Paris convention he returned directly to Berlin and, without checking for any possible danger, went to the apartment. Brother Dietschi fell into the trap and was arrested on the spot. Naturally, the meetings with the now even smaller group of traveling servants had to be changed as to time and place.

Brother Dietschi had served untiringly for many years in the underground activity and had not shrunk back in the face of danger. He was sentenced to four years, but, unlike the majority of his brothers, was not put into a concentration camp after he had served his time.

In 1945, when the work began to be reorganized, he was one of the first to begin serving the congregations as a "servant to the brethren." But, sadly, years later he began developing his own theories and turned away from Jehovah's organization.

But let us return to 1937. After dangerous gaps in the ranks of our brothers had once again been created, Brother Wandres tried to close these up, at least temporarily, so as to ensure the brothers their spiritual food. After Brother Franke's arrest he had taken over his territory, but now he felt responsible for the other unoccupied territories as well, so he asked Sister Auguste Schneider from Bad Kreuznach to deliver spiritual food to the brothers in Bad Kreuznach, Mannheim, Kaiserslautern, Ludwigshafen, Baden-Baden and the entire Saar territory. Like all the brothers who had to travel at this extremely difficult time, she was given another name; from now on she was "Paula."

Brother Wandres, realizing that the enemy had been especially furious in Saxony, asked Hermann Emter from Freiburg to care for this territory. On September 3, both of them traveled to Dresden. Although Brother Wandres had never been there before, the Gestapo were waiting for them. A manhunt that had lasted for three years was over!

Toward the middle of September, in harmony with arrangements made with Brother Wandres, unsuspecting "Paula" was waiting at the railroad station in Bingen with two large suitcases full of literature. Suddenly a gentleman approached her and said: "Good day, Paula! Albert is not coming and you will have to go along with me!" It was useless trying to resist, for the stranger was a Gestapo agent. He added: "You need not wait for Albert; we have already arrested

him and have taken all his money. . . . Mr. Wandres said that you would be here with two large suitcases and that you are Paula!" It is a mystery until this day where the Gestapo got this information. But this was a popular method of the Gestapo, that is, claiming that certain brothers had said certain things so as to break down the confidence among the brothers, causing them to withdraw from such "traitors."

## **A PLAN OF PERPETUAL DETENTION**

With this series of arrests an important era ended for the German brothers. The period of well-organized activity was over. Everything now pointed to the start of a new phase in the fighting. The Gestapo's goal was now: Each individual courageous enough to hold to Jehovah must be destroyed, thereby destroying the organization.

According to a circular released by the Düsseldorfer Gestapo on May 12, 1937, Bible Students were henceforth to be put into concentration camps even in cases where no judicial warrant for arrest existed but simply on the grounds of suspicion. Similar notices were released throughout Germany. Besides, the Bible Students were to be automatically placed in concentration camps after serving their court-appointed terms of imprisonment. This decision was made more severe and extended in April of 1939. From now on, only those willing to sign a declaration disassociating themselves from Jehovah and his organization were to be freed. Many brothers were not even given an opportunity to decide whether to sign the declaration.

When Heinrich Kaufmann from Essen had served his prison sentence and had put on his civilian clothes he was simply told by a criminal agent that he was being taken into protective custody. First they took him to his home, however, which he had not seen for a year and a half, and asked him: "Do you want to rescind your faith and follow Hitler?" At the same time they showed him his house keys and a package of twenty pounds of foodstuffs, promising him that his wife would also be returned from the Ravensbrück concentration camp. Brother Kaufmann rejected the offer.

At times attempts were made to trick the brothers, as Ernst Wiesner reports. A short time before he was to be released he had a paper placed before him. The

statement was so general in nature that, after reading it through carefully, he decided he could sign it. But now came the trick. Brother Wiesner was to put his signature at the bottom of the page, but the bottom half of the page was empty. There was no doubt that the Gestapo would later add other things that Brother Wiesner would not have been able to sign with a good conscience. But he realized at once what they were up to and, before they could stop him, he signed his name directly underneath the typewritten text. The result was that, despite his signature, he was not released, but was informed by the secret police three weeks before his sentence was over that he was at once being transferred to a concentration camp.

## THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS—A YAWNING ABYSS

In the *Vierteljahresheft für Zeitgeschichte* (History Quarterly) Hans Rothfels writes in his second pamphlet for 1962: "Being put into concentration camps was for the Earnest Bible Students the last and the most difficult phase of their period of suffering under the National Socialists. . . ."

Consoling for the majority was the fact that there were already incarcerated faithful brothers who were hardened by the heat of persecution. Being with them and experiencing their loving care was comforting and quickened the hearts of each new "entry."

But whenever our brothers' steadfastness was seen and reported to the government, its only thought was of how it could increase their sufferings. So it was that for a time Jehovah's witnesses were, as a matter of routine, given twenty-five stripes with a steel whip, besides the many other brutal means of torture, when they arrived at the camps. Their slave labor began at 4:30 in the morning, when the camp bell sounded to wake everyone up. Shortly thereafter a tumult broke forth: making the beds, washing, drinking coffee, taking roll call—and all of this on the double. No one was allowed to do anything at a normal pace. They marched to roll call, then stepped out to join the various work crews. What now followed was a real drama: carrying gravel, sand, stones, poles, entire sections of barracks, and this all day—all on the double. The taskmasters, who yelled at the prisoners without letup and forced them to the limits of endurance, were the worst that Hitler could offer.

Remembering that Jesus suffered similar things was comforting and encouraging and gave them strength to persevere under the inhuman treatment.

For the sake of variety, “punishment exercises” were sometimes held for no particular reason. The brothers were often forced to go without food. It could be a real test when, instead of being able to sit down to eat a meal, a tired brother was forced to stand at attention another four or five hours in the courtyard, and this only because one of the brothers had a button missing from his jacket or for some other insignificant infraction of the rules.

Finally they were permitted to go to sleep, if hunger would allow it. But the nights were not always just for sleeping. Often one, or sometimes several, of the infamous “block leaders” would show up in the middle of the night to terrorize the prisoners. These episodes would sometimes be introduced by revolver shots into the air or into the barracks rafters. Then the inmates would be forced to run around the barracks, or, at times, even to climb over them, in their night shirts, this as long as the “block leaders” desired. It is understandable that the older brothers suffered the most under such treatment, and it cost many of them their lives.

In March 1938 an absolute correspondence ban was enforced for Jehovah's witnesses in concentration camps. This lasted for nine months, during which time the brothers could neither get in touch with their relatives nor vice versa. Even after this ban was rescinded, the limitation that each of Jehovah's witnesses might write his relatives only five lines a month stayed in effect for between three and a half and four years—in some camps even longer. The text was prepared and read: “Your letter has been received; thank you very much. I am well, am healthy and hearty. . . .” But there are cases where the death notification arrived before the letter that read: “I am well, am healthy and hearty.” On the empty space on the letter the following text was stamped: “The prisoner remains, as before, a stubborn Bible Student and refuses to reject the Bible Students' false teachings. For this reason the usual privileges of correspondence have been denied him.”

## **“FOURSQUARE” MEETS HIS MATCH**

Life in a concentration camp was full of its daily anxieties, often caused by the camp commander himself. For a time the commander in Sachsenhausen was a

man by the name of Baranowsky, and, because of his husky build, the prisoners soon nicknamed him “Foursquare.”

He generally met each new arrival of prisoners himself and delivered his “welcoming speech” to them. It usually started with the words: ‘I am the camp commander and am called “Foursquare.” Now listen, all of you! You can get anything you want from me—a shot in the head, a shot in the chest, a shot in the stomach! You can cut your throats if you want to or rip open your arteries! You can run into the electric fence if you’d like. Just remember that my boys are good shots! They will send you right straight to heaven!’ He never missed an opportunity to poke fun at Jehovah or his holy name.

But at the beginning of the ban on Jehovah’s witnesses a young man about twenty-three years old from Dinslaken had learned the truth. His name was August Dickmann. Though he had not yet been baptized, the Gestapo had arrested him and brought him to trial. After serving his sentence he had let the Gestapo pressure him into signing the “declaration,” no doubt in the hope that this would free him from further persecution. Despite this, he was put into Sachsenhausen in October of 1937 immediately after serving his prison term. The brothers there used every opportunity to carry on joyful and encouraging discussions with one another, and now, being among them, he realized that he had compromised with the enemy due to weakness. He repented and asked to have the statement he had signed annulled.

In the meantime his fleshly brother Heinrich had also been delivered into the Sachsenhausen camp. August told him about having signed the statement but that he had, in the meantime, demanded that it be annulled.

The next few weeks passed rapidly. When the second world war broke out in the latter half of 1939, the camp commander, Baranowsky, began to carry out his plans. He saw his opportunity when August Dickmann’s wife sent her husband his military induction slip, which had been sent to their home in Dinslaken. Three days after the war broke out, Dickmann was ordered to the “political department.” Before roll call was taken, Heinrich, whom August had notified of this new development, warned him that now that war had broken out he should be prepared for anything. He should be completely sure of what he wanted to do. August answered: “They can do what they want to with me. I will not sign and will

not compromise again.”

The hearing was held that afternoon, but August did not return to the brothers. As it later turned out, he had not only refused to sign the military induction slip but had given a fine witness. He was placed in solitary confinement in the dungeon while the camp commander notified Himmler of the case, asking permission to execute Dickmann publicly in the presence of the brothers and the entire camp. He was convinced that a large number of Jehovah's witnesses would sign if actually faced with death. The majority until now had refused to do so, but only threats had been made. Himmler answered by return mail that Dickmann was sentenced to death and should be executed. Now the way was open for “Foursquare” to put on his ‘big show.’

It was a Friday. There was an eerie quiet hanging over the entire camp when suddenly a command group came and, in a short time, set up a firing range in the courtyard. This, of course, led to all sorts of rumors. Excitement grew even more intense when orders were given to quit work an hour earlier than usual. Paul Buder still remembers how, when their work crew was marching back, an SS man laughingly told him: “Today is Ascension Day! One of you will be going to heaven today.”

When the crew to which Heinrich Dickmann was assigned entered, the camp elder approached him and asked if he knew what was going on. When he replied he did not, he was told that his brother August was to be shot.

But there was no time for long discussions. Commands were issued for all the prisoners to march onto the field. Jehovah's witnesses were placed directly in front of where the firing squad would stand. All eyes were fixed on this point. The SS guards marched in; security precautions were four times what they normally were. The cover was withdrawn from the guns and munition was placed in the weapons for immediate use. SS men were perched on the high wall looking forward to what was going to take place—so many of them that a person felt that the entire group had been commanded to be present for this bloody spectacle. The main gate was constructed of strong round iron bars and the sensation-loving SS men were standing and hanging on it like a bunch of grapes. Some of them had even climbed up on the crossbars so as to be able to see better. Their eyes were full, not only of curiosity, but also of bloodthirstiness. Some of the faces revealed a certain



horror, for they all knew what would soon be taking place.

Accompanied by several ranking SS officers, August was led in, his hands tied in front of him. Everyone was impressed by his calmness and composure, like someone who had already won the battle. Approximately six hundred brothers were present, his fleshly brother Heinrich standing only a few meters away.

Suddenly there was a crackling in the loudspeakers as the microphones were turned on. One could hear "Foursquare's" voice: "Prisoners, listen!" There was immediate silence. There was just the slightly asthmatic breathing of this monster as he continued:

"The prisoner August Dickmann from Dinslaken, born on January 7, 1910, refuses to perform military service, claiming he is a 'citizen of God's kingdom.' He has said: He who sheds human blood will have his blood shed. He has placed himself outside of society and in accordance with instructions from SS leader Himmler he is to be executed."

While a deathly silence reigned over the entire courtyard, "Foursquare" continued: "I notified Dickmann an hour ago that his miserable life would be blotted out at 6:00 o'clock."

One of the officials approached and asked if the prisoner should once again be asked if he had changed his mind and was willing to sign the draft papers, whereupon "Foursquare" answered: "It would be useless." Turning to Dickmann, he commanded: "Turn around, you swine," and then gave the command to shoot. At that, Dickmann was shot from behind by three SS men. A ranking SS leader later walked over and shot him in the head, sending blood streaming down his cheek. After a lower-ranking SS man had taken off his handcuffs, four brothers were instructed to put him in a black box and to carry him into the ward.

Whereas all the other prisoners were now permitted to break ranks and to go to their barracks, Jehovah's witnesses had to remain. Now was the time for "Foursquare" to make good his claim. With great emphasis he asked who was now ready to sign the statement—not only a rejection of one's faith, but also indicating one's willingness to become a soldier. No one responded. Then two stepped forward! But not to sign the statement. They asked that the signature that both of

them had given approximately a year before be annulled!

This was too much for “Foursquare.” Furious, he left the courtyard. As can be expected, the brothers had a very bad time of it that evening and during the next few days. But they remained steadfast.

Dickmann’s execution was announced several times over the radio during the next few days, apparently in the hope of intimidating other Witnesses still free.

Three days later his brother Heinrich was called to the “political department.” Two high-ranking Gestapo agents had come from Berlin to find out what effect his brother’s execution had had upon him. According to his own report, the following conversation took place:

“‘Did you see how your brother was shot?’ My answer was: ‘I did.’ ‘What did you learn from this?’ ‘I am and I shall remain one of Jehovah’s witnesses.’ ‘Then you will be the next one to be shot.’ I was able to answer several Bible questions, until finally an agent shouted: ‘I don’t want to know what is written, I want to know what you think.’ And while he tried to show me the necessity of defending the fatherland, he kept throwing in sentences like: ‘You will be the next one to be shot . . . the next head to roll . . . the next one to fall.’ Until the other agent said: ‘It is useless. Here, finish up the records.’”

The statement was once again placed before Brother Dickmann for signing. He refused, saying: “If I would recognize the state and government by signing this I would be signifying agreement with my brother’s execution. This I cannot do.” The answer: “Then you can start figuring out how much longer you will be alive.”

But what happened to “Foursquare,” who had mocked and challenged Jehovah as few humans ever had? He was seen in the camp only a few times after that, and then not at all. The prisoners found out, however, that shortly after August Dickmann’s execution, he was struck with a terrible illness. He died five months later without ever having an opportunity of mocking Jehovah or his witnesses again. “I have taken up a fight with Jehovah. We will see who is the stronger, I or Jehovah,” “Foursquare” had said on March 20, 1938, when he placed the brothers in the “isolation crew.” The battle had been decided. “Foursquare” had lost. And whereas our brothers were released from the “isolation crew” a few months later,

and, in certain instances, received a certain amount of relief, the rumor continued to circulate throughout the camp that “Foursquare” was seriously ill and that when officers visited him at his sickbed he would whimper: “The Bible Students are praying me to death, because I let their man be shot!” It is also a fact that after he had died, his daughter, when asked the cause of her father’s death, would always answer: “The Bible Students prayed my father to death.”

## **DACHAU**

Brother Friedrich Frey from Röt reports about the treatment meted out in the “isolation group” at Dachau: “One can scarcely describe the hunger, the cold, the torments. An officer kicked me in the stomach with his boots once, bringing on a serious ailment. Another time the bridge of my nose was so deformed by repeated beatings that to this day I have difficulty breathing. Once an SS man caught me eating a couple of dry crumbs of bread during working hours to still my hunger. He kicked me in the stomach with his boot and knocked me to the ground. As further punishment I was hung on a three-meter-high pole with my arms chained behind me. This abnormal position of the body and its weight caused a blockage in the blood circulation and excruciating pain. An SS man grabbed both of my legs and swung them back and forth, crying, ‘Are you still one of Jehovah’s witnesses?’ But I was unable to answer because the sweat of death was already breaking out on my forehead. I have a nervous twitching from this even until this day. I could not help but think of the last few hours that our Lord and Master spent with his hands and feet run through with nails.”

In Dachau, shortly before “Christmas,” a large Christmas tree was put up and decorated with electric candles and other forms of decoration. The camp’s 45,000 prisoners, including over a hundred of Jehovah’s witnesses, hoped that they would be able to enjoy a few days of peace. But what happened? At 8:00 o’clock on Christmas Eve when all prisoners were in their barracks, the camp sirens suddenly began to wail; the prisoners were to march out onto the courtyard as fast as possible. One could hear the SS band playing. In marched five companies of fully equipped SS troops. The camp commander, accompanied by SS officers, delivered a short speech telling the prisoners that they wanted to celebrate Christmas with them this evening in their own particular way. He then pulled a list of names from his briefcase and for almost an hour read the names of prisoners who had been

recommended for punishment during the last few weeks. The block was brought out and set up and the first prisoner was strapped down upon it. Afterward two SS men equipped with a steel whip took their places to the right and to the left of the block and began to beat the prisoner while the band played “Silent Night”; all the prisoners were expected to sing along. At the same time the prisoner being given the twenty-five strokes was forced to count these out in a loud voice. Each time a new prisoner was strapped down to the block two new SS men stepped forward to administer the punishment. Truly a worthy way for a “Christian nation” to celebrate Christmas.

In the face of such treatment our brothers needed strong faith, a faith made strong by a careful study of God’s Word. How a failure to study can be dangerous and can leave a person unprepared for such tests, Helmut Knöller experienced. Let him tell his own experience:

“My first days in Dachau were very difficult. At twenty, I was the youngest of the new arrivals. I was assigned to a special crew that had to work even on Sundays. My overseer was especially hard on me. I had to do the most difficult jobs, to which I was not accustomed, on the double. I collapsed repeatedly but was revived each time by being placed in the basement in water up to my hips and then having water poured over my head.

“I was driven to almost complete physical exhaustion. This went on day after day and I was near the point of despair, knowing that it could go on for weeks, yes, even months. . . . But the difficulties became so great that I finally went to the camp leaders and signed the declaration indicating that I no longer had anything to do with the International Bible Students. That I signed this was a direct result of insufficient study on my part at home. My parents had studied too little themselves and we children had received only faulty instruction from them. . . . I had been told that we could go ahead and sign such a declaration, since, first of all, nothing was said about Jehovah’s witnesses in it, but only about the Bible Students, and, secondly, it was not wrong to deceive the enemy if this would result in our being set free so that we might better serve Jehovah outside.” It was only later while in Sachsenhausen that mature brothers helped him to appreciate the meaning of Christian integrity and built up his faith.

## **MAUTHAUSEN**

Even though many persons were gassed or cruelly killed at Dachau, yet Mauthausen was a regular destruction camp. The camp commander, Ziereis, repeatedly said he was only interested in seeing death certificates. In fact, within a period of six years 210,000 men were cremated in the two modern crematories they had there, an average of a hundred a day.

When prisoners were made to work at all, it was generally in the quarry. A steep cliff located there was called the “wall of parachutists” by the inhuman SS. Hundreds of prisoners were shoved over this cliff and then lay motionless below. They were either killed by the fall or drowned in a ditch filled with rainwater. Many despondent prisoners even jumped into the abyss of their own will.

Another attraction was the so-called “stairs of death.” A pile of 186 loose blocks of various height piled on top of one another was called a stairway. After the prisoners had lugged heavy stones on their shoulders up to the top, the SS men enjoyed starting mass slides by kicking them or striking them with the butt end of their rifles, thereby knocking them over backward down the “stairs.” This resulted in many deaths, the number of dead increased by the falling rocks from above. Valentin Steinbach from Frankfurt recalls that groups of 120 men put together in the morning often returned in the evening with only some 20 still alive.

## **CONCENTRATION CAMPS FOR WOMEN**

Concentration camps were set up not only for men but also for women. One of these went into operation as early as 1935 in Moringen near Hannover. When the pressure on Jehovah's witnesses became more severe in 1937, the camp in Moringen began to be evacuated. In December some 600 prisoners, including a number of sisters, were taken to the Lichtenburg camp. Since efforts to talk our sisters into changing from their steadfast course failed, a “penal crew” was formed. Their overseers gave them very little to eat and constantly tried to find reasons for meting out punishment. The camp commander told them: ‘If you want to stay alive, then come to me and sign.’

One method used in an attempt to get our sisters to break their integrity is reported upon by Ilse Unterdörfer: “One day Sister Elisabeth Lange from Chemnitz was called to the director. She resolutely refused to sign the declaration, whereupon she was taken to a cell located in the basement of this old castle. As

anyone acquainted with old castles and their dungeons can imagine, this was extremely trying. The cells were dark holes with a small barred window. The bed was of stone and most of the time a person was forced to lie upon this cold, hard 'bed' without even a straw sack. Sister Lange spent half a year in solitary confinement in this hole in the basement. Although she suffered physically, it did not shake her determination to remain faithful."

Another method that was employed to try to break the steadfastness of our sisters was hard physical labor. For this reason a number of sisters were taken to Ravensbrück. It was on May 15, 1939, that the first group arrived, closely followed by others. The camp soon grew to include 950 women, some 400 of them Jehovah's witnesses. All of them were called upon to do the most difficult construction and cleaning up work, jobs normally required only of men. The new camp commander, who was especially noted for his brutality, thought he would be able to wear the sisters down by making them perform hard physical labor.

Such treatment naturally resulted in many deaths. Then, too, complete groups were taken to Auschwitz, a camp which, like Mauthausen, was especially equipped for mass destruction. Women who were old, in poor health or did not meet up to the SS men's standards for women who could produce a "master race" were faced with death. Berta Maurer tells us what went on there:

"We were forced to stand naked in front of a commission which made its selection. Immediately thereafter, the first group left for Auschwitz. Among them were a number of sisters who had been deceived into thinking that they were being taken to a camp where they would have it easier, although everyone knew that Auschwitz was even more unbearable. Those making up the second group were told the same thing. Among this group were many weak and sickly sisters." Soon thereafter their relatives were notified of their deaths. In most cases 'circulatory ailments' was listed as the cause of death.

Another thing that could have presented a test for the sisters is reported on by Auguste Schneider from Bad Kreuznach:

"One day a prisoner came to me and said: 'Mrs. Schneider, I am leaving here!' I asked her where she was going and she answered: 'There are so many men here that a brothel is being set up for the prisoners. We were asked, and about twenty



to thirty women have volunteered. We are being given nice clothes and prettied up!' I asked her where it was going to be, and she answered, 'In the men's camp.'

"One can hardly describe what took place there. But one day an SS leader told me: 'Mrs. Schneider, you will have heard what is taking place in the men's camp. I just wanted to let you know that none of Jehovah's witnesses have taken part!'"

Ravensbrück became widely known as the most notorious of all the concentration camps for women. When the second world war broke out, the number of sisters there had risen to some five hundred.

One day several sisters were suddenly ordered from their cells and put to work shining up the entire building, since Himmler had indicated he would be coming for inspection. But the day passed and he failed to show up. Our sisters had already got ready for bed, that is to say, they had taken off their shoes, which served as pillows, but because of the cold they slept in their clothing. They lay down as close together as possible so as to keep warm. From time to time they would change positions so that everyone would be on the outside once, where it was naturally colder. Suddenly there were loud noises in the corridors and cell doors began to be opened. Our sisters now stood before the man who in Germany decided over life and death. Himmler examined the sisters critically, asked them some questions and was forced to the realization that they were unwilling to make any concessions.

That same evening after Himmler and his attendants had left, a large number of prisoners were called out and other prisoners could hear their screams. Himmler had introduced the "intensified" punishment also for women; they received twenty-five strokes with the steel whip on their naked buttocks.

One sister tells of the courage with which many faced their problems: "In my block there was a Jewish woman who had accepted the truth. One night she too was awakened. I heard her as she got up and I tried to give her a word of comfort. But she said: 'I know what is awaiting me. But I am happy to have learned of the wonderful hope of the resurrection. I am calmly awaiting death.' And courageously she walked out."

## **DIVISIONS ADD TO THE HARDSHIP**

Cut off from the brothers outside, those in the camps felt a great craving for spiritual food. New arrivals were questioned by the brothers to find out what had been published in *The Watchtower*. Sometimes the information was accurately conveyed, and sometimes it was not. There were also brothers who tried to use the Bible to set the date when they would be delivered, and, although the arguments were weak, some hopefully grasped at these “straws.”

During this time a brother who had an exceptional memory was put in Buchenwald. At first his ability to recall and to share with others the things he had learned was a source of encouragement to the brothers. But in time he became an idol, “the wonder of Buchenwald,” and his statements, even his personal opinion, were viewed as final. From December of 1937 until 1940 he delivered a talk every evening, about a thousand in all, and many of these were taken down in shorthand so that they could be mimeographed. Though there were many older brothers in the camp who were capable of giving discourses, this brother was the only one who did so. Any who were not in full agreement with him were referred to as “enemies of the Kingdom” and “Achan’s family,” to be avoided by the “faithful ones.” Almost four hundred brothers more or less willingly went along with this arrangement.

Those thus labeled “enemies” were also brothers who had been willing to risk their lives to promote Kingdom interests to the best of their abilities. They, too, had been put into the camp because of determination to prove their integrity, even to death. Some of them were not fully applying Bible principles, it is true. Yet when they sought to establish contact with the responsible ones so that they too could benefit from what spiritual food became available in Buchenwald, these viewed it as “beneath their dignity” to discuss matters.

Wilhelm Bathen from Dinslaken, who is still serving Jehovah, relates how he personally was affected: “When I realized that I too had been disfellowshipped I was so spiritually shaken and depressed that I asked myself how such a thing was possible. . . . I often got down on my knees and prayed to Jehovah that he should give me a sign. I asked myself if I were to blame for the situation and whether he too had disfellowshipped me. I had a Bible and I would read in it in the dim light and I found a great deal of comfort in the thought that this was coming upon me as a test, otherwise I already would have been destroyed, for this being cut off

from the brothers was a tremendous pain.”

Thus human imperfections and an exaggerated view of one's own importance, led to divisions among God's people, resulting in severe tests for some.

### **OVERREACHED BY CONCERN FOR “SURVIVAL”**

Some who were put into the camps, determined not to compromise, later allowed concern for “survival” to eclipse their love for Jehovah and for their brothers. If a person could attain to some responsible position in the camp organization, entrusted with oversight of some sphere of activity, he would no longer have to wear his strength down with hard labor. But this was dangerous. In many cases it required that he work closely with the SS, that he drive the prisoners to work at a faster pace and that he report prisoners—even his own brothers—for punishment.

A brother by the name of Martens found himself in such a position while in the Wewelsburg camp. At first he had oversight of 250 Bible Students. He constantly strove to be a very good “camp elder” in the eyes of the SS. In time, many political prisoners and others were added to the camp. Martens did not want to lose his position, so he had to champion the interests of the SS and employ their methods.

Before long he was forbidding the brothers to consider the daily text or to pray together. Soon he was frisking them and beating with a rubber hose those on whom a copy of the daily text was found. One morning, as several brothers were praying together, he jumped into the midst of them and disrupted the session, saying: “Don't you know the camp rules? Do you think I want trouble just because of you?” Thus much additional suffering was brought on a large number of faithful brothers by a very few who lost sight of their goal.

### **THE PROBLEM OF HUNGER**

After the second world war began available food was sent to the fronts. Meals in the concentration camps consisted mostly of a type of turnip that, generally, was used only for feeding animals. Everything was prepared with such a lack of love that the prisoners were often heard to say that even the swine would have refused to eat the food. But it was not a question of having appetizing food, it was simply a question of survival. Many starved to death. “My greatest test was hunger,”

Brother Kurt Hedel writes, and explains by saying: “I am about 6 foot 2 inches tall and normally weigh some 230 pounds. But in the winter of 1939/1940 I weighed only 90 pounds and even less. I was nothing more than skin and bones. Despite my size I was not given more to eat than those smaller than I was. I often dug my fists into my stomach for pain until a mature brother advised me to take my problem to Jehovah in prayer and to ask him to help me endure the pain. I soon realized what a help prayer proves to be in such situations.” Another brother recalls that he often put sand in his mouth to fight the pangs of hunger.

How comforting was the brotherly association in such situations. Yes, it was very touching to see brothers, themselves marked for death, give some of their scant bread rations to those having a harder time of it than they were. Often it was just crumbs that they secretly hid under the pillows of those who for some reason or another had not been given anything to eat and who had been forced to stand out in the courtyard in the fierce cold with hardly anything on. How soothing it was for those the enemy had almost “broken down” to hear from the mouth of a mature brother encouraging words trickling down like oil onto a wound and giving new strength at a time when they felt their situation to be unbearable! And how powerful united prayer proved to be! Frequently, evenings, when the barracks were locked up and everything was quiet in the dormitories, problems were unitedly presented to Jehovah in prayer. They were often matters that had to do with them all, but just as often with problems of individual brothers. Whenever Jehovah—as he did in so many cases—immediately brought about a change for the better, this was a cause for a united prayer of thanks on the next day. Up against a situation a person could not have mastered alone, the brothers realized once again that “we are never alone.”

## **WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE THAT COMPROMISED**

It is interesting that the SS, who often used the dirtiest tricks to try to get someone to sign the declaration, frequently turned against them once they had actually signed and harassed them more afterward than they had before. Karl Kirscht confirms this: “More than anyone else Jehovah’s witnesses were the victims of chicanery in the concentration camps. It was thought that in this way they could be persuaded to sign the declaration. We were repeatedly asked to do so. Some did sign, but, in most cases, they had to wait more than a year before they were

released. During this time they were often publicly reviled by the SS as being hypocrites and cowards and were forced to take a so-called 'honor walk' around their brothers before being permitted to leave the camp."

Wilhelm Röger recalls that a brother signed the declaration when his wife and daughter came to visit, but he did not tell the brothers about having done so. "Several weeks later he was informed he should get ready for release. (Such ones generally had to stand at the gate until their names were called.) This brother stood at the gate all day and was still standing there that evening, so he had to return to the brothers in the barracks. After the evening roll call, which was conducted by a much feared captain by the name of Knittler, this brother was sent to get a footstool from the barracks and then forced to stand on it in the courtyard in front of the brothers marching in. Knittler now directed attention to the brother and, giving us all a sharp look, said: 'Look at your coward; he has signed without telling any of you about it!' In actuality the SS would have liked for all of us to sign. But the respect which they secretly had for us was gone once someone did."

Sister Dietrichkeit remembers two sisters who signed the declaration. When they returned they told Sister Dietrichkeit they had signed because they were afraid they were going to starve to death. They did not hide the fact that the SS had asked them: "Now that you have denied your God, Jehovah, what God will you serve?" The two sisters were soon released, but when the Russians invaded the country both were rearrested for some reason or another and taken to prison by the Russians where they actually did starve to death. In another case a sister who signed was raped by the Russians during the last few days of the war and then murdered by them.

A large number of the brothers who signed the declaration were drafted into the military and taken to the front, where most of them lost their lives.

Even though there is proof enough that those brothers who signed thereby placed themselves outside of Jehovah's protection, it did not hold true in most cases that they were "traitors." Many had their signature annulled before their release, once understanding, mature brothers had helped them to realize what they had done. Repentantly asking Jehovah to give them another chance to prove their faithfulness, many of these, after the breakdown of Hitler's regime, spontaneously joined the publishers' ranks and began working as congregation publishers, in

time as pioneers, overseers, even as traveling overseers, promoting in an exemplary way the interests of Jehovah's kingdom. Many were comforted by the experience of Peter, who had denied his Lord and Master too, but had been taken back into his favor.—[Matt. 26:69-75; John 21:15-19](#).

## TREASON

Whereas some temporarily lost their spiritual balance due to the sly methods used or because of human weaknesses, there were others who turned traitor and caused their brothers much suffering.

Julius Riffel reports that in 1937/1938 “a Brother Hans Müller from Dresden came to the Bern Bethel and tried to get in touch with brothers in Germany, allegedly with the goal in mind of ‘rebuilding the underground organization in Germany after so many brothers had been arrested.’

“I naturally declared my willingness to cooperate, as did several other brothers. Sorry to say, we did not know at the time that this ‘Brother’ Müller was working with the Gestapo in Germany. Unsuspectingly we made plans in Bern and began our work. I was to take over Baden Württemberg. In February 1938 I crossed the border into Germany and tried to reorganize the activity by getting in touch with the brothers who were still free. Two weeks later I was arrested. . . . The Gestapo knew about our activity in all its details and this through this false brother who helped rebuild the underground organization, only to betray it to the Gestapo afterward. This ‘brother’ did the same thing a year later in the Netherlands and also in Czechoslovakia. . . .

“In 1939 I was taken by prison truck to Coblenz, where I was to testify at the trial of three sisters with whom I had worked underground in Stuttgart. There I myself heard a Gestapo agent tell a court official how they knew all the details about our work, things like cover addresses and aliases, as well as the structure of the organization. Once when we were waiting outside in the corridor this same Gestapo agent told me they would not have been able to get behind our activity so easy had it not been for the fact that we had good-for-nothings in our ranks. Sorry to say, I could not deny this. From time to time I was able to warn the brothers from prison about this traitorous ‘brother,’ but Brother Harbeck ignored the warning, simply being unable to believe it. According to my opinion, this



Müller was responsible for hundreds of brothers being thrown into prison.”

## THE STREAM CONTINUES TO FLOW

Even though the enemy repeatedly opened up new gaps in the ranks of God's people and decimated the number of those still free, there were always others who recognized the necessity of providing the brothers with spiritual food. This they did despite the danger to their lives. One of the brothers who rebuilt the *Watchtower* distribution system among the brothers, while Müller continued to do his dirty work in Dresden, was Ludwig Cyranek. He did this until he was arrested and sentenced to two years in prison. Then, just as soon as he had left the prison doors behind him, Brother Cyranek went right back to work.

Many sisters joyfully filled up the places left open by the arrests of the brothers, although they realized that in accordance with the more severe war laws they could lose their lives if they were caught. Among those used to distribute *The Watchtower*, for example, were Sister Neuffert in Holzgerlingen, Sister Pfisterer in Stuttgart and Sister Franke in Mainz. Brother Cyranek wrote these sisters letters containing harmless information, letters that the sisters ironed so that they could read the secret message he had written underneath in lemon juice, telling them where they should take *Watchtowers* and how many.

From time to time Brother Cyranek would go to Stuttgart, where Maria Hombach worked for him as secretary. He dictated reports to her about the work in Germany, which he would then send to Arthur Winkler in the Netherlands, who looked after Germany and Austria. Sister Hombach wrote these letters in lemon juice, too, so that important information would not fall into unauthorized hands.

That this underground activity functioned for at least a year can be attributed only to Jehovah's guidance. He often saw to it that his people were led in strange ways, that they might be supplied with spiritual food in due season. Müller soon felt the time opportune to betray this entire organizational ring to the Gestapo. Everyone involved was arrested within several days. At the trial in Dresden, Brother Cyranek was sentenced to death and the others received long prison terms. On July 3, 1941, just a few hours before his execution, he wrote his relatives the following letter:

“My dear brother, sister-in-law, parents, and all other brothers included,

“Fear God and attribute to him the honor! I must write you the painful news that when you receive this letter I no longer will be alive. Please do not be overly sad. Remember that it is a simple matter for Almighty God to raise me from the dead. Yes, he can do all things and if he permits me to drink this bitter cup, then it certainly serves a purpose. Know that it was my attempt to serve him in my weakness and I am completely convinced that he has been with me right up unto the end. I put myself into his keeping. My thoughts during these last few hours are with you, my dears. May your hearts not be dismayed, but, rather, maintain your composure, for it is much better than for you to know that I am suffering in prison, which would have been a continual worry for you. And now, my dear mother and father, may I thank you both for all the good things you have done for me. I can only stammer out a weak thank you. May Jehovah repay you for all you have done. My prayer is that he may protect and bless you, for his blessing alone makes rich. Dear Toni, I can only too well believe that you would have done everything possible to rescue me from the ‘lions’ den,’ but this in vain. I received notification tonight that the petition for clemency has been rejected and that my sentence will be carried out tomorrow morning. I have made no plea of any kind nor asked for mercy at the hands of man. I appreciate your good will, however, to help me and thank you as well as Luise from the bottom of my heart for all the good things that you have given me. Your lines of sympathy did me good. Many greetings to you all and may I send you all a kiss. I especially have a place in my heart for Karl. May God be with you until we meet again. I put my arms around you in departure. [signed] Ludwig Cyranek.”

Julius Engelhardt, who mimeographed *Watchtowers* with Sister Frey in Bruchsal, had worked closely with Brother Cyranek in the southern part of Germany. It was planned that in case of Brother Cyranek’s arrest he would continue the work. Sorry to say, Müller betrayed him to the Gestapo too, and they soon found his hiding place in his hometown of Karlsruhe. But Brother Engelhardt had always encouraged the sisters by telling them ‘it can’t cost us anything more than just our heads,’ and he was determined to sell his freedom at the highest price possible. Although the Gestapo agent had already taken him into custody, he suddenly broke away and bounded down the stairs, where he disappeared into the crowds on the street faster than the police could stop him. It is interesting what secular

historians, in the book *Widerstand und Verfolgung in Essen 1933 – 1945* (Opposition and Persecution in Essen 1933 – 1945), say about Brother Engelhardt's activity, as taken from Gestapo files:

"With the arrest of Cyranek, Noernheim and others, the distribution of illegal publications was by no means stopped, for Engelhardt, who at first had been active in the southwest, had been forced to flee to the Ruhr territory in 1940 when threatened by arrest at his former base in Karlsruhe. After a brief stay in Essen he found an illegal place to live in Oberhausen-Sterkrade where from the beginning of 1941 to April 1943 he produced 27 different issues of the *Watchtower* in an edition of 240 and later 360 copies. From the Ruhr territory he arranged for bases in Munich, Mannheim, Speyer, Dresden as well as Freiberg in Saxony and served as treasurer for the entire country. . . . On September 18, 1944, high prison sentences were handed down by the superior court in Hamm against members of the Essen group who held meetings and regularly distributed the *Watchtower* in connection with Engelhardt's activity. . . . Many were put to death."

Christine Hetkamp also gives us an encouraging report about Brother Engelhardt's activity: "My husband, who was baptized, turned into a malicious opposer. . . . I had not missed any of the meetings which had been held alternately at my mother's home, at mine and at my brother's. I could have them in my home because my husband left on Mondays and stayed at his sister's place until Saturday; she lived a short way outside of town. Hers was a rabid Nazi family and he found shelter there, since he could no longer put up with our spirit, which is understandable. So during his absence *The Watchtower* was printed in our home for almost three years. A brother (Brother Engelhardt) who lived with us for three years first of all wrote the stencils on a typewriter and then used them to make mimeographed copies of *The Watchtower*. Afterward he would travel with my mother to Berlin, to Mainz, Mannheim, etc., where they would deliver the magazines to trustworthy persons who would then distribute them further. Brother Engelhardt and my mother were in charge of the whole arrangement, whereas I did the cooking and the washing. When my mother was put in prison I took over the job of delivering *The Watchtower* to Mainz and Mannheim. . . . In April 1943, my mother was arrested the second time, this time forever. Shortly thereafter Brother Engelhardt, who had been in charge for so long and who had directed the underground work, was also arrested."

Later Sister Hetkamp's daughter, her brother-in-law, her sister, her sister-in-law and her aunt were arrested. All of them were tried on June 2, 1944. Brother Engelhardt and seven additional defendants, including Sister Hetkamp's mother, were sentenced to death. They were all beheaded shortly thereafter.

From then on conditions in Germany continued to grow ever more confused. It was no longer possible to determine for sure where *Watchtowers* were being mimeographed, but they were being produced.

## **FAITHFUL UNTIL DEATH**

The numerous executions that took place during the Third Reich take a special place in the history of persecution. At least 203 brothers and sisters, according to incomplete reports, were either beheaded or shot. This figure does not include those who died from starvation, disease and other brutal mistreatment.

Concerning a brother who was sentenced to death, Brother Bär reports: "All the prisoners and also the prison officials were amazed at him. He was a locksmith and did repair work throughout the entire prison. He went about his daily work without any sign of dejection or sadness; to the contrary, while busy working he sang songs of praise to Jehovah." One day around noon he was taken from the shop, and put to death that evening.

Brother Bär continues his report, saying: "My wife once saw a sister in prison in Potsdam she did not know. She walked past her in the prison courtyard. When the sister saw my wife she raised both of her handcuffed arms and waved a joyful greeting. Although sentenced to death, there was no look of pain nor of sadness in her glance." This calmness and peace that were radiated by our brothers and sisters sentenced to death takes on added value when a person remembers what they had to put up with in their cells.

Whereas our brothers and sisters were resolute and resigned, in fact, sometimes even joyful in face of the difficult way they were called on to go, others who were not Witnesses often collapsed or, out of their intense fear of death, would let out loud cries until forcibly restrained.

Jonathan Stark from Ulm, however, did not give way to such fear. True, he was only seventeen years old when he was arrested by the Gestapo, and, without legal

formalities, was sent to Sachsenhausen, where he was put in the death barracks. His offense? Refusal to take up premilitary work. Emil Hartmann from Berlin heard that Jonathan was confined to those barracks and, though it could have brought severe punishment on him, Brother Hartmann gained entrance to speak to this young brother and strengthen him. For both of them these brief visits were very encouraging. Jonathan was always very happy. Though himself facing death, he comforted his mother with the wonderful hope of a resurrection. When taken by the camp commander to the place of execution just two weeks after his arrival, Jonathan's last words were "For Jehovah and for Gideon." (Gideon was a faithful servant of Jehovah who foreshadowed Jesus Christ.)—[Judg. 7:18](#).

Elise Harms from Wilhelmshaven remembers that her husband was asked seven times to recant after he was sentenced and, when he refused, she was offered permission to visit him on the condition that she do all in her power to persuade him to change his mind. But this she could not do. When he was beheaded, she was happy that he had remained faithful to Jehovah and that he was no longer under pressure to be unfaithful. In the meantime his father, Martin Harms, had been arrested for the third time and put in Sachsenhausen. Deeply moving is the letter his son wrote him shortly before his execution on November 9, 1940:

"My dear father,

"We still have three weeks until December 3, the day on which we saw one another two years ago for the last time. I can still see your dear smile when you were working in the prison basement and I was out walking in the prison courtyard. In the early morning hours we did not suspect that my dear Lieschen (his wife) and I would be released that afternoon nor that you, my dear father, to our pain, would be taken that same day to Vechta and then later on to Sachsenhausen. Those last moments when we were alone in the visiting room of the prison in Oldenburg are still indelibly impressed upon my memory, how I put my arm around you and promised you that I would take care of mother and you as far as it was in my power to do so. My last words were: 'Remain faithful, my dear father!' During the last one and three quarters years (21 months) of 'slavery in freedom' I have kept my promise. When I was taken into custody on September 3 I turned the responsibility over to your other children. I have considered you with pride during this time and also with amazement at the way

you have been carrying your burden in faithfulness to the Lord. And now I, too, have been given an opportunity to prove my faithfulness to the Lord unto death, yes, in faithfulness not only up *unto* death, but even *into* death. My death sentence has already been announced and I am chained both day and night—the marks (on the paper) are from the handcuffs—but I still have not conquered to the full. Remaining faithful is not made easy for one of Jehovah's witnesses. I still have an opportunity to save my earthly life, but only thereby to lose the real life. Yes, one of Jehovah's witnesses is given an opportunity to break his covenant even when in view of the gallows. Therefore, I am still in the midst of the fight and I still have many victories to win before I can say that 'I have fought the fine fight, I have observed the faith, there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness with God, the righteous judge, will give me.' The fight is doubtless difficult, but I am wholeheartedly grateful to the Lord that he not only has given me the necessary strength to stand up until now in the face of death, but has given me a joy I would like to share with all my loved ones.

"My dear father, you are still a prisoner, too, and whether this letter will ever reach you, I do not know. If you should ever go free, however, then remain just as faithful as you are now, for you know that whoever has laid his hand to the plow and looks back is not worthy of the kingdom of God. . . .

"When you, dear father, are at home again, then be sure to take particular care of my dear Lieschen, for it will be particularly difficult for her, knowing that her dear one will not return. I know that you will do this and I thank you ahead of time. My dear father, in spirit I call to you, remain faithful, as I have attempted to remain faithful, and then we will see one another again. I will be thinking of you up until the very last.

"Your son Johannes

"Auf Wiedersehen!"

## **WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO THOSE OUTSIDE**

Not only were death candidates encouraged by brothers outside; those outside in freedom were often encouraged even more so by their brothers in prison. Sister Auschner from Kempten confirms this. She received a letter from her twenty-one-



year-old son on February 28, 1941, which contained the following brief lines directed to his eighteen-and-a-half-year-old brother: “My dear brother. In my last letter I called your attention to a book and I hope that you have taken to heart what I said, for this can only be of benefit to you.” Two and a half years later Sister Auschner received from this, her youngest son, a farewell letter. He had taken to heart what his older brother had written and had followed him faithfully into death.

The two brothers Ernst and Hans Rehwald from Stuhm, East Prussia, also assisted each other in a similar way. After Ernst was brought before a military court and sentenced to death, he wrote from his death cell a letter to his brother Hans in prison at Stuhm: “Dear Hans, In case the same thing should happen to you, then remember the power of prayer. I know no fear, for the peace of God is within my heart.” A short time later his brother was in the same position and, although he was only nineteen years old at the time, was executed.

## **A TEST OF LOYALTY FOR MARRIAGE MATES**

It was impressive to see how close relatives encouraged their loved ones not to waver in their integrity. Sister Höhne from Frankfurt/Oder was one who accompanied her husband to the railroad station when he received his induction order, never to see him again. Her last words were: “Be faithful”—words that Brother Höhne bore in mind up until his death.

In many cases the brothers were newly married and, had their love for Jehovah and for Christ Jesus not been so strong, they would certainly not have been able to bear breaking off the bonds of communication with their loved ones. Two sisters, who have been widows now for more than thirty-two years, look back on those turbulent times grateful for the help Jehovah gave them. Sisters Bühler and Ballreich, from Neulosheim near Speyer, both got married near the beginning of the ban and learned the truth around the same time. In 1940 both husbands got their draft call and, upon refusal to take up military service, were arrested.

Sister Ballreich went to the district draft officials in Mannheim, where she learned that the two brothers had been sent to Wiesbaden to appear before a military court. Sister Ballreich received permission to visit her husband on the condition that she try to persuade him to change his mind. Sister Bühler was given

permission to visit her husband on the same condition. Both sisters at once went to Wiesbaden. Sister Bühler reports:

"I can hardly describe how sad the reunion was. He (her husband) asked: 'Why have you come?' I answered that I was supposed to try to influence him. But he comforted me, gave me Biblical counsel and told me not to be sad like the rest who have no hope but to place my entire confidence in our great God, Jehovah. . . . A young court clerk, who had accompanied us to the prison, advised us to stay in Wiesbaden until Tuesday, which was the day the case was to be heard. If we were there we would certainly be permitted to attend. So we stayed until Tuesday. We waited outside on the street until our husbands, accompanied by two soldiers with loaded weapons, were led through the street like professional criminals. Truly a spectacle for men and angels. Sister Ballreich and I walked along. We were able to attend the trial. It lasted less than an hour, ending up with two blameless and brave men being sentenced to death. Afterward we could be with them for about two hours in a room on the ground floor. But after we had left the courthouse we walked the streets of Wiesbaden like two lost sheep."

Shortly thereafter the two young sisters received notification that their husbands had been shot to death on June 25, 1940, with the words on their lips "Jehovah forever!"

## **PARENTS AND CHILDREN PUT JEHOVAH FIRST**

A case that occupied the attention, not only of the courts, district attorneys and defenders, but also of the public, involved two Kusserow brothers from Paderborn. Based on the good instruction in Jehovah's ways that they had received at home, they were willing to surrender their lives without fear. And their mother used their death as further opportunity to tell others in her community about the resurrection hope. A third brother, Karl, was arrested three months later and taken to a concentration camp; he died four weeks after his release. There were thirteen members of this family; twelve were put into prison, sentenced to a total of sixty-five years of which they served forty-six.

Similar to the Kusserow case, where, not just the parents, but also the children put Kingdom interests ahead of self was the Appel family from Süderbrarup. They owned a small printing establishment there. Let us hear how Sister Appel tells

what happened:

"In 1937 when the large wave of arrests was rolling over Germany, my husband and I were taken away from our four children late on the night of October 15. Eight persons (Gestapo and police officers) entered our home and searched the whole house from the basement to the attic. Then they took us along with them. . . . After we were sentenced my husband was taken to Neumünster and I to the women's prison in Kiel. . . . In 1938 after a series of amnesties we were released. . . . When the second world war broke out, however, we knew what was ahead of us, for my husband was determined to maintain neutrality. We spoke to our children about the whole thing and called their attention to the Biblical pronouncements in regard to persecution.

"As far as possible we arranged to have sufficient clothing on hand for the children so that they would be cared for in this regard. After my husband had told the draft officials his Biblical reasons for being unable to engage in war he got the rest of his personal matters in order. We daily presented all our problems to Jehovah in prayer. On March 9, 1941, at 8:00 in the morning the doorbell rang and two soldiers came to pick up my husband. They waited outside and gave him fifteen minutes to tell us good-bye. Our son Walter had already gone to school. The other three children and Sister Helene Green, who worked in our printery, were asked to come to the apartment at once. My husband's last request was that we sing the song 'He that is faithful, he that is loyal, yields not his soul unto fear.' Although the words stuck in our throats, we sang. After a prayer, the soldiers came in and led my husband away. That was the last time the children ever saw their father. He was taken to Lübeck, where a high official spoke at length with him in a fatherly way, trying to persuade him to put on the uniform. But Jehovah's unchangeable law was so firmly anchored in my husband's heart that there was no turning back. . . .

"It was early on the morning of July 1, 1941, that police officials presented me with a letter . . . notifying me that our car was being confiscated as Communist property and that the printing establishment was being closed by the police. Then he handed me another letter that said: 'You are to bring your children to the city hall on the morning of July 3, 1941. Clothing and shoes are to be brought along.' This was a hard blow.

"So it was that on the morning of July 3, supervisors from two juvenile homes came to pick up our children. The woman who took charge of my fifteen- and ten-year-old girls, Christa and Waltraud, told me: 'I have known for several weeks that I was to pick up your children, and I have been unable to sleep at night since, knowing that I am taking children out of a well-organized family. But I must do it.'

"Some of the neighbors did not refrain from showing their dislike of the action being taken, but a warning was soon circulated by the responsible authorities that 'anyone speaking about the Appel case is committing national sedition!' Just to make sure, three police officials were sent to oversee the matter of taking away the children. . . . My husband was naturally notified by the officials of the steps that had been taken in regard to the business and the children. They hoped that this would soften him up. He was accused of being dishonest and unscrupulous in having left his family in the lurch. My husband wrote me a very loving letter saying how he had got up very early the next morning, got down on his knees and in prayer committed the care of his family to Jehovah. . . .

"The same day the children were picked up I received notification from the military court in Berlin-Charlottenburg to come there. I was taken before the chief public prosecutor, who asked me to try to influence my husband to put on the uniform. When I told him the Biblical reason for being unable to do this, he shouted full of rage: 'Then he'll get his head chopped off!' Despite this, I asked for permission to speak to my husband. He gave me no answer but pressed a bell that summoned a soldier who took me down one story where several officers greeted me with icy glares and accusations. When I left, one of them followed me, took my hand and said: 'Mrs. Appel, always stay as steadfast as you are now. You are doing the right thing.' I was truly surprised. What was important, however, was that I could speak to my husband.

"While I was in Berlin the Nazis had already sold our business. I was forced to sign the bill of sale because—as I was told—I would otherwise be put into a concentration camp.

"After I had visited my husband in Berlin several times, he was sentenced to death. The lawyer who 'defended' him remarked: 'Your husband has been given a golden opportunity to get out of this, but he has refused to make use of it.' To which my husband replied: 'I have made my decision for Jehovah and his kingdom and that

is the end of the matter.'

"On October 11, 1941, my husband was beheaded. In his last letter, which he was permitted to write just a few hours before his execution, he said: 'When you get this letter, my beloved Maria and my four children, Christa, Walter, Waltraud and Wolfgang, everything will already be over and I will have won the victory through Jesus Christ and my hope is that I have been a conqueror. From my heart I wish you a blessed entry into Jehovah's kingdom. Remain faithful! Three young brothers, who will be going the same way that I am tomorrow morning, are here beside me. Their eyes are aglow!'

"A short time later I was forced to vacate my home in Süderbrarup. The furniture was stored in five different places. I personally landed penniless at my mother's.

"My son Walter was taken out of school by the juvenile home and sent to Hamburg where he took up an apprenticeship in printing. In 1944, he was drafted, although he was only seventeen years old. In a most wonderful way he had come into possession of the book *The Harp of God* before this and had learned a great deal from it during the nights of bombings in Hamburg in his little room in the attic. His desire was to dedicate himself to Jehovah. After many difficulties he was able to go to Malente, at New Year's time of 1943/1944, where, in a darkened laundry, a brother baptized him secretly. . . .

"He was able to get in touch with me secretly and I waited in the streets of Hamburg several hours until he came, because I was forbidden to see my children under any circumstances.

"For his encouragement I could tell him that I had received a letter from the brothers in Sachsenhausen who had heard of our lot. Brother Ernst Seliger wrote that after the camp had quieted down at night several hundred brothers from various nations would bow their knees to Jehovah and make mention of us in their prayers. Then my son was taken by force to East Prussia to the military group to which he was assigned. In the icy cold they took away his clothes and laid his uniform down in front of him, but he refused to put it on. It was two days before he got something warm to eat. But he remained firm.

"In Hamburg we had bidden each other farewell. He told me he would be going

the way of his father. Some seven months later, after his papers had been falsified to make him appear to be older, he actually was beheaded, without ever having had a trial. According to law, he was still underage and under juvenile jurisdiction.

“A Süderbrarup policeman visited me and read me the police report from East Prussia. I myself was given nothing at all. Although I had not really counted on my boy having to go through what his father had, since he was so young and the end of the war was so near, yet despite the great pain I felt, I offered a prayer of thanksgiving to Jehovah. I could now say: ‘Thank you, Jehovah, that he has fallen on the battlefield for you.’

“Then came the upheaval of 1945. Joyfully I welcomed my three remaining children back into my arms. The two youngest ones had been taken out of the juvenile home and had been living with a labor office director for the last three years, where they were to be reared in the sense of National Socialism. I was permitted to visit them only once every fourteen months and to speak to them for several hours, but always with someone else present. Despite this, my two girls were once able to whisper to me that they had a little testament which they kept carefully hidden. When they were alone one of them would listen at the door to make sure no one was coming and the other would read several verses. How happy I was!

“Now in 1945 the faithful brothers began returning from their imprisonment. In Flensburg a ship arrived with many brothers and sisters mainly from the East. At that time a period of intense activity began. There it was that I became acquainted with my present husband, Brother Josef Scharner. He, too, had been robbed of nine years of freedom. Truly, both of us had gone through difficult times and both of us had the same desire to spend our last remaining years in serving Jehovah with all our strength.”

## **MAKING DISCIPLES EVEN IN A DEATH CELL**

That it would be possible to make disciples even in the death cells sounds hard to believe, but Brother Massors reports such an experience in a letter to his wife dated September 3, 1943:

“During 1928/30/32 I pioneered in Prague. Lectures were delivered and the city



was covered with literature. At that time I met a political lecturer from the government named Anton Rinker. I talked to him a long time. He accepted a Bible and several books but explained that he had no time to study such things, since he must look after his family and make a living. He said, however, that his relatives were all very religiously inclined, although they did not go to church.

"It must have been in 1940/41 when a new partner was sent into my cell, as was often the case. He was very depressed, but everyone is at first. Only at the time when the cell door flies shut behind him does a person suddenly realize where he is. 'My name is Anton Rinker and I am from Prague,' my new cellmate told me. I recognized him at once and said: 'Anton, yes, Anton, do you not know me?' 'Yes, you do look familiar, but . . .' It took only a little while for him to remember that I had been at his place in 1930/32 and that he had taken a Bible and several books from me at the time. 'What!' said Anton, 'you are here because of your faith? That I cannot understand; none of the ministers do anything like that. What do you believe actually?' He was to find out.

"'But why don't the clergy tell us these things?' was his question. 'This is the truth. Now I know why I had to come to this prison. I must say, dear Franz, that before I entered this cell I prayed to God that he might send me to a believing person, otherwise I was thinking of committing suicide. . . .'

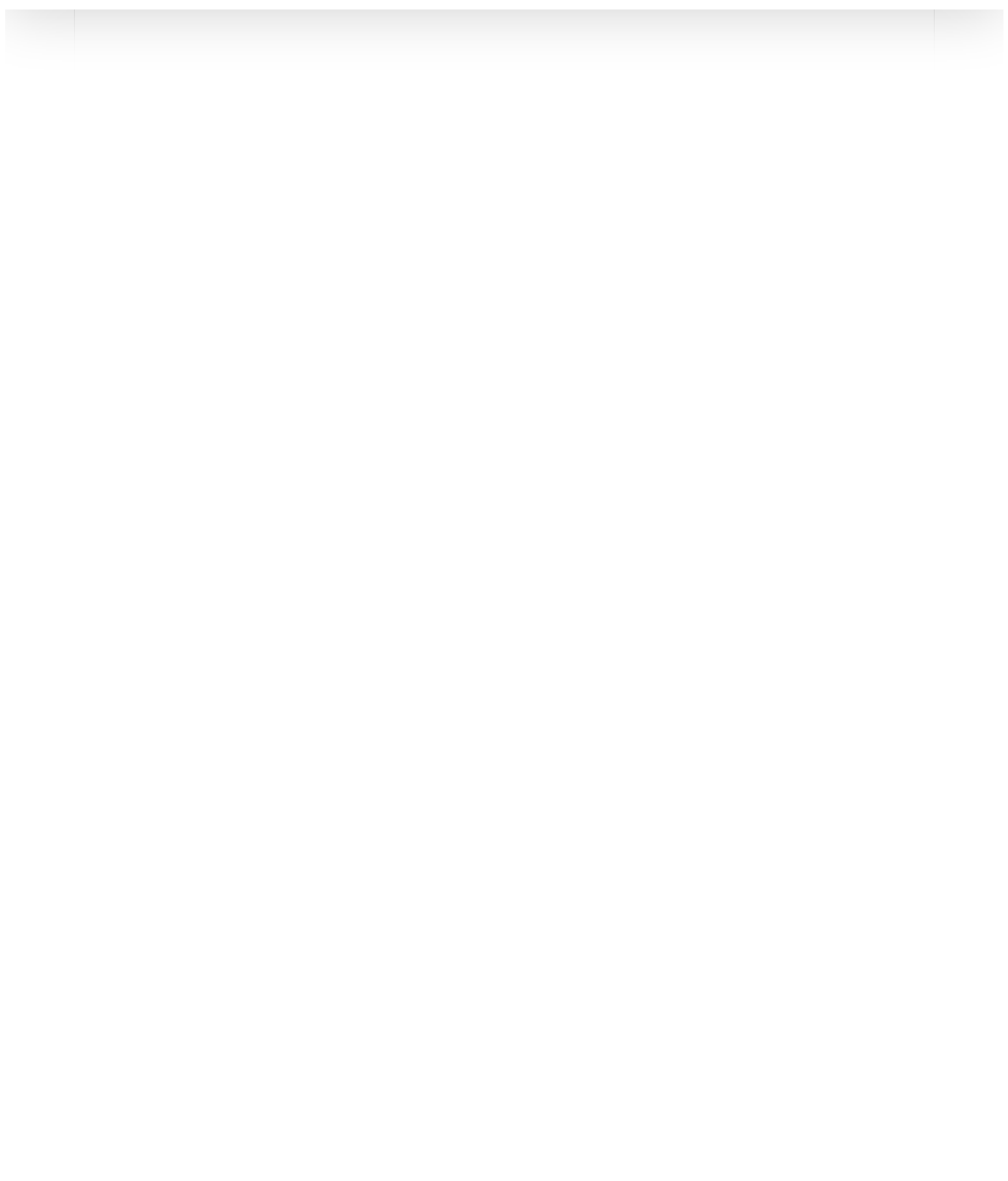
"Weeks and months passed. Then Anton told me: 'Before I leave this world, may God help my wife and my children find the truth, so that I can leave in peace.' . . . One day he received a letter from his wife in which she wrote:

"' . . . How happy we would be if only you could read the Bible and books that you bought from that German man years ago. Everything has turned out just as the books said. This is the truth for which we never had time.'"

### **[Picture on page 171]**

Courtyard at entrance to Mauthausen concentration camp, with group of naked entrants





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## 1974 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses

## Part 3—Germany



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## Part 3—Germany

## SPIRITUAL FOOD IN THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS

During those years when the brothers, especially those in concentration camps, were “isolated” they had very little opportunity to obtain a Bible or other publications. Just that much more effort was put into recalling the contents of important *Watchtower* articles when they had to stand for hours in the courtyard, or evenings when they had a little quiet in their barracks. Their joy was especially great when it was possible in some way to obtain a Bible.

Jehovah sometimes used interesting ways to get a Bible into the hands of his servants. Franz Birk from Renchen (Black Forest) recalls that one day in Buchenwald he was asked by a worldly prisoner if he would like to have a Bible. He had found one in the paper factory where he worked. Of course Brother Birk accepted the offer thankfully.

Brother Franke also remembers how, in 1943, an aged SS man who had joined this organization only under the pressure of the times went to a number of clergymen on his day off asking for a Bible. All of them said they regretted not having a Bible anymore. It was evening when he finally found a clergyman who told him that he had one small Luther Bible that he had kept for special reasons. He was so happy

that an SS man should manifest interest in the Bible, however, that he said the Bible should be his. The next morning this gray-haired SS man gave Brother Franke the Bible, obviously joyful that he could give this gift to a prisoner he was guarding.

With time it became possible to smuggle new *Watchtower* articles into the concentration camps. In the Birkenfeld concentration camp it was done in this way: Among the prisoners was a brother who, because of his knowledge of architecture, worked with a civilian friendly to Jehovah's witnesses. Through this friendly man the brother made contact with brothers outside the camp who soon supplied him with the newest *Watchtowers*.

Our brothers in the Neuengamme camp had similar opportunities. Most of the approximately seventy brothers there were put to work cleaning up after the air raids in Hamburg. There in Hamburg they could obtain Bibles, once finding three in just a matter of minutes. Willi Karger, who experienced this personally, relates: "I would like to tell of additional spiritual food that a sister from Döbeln brought us. May this never be forgotten. Her brother, Hans Jäger, belonged to our work crew in Bergedorf near Hamburg, and was put to work in the Flunz Iron factory. Hard work and strict surveillance were our lot. Brother Jäger, nonetheless, succeeded in smuggling a letter out and notifying his sister where he would be during his noon hour. His sister took a train to Hamburg and 'felt her way' carefully out to the place where we were working. She succeeded in placing the requested magazines into our hands, so, despite the SS guards and due to Jehovah's supervision, the valuable magazines were brought into the camp undetected."

Everyone schemed up different ways, and with time there were a number of Bibles in the camp. A brother wrote to his wife in Danzig that he would enjoy eating some "Elberfelder gingerbread," and with the next food package (which the brothers could receive in this camp at that time) he received an Elberfelder Bible carefully baked in gingerbread. Certain ones had contact with prisoners who worked at the crematorium. These related that many books and magazines were burned there, so the brothers made arrangements secretly to receive the Bibles and the magazines, in exchange for some of their food supplies.

In Sachsenhausen some Bibles got into the hands of the brothers while they were still in "isolation." Strange as it may sound, isolation proved to be a certain

protection in this case, since a brother not only was assigned to guard the door leading to the isolation area but also had the key and, therefore, had to lock and unlock the door. There were seven large tables in a room that seated fifty-six brothers. For quite a while a brother would give a fifteen-minute comment covering the text while the other brothers were eating their breakfast. This was rotated then among the tables as well as among the brothers sitting at them. This comment was then the subject of conversation when the brothers were forced to stand for hours in the courtyard.

During the severe 1939/1940 winter the Witnesses petitioned Jehovah in prayer on this matter of literature, and, look, a miracle! Jehovah placed his protecting hand over a brother who was able to smuggle three *Watchtowers* into "isolation" inside his wooden leg, and this despite careful examination. Even though the brothers had to crawl under their beds and read by the light of a flashlight while others stood guard to the right and the left, it was a proof of Jehovah's wonderful direction. As a good Shepherd, he does not abandon his people.

In the winter of 1941/1942, when the brothers had been released from "isolation," seven *Watchtowers* dealing with [Daniel chapters 11 and 12](#), the first issue discussing Micah, a book entitled "Kreuzzug gegen das Christentum" (Crusade against Christianity) and a *Bulletin* (now *Kingdom Ministry*) all arrived at one time. This was truly a gift from heaven for, along with their brothers in other countries, they could now get a clear understanding of the "king of the south" and the "king of the north."

Thanks to the fact that prisoners not in "isolation" had Sunday afternoons free and that the political block captain went to other barracks to see his friends that afternoon, it was possible for the brothers to conduct a *Watchtower* study every Sunday for several months. On the average, 220 to 250 brothers shared in this study, while 60 to 70 kept watch all the way up to the camp entrance, and whenever danger arose they would give a certain sign. So it was that they were never surprised by an SS man during their study. The study conducted in 1942 remains unforgettable for those in attendance. The brothers were so impressed by the wonderful explanations concerning the prophecy in [Daniel chapters 11 and 12](#) that, in conclusion, in joyous march tempo, they sang folk songs interspersed with Kingdom songs, thus not giving the guard on duty a few meters away from

the barracks on a tower cause for suspicion; rather, he enjoyed the beautiful singing. Just imagine: The voice of 250 men who, although imprisoned, were in reality free, whole-souled in singing songs to Jehovah's praise. What a setting! Might the angels in heaven have sung along?

## **EASING OF PRESSURE ON THOSE IN CONCENTRATION CAMPS**

Although the blood of faithful witnesses of Jehovah continued to flow at the Nazi executional centers right up until the regime's complete collapse, yet the weapons of those who had time and again sworn that Jehovah's witnesses would leave the concentration camps only through the crematorium chimneys began to weaken. There were also the problems that the war presented. So especially from 1942/1943 on, there were periods when Jehovah's witnesses were left in comparative peace.

The war, which was now a total war, had changed to the point where all available forces were mobilized. For this reason, in 1942 they started including prisoners to the extent possible in projects productive to the economy. In this connection a comment made by SS leader Pohl to his boss, Himmler, concerning the "state of the concentration camps" is interesting:

"The war has brought about a visible change in the structure of the concentration camps and basically changed their function with regard to the use of prisoners.

"The incarceration of prisoners solely because of security, educational or preventative reasons no longer predominates [mass destruction is not even mentioned]. The emphasis has swung to the economic aspect of the matter. The mobilization of all prisoners, in the first place, for war-related jobs (increase of armament production) and, secondly, for peace-related matters becomes more and more the predominating factor.

"The necessary measures being taken result from this realization, requiring a gradual transfer of the concentration camps from their previous one-sided political design to an organization meeting the economic needs."

This transformation, of course, required that the prisoners be fed better if they were to be used more for work. This brought further relief for the brothers. The officials were also judicious enough, with few exceptions, not to try to place the



brothers in armament plants, but to use them in accord with their vocational abilities in the various shops.

In the meantime, Jehovah had done his part, for he can direct the hearts of humans—even those of his enemies—like streams of water. A striking example is Himmler. For years he believed that he alone could decide about the lives of Jehovah's faithful servants, but he suddenly began to change his mind concerning the "Bible Students." His personal doctor, a Finnish medical man named Kersten, played an important role.

The masseur Kersten began to have a strong influence on Himmler, who was always quite sickly. He heard about Jehovah's witnesses' being cruelly persecuted and one day asked Himmler to give him some of the women to work on his estate in Harzwalde, some seventy kilometers north of Berlin. After hesitation Himmler agreed, and later he granted Kersten's additional request, releasing a sister from a concentration camp so that she could work in Kersten's second home, in Sweden. It was first from these sisters that Kersten heard the truth about the conditions in the concentration camps and about the indescribable suffering that had been inflicted especially upon Jehovah's witnesses for years. He was greatly dismayed, knowing that his massages repeatedly restored this fiend to sufficient health to carry on his murderous business. He, therefore, decided to use his influence to ease at least to some extent the suffering of all these prisoners. It can thus be attributed to his influence that tens of thousands of them, especially toward the end of the war, were not exterminated. Especially for Jehovah's witnesses his influence proved to be very beneficial. This can be seen from a letter that Himmler wrote to his closest associates, the top SS leaders Pohl and Müller. This letter, stamped "Secret," included the following passages:

"Enclosed is a report about the ten Bible Students that are working on my doctor's farm. I had an opportunity to study the matter of the Earnest Bible Students from all angles. Mrs. Kersten made a very good suggestion. She said that she had never had such good, willing, faithful and obedient personnel as these ten women. These people do much out of love and kindness. . . . One of the women once received 5.00 RM as a tip from a guest. She accepted the money since she did not want to cast aspersions upon the home, and gave it to Mrs. Kersten, since it was prohibited to have money in the camp. The women voluntarily did any work

required of them. Evenings they knitted, Sundays they were kept busy in some other way. During the summer they did not let the opportunity pass to get up two hours earlier and gather baskets full of mushrooms, even though they were required to work ten, eleven and twelve hours a day. These facts complete my picture of the Bible Students. They are incredibly fanatical, willing people, ready to sacrifice. If we could put their fanaticism to work for Germany or instill such fanaticism into our people, then we would be stronger than we are today. Of course, since they reject the war, their teaching is so detrimental that we cannot permit it lest we do Germany the greatest damage. . . .

“Nothing is accomplished by punishing them, since they only talk about it afterward with enthusiasm. . . . Each punishment serves as a merit for the other world. That is why every true Bible Student will let himself be executed without hesitation. . . . Every confinement in the dungeon, every pang of hunger, every period of freezing is a merit, every punishment, every blow is a merit with Jehovah.

“Should problems develop in camp in the future involving the Bible Students, then I prohibit the camp commander from pronouncing any punishment. Such cases should be reported to me with a brief description of the circumstances. From now on I plan on doing the opposite and telling the respective individual: ‘You are forbidden to work. You are to be better fed than the others and you do not have to do anything.’

“For according to the belief of these good-natured lunatics merit ceases then, yes, to the contrary, previous merits will be deducted by Jehovah.

“Now my suggestion is that all of the Bible Students be put in work—for example, farm work, which has nothing to do with war and all its madness. One can leave them unguarded if properly assigned; they will not run away. They can be given uncontrolled jobs, they will prove to be the best administrators and workers.

“Another use for them as suggested by Mrs. Kersten: We can employ the Bible Students in our ‘Lebensbornheime’ (homes erected to rear children fostered by SS men to produce a master race), not as nurses, but, rather, as cooks, housekeepers, or to do work in the laundry or similar jobs. In cases where we still have men serving as janitors we can use strong women Bible Students. I am convinced that, in most cases, we will have little difficulty with them.

"I am also in agreement with suggestions that Bible Students be assigned to large families. Qualified Bible Students who have the necessary ability should be found and reported to me. I will then personally distribute them among large families. In such households they are not to wear prison garb, however, but civilian clothes and their stay should be arranged in a similar way to the free and interned Bible Students in Harzwalde.

"In all these cases where prisoners are partially free and have been assigned to such work we want to avoid written records or signatures and make such agreements with just a handshake.

"Please send your recommendations for initiating this action and a report on it."

So it was. Within a short time quite a few sisters were sent to work in SS households, truck gardens, estates and "Lebensbornheime."

There were other reasons, however, why the SS were willing to take Jehovah's witnesses into their homes. The SS felt the secret hate that was growing among the populace. They realized they were not just being joked about privately. Many did not even trust their maids anymore and were afraid that they might poison their food or kill them in some other way. With time, top SS officials dared not go to just any barber, for fear he might cut their throats. Max Schröer and Paul Wauer were assigned to shave top SS officials regularly, since they knew that Jehovah's witnesses would never take revenge and kill their human enemies.

These brothers and sisters working outside the camps were even permitted visits from their relatives or could themselves visit their relatives at home. Some were given several weeks' vacation for this purpose. This eventually meant that the brothers and sisters obtained more food, which resulted in rapid improvement of their health and reduced the number of deaths due to hunger and mistreatment.

To what extent the attitude in the concentration camps changed to the advantage of Jehovah's witnesses can be seen by an experience that Reinhold Lühring had. In February 1944, he was suddenly called from his work crew and asked to report to the camp office. This was where so many had been mistreated and attempts had been made to persuade them to renounce their faith in Jehovah. How surprised Brother Lühring was when officers sitting opposite him asked if he would

supervise an estate, properly directing the work and the workers. Answering all their questions in the affirmative, he was later taken to Czechoslovakia, together with fifteen other brothers, to take charge of Mrs. Heydrich's estate.

Another work crew composed of forty-two brothers, all good craftsmen, was taken to Lake Wolfgang in Austria to build a house for a top SS official. Although the work on the mountainside was not easy, the brothers otherwise had it much better. For example, Erich Frost, who belonged to this group, was given permission to have his accordion sent from home. After receiving it he and the other brothers were often permitted to go out onto the lake evenings, where he would play folk songs and concert pieces, which were enjoyed, not only by his brothers, but also by those living along the lake, including the SS, under whose supervision they were working.

It also continued to become easier to supply the brothers in concentration camps with spiritual food. Dr. Kersten played no small part in this, since he often traveled between his home in Sweden and his estate in Harzwalde. He would always let the sisters that Himmler had given him to work at his estate and his home in Sweden pack his suitcases. A silent agreement had been made between them that the sister in Sweden would put a number of *Watchtowers* in Kersten's suitcase when she packed it. Upon arriving in Harzwalde he would tell the sister working for him there that she should unpack his suitcase, which he always let her do alone. After the sisters had carefully studied these *Watchtowers*, they would pass them on to the nearby concentration camp.

Mr. Kersten's estate in Harzwalde was ideally located, about thirty-five kilometers south of the women's camp at Ravensbrück and about thirty kilometers north of the men's camp at Sachsenhausen. Things were constantly being transported from Harzwalde to both camps, so it was not difficult to smuggle spiritual food into the camps to the brothers and sisters.

There was thus an ever-closer contact between the various camps and private homes where our sisters were assigned to work for SS families. Ilse Unterdörfer reports about this interesting time:

"Since we had considerable freedom where we worked, we succeeded in sending letters to our relatives without having them censored. We were also able to

correspond with our brothers who were working outside or had trusted positions working for SS men, thereby enjoying more freedom. Yes, we even succeeded in getting in touch with brothers living in freedom and obtained *Watchtowers*. After many years of living on things previously learned and from new truths brought in by new arrivals it was wonderfully refreshing to be able personally to read *The Watchtower* again. I was assigned to an SS farm near Ravensbrück under the jurisdiction of SS officer Pohl. As supervisory prisoner I was responsible for our sisters' work. Some of us even slept there and did not have to go to the camp at all anymore. It was thus possible for me, according to arrangements made in a letter delivered by a sister, to get in touch with Franz Fritsche from Berlin, whom I met one evening in a wooded section of the farm. He always supplied me with a number of *Watchtowers*. In addition to this we also received spiritual food in another way. Two sisters worked in a factory and they also brought copies of *The Watchtower* into the camp. In this way Jehovah lovingly cared for us at a time when it was most urgent."

Jehovah blessed the brothers who had easier access to spiritual food and who endeavored to make it available to others, as can be seen from Frank Birk's account. He was among those brought to the estate at Harzwalde. They soon heard that other imprisoned brothers, working under the supervision of a soldier, were putting up a building in the forest some ten kilometers away. Since the Harzwalde-estate brothers already enjoyed a measure of freedom, they looked for an opportunity to meet these brothers in the forest.

"One Sunday morning," Brother Birk reports, "Brother Krämer and I took our bicycles and started out to find our brothers. As we rode into the woods we soon saw a cleared strip where a new building was going up. Seeing a prisoner come across the clearing, we waved at him, and he started toward us through the woods. As soon as we saw the lilac triangle on his clothes we knew that he was a brother. After we told him that we were from the Harzwalde crew he took us into the new building. Since we had new *Watchtowers* with us, we sat down and started to study. After that we visited our brothers every Sunday. They were under the surveillance of a sergeant major from Freiburg, who was kindly disposed toward the brothers. Shortly before Christmas I asked him: 'How would it be if you and our brothers would make a visit to the Harzwalde estate during the holidays?' He thoughtfully replied that he wanted some place to go with his men where they

could get their hair cut. When he heard that we had a barber in Harzwalde he immediately agreed. And so early Christmas morning our brothers, accompanied by this officer, came to the farm. Sister Schulze from Berlin, who was working in the kitchen, took especially good care of the officer so that we might be undisturbed in our association with one another. That evening the brothers returned home, filled with joy over the blessed meeting they had had together. Just think, this had taken place in the midst of our enemies!"

In time there were increased possibilities of getting spiritual food in all the concentration camps. Gertrud Ott and eighteen other sisters incarcerated in Auschwitz were sent to work in a hotel where the families of SS men lived. Since other persons also came to eat and drink there, it was not long before sisters who were still free discovered their imprisoned sisters washing windows. "We are sisters, too." they mumbled in passing, without looking up. Three weeks later they arranged to meet in the toilet. From then on, the sisters from outside regularly came and brought the sisters working in the hotel *Watchtowers* and other publications, which were then sent on to Ravensbrück.

At the beginning of December 1942 an especially wonderful opportunity came for about forty brothers left in Wewelsburg to care for special work there. Although still treated as inmates, they enjoyed a certain amount of freedom, for there was no longer any electric barbed wire or sentry to keep them within the camp.

Brother Engelhardt was still free at the time and had issued instructions to brothers living nearby to try to find a way of getting *Watchtowers* into the camp. After overcoming several problems, Sandor Beier from Herford and Martha Tünker from Lemgo investigated the situation by simply taking a walk through the section like a young couple might do. They soon made contact with the brothers and regularly provided them with *Watchtowers* thereafter. The first time, they met the brothers in a cemetery at a certain grave; the next time, they hid the magazines in a strawstack, or delivered them to the brothers personally at midnight at some predetermined place. A new meeting place was arranged for each delivery. After Brother Engelhardt and the sisters that had produced and distributed the magazines were arrested, the question arose as to how those still in freedom would be supplied with spiritual food.

This time the brothers in Wewelsburg tried to find a solution themselves. They



were able to get a typewriter, which one of the brothers used to write up stencils. Another brother constructed a primitive mimeograph machine out of wood. Sisters outside, with whom they still had contact, brought the brothers the necessary supplies for mimeographing. So many copies of *The Watchtower* were finally being produced here that a large section of northern Germany could be supplied. Elisabeth Ernsting remembers that she always received fifty copies to supply the territory for which she cared. Thus for almost two years, until the collapse of the regime in 1945, it was possible to provide the brothers living in Westfalen and other districts with *The Watchtower*.

The supply of spiritual food for the brothers and sisters inside concentration camps improved so greatly that by 1942 in Sachsenhausen it could be compared to a small stream. Sentenced to death shortly before the collapse of the Nazi regime but not executed, Brother Fritsche from Berlin was able over a period of one and a half years to provide the brothers, not only with all the new magazines, but also with a number of older issues, as well as all the books and booklets that had been released in the meantime. It was as though the brothers had been led to rich pastures, for every brother had a copy of one of the Society's publications for study every evening. What a change! But that is not all. The organization operated so well that Brother Fritsche was able to forward letters to the brothers' relatives, or letters into other camps or to foreign branches. Thus it was possible within one and a half years to smuggle out 150 letters, and nearly as many into the camp. The letters sent out testified to the brothers' fine spiritual condition. Understandably, many copies of these letters were made. Some were even mimeographed and served as an encouragement to the brothers outside and especially for the relatives of those who were imprisoned.

### **THEOCRATIC UNITY BOLDLY DECLARED WITHIN THE CAMPS**

All went fine for about one and a half years, until the fall of 1943, when Brother Fritsche was arrested. Reports about Sachsenhausen had been found during house searches that directed attention to him. The police found, not only *Watchtowers* and other publications in his possession, but also some letters from brothers that he was to deliver. The police, discovering that correspondence was being carried on on a nearly international scale, became suspicious of the camp leaders' ability or willingness to discharge their obligations. Himmler, therefore,

ordered an immediate search to be made of all the concentration camps under suspicion.

The campaign began at the end of April. One morning some of the officials of the Secret Police came to Sachsenhausen. The surprise attack upon the brothers had been well planned. Those working inside the camp were called from their places of work and told to stand in the courtyard, where they were questioned about the daily texts and frisked. Some publications were found. This was all accompanied by the usual beatings. But the Gestapo failed to get the brothers to retract, for Jehovah had richly nourished them in the midst of their enemies. They had a clear vision of their commission and did not fear to take their stand unitedly for theocratic rulership.

Ernst Seliger was known to be the connecting link to Brother Fritsche, so he was given special "attention." He had endeavored to bind, not only the fleshly wounds, but also the spiritual ones, and his humble fatherly manner had greatly contributed to the unity enjoyed in this camp. But he was very much disturbed about the outcome of his first interrogations and prayed to Jehovah that He might turn his "defeat," as he considered it, into a victory. But this was not to be a test for just one individual. Wilhelm Röger from Hilden describes the situation as follows: "Now it had to be 'One for all and all for one!'" All the brothers verified Brother Seliger's statement that he had passed out daily texts for their encouragement. They confirmed the fact that they had read the literature that Brother Seliger had brought into the camp and that they would continue to encourage one another and to speak about their hope in the future.

Four days passed. Sunday morning Brother Seliger appeared before the camp administration so they could take down the protocol. He describes his experiences: "First, I witnessed in three hospital rooms [where he worked as an assistant] . . . Then full of joy I went into the lions' den. A doctor and a druggist were studying the letters we had illegally sent out of the camp. Two hours of heated debate followed. When the protocol was to be concluded the questioning officer said: 'Seliger, what are you going to do now? Do you intend to continue writing daily texts and encouraging your brothers? And do you intend to continue preaching the message here in the camp among other prisoners?' 'Yes, that is exactly what I am going to do, and not only I, but also all of my brothers!' . . . At

2:00 o'clock the interrogation was over and the declaration made in the name of all the brothers was presented to them, whereupon they all joyfully went into the preaching work"—in the camp barracks.

The brothers recalled that it had been nearly ten years since October 7, 1934, when Hitler had been informed in a letter that Jehovah's witnesses would not cease meeting together and preaching despite threats. Now after almost ten years the Gestapo realized that the fighting spirit of God's people had still not been broken, regardless of whether inside or outside the concentration camps. The letters testified to this.

The Gestapo now checked the other concentration camps to see if the much proclaimed 'theocratic unity' prevailed there too. The next camp was Berlin-Lichterfelde, a branch camp of Sachsenhausen. Brother Paul Grossmann who served as contact man between Sachsenhausen and Lichterfelde later mentioned the investigation:

"On April 26, 1944, the Gestapo struck a new blow. At 10:00 o'clock that morning two Gestapo officers came to Lichterfelde to investigate me thoroughly as contact man between Sachsenhausen and Lichterfelde. They showed me two illegal letters I had written to brothers in Berlin. These letters clearly revealed our methods of operation. [We can see how unwise it is to write letters containing such information, because it is to be expected that sooner or later the officials will find them when making arrests or conducting searches.] The officials were thus informed about all organizational details and additionally that we had regularly received food from our 'mother.'

"Despite turning everything upside down, all they found was a *Watchtower*. I had to stand at the gate while the other brothers were brought in from work. They were also searched and made to stand at the gate. This was a real sensation, since a big police raid like this had not been made for a long time. There were many beatings and abusive words during the questioning, and a few *Watchtowers* and texts were found. An extensive report about experiences in Sachsenhausen, a Bible and other papers were kept out of their hands. The brothers did not conceal the fact that they had been actively working for the interests of the Theocracy and had read *The Watchtowers*. We had to stand at the gate until 11:00 o'clock that night. In the meantime a police truck had arrived to transfer the twelve ringleaders to

Sachsenhausen. This meant they were to be hanged. They had to turn in their spoons and dishes, and so forth. But the transfer did not materialize. Not on the following day either, although death announcements for the relatives had already been written up. There was a surprise on the third day. The twelve brothers were not executed, but were put back to work."

The brothers in Lichterfelde were then required to sign a declaration stating: "I -----, one of Jehovah's witnesses, in the camp since ----- profess belonging to the 'theocratic unity' that exists in the concentration camp Sachsenhausen. I have received daily texts and literature which I have read and passed on." Everyone was more than happy to sign.

Similar police raids were carried on with the same results in other camps, one being conducted in Ravensbrück on May 4, 1944, because it was evident from the letters that contact was being made between Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück. Severe measures were taken against the "ringleaders" in this camp. But before long the sisters were put back on their old jobs here, too, after requests had been made by the responsible heads of the departments. This was further proof that the tyrant's power had by this time been fairly well broken.

Defeats suffered by the German army on the Eastern front in 1944 took so many lives that, not only old men and the Hitler youth were drawn into the war, but even prisoners were given an opportunity to prove themselves on the Eastern front. For this reason committees came to the camps and offered political prisoners the opportunity to join the demoted General Dirlewanger's division. If they would prove themselves there, then they would be considered free Germans. It was interesting, however, that all the prisoners bearing a lilac triangle were always sent to their barracks before this offer was made to the others. They knew what answer they would receive from Jehovah's witnesses and had, therefore, ceased asking them.

## **HURRIED EVACUATION OF THE CAMPS**

In 1945, the unceasing rain of bombs from the American and English air forces by day and night and the retreat of the German army, which finally turned into open flight, indicated to everyone that the end of the second world war was near. The SS had quit displaying their lordship. That they were not in an enviable position can

be appreciated when one remembers that hundreds of thousands in concentration camps were nervously awaiting liberation. These masses were unpredictable, yes, explosive material, which put many SS men in fear of the prisoners. But Himmler continued to follow his Führer's commands and sent the following telegram to the commanders of Dachau and Flossenbürg: "Surrendering is out of the question. The camp is to be evacuated immediately. No prisoner is to fall into enemy hands alive. (Signed Heinrich Himmler)" Similar instructions were sent to the other camps.

This was the last devilish plan once again endangering the lives of God's faithful servants held in the camps. But they were not overly worried. They rested their confidence in Jehovah, regardless of what the immediate outcome might be to them personally.

The SS officers who had the duty of liquidating the prisoners were faced with an unsolvable task. Brother Walter Hamann, who had been assigned to work in the SS canteen, overheard an interesting conversation among SS officers. He relates: "The officers spoke of gassing the prisoners, but the facilities were much too small, neither did they have enough gas. Then I overheard a telephone conversation about an oil shipment for the furnaces; but this could not be delivered. Mention was then made of blowing up the camps and their inmates. Boxes of dynamite had already been placed in the various barracks, especially in the hospital ward. But this plan was abandoned too. Finally, it was decided to evacuate the 30,000 prisoners; they were told that they would be sent to a larger camp—which did not exist—but in reality they were intending to provide us with a mass grave in Lübecker Bay. No gas, oil or dynamite would be needed for this."

In the meantime the speed with which the Allied forces were approaching from east and west was increasing. The SS now began worrying about their own lives and became ever more confused, especially after the government's decision to liquidate the camps had become known. Faced with insurmountable problems, they simply drove the prisoners out onto the roads and made them march off with very little food supplies. Anyone later following the route of these marches, which were correctly labeled "death marches," would notice that all were directed to the same destination. Their goal was to get them to Lübecker Bay, or to the open sea in the north, where they could then be put on ships and sunk before the enemy

forces arrived.

Soon there was no food left and, at times, not even a drop of water. Nonetheless, the starving prisoners were forced to march all day long for days on end in pouring rain with an average temperature of only 4 degrees Centigrade (40 degrees Fahrenheit). At night they were permitted to lie down in the woods on the rain-soaked ground. Those unable to keep up with the prescribed speed were mercilessly shot in the neck by the SS rear guard. The extent of the loss of life on these marches can be seen from the example of Sachsenhausen. Of 26,000 prisoners still alive at the time of evacuation, 10,700 were left lying along the road from Sachsenhausen to Schwerin, shot to death.

The few brothers left at Mauthausen were also in a dangerous position. Large tunnels had been dug into the mountain in which the feared "V-2" rockets were built. One day one of the tunnels was closed off and mines were placed in it. The plan was to fake an air raid, thereby driving the 18,000 prisoners into the tunnel, which could then be blown up. But the camp administration was taken by surprise by the rapid advance of the Russian tanks, and the SS preferred to leave the prisoners on their own and to try to save their own lives, if possible. But they did not make it very far. Only a few days later the camp commander, who was known for having said: 'I only want to see death certificates,' was recognized by prisoners and trampled to death. Political prisoners now sought revenge upon their fellow prisoners who, as camp elders, block elders and foremen, had brought much bloodguilt upon themselves.

The death march of the inmates from Dachau led through forests, and those unable to keep up were shot by the SS. Their goal was the Ötztaler Alps, where all who finally reached their destination were to have been shot anyhow. The brothers kept together and helped one another, thus keeping some from being killed until they reached Bad Tölz, where they were freed. Brother Ropelius remembers that they spent the last night under a blanket of snow in the forest of Waalkirchen. As day dawned the Bavarian State Police came and told them they were free and that the SS had fled. As they continued their journey they found weapons leaning up against the trees but no SS men.

The SS took seriously the government's orders to liquidate all prisoners. Just a few days before the capitulation, groups were put together in Neuengamme and put



aboard a freighter that was to take them out to the 'Cap Arcona,' a luxury steamship, which was lying anchored in Neustadter Bay. Some 7,000 prisoners were already on this 200-meter-long ship. The SS planned on sailing the 'Cap Arcona' out into the open sea where they could then sink it with the prisoners. But the ship was still flying its flag and was therefore sunk on May 3, 1945, by English fighter planes. The freighter 'Thielbeck,' with between 2,000 and 3,000 prisoners on board, also went under. Some 9,000 prisoners went into a wet grave in Neustadter Bay. It is understandable why survivors shudder when recalling this event. To this day twelve to seventeen skeletons of these drowned prisoners are found yearly at the Neustadter beach by bathers and during digging operations.

The same fate had been determined for the prisoners in Sachsenhausen, including 220 brothers. In a murderous march they covered approximately 200 kilometers in two weeks.

The Witnesses had early recognized the danger that was threatening, so they had repaired their shoes and gathered together a few small carts to transport the meager belongings of the weakest ones, whom they then placed on top. Otherwise these brothers, had they had to walk the entire way, would have been among the more than 10,000 dead. But in this way the brothers who were physically not quite as bad off could pull them along. On the way others were put on the carts when their strength gave out. After a few days of rest, when they had regained enough strength, they would take their turn at pulling the carts again. Thus even during this death march they all remained together as a large family, enjoying Jehovah's protection down to the end.

Then one afternoon when this group of fleeing prisoners was only three days' journey from Lübeck, the SS ordered everyone to set up camp in a forest near Schwerin. During the trek the brothers had formed small groups and made makeshift tents out of their blankets. The floor they had covered with small branches so as to ward off the coolness of the night. That night while Russian bullets whistled over their heads and the Americans continued to advance, this part of the German front collapsed. It was an indescribable feeling for those present when suddenly in the midst of the night a call rang out, reechoed thousands of times: "WE ARE FREE!" The approximately 2,000 SS men who until then had been in command of the prisoners had secretly doffed their uniforms so

as to appear to be civilians, some even putting on prisoner uniforms to conceal their identity. A few hours later some of them were recognized, however, and mercilessly slaughtered.

Should the brothers accept the offer of the American officers who had now reached them, and break camp in the middle of the night? After prayerfully considering the matter, they decided to wait until sunrise. But even then they stayed a few more hours, since a farmer among the refugees had given the brothers two hundred pounds of peas. A wonderful meal was cooked and eaten. Oh, how appreciative the brothers were! For nearly two weeks they had had practically nothing except a little tea, which they gathered along the way and made in the evenings in the woods when water was available.

How thankful they were when they discovered that not one of them was missing! But, as they later realized, they had still another reason to be thankful to Jehovah, for during their march toward the north they had once been detained by the SS in a forest for several days since they were unsure as to just where the front was. These few days were just the amount of time they would have needed to reach Lübeck before the front finally collapsed.

Now they were no longer in any great hurry to continue on. Right there in this forest near Schwerin they began to write up a report of their experiences on a typewriter that soldiers had thrown out of a mobile office. This report included a resolution written up with the indescribable feeling of having been free for several hours, but also with appreciation for Jehovah's protection during the many years of their stay in the "lions' den" deeply impressed upon their minds. This is the resolution:

## **RESOLUTION!**

"May 3, 1945

"The resolution of 230 of Jehovah's witnesses from six nationalities, gathered in a forest near Schwerin in Mecklenburg.

"We witnesses of Jehovah gathered here, send heartfelt greetings to the faithful covenant people of Jehovah and their companions throughout the entire world in the words of [Psalm 33:1-4](#) and [Ps 37:9](#). Let it be known that our great God, whose

name is Jehovah, has fulfilled his word to his people, especially in the territory of the King of the North. A long hard period of testing lies behind us and those who have been preserved, snatched as it were from the fiery furnace, do not even have the smell of fire on them. (See [Daniel 3:27](#).) To the contrary, they are full of strength and power from Jehovah and are eagerly awaiting new commands from the King to further Theocratic interests. Our resolve and our willingness to work are expressed in [Isaiah 6:8](#) and [Jeremiah 20:11](#) (Menge translation). Thanks to the Lord's assistance and his gracious support, the enemy's designs to cause us to break our integrity have failed, even though he attempted this by employing innumerable violent devilish schemes as well as thousands of inquisitional practices right out of the Middle Ages, both physical and mental, and many flatteries and enticements. All of these varied experiences that would fill many volumes are briefly described in the words of the apostle Paul in [2 Corinthians 6:4-10](#); [2 Corinthians 11:26, 27](#) and, above all, in [Psalm 124](#) (Elberfelder translation). Satan and his demonized agents have once again been marked as liars. ([John 8:44](#)) The great issue has once again been decided in Jehovah's favor to his honor.—[Job 1:9-11](#).

"To our and your joy may you know that the Lord, Jehovah, has blessed us with rich spoils, thirty-six men of goodwill, who upon our leaving Sachsenhausen . . . voluntarily declared: 'We will go with you people, for we have heard that God is with you people.' [Zechariah 8:23](#) has been fulfilled! Because of our hurried exit, many friends of the Theocracy were unable to join us, but Jehovah will direct matters so that they will soon find their way back to us.

"We, Jehovah's witnesses, declare anew our complete faith in Jehovah and our complete dedication to his Theocracy.

"We solemnly promise that we have only one desire, namely, in view of our deep appreciation for the endless chain of evidences of his marvelous preservation and his deliverances of us from the thousands of difficulties, conflicts and afflictions during our stay in the lions' den, that we be permitted to serve Jehovah and his great King, Christ Jesus, with willing and joyful hearts for all eternity. That would be in itself our greatest reward.

"We conclude our resolution with the words of [Psalm 48](#) in the joyful conviction of an early reunion.

“Your fellow servants for Jehovah’s holy name.”

Thus, after first expressing their thankfulness to Jehovah for his undeserved kindness, for his protection and now also for their restored freedom, the brothers broke camp. Although between 900 and 1,000 prisoners had died on that first night of freedom, the brothers reached Schwerin completely unscathed. Since the bridges across the Elbe River had been destroyed, however, they were unable to leave for two to three months. They found accommodations in the stables of an army barracks where they were able to mimeograph *Watchtowers* and have a *Watchtower* study every morning to prepare themselves spiritually for the work ahead. At the same time they took up the field ministry again, although circumstances forced them to do so in their prison uniforms. Finally they were able to continue their travels westward, once again to get in touch with relatives and to see what could be done in reorganizing the Kingdom work.

## A RECORD OF INTEGRITY

This report has endeavored to reconstruct an important phase in the modern-day history of Jehovah’s people. But only a small portion of the interesting things that brothers and sisters in Germany experienced during the National Socialistic rule of terror could be related. Many, many books would be necessary to report on everything that happened because the Witnesses held fast to true worship and upheld Jehovah’s name. May the individual experiences that have been related speak for the many that would also have been worthy of mention, not that humans, but, rather, Jehovah, should be praised and honored thereby. He it was who took steps at the right time to deliver his people as a group, even though he permitted many of them to lay down their lives for his holy name.

Anyone who spoke with those freed from tyranny in 1945 recalls how often they unitedly praised Jehovah in the words of [Psalm 124](#). They reflected on the wonderful *Watchtower* articles that had appeared at the outset of the persecution, with which Jehovah had prepared them for that difficult time. Now they understood what Jesus meant when he said they should not fear those who can destroy the body. They knew what it meant to be thrown into a fiery furnace or, like Daniel, into a lions’ den. But they also realized that Jehovah is mightier, making their foreheads harder than those of their enemies. Even outsiders recognize this and it is often emphasized when historians speak of this part of Germany’s history.

For example, Michael H. Kater in his *Zeitgeschichte* (History Quarterly), 1969, pamphlet 2:

“The ‘Third Reich’ knew how to deal with internal resistance only with brutal force and even then was unable to overcome the forces of rebellion among the German people, and was unable to master the problem of the Earnest Bible Students from 1933 to 1945. The witnesses of Jehovah emerged from their period of persecution in 1945 weakened but not broken in spirit.”

Also in a review of the book *Kirchenkampf in Deutschland* (Fight of the Churches in Germany), by Friedrich Zipfel, we read:

“Hardly an analysis has been made or a book of memoirs written about the concentration camps in which there is not a description of the strong faith, the diligence, helpfulness and the fanatical martyrdom of the Earnest Bible Students. This in contrast to opposition literature in general which was written before the fight Jehovah’s witnesses had before their imprisonment and which mentions them not at all or just in passing. The activity and persecution of the Bible Students is, however, a very strange case. Ninety-seven percent of the members of this small religious group were victims of National Socialistic persecution. One third of them were killed, either by execution, other violent acts, hunger, sickness or slave labor. The severity of this subjection was without precedent and was the result of uncompromising faith which could not be harmonized with National Socialistic ideology.”

How humiliated now was the Führer of the defeated German Reich! Göbbels had said of him on December 31, 1944: “If the world really knew what he would like to tell and give it and how deep his love is for his own people and for all of mankind, then it would immediately leave its false gods and praise him . . . a man whose purpose it has been to deliver his people. . . . Never has a false word or a debased thought passed his lips. He is truth itself.” But this man who sought to be a god committed suicide.

How humiliated too were those who had put their trust in him—for example, Himmler, who also considered Hitler to be a divinity and who was unscrupulous in carrying out his commands. It was Himmler who had made life for Jehovah’s faithful servants so very difficult for many years. For how much spilled blood must

he take the responsibility? In 1937 he braggingly told our sisters in Lichtenburg: "You too will capitulate, we will cut you down to size, we will hold out longer than you!" And how depressed he was after the collapse of the Nazi regime when he was fleeing and met Brother Lübke at Harzwalde and asked him: "Well, Bible Student, what happens now?" Brother Lübke gave him a thorough witness and showed that Jehovah's witnesses had always reckoned with the collapse of the Nazi regime and with their deliverance. Himmler turned away without a word, and shortly thereafter poisoned himself.

But despite the hard conditions, how those who worshiped Jehovah rejoiced! They had been privileged to prove their integrity to the Sovereign Ruler of the universe. During Hitler's rule 1,687 of them had lost their jobs, 284 their businesses, 735 their homes and 457 were not allowed to carry on their trade. In 129 cases their property had been confiscated, 826 pensioners had been refused their pensions and 329 others had suffered other personal loss. There were 860 children who had been taken away from their parents. In 30 cases marriages had been dissolved due to pressure by political officials, and in 108 cases divorces had been granted when requested by mates opposed to the truth. A total of 6,019 had been arrested, several two, three or even more times, so that, all together, 8,917 arrests were registered. All together they had been sentenced to serve 13,924 years and two months in prison, two and a quarter times as long as the period since Adam's creation. A total of 2,000 brothers and sisters had been put into concentration camps, where they had spent 8,078 years and six months, an average of four years. A total of 635 had died in prison, 253 had been sentenced to death and 203 of these had actually been executed. What a record of integrity!

## **RECONSTRUCTION BEGINS**

Immediately after the war, the brothers in the Swiss Bethel were the only ones who had contact with the German brothers. They, having heard of certain undesirable tendencies that existed in many congregations even after the release of the brothers from the camps, sent the following circular to the congregations.

"To all our beloved fellow servants in Germany

Dear Brethren in Christ,



"At last you are free from the Nazi yoke!—Some of you have suffered for years, either in prison or in concentration camps or by other types of persecution. . . .

"No one, however, who was considered worthy of special suffering for the Lord's name will become conceited about this and wear a martyr's halo or exalt himself above others who were not in prison or concentration camps. No one should brag to his fellow humans about his sufferings. Do not forget that many of the brethren who remained at home also had many problems and were under severe pressures. A Christian cannot choose his sufferings. The Lord determines or, rather, permits them.

"For this reason, dear brethren, let us not be unfair and take sides nor let us condemn anyone, who, according to our way of thinking, has compromised or was willing to do so. The Lord judges our hearts. Before him we are like an open book. . . .

"Brother Erich Frost from Leipzig is authorized to take over the direction of things in your territory. This arrangement is, however, according to the president's instructions, only of a temporary nature. Brother Frost will, as far as possible, regularly report to the president about the progress of the publishing work.

"The preaching work under the direction of the new president of the Society, Brother Nathan Homer Knorr, has been more thoroughly organized than ever and is making great progress! . . .

"Bible House Family in Bern signed Fr. Zürcher"

Brothers Frost, Schwafert, Wauer, Seliger, Heinicke and others, immediately after their release, began trying to regain possession of the Society's property with the thought of having the work once again directed from there. This later proved impossible because of the hostile attitude of the Russian authorities.

Brother Frost, who in the meantime had been appointed branch overseer, asked Willi Macco from Saarbrücken, Hermann Schlömer and Albert Wandres from Wiesbaden, and Brother Franke from Mainz to organize and take care of the congregations in those sections of West Germany where they had been regional service directors during the ban.

At the same time Brother Franke was endeavoring, in the vicinity of Stuttgart, to purchase paper that could be used for printing small editions of *The Watchtower*. Arrangements were also made for talks to be given over the radio from Stuttgart, Frankfurt and Saarbrücken, thereby calling the public's attention to the Kingdom message. Finally, Brother Franke rented two office rooms in Wiesbaden, and one week later a small room in the same house for living quarters.

At the end of 1945 Brother Frost went to Stuttgart from Magdeburg and discussed organizational questions with faithful brothers who were willing to take up full-time service as traveling servants or to work in Bethel. Since the Society was registered in Magdeburg in East Germany, it seemed to be necessary to open up a branch office in Stuttgart, in West Germany.

Soon Brother Frost headed for the Netherlands to meet Brother Knorr and to speak personally to him for the first time. He stopped off in Wiesbaden on his way and, after Brother Franke had shown him the two rented office rooms, he immediately decided to cancel the plans for Stuttgart and to open the office in Wiesbaden. That meant that the two office rooms and Brother Franke's small living quarters were to become the Bethel home, where soon twenty brothers and sisters were working and eating.

Approximately one year later Brother Franke, because of his internment under the ban, was offered a two-room apartment at Wilhelminen Strasse 42, by the city of Wiesbaden, so not only did Brother Franke move but Bethel did also. The larger of the two rooms was the Bethel home. By Jehovah's undeserved kindness, it was possible to rent another room in the same house, which was owned by a sister, and this served as an office. It was here that Brother Knorr made his first visit to the brothers in Germany.

The brothers had repeatedly called on the mayor, and although he had promised them rooms, yes, even an entire house, yet nothing had ever come of it. Now they took advantage of the visit of the president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, announcing it with emphasis to all the proper officials, especially, however, to the mayor, asking him what he thought they should tell the Society's president, who was an American, when he asked them what office space had been offered them for carrying out their responsibilities. They took advantage of Hitler's ban and their long years of imprisonment, pointing out to the officials the

responsibility they had voluntarily taken on to make reparations for the injustices that had been forced upon the Witnesses. How surprised the brothers were when the mayor said: "Then why don't you take the west wing of the building in Kohlheck?" It had been constructed for use as an air force barracks, but it had not been finished and used before the war ended. That was just the building they had their eye on and had tried several times to get, but without success.

Happy over this information, they excitedly looked forward to Brother Knorr's visit, during which the contract could be drawn up and legally signed by him as president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

## **CONVENTION IN NÜRNBERG**

While the brothers were busy trying to reorganize the congregations and provide them with spiritual food despite the scarcity of paper, their desire to have a large assembly grew. But organizing such an assembly at that time entailed solving many problems, not only in connection with the shortage of food and the lack of sleeping accommodations, but also in connection with the fact that Germany was divided into four military zones, and it was extremely difficult to travel from one zone to another. Despite this, Brother Frost asked Brother Franke to make arrangements for at least one district assembly in each zone of occupation and, if possible, to have one of them in Nürnberg in the American zone.

After the first attempts had failed, a brother personally went to the officials in Nürnberg and determined that there was a possibility of having an assembly there after all. Arrangements were made for the 28th and 29th of September. Suspense among the brothers grew ever greater when it was announced that the military government had finally offered us the use of the Zeppelinwiese in Nürnberg.

At this time the trial of the so-called "war criminals" was in process in Nürnberg and they were to be sentenced on September 23. This date had been set weeks ahead of time, and the world had been notified.

After it became possible to hold an assembly in Nürnberg, the brothers decided at the last minute to extend it by one day so that it would conclude on Monday, September 30. After reorganizing the special trains and making all other arrangements for this third assembly day, the radios and newspapers suddenly

announced to the world that the sentences handed down at the war-crimes trial in Nürnberg would not be made public until September 30. This raised problems, since the American military government was afraid there might be demonstrations in Nürnberg and therefore called a curfew. This meant that no one from the city would be able to attend the public talk on Monday. So it was rescheduled for Sunday evening at 7:30, with Brother Frost speaking on the subject "Christians in the Crucible." Indescribable was the joy of the 6,000 brothers present when they heard that an additional 3,000 persons from Nürnberg were present to hear this talk.

Although officials of the American military government at first tried to disrupt the third day of our assembly due to the sentencing of the war criminals on that same day, the brothers won out. After prolonged negotiations the military officials retracted their request. How could they prohibit Jehovah's witnesses, who for so many years had resisted those now standing trial, from concluding their assembly in peace and without disturbance?

Thus on Monday morning the brothers at the assembly, which bore the motto "Stronghearted for the Postwar Period," experienced another highlight when the talk "Fearless Despite World Conspiracy" was delivered.

Who can describe how the 6,000 assembled brothers felt when they realized how Jehovah had maneuvered matters? Think of it, after the collapse of the Nazi regime, Jehovah's witnesses, who have a true message of peace for mankind, were the first ones permitted to assemble together on this field that had once been Hitler's parade grounds. And can we imagine their reactions when they thought of the fact that on this very third day of their assembly death sentences were pronounced on those representing that murderous system that had tried to stamp out Jehovah's witnesses? Said the chairman at the assembly: "Just being able to experience this day, which is just a preview of the triumph of God's people over their enemies at the battle of Armageddon, was worth nine years in concentration camp." His statement was picked up by the press and carried all over the world.

## **RELIEF MEASURES FROM ABROAD**

In 1947 Brothers Knorr, Henschel and Covington were able to visit the brothers in

Germany. During their visit arrangements were made for an assembly to be held in Stuttgart, on Saturday and Sunday, May 31 and June 1. Since there were no halls available in the city, as everything was bombed out, a place for the assembly was arranged for in an adjoining suburb. There were approximately 7,000 present.

During this visit of Brother Knorr it became apparent to him that the Society's relief shipments of food and clothing should be continued. The brothers in Switzerland had contributed many gifts in the form of foodstuffs and clothing to relieve the German brothers in their dire straits, thus showing their brotherly love. But Brother Knorr felt so sorry for them that he decided to tell the brothers who would be assembling at the convention in Los Angeles in just a few weeks of their plight and to encourage them to contribute food and clothing. The German brothers, however, were not especially conscious of their plight, so happy and appreciative were they that Jehovah had prepared this spiritual feast for them, climaxed by Brother Knorr's being in their midst.

When he told the brothers in the United States of his observations in Germany and encouraged them to contribute foodstuffs, the brothers spontaneously responded with \$140,000.00, a sum used to buy 22,000 large food packages from the CARE organization to be sent to Germany. Additionally, they contributed 220 tons of clothing—suits, dresses, underwear and shoes, for men, women and children.

As soon as announcement was made that the shipment was on its way, preparations were made in Bethel for fast and smooth distribution. In a suburb of Wiesbaden they rented a room in a Gasthaus (an inn) where they sorted and distributed the clothing. Every publisher who had been active in the field ministry for six months—in other words, who had not reported just to get a CARE package—was registered, for there was a large and valuable food package awaiting each of them.

The distribution had hardly begun when mountains of letters poured into the branch office in which the brothers expressed their appreciation. It was touching to see with what appreciation the brothers accepted these gifts and how they felt called on to thank both Jehovah and the contributors, their brothers in America. Quite often someone would stop work to dry away the tears that these letters brought to his eyes. As an example, a father, after opening the package and

seeing its contents, knelt down with his twelve-year-old son and thanked Jehovah in prayer for this loving gift from his brothers.

Brother Knorr also made arrangements for nearly one and a half million copies of the books *“Let God Be True,” The New World* and *“The Truth Shall Make You Free”* to be sent to Germany as a gift. With the monies collected from the distribution of these books a foundation was to be laid, from which the branch office could work. Thus Jehovah took care of everything necessary that the work might get under way anew in Germany.

## **FORWARD DESPITE POSTWAR HARDSHIP**

The year 1948 began with a series of strikes in southern Germany and in the Ruhr territory protesting the poor food situation. Meat and fat rations had been further reduced. Whereas the UNO had declared a ration of 2,620 calories a day to be necessary, what could be obtained was far below this in some places—only 1,000 or perhaps as low as 700 calories. Nearly everyone was hungry, and it was getting worse, resulting in a general feeling of bitterness.

Nevertheless, Jehovah's people began the new year full of zeal and enthusiasm. A special meeting in each congregation was held on January 1 with a total of 38,682 in attendance, and during the same month 27,056 publishers, 2,183 more than in the month before, reported field service. It was the time for the annual *Watchtower* campaign to begin, but what we here in Germany really needed were personal copies of *The Watchtower* for ourselves. It was a problem, especially in view of the distressing conditions brought on by the paper shortage plus all the other difficulties. Brother Knorr made arrangements whereby a sufficiently large amount of *Watchtowers* were printed in Switzerland and sent to Germany so that during January, not only did every publisher have his own *Watchtower*, but every congregation was supplied a number above this amount, permitting many in regular attendance at the *Watchtower* study to obtain their own personal copy. So we were being provided with spiritual food.

At this time most German cities were nothing more than piles of rubble. This was the case with Cassel; it had been almost completely destroyed and the first estimates made by the planning commission, which was set up to take care of the clearing-off work, were that it would take twenty-three years just to get rid of the



rubble in the city. It was here that we planned to have an assembly. The city could give us nothing else for our assembly than the large Karlswiese, a meadow that had more than fifty large bomb craters. But the brothers with their concentration camp experience happily went to work, despite the oft-repeated skeptical comments of the officials. Using primitive methods, they carted some 10,000 cubic meters of stones and rubble from the destroyed houses in the neighborhood and filled the bomb craters. This took nearly four weeks.

These weeks proved to be a test, for hardly had the brothers begun to work when rain began to fall, and it never stopped until the assembly commenced. Although drenched, they did not allow either the hard work or the rain to dampen their spirits. When people told them it would be impossible to hold such an assembly on the Karlswiese in this kind of weather, they optimistically answered that once the assembly began they would have nice weather.

Right in the midst of the rapidly progressing preparatory work a currency reform was announced. Inconveniences of the most unpleasant kind were to be expected. On June 21 the new currency went into circulation, each citizen of the three western zones receiving for sixty old Reichsmarks forty Marks in the new currency. A month later they received an additional twenty Deutsche Marks. Bank accounts were reduced to a tenth of the old amount in Reichsmarks and were, in most cases, frozen for the moment.

The value of the new currency soon became apparent. Horded supplies suddenly became available for sale, and many necessary things that one had been without for years could now be bought in the stores. But our brothers were conscious of their spiritual needs and were willing to invest their D-Marks to attend the assembly. Many sold such valuable items as cameras, and so forth, to cover expenses. Jehovah's hand was not too short to help those putting Kingdom interests first. As an example, Sister Neupert from Munich reports: "My colony of bees was endangered since I had no sugar and could not afford to buy any, but to me Cassel was more important. And I was not disappointed. Upon my return I found that my bees had worked so zealously that I was able to harvest some 2,200 lbs. of honey that year."

When the responsible brothers from the branch office arrived in Cassel they were greeted with the words from [Isaiah 12:3](#): 'With joy you . . . will draw water.' The

brothers had written these words on a banner and hung it over the entrance to the meadows. Others, still busy drawing water out of the remaining bomb craters so that the ground would dry up more quickly, greeted them with their version of the scripture: 'With tubs you . . . will draw water.'

Seventeen special trains converged upon Cassel, and on Friday morning, after weeks of pouring rain, the sun beamed down from a clear blue sky upon more than 15,000 in attendance. Attendance reached 17,000 on the second day and climaxed at the public talk when the attendants counted 23,150 persons, not including the swarms of Cassel citizens standing in the streets around the assembly grounds. The Cassel newspapers spoke of "25,000 to 30,000 people at Karl's Meadow."

Even the mayor was present and gave a short speech to the brothers, whose work had greatly impressed him. The good weather prevailed and the Catholic police chief told the brothers, during a visit to the assembly site on the second day: "You seem to have a good number with that man upstairs!" Then after a pause he added: "A better one than we do."

One of the many highlights of this assembly was when each in attendance received a free copy of the book *"The Truth Shall Make You Free"* and two copies of the booklet *The Joy of All the People*. Another highlight was the field service. The brothers were taken by special trains to work all the towns in the vicinity, even as far as Paderborn, so that this bishop's city was completely worked in one day. At this assembly 1,200 new brothers and sisters were baptized.

The result of the willingness of Jehovah's people to put spiritual interests first was peace, unity and increase. During the convention month of July, 33,741 publishers reported service, and this rose in August to 36,526. The service year closed with an 83-percent increase. The number of congregations grew, and on October 15 a new division of circuits was made, there now being seventy.

It was also in 1948 that the first flatbed presses were set up in the Wiesbaden Bethel. Since a large shipment of paper had arrived at the same time as a gift from Brooklyn, it was possible to begin printing on a large scale. Two machines ran day and night for a long time. But many outsiders were curious as to how it was possible for us to get these two machines, since no firm was able to produce them

at that time. They were presses that had belonged to a former millionaire and had been badly damaged in a bombing raid on Darmstadt. After 1945 the iron parts were dug out of the rubble by this man and his office manager, and taken to the factory in Johannisberg on the Rhine where they had originally been made. Happy to have something for their workers to do, they completely restored these machines. Meanwhile, the secretary of this once rich printer, who soon became his wife, learned the truth and used her influence so that this man sold the Society the machines at an unbelievably low price.

Even before this the brothers had been able to produce some four to six thousand magazines monthly for nearly one and a half years in a small printing establishment in Karlsruhe. It had been a National Socialistic plant and was taken over by the American occupational forces to be put at the disposal of persons persecuted by the Nazi regime. Since Bethel members belonged to this group, this small printing establishment was turned over for their use on the condition that they would take over the management themselves. Erwin Schwafert was given the responsibility of managing and seeing to it that *Watchtowers* were printed there until we could continue the work in our own plant.

One special problem was distribution. Although the number of publishers grew monthly, the military government was unable to give us more paper. So we had to draw up a new distribution plan each month, whereby one *Watchtower* was available for every six or seven publishers. That was also one of the reasons why Brother Knorr put forth every effort to get the Society legally established in Wiesbaden as a branch organization of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Thus it would be possible quickly to supply paper from outside Germany to meet the brothers' ever-growing demand for study material. But they also needed literature for working from house to house. There had been but few publications available for the brothers up till 1948, mainly booklets, and these were being loaned out for one or two weeks.

In 1949, increasing paper supplies made it possible to step up the amount of printing considerably. There were 40,000 copies of the January 1, 1949, *Watchtower* printed and this figure grew, reaching 80,000 copies for the April 15 issue, 100,000 for the May 1 issue and 150,000 for the May 15 issue.

Whereas there were 35,840 present at the 1947 Memorial celebration in all four

zones of Germany, one year later there were 48,120, and in 1949 the number in attendance at the Memorial had risen to 64,537 persons. Here too there were sometimes problems to be solved. For example, in Holzheim near Göppingen the 1948 Memorial celebration was held under police "protection." How did this come about? Brother Eugen Mühleis explains: "The minister had been forbidden to celebrate the evening meal in the Evangelical Church because of an outbreak of typhus in the community. The director of the school where we had planned on holding our Memorial celebration now attempted to prevent us from doing so. The health department had granted us permission, but had laid down several restrictions to be met in order to prevent the spread of the contagious disease. A policeman was sent to attend our Memorial celebration to make sure that these restrictions were observed."

At the beginning of 1949 the Wiesbaden printery was enlarged; eight presses were at work, two of them running day and night. During the course of the year some one and a half million bound books were sent from Brooklyn, distribution of which created a broader basis for new return visits and Bible studies. The publisher ranks grew from month to month, with 43,820 reporting in August 1949. a 33-percent increase in publishers was achieved for the service year.

## **OPPOSITION IN COMMUNIST EAST GERMANY**

Quite different was the development of the work in East Germany and the Eastern sector of the city of Berlin, which, at the end of World War II, were occupied by Soviet Russia and governed by the Soviet military administration. Many of its military officers did not know much about Jehovah's witnesses, except that they had withstood brutal persecution by the Nazis. There was comparatively little interference in the beginning, but, as the congregations started to prosper and many people began to show interest in the Kingdom message, the Soviet military administration became distrustful of our work, as it seemed to be beyond their control. Often there were greater crowds at our public meetings than the attendance at the political meetings of the Communist party, which were fostered by the military government.

Local Soviet officers started openly to curtail the activities of the congregations and of individual publishers. Some of the clergy of Christendom saw their chance to show themselves good friends of the Communists. They lyingly slandered the

brothers as being opposed to the authorities and as influencing the people to a kind of passive resistance to the recovery effort of the military government for East Germany's desolated economy, by preaching God's kingdom as the only hope for mankind.

These interferences prompted the brothers working in the Society's office in Magdeburg to approach the headquarters of the Soviet military administration located in East Berlin. At first, their efforts were dealt with according to the generally practiced principle of "nothing forbidden, nothing allowed." But the brothers finally succeeded in obtaining a certificate from the headquarters confirming that Jehovah's witnesses were operating legally. Presenting this document at places where interferences occurred helped in some instances, but other officials seemed to feel that the headquarters was far away and that they were their own lords.

After the war, Berlin, the previous capital of the German Reich, was divided by the four allied victors into four sectors with partially independent and partially mutual government administration. Dissension became vehement when the Russians enforced a blockade on the Western sectors of Berlin after the economic reform that was initiated in 1948. The Western allies broke through the blockade by using their right to the air corridors that were not subject to controls, thus supplying the population in the three sectors with the necessities of life by building an "air bridge." By the time an agreement was reached and the Russians lifted the blockade, Berlin was definitely a divided city, East Berlin under Communist rule and West Berlin with certain ties to the Federal Republic of Germany.

A district assembly was scheduled to be held in Leipzig in 1948, but the Russian military officials refused to give permission. Plans were then made to use the beautifully situated Waldbühne (Forest Stage) located in the British sector of Berlin. There was no end to the difficulties involved. Not merely the currency reform and the bad weather; the most important question was, How will the thousands of persons from all over East Germany get into the blockaded city of Berlin? Finally we received permission to run special trains into the city, so, despite the critical political situation, almost 14,000 were assembled on the first day. On the third day over 16,000 were present, and the public lecture on Sunday afternoon was attended by more than 25,000. New publishers who symbolized

their dedication by baptism numbered 1,069. Jehovah proved to be a gracious host who prepared a table of fat things for his people at the very focal point of the struggle between two blocs of nations.

How was the Society's property in Magdeburg in Communist East Germany faring? The buildings at Wachtturmstrasse 17-19 had been returned in 1945 right after the end of the war and were already 95 percent restored, whereas about 90 percent of the one located at Leipziger Strasse 16 had been repaired. Our brothers had rebuilt the destroyed property, volunteering their services without pay. The Saxony State government's decision of June 24, 1949, returned the rest of the property, located at Fuchsberg 5-7 and Wachtturmstrasse 1-3, to the Society. That month the total number of publishers in East Germany being cared for by the branch office in Magdeburg reached 16,960.

There was a great demand for Biblical truth. Traveling overseers report that often 100 to 150 persons were present at public meetings in congregations numbering only 30 to 40 publishers. In large cities the attendance at the talks often reached upward of a thousand persons. Many Bible studies were started; in one congregation the publishers averaged 3.8. The traveling overseers did not always have an easy time of it. Some of them got around by means of old borrowed bicycles, some of which had no rubber tires, but only metal rims. They had long distances to travel. Then, too, there was the problem of ration cards. One circuit overseer reports that the certificate issued by the labor office designating him as a "preacher" was not extended, which meant he was without a ration card.

Another circuit overseer reports: "There were several spies in attendance at every talk. Once the brothers were not quite sure about a man who appeared in civilian clothes. Before the talk started I approached him and asked: 'Excuse me, officer, could you give me the correct time?' He did, and because he did not seem surprised at what I had called him we knew he was a policeman in civilian clothes."

The enmity of the Russian and German Communist officials continued to increase. A district assembly for the brothers living in East Germany was once again planned to be held in Berlin in the Waldbühne, from July 29 to 31, 1949. This convention was held under the shadow of gathering clouds of persecution, but it showed the determination of our brothers to continue serving Jehovah with a complete heart. Preparations were made as quietly and with as little fanfare as



possible. There had already been a number of Communist attacks against religious freedom in East Germany. For example, a circuit assembly in Saxony was canceled at the last minute and violence left some of the Witnesses injured.

We were able to arrange for eight special trains. Some 8,000 persons had already paid more than 100,000 D-Marks for tickets, when, just a few hours before departure, the trains were canceled. The railway refused to refund the ticket money before two weeks had elapsed. Thousands of Witnesses were waiting at the stations for the special trains, only to hear that they had been canceled. The police blockaded all the roads leading into Berlin and searched all the autos, buses and trucks for anyone going to the convention. But on the evening of the first day of the assembly there were at least 16,000 persons in attendance. The public talk on Sunday was attended by more than 33,000. The enemy's wicked attacks and efforts had worked out only to be a gigantic witness against them.

The dictatorial measures directed against us soon became known and, although the press was issued no invitation, numerous reporters showed up to write sensational stories about the Communists' attempts to keep the Witnesses from getting to Berlin. On Saturday evening the branch overseer, Erich Frost, read a resolution to the assembled thousands, and it was reported on that same evening over RIAS, the American radio station in Berlin. Brother Frost outlined their courageous stand with the words: "Is Bolshevism better than other systems? Do the Communists believe they must finish what Hitler started? We are just as unafraid of the Communists as we were of the Nazis!"

The resolution passed at the Berlin district assembly included a sharp protest against the undemocratic and unconstitutional bans and the limitation of religious services in Saxony and the confiscation of rooms used for such. This resolution was sent with an accompanying letter, dated August 3, to the top Soviet military administration of Germany in Berlin. Copies were also sent to 4,176 prominent public officials or those having to do with daily newspapers, radio stations, news agencies, and so forth, both in Berlin and in West and East Germany. So everyone's attention was called to the Communists' drive and to the steadfastness of true Christians. In August, a month after the convention, Jehovah's witnesses in East Germany reached a new peak of publishers, 568 more than had ever reported before!

The kindling of a campaign against Jehovah's witnesses continued to take on ever greater scope. Freedom of religion was restricted more and more. Bans against conducting Bible studies were issued, policemen broke up religious services, brothers were fired from their civil service or municipal jobs because of their religion. A petition pleading for a guarantee of true religious liberty was presented to the government of the German Democratic Republic on February 18, 1950. The result was more cases of unconstitutional breaking up of religious services, confiscation of literature and arrests of several leading ministers. On June 27, 1950, another petition from Jehovah's witnesses in East Germany was sent to the government, being directed to the Minister President Otto Grotewohl. Then the cruel hand of Communism struck hard.

Early on the morning of August 30, 1950, Communistic police forces under the command of two Russian officers stormed into our Magdeburg Bethel. They arrested all the brothers except one, whom they kept as "caretaker." The letter from the Ministry of the Interior notifying the Watch Tower Society in Magdeburg of the ban was dated August 31. But not until September 3 did the police present this letter to the lone brother left behind, the "caretaker."

Eyewitness reports from sisters in Bethel describe what happened on that morning of August 30: "Around 5:00 o'clock in the morning the alarm signal sounded. I dressed quickly. . . . As I opened the door to run downstairs, I was confronted by two policemen who said I should remain in my room. Then one of the officers came in and told me to open the wardrobe. I refused until he showed me his identification. They tore everything apart. . . ." How had the police got into the Bethel home? Another sister tells us: "I looked out the window in room 23 and noticed a policeman climbing over the gate. Others were already inside. The night watchman had refused to open the gate for them. I estimate that there were at least 25 to 30 policemen in the group, none of them in uniform."

Sister Bender, who served in the Magdeburg Bethel at that time and is still faithfully serving in Wiesbaden Bethel, relates her experience: "On August 30, 1950, between 4 and 5 in the morning the East German police came to the Bethel home. Everyone had to stay in their room, but toward 10 a.m. I slipped out of Bethel unnoticed by the police by going down the fire escape from the balcony of the first story and climbing through the fence between our's and the neighbor's

property. Although I saw police on the street, I came out of the neighbor's property casually and went to a brother's home where some of the Society's documents were kept. I picked these up and a brother drove me to Berlin." In this way it was possible to save some of the records.

All the literature was confiscated and taken away along with the Society's truck. The same thing was true of the foodstuffs stored in the kitchen. Only the sisters were allowed to keep their ration cards. An eyewitness reports: "In the meantime they had—as we observed—quietly taken away the brothers two by two. . . ."

A wave of persecution had set in. Upon coming to arrest one brother, the police were greeted by him dressed in the striped "Zebra clothes" he had been forced to wear in a Nazi concentration camp! Farce trials were conducted and once again the work of Jehovah's witnesses retreated underground.

Lothar Wagner was one of the brothers who was sentenced to a long prison term in 1950. He vividly describes how he was able to maintain his integrity during seven years of solitary confinement:

"August 30, 1950, I was arrested in Plau, Mecklenburg, and on October 4, 1950, sentenced to fifteen years in a penitentiary by the high court of the DDR in Berlin. Due to the unrest in Hungary in 1956 the sentence was reduced to ten years.

"These ten years (and six weeks of detention pending investigation, which were not deducted from the sentence) I spent in the penitentiary in Brandenburg-Görden. There I was released on October 3, 1960.

"During this time I spent seven years in solitary confinement. In the first three years the only contact I had with the outside world was one letter, the size of a half sheet of typing paper, consisting of fifteen lines, which I was allowed to write and receive each month—depending on whether the contents were approved by the police or not. Until 1958 work was considered a privilege—therefore I was not allowed to work. From 1958 it was considered a punishment—then I had to work.

"When one is in solitary confinement for so many years there is one main enemy, among many other vexations, against which one has to fight—the time. Time has to be conquered.

"I solved this problem of time in the following manner: Unity strengthens, this is also true of time. If the entire period of imprisonment totaling fifteen years is considered in one unit, one is nearly crushed by this volume of time, because it is simply beyond our imagination and this immense span of time confronts one like a monster. One has to try to gain the upper hand and make time submissive. When rulers of this world try to rule a large number of people they cannot master, they often follow the principle: divide and rule!

"With regard to time I applied this principle; I divided the time. I reckoned not with years or months, yes, not even with weeks or days, but, rather, at the most, with hours. In the morning at say 7:00 o'clock I didn't ask myself: What shall I do today? but, What shall I do until 9:00 o'clock?

"Suddenly everything looked different. One or two hours were not fear inspiring, I could easily keep the upper hand that long. But there was still another problem: With what should one fill out the time? Paper and pencil could not be obtained. The only real occupation was keeping the cell clean and eating. Even if one did both of these thoroughly and as slowly as possible still one could not fill out the entire day with them. Naturally all branches of Theocratic service, from personal study to international conventions, house-to-house service to public lectures, were shared in to the extent possible in thoughts. But despite everything there were often one or two hours of the day where there was nothing to do, and these were the most dangerous because, due to carelessness, despondency or dejection one could easily demolish all that one had laboriously built up the entire day.

"One day I discovered a 'clock,' which was a help to me for many years, in applying this dangerous, unproductive time in a useful way. I discovered that there were still two hours until dinner time. I walked back and forth in my cell, five steps forward and five steps back and while doing so I sang Kingdom songs. When I finished the 30th song the door opened and dinner was served. I had concentrated on the text of the songs and did not even notice that time had slipped by. That was a discovery that saved me from experiencing monotony and dejection for many years. For several weeks I concentrated on completing my storehouse of Kingdom songs. When I did not know the text exactly I simply made up one or two stanzas. I used melodies of worldly songs that I liked to make Kingdom songs by thinking up a theocratic text. Thus I finally had 100 Kingdom

songs in my collection, all numbered, which I could sing. One song lasted exactly four minutes, so I could figure out exactly how many songs I had to sing to span a certain amount of time. Throughout the years I sang at least two hours daily, that would be thirty Kingdom songs. I thus once had the possibility to sing the whole day from morning until evening when I didn't feel like doing anything else. What an abundance of encouraging and upbuilding thoughts our Kingdom songs contain! When one uses the text of each song as an outline one can easily make a talk from each song—a further possibility to fill out time without suffering spiritually. One can truly say our Kingdom songs are food at the proper time.

“I am very thankful to Jehovah that with the help of his spirit I was able to remain spiritually strong these ten years of being cut off from his organization. I would like to encourage everyone to show proper appreciation for *all* spiritual food that is given us since we do not know just how it will be of value to us at some time. If we regularly consume the spiritual food at the proper time, it will help us in times of special difficulties, in which we stand alone, to put our trust in Jehovah and endure steadfast on his side.”

From September 1, 1955, to August 31, 1961, the Society maintained a beautiful branch office in West Berlin, which made it possible to give better attention to the special circumstances of this divided city. It also proved to be a good arrangement to have close organizational ties between West Berlin and East Germany.

These ties between Jehovah's witnesses living in East Germany and East Berlin and the West were adversely affected by a turn of events in 1961 over which the Witnesses personally had no control. Shortly after the war, an ever-growing stream of refugees left East Germany and went to West Berlin and West Germany, generally out of dissatisfaction with the regime's policies. Since the East German authorities did not permit their citizens to travel out of the country, they crossed the “green border” secretly as refugees. The authorities tried to counteract this flow of refugees by increasing border controls, checking persons in trains and on the streets as well as through stricter laws against “fleeing the republic.” A comparatively convenient way to cross into the West was through the Eastern sector of Berlin. By the first half of 1961 the flow of refugees had increased to 20,000 persons a month; in July it surpassed 30,000. A total of more than three million residents, one sixth of the total population, had left their property and

possessions in East Germany and fled as refugees to West Berlin and West Germany.

To prevent a further deserting of their territory the Communist authorities took rigorous action. Early on the morning of August 13, 1961, they began to build a wall of cement and barbed wire, with a leveled-off "death strip" and automatic alarm systems and guards, ready to shoot, along the 50-kilometer-long border between the Eastern and Western sectors of the city as well as along the 120-kilometer-long border between the three Western sectors and East Germany. This tightened the noose around West Berlin and suddenly stopped the heavy traffic that, despite controls, was still moving between the two sections of the city. Jehovah's witnesses living in East Germany could no longer obtain literature by traveling to West Berlin or Communicate with the branch office there, nor could they attend assemblies held in West Germany.

Of course, obtaining literature had not been easy even before. Taking literature into eastern Germany was prohibited by the Communist authorities, and was therefore punishable. When the Society's Biblical literature was found on brothers during checks made at the border, they had to reckon with long prison terms. Such trips, therefore, required strong faith and a complete trust in Jehovah.

From the start of persecution in 1950 until the "Berlin Wall" was built in 1961, East German authorities arrested 2,897 of Jehovah's witnesses; 2,202 of them, including 674 sisters, were haled before courts and sentenced to a total of 12,013 years in prison or an average of five and a half years apiece. During their imprisonment thirty-seven brothers and thirteen sisters died due to maltreatment, sickness, malnutrition and old age. Twelve brothers were originally sentenced to life imprisonment, but this was later reduced to fifteen years.

The East German brothers quickly adjusted to the new situation brought about by the "Berlin Wall." Other means were employed to supply them with the necessary spiritual food and they continued their Christian ministry with great zeal. Obviously the Communist authorities had not expected this. They tried to infiltrate the organization with spies who visited persons known to be Jehovah's witnesses and claimed they were brothers sent by the Society to help adjust the work to the changed circumstances. But the brothers were well trained; they immediately recognized the individuals as spies.



In the course of the years the number of brothers arrested and sentenced dropped sharply. Only fifteen new arrests of Jehovah's witnesses occurred in 1963 and nine in 1964, whereas during the same two years ninety-six and forty-eight brothers were released after long prison terms. In the summer of 1964 four brothers who had been imprisoned for many years had an unexpected surprise. Originally sentenced to life imprisonment, they were suddenly released and sent to West Germany. They arrived just in time for an assembly. They felt they were dreaming. Just a few days before, they had been in the bleak penitentiaries of East Germany where one only dreamed of being able to assemble with the brothers in freedom. And now they were experiencing the sudden fulfillment of this desire hidden in their hearts. Two of the brothers, Friedrich Adler and Wilhelm Engel, were members of the Bethel family in Magdeburg. Friedrich Adler was arrested and imprisoned in 1950, two months before the work was banned, whereas Wilhelm Engel was one of those arrested when Bethel was seized on August 30, 1950. Brother Engel was turned over to the Red Cross on the Berlin Sector border due to his poor health. He was immediately taken to a hospital where he died a few weeks later. These brothers had already been in prison up to nine years under Hitler's regime and had thus endured all together twenty-three years' imprisonment because of their faith. Friedrich Adler again took up Bethel service, this time in Wiesbaden. He was able to look back over a long and eventful life in full-time service, having already served back in the 1920's as a pilgrim brother. Weakened by his long imprisonment, he ended his earthly course in December 1970.

In November 1964 the Communist Authorities delivered the brothers in East Germany a new blow. Military conscription had been introduced for all citizens some time previous to this. The young brothers had refused military service, but they were generally handled with consideration and their attitude was respected. But now suddenly, under cover of early morning darkness, 142 brothers were arrested. This unexpected change in the handling of their cases constituted a test of faith for these young brothers. They were put into a work camp. First, an attempt was made to get them to work as "construction soldiers," a type of substitute military service, but this they unitedly refused. Despite punishment they remained steadfast, and such coercion attempts were dropped. They had to perform hard work in railroad construction, working from four in the morning until nine at night. When not working they received instruction intended to

convince them that the responsible men among Jehovah's witnesses were Western agents. Most of the young brothers had become acquainted with the truth after the work had already been banned and the authorities were astounded that they would find young people fearlessly standing up for the principles of true Christianity despite the massive indoctrination of youths with Communistic, atheistic ideas.

During 1965 the watching and molesting of our brothers by spies and secret agents of the ministry for state security increased sharply. Many homes were searched, brothers were stopped on the streets and interrogated. Secret bugging systems were installed in automobiles and homes, yes, even in the brothers' bedrooms. The authorities endeavored to give the brothers the impression that every move they made was known to the authorities.

Of course, the authorities were successful in gleaning many a detail by "listening" to the guileless conversations of the brothers. When hearings were conducted the secret police tried to make it appear that the information they had gathered about the work had been received from the "capitalistic world," thus inferring a certain thoughtlessness among the brothers there. They were thereby trying to sow seeds of doubt and mistrust concerning the Governing Body and the brothers in the Society's offices. But the brothers did not let themselves be disturbed by this and, in the course of time, they began to realize ever better how tight the spy net was that had been drawn around them.

This became especially apparent when one November day in 1965, early in the morning, the homes of brothers all over the country were occupied by groups of eight officers and searched for several hours. Fifteen brothers who were considered "ringleaders" were arrested and kept in jail for between nine and thirteen months until they were charged and brought up for trial. In 1966 they received sentences of up to twelve years, the average being more than seven years.

While these brothers were being treated like desperate criminals, the secret police were hunting down others who had been preaching the good news and gathering together to worship Jehovah in small groups just as the brothers sentenced had been doing. They made them the offer that if they would file a report on their activity and submit the names of those participating in the ministry—this for the

purpose of state security—they could continue to meet together in small groups, have their Bible literature and keep in touch with their brothers in other countries. But the brothers rejected the authorities' insincere offer. One of the officers moaned: "We thought that we had taken away your leaders, but now we have only succeeded in losing sight of your work."

In the course of 1969, after approximately four years of imprisonment, fourteen of the fifteen brothers arrested in the 1965 campaign were suddenly released. The majority were sent to West Germany. The last one of the group was arbitrarily kept in prison for another year, until September 1970.

Since then the secret police have changed their tactics, and presently they are making use of the regular police forces and other state agencies to make trouble for the brothers. In some areas the police have sentenced the brothers to pay high fines for supposedly disturbing the peace when they preached or met together. A number of brothers were successful in having these fines suspended by appealing to the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom and demanding to be able to face the witnesses whose peace had been disturbed. Such witnesses of course did not exist.

In other localities the authorities have tried to put pressure on the brothers by evicting them from their homes and putting them in substandard housing, giving them low-paid secular work and denying younger brothers specialized training for various jobs.

Since the work in East Germany was sealed off from the outside world when the "Berlin Wall" was built in 1961, many thousands have heard the good news, learned the truth, dedicated themselves and have been baptized. They are a living proof of the fact that Jehovah's spirit cannot be restrained, even by human-built walls and fortresses. Thus Jehovah's witnesses in East Germany who have been working and living under ban and great difficulty for more than twenty-three years now can say along with King David: "And by my God I can climb a wall."—[Ps. 18:29](#).

## **SUCCESSFUL PREACHING CAMPAIGNS**

In West Germany, during this time, the Kingdom message was being brought

prominently to the attention of the public again and again. The *Watchtower* campaign in 1949 laid a foundation for getting spiritual food into the homes of tens of thousands of persons on a regular basis. Everyone attending the *Watchtower* study and all interested persons should be offered *The Watchtower* on a subscription basis. Did we reach our goal? In the 1949 service year 59,475 subscriptions were obtained, a figure we have never attained since then!

Street work with the magazines was another means by which the vital message of God's kingdom was kept before the public eye. This activity was also a thorn in the eyes of the clergy. In Catholic Bavaria attempts were made to prevent magazine street work by passing laws and traffic regulations. It was claimed that certain religious groups felt themselves molested. But they were silenced when the states of Bavaria and Hesse released a statement to all police officials in 1954, that the ministry as carried on by Jehovah's witnesses is not subject to legal restrictions.

A special campaign to carry the Kingdom message into all unassigned territory was planned for the summer months of July and August 1956. The brothers worked with unprecedented enthusiasm, covering at least 80 percent of all unassigned territory. There were very few persons in West Germany that year who were not visited by a minister of the good news. However, there was often opposition, especially in rural areas, as we can see from the following report: "The entire village was in an uproar. Young people followed us from house to house and introduced us with the goal in mind of causing the people to dismiss us at once. It was impossible to place even one single book in the whole village."

A week later the same congregation worked another village in the same territory. The publishers met at the railroad station, discussed the daily text together and then discussed introductions to be used in their witnessing. A man joined the publishers and began to listen. He was given a witness as one of Jehovah's witnesses would have done at the door. When the brother finished, the stranger pulled out his wallet and said: "I would like to have those books." As it turned out, this man lived in the village where a week before not a single book had been placed. Despite the opposition in rural areas where the clergy still had a certain influence on the village folk, 166 percent more books and 60 percent more magazines were placed during these two months than during the same months of the year previous.

Besides such campaigns there were others featuring tracts and booklets. At the 1958 "Divine Will" international convention in New York an impressive resolution was adopted. Plans were made to distribute it world wide in December and seventy million copies were printed in fifty languages; seven million were printed in German. These tracts were handed to the householder personally, with just a few short words of introduction. When priests in Catholic areas realized what was being distributed they would warn the villagers. But after four weeks of zealous activity there was reason for being joyful and rejoicing because, since this was a good opportunity to introduce new ones to the field ministry, most of the congregations had been able to report an increase in publishers of from 10 to 50 percent and an 11.6-percent increase was reached throughout the entire country.

### **GIVEN "THE TONGUE OF THE TAUGHT ONES"**

As the number of willing workers continued to pour into Jehovah's organization, he made provision through his 'faithful slave' class to give them all, young and old, the needed training. The result has been that his servants have come to have "the tongue of the taught ones." ([Isa. 50:4](#)) This has contributed to the increase. The world has also taken note of the effect this training has had on the Witnesses. A newspaper reported, for example, that eleven-year-old Ingo Rücker had won a reading contest in Recklinghausen. "Only outsiders would be surprised, for basically there was no way of preventing his victory. Eleven-year-old Ingo Rücker had been gathering plus points for the contest for three years: In the ministry school of Jehovah's witnesses . . . He was the best reader at the Josef School, although it was a close contest right down to the finish line between him and a young girl who also attends the ministry school." A circuit overseer wrote after visiting the congregation in Lörrach: "Something special happened Tuesday evening. As the assignments for the sisters were being presented an elderly sister suddenly went to the stage. She not only carried on a fluent discussion, without any notes but just her Bible in the hand; she also observed all the rules of speaking. When we asked the sister her age, she told us that she had turned ninety just a few weeks before."

As an important provision in this progressive training the first class of the Kingdom Ministry School was started on November 13, 1960, to provide advanced

training for overseers of the congregations. This has now been expanded to three schools, in Wiesbaden, Hamburg and Munich.

## **1948—AND TWENTY YEARS THEREAFTER**

There were years of sizable increase in the number of proclaimers of the good news, but also some years with no increase. The 1948 service year ended with an 83-percent increase. The monthly average of hours was sixteen per publisher. The increase held on during the following years; in 1949 a 33-percent increase, in 1950 a 23-percent increase, and in 1951 a 26-percent increase.

Meanwhile the economic tension and difficulties continued and the number of unemployed climbed to more than two million at the middle of February 1950. At the end of September 1952 the number unemployed was still 1,249,000. From then on, unemployment began to decrease, slowly at first, then more rapidly.

Another change also became evident. The number of active congregation publishers continued to grow from year to year, but the number of full-time preachers of the good news did not keep pace. To the contrary, in 1955 there were 200 fewer pioneers than in 1950, whereas there were 21,641 more publishers, almost twice as many as in 1950. The low point in this trend was reached in 1956; whereas in 1950 4.4 percent of all publishers were in full-time service, it had now dropped to 1.6 percent.

In time Germany became a nation of plenty. There was full employment and the widely acclaimed "economic miracle." This affected the thinking of some who were associated with Jehovah's witnesses. From April to July of 1963 there was a decrease in the number of publishers and in hours spent in the field ministry. In July there were 6,000 fewer publishers active and over 40,000 fewer hours were spent in the preaching work than in April.

The majority of the brothers, of course, persevered in the ministry and enjoyed the blessing of their work. From 1965 to 1967 there were 9,325 persons baptized, but still the average number of publishers in 1967 was only 400 more than in 1965, whereas the peak in publishers was 437 fewer! It was apparent that some publishers had slacked their hands in their desire for material things and had slowed up in zeal, having given room to desire for what the world could offer.



Others even became inactive. Then, too, in the 1964 service year, for example, 569 persons were disfellowshipped, most for immorality. Only 95 persons asked to be reinstated.

The service year 1968 began to see a change. The hard fight being waged against materialism was keeping the losses from being as high as previously. Good increase was made on all fronts. We now had 466 special pioneers, the number of regular pioneers had risen to 2,651 and we reached a peak of 7,163 serving in the full-time preaching work sometime during the year. The service year ended with a 3-percent increase after three service years with no increase at all. Things were once again beginning to move ahead.

From July 4 to August 11, 1968, we had eleven district assemblies. The book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* was released. Thanks to the help of the Brooklyn office, we were able to present each publisher with his own personal copy plus five additional copies for distribution. In an August campaign 139,471 books were placed, a new peak. The demand was great. Up until the end of March 1973 in our factory in Wiesbaden we have printed 2,900,115 copies in German and 1,715,338 in four additional languages. Because of its effect and its blue color the book was soon dubbed "the blue bomb" by many.

Interesting experiences in connection with the effectiveness of this book could already be heard at the next circuit assemblies. One sister related: "When we received our *Truth* books, little did I suspect what a valuable Bible study aid was being placed in our hands. I at once began to ask the people in my hometown during my house-to-house service if they would be interested in learning within a short time the principles of the Bible with the help of this book. How astonished I was when a very religious lady, of whom I knew that she and her sister led the church choir, said: 'It has always been my desire to get acquainted with the Bible. I never had an opportunity to do so and I am happy that you are willing to help me.' I could hardly believe it. Now she has been studying regularly for two months and is making wonderful progress. . . . A quite prominent and well-to-do lady was likewise willing to study the Bible with me. Last week she told me: 'This book really speaks for itself. I have never read such an understandable book.' Now a regular chain reaction has set in. Full of zeal I went to my neighbor to help her too. A woman has started to study this month and no fewer than four persons are

waiting until a new shipment of books gets here and we can make arrangements for a convenient time . . . I can tell you, in our town it is going the rounds that the fashionable thing to do nowadays is to study the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses."

It became easier to start Bible studies with this new book, as seen by the fact that in 1969 the number of Bible studies increased to 47,691. During the year 6,678 persons were baptized, the best figure since 1955. In May of 1970 we reached 86,222 publishers, which was not only the fifth peak of publishers in a row but also the first time that we had ever had more publishers in May than in the preceding month of April. In October of that year we reached another peak, this time 86,489 publishers. This meant an increase of 7,718 publishers in comparison to the publisher figure for 1968. This fast increase mirrored Jehovah's blessing upon his earthly servants. Certainly the *Truth* book has played not a small part in bringing about this increase.

## **CONVENTIONS SHARE PROMINENTLY IN GIVING THE WITNESS**

Conventions have played an important part in making known Jehovah's name and in increasing the number of Kingdom publishers in Germany. From the first convention after the war, held in Nürnberg with 9,000 in attendance, and the 1948 Cassel assembly, down to the conventions of modern days with over 100,000 persons in attendance, many organizational changes have been made, problems have been solved and new ideas developed.

In Frankfurt/Main from August 24 to 26, 1951, delegates from twenty-four nations gathered for the "Clean Worship" assembly. But before 34,542 delegates could assemble on Friday morning many a nervous hour was spent solving problems. Of what nature? A large kitchen in the city had promised to cook our meals, but as convention time drew ever nearer they became ever more unwilling to do so. What could be done? The Society bought 51 large gas, coal and steam kettles, each holding 300 liters, and built their own kitchen. Since necessary material was not available to convert all the kettles to gas, however, they all had to be converted to steam. Days of welding were necessary to hook up the pipes, which had been bought from junk dealers with the greatest of difficulties. Some of the kettle walls were paper thin and had to be patched. The next big question was where to get the necessary steam. We negotiated with the railroad company in Frankfurt and were able to obtain usage of a locomotive that was parked on an unused siding.

This locomotive could not produce low-pressure steam, however, and so we had to find a way to reduce the steam pressure to one twenty-fourth of what it was. The problem was finally solved, the steam was turned on and within fifteen minutes the steam kettles were ready to be used. The press was amazed at what we had done. Its reports plus the zealous preaching activity of our brothers contributed to having 47,432 persons in attendance to hear Brother Knorr's public talk "Will Religion Meet the World Crisis?"

The big event of 1953 was undoubtedly the "New World Society" assembly in New York. How enthusiastic the 284 brothers who were able to attend from Germany were! The New York convention found its counterpart in Germany in the two assemblies held in Nürnberg for West Germany, and one week later in Berlin for the brothers there and those from East Germany. In Nürnberg thirty-eight tents were provided for mass accommodations and more than a thousand private tents. Attempts were also made to obtain private rooms, which created problems for the city's clergymen. The *Nürnberger Evangelischen Gemeindeblatt* printed an article entitled "Caution with the Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses." It read in part: "A special problem has arisen in that some Evangelical church members have in good faith provided free accommodations for visiting Jehovah's witnesses. Those who have done so have in most cases been asked by church officials to cancel their invitations." But this turned out to be a boomerang; because of this many persons became even more willing to offer us accommodations. The clergy truly did have a problem!

Two years later the large "Triumphant Kingdom" international convention was held in the same city on the same grounds at the Zeppelin Meadows. It was a very impressive convention; sixty-two nations were represented. An extraordinary stage dominated the tremendous Zeppelin Meadows. The stone tribune was 300 meters long and a stairway of 75 steps across this long tribune led up to a hall of 144 pillars running along the entire length of 300 meters.

Besides the accommodations obtained in hotels and in private homes there was a giant tent city providing mass accommodations for 37,000 persons. Large tents, each capable of sleeping 600 persons, were set up. Sacks filled with straw served as mattresses.

On Friday morning a large baptism was held with 4,333 persons symbolizing their

dedication by water immersion. Among these new brothers were some from East Germany, for more than 4,000 had come from there. On Friday evening those in attendance heard a Communist-controlled radio program threaten all of Jehovah's witnesses from the east, attending the Nürnberg or Berlin assemblies, with arrest upon their return. But thousands refused to let themselves be intimidated.

How many attended Brother Knorr's widely advertised talk? The magazine *Neue Illustrierte*, dated August 20, wrote: "The 'Zeppelin Meadows,' upon which Hitler once declared he would wipe out 'Jehovah's witnesses,' was packed out." And it was, for 107,423 persons listened attentively to the subject "World Conquest Soon—by God's Kingdom." More than twenty thousand inhabitants of Nürnberg had come. Just as the president started his concluding comments it began to rain—to pour—but the audience stayed in their seats, and by the time Brother Knorr had finished it had stopped raining. Then something happened that those present will never forget. A tremendous rainbow appeared in the heavens. What a stirring sight! In farewell Brother Knorr waved his handkerchief, and in answer the entire field was transferred into what appeared to be a field of waving white flowers. Many had tears in their eyes. Strengthened in faith and better equipped for their further service, the thousands in attendance began their trip home.

The next large international assembly was held in 1961 in Hamburg, Germany's largest port. Not a few headaches were involved. The main problem was the convention grounds, which was nothing more than a large plot of lawn (80,000 square meters) located in Hamburg's largest city park. The convention began to the accompaniment of falling rain, and the meadows soon turned into fields of mud. And it continued to rain, from the very first right up to the last day! It was inspiring to see tens of thousands streaming onto the convention grounds every day and listening to the program under a canopy of umbrellas. Indeed, to the astonishment of the newspaper reporters and cameramen present, the convention was not seriously affected by the rain and mud. The newspaper *Hamburger Morgenpost* wrote: "Almost all of them look happy, even in mud and rain, this a person must grant them. They are colorfully dressed. There is an astonishingly large number of young people among them. . . ." A police official told a representative from the convention office: "Even though it is the largest convention ever held in Hamburg, we are not at all worried about everything going off smoothly. We know you could easily get along without us, but we think it

is good training for our officers and we hope you have no objections to our being among you.”

This was the last opportunity for our East German brothers to attend a convention, several thousand being in attendance. Several days later the “Berlin Wall” was built and the Iron Curtain was drawn even tighter.

The rains played havoc with the park’s lawns, but after the convention was over, the entire area was covered with new topsoil by the brothers and the lawn was replanted. Now the park was even more beautiful than before, and this to the benefit of the officials and populace of Hamburg. The way their park meadow was replanted and the way our brothers persevered during the rain made a deep impression upon Hamburg’s inhabitants.

In 1963 the “Everlasting Good News” convention went around the world, touching down in Germany in Munich, the capital of Bavaria. The Theresian Meadows served as our “Kingdom Hall.”

The preparatory work, as well as the convention itself, made a deep impression on Munich, including its businessmen and officials. A policeman assigned to work at the convention grounds told a brother: “You know, I like being here. I feel at ease. I like your people’s sincerity and their straightforwardness. It’s just the opposite to the Eucharistical convention held here two years ago.” Comparisons of this nature were often made by honest observers who were frank in their observations. Such impressions last. Three years later a Munich businessman told a brother that his fellow workers in a large Munich department store noticed that whenever large conventions were held in Munich there was always an increase in shoplifting. During our convention they were prepared for such an increase and were astonished when the convention had no effect upon this at all. They were thoroughly puzzled. So it was that this “Everlasting Good News” convention, like all the earlier conventions, helped make known Jehovah’s name, his purpose and his people.

## **TO PEOPLE OF ALL NATIONS THE GOOD NEWS MUST BE PREACHED**

Germany is only a part of the worldwide field in which the good news must be preached. ([Mark 13:10](#)) The Watchtower Bible School of Gilead has been very

successful in training missionaries and sending them out to various parts of this worldwide field. The first Gilead graduate sent to Germany, Filip Hoffmann, arrived in 1949.

Four more followed in 1951. In looking back now they often amuse themselves as to how Brother Frost must have felt when they showed up in Bethel. He had asked Brother Knorr to send some of the graduates to Germany in order to help with the work. But when he saw those four, they must have looked like youngsters to him, all of them being in their early twenties. In the years that followed, a total of thirteen foreign missionaries finally received assignments to Germany. Eleven of these are still in the full-time ministry in various countries (one died in her assignment in 1972 after twenty years of faithful service) and nine of these eleven are still busy at work in Germany, either in Bethel or in the traveling ministry. Three of them came from Switzerland in 1956 when the translation department was transferred from Bern to Wiesbaden, and they are still serving in this capacity.

Alice Berner belongs to this group of long-time servants. Let us hear briefly what an interesting career she has had: "I started my full-time service in Switzerland in January 1924 as a pioneer. But after about six months I was called to Bethel in Zurich. We soon were transferred to the new Bethel home in Bern. There in the course of the years I was occupied in many different departments. In 1932 a new assignment brought me to Paris, from where I had an interrupted service, as sometimes I had to leave the country and do some pioneer service in Belgium because the authorities in France would not give me a permanent visa. In this way I remained about three years in Paris. In 1935 the Society took part in the International Exhibition in Brussels where I had the privilege of serving at the literature stand. From there I was called back to Bern, where I worked again for ten years until I received the great call in 1946 to attend the 8th class of Gilead. Afterward again back to Switzerland for another ten years of joyful service, whereupon three of us received a new assignment to Germany. I wish to thank Jehovah for all his goodness toward me, letting me spend a happy and rich life filled with wonderful opportunities in his service." Sister Berner is still an encouragement to the members of the Bethel family as she daily carries on her work of translating.

The missionaries that were sent to Germany proved to be an incentive for many



German brothers to want to attend Gilead School and go into missionary work. Until now 183 graduates of Gilead have been provided by Germany. Of these, twenty-nine returned to their home country as special pioneers, traveling ministers or members of the Bethel family, whereas the others have been sent to new homes scattered around the entire earth.

For those interested in attending Gilead School, a special arrangement was made to help them improve their knowledge of English. By the spring of 1973 there were sixteen English-speaking congregations in Germany, numbering 450 publishers and 130 full-time servants. Those preparing for Gilead are assigned to these congregations where they can participate in the meetings and go into the field ministry in English-speaking territory. Since the formation of the first English congregation in Wiesbaden in 1967 some 250 persons have been baptized.

During the past few years some ninety-five special pioneers from Germany have been sent into European or African countries to continue their special pioneer work there. Some were willing to serve in foreign fields, although having no knowledge of the foreign language they would need. They were willing, however, to put forth special efforts to learn a new language that they might serve in countries where their help was needed. Four special pioneers, for example, received a one-week crash course in French at the Wiesbaden Bethel before being sent to Tchad, Africa. They naturally had to continue studying the language there, but they were soon able to make themselves understood and could continue their ministry under the glaring African sun.

In recent years there have also been large numbers of persons from other lands that have moved into Germany. Because of the booming economy, the government decided to bring in foreign workers, and the good wages offered enticed many a "guest worker" to come. In 1962 there were already 700,000 persons from Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, Spain and Portugal, employed here, in most of which countries the preaching work had been carried on only under the greatest of difficulties. This was a new field of activity for us and it continued to expand. The statistics for September of 1972 showed 2,352,392 foreigners employed in Germany. Of these, for example, 474,934 are from Yugoslavia and 511,104 from Turkey.

Many brothers were willing to learn foreign languages so as to be able to help

these people to hear and understand the Kingdom message. The hunger for truth was truly great among these guest workers and many interesting experiences were had. A circuit overseer reported obtaining some Spanish literature, and placing over a hundred booklets and six books in a comparatively short time. He said: "The majority of the Spaniards to whom I offered the booklets took all fifteen different ones I had available."

Foreign-language congregations were soon formed, the first one being a Greek congregation in Munich on May 1, 1962. By May 1973 there were 1,560 Greek-speaking publishers divided into two circuits. The first Spanish congregation was formed in Frankfurt in 1964, and the first Italian congregation in Cologne. By the summer of 1973 the Spanish circuit had 660 publishers and the Italian circuit reported 1,000 publishers plus 45 full-time servants. We also have Turkish and Yugoslavian groups. For many the "economic paradise" they were seeking in Germany has turned out to be a much more valuable "spiritual paradise."

After learning the truth many of our new brothers return to their native lands filled with the desire to take the truth to their relatives and neighbors. For example, a brother from Sicily was baptized in Cologne in October 1965. In December he went to visit his family and naturally spoke to them and to all his relatives and acquaintances about the truth. At the end of April 1966 he had to return to Germany to have his passport stamped. But he reported that he had found four persons so deeply interested in the truth that he must return home immediately to continue studying with them. His goal was to start a congregation book study there. No preaching had ever been done in that village. The nearest one of Jehovah's witnesses lived some one hundred kilometers away.

### **EXPANSION—AS VIEWED BY THE BETHEL FAMILY**

The Watch Tower Society's branch office in Wiesbaden has been kept busy as a result of the work done by Jehovah's witnesses throughout Germany. Since it is from here that their literature supplies come, the brothers are keenly interested in it, and large numbers come to tour the Bethel home and factory. The brother who works at the reception desk can tell you how, especially on holidays, thousands of visitors are taken on tours through the Bethel home and factory. Once over 4,000 came. There were fifty-one buses standing out front! Brothers from foreign countries also enjoy stopping in to visit us. Some years ago a gentleman took a

tour of Bethel and was afterward encouraged to start a Bible study. Correspondence developed between a brother in Bethel and this certain gentleman, who later accepted the truth, was baptized, went into full-time service and today serves as a circuit overseer.

Those who actually live and work at Bethel have enjoyed many blessings over the years. They have seen the Society's facilities enlarged, new work undertaken, special activities prepared for—and it has been their privilege to be at the hub of all this activity. At times others too have been asked to help out.

In the winter of 1951/52, for example, construction was started on a new addition to enlarge the branch facilities. This kept the brothers busy all day and sometimes up into the night, in snow, rain and wind. About twenty brothers were called into Bethel to help out. Evenings, after their regular working hours, many members of the Bethel family also shared in the construction work.

There was real rejoicing then when a rotary press arrived from the Swiss branch office in Bern. But this was not just any rotary press! It was the first press used for printing books back in the Magdeburg branch office in 1928. After the Nazi ban it was taken to Prague, Czechoslovakia, from where it was taken a few years later to Bern so as not to fall into the hands of the Nazis. Now it was once again back in a German branch office and today, despite its age, it is still busy printing books or up to 7,000 magazines an hour.

Another cause for joy was the appearance of the German *Awake!* magazine in its 32-page edition on January 8, 1953. Starting with this issue, distribution of this magazine began in Germany. It did much to increase the brothers' zeal for magazine work.

The Bethel home in Wiesbaden kept expanding. In 1956 there was a peak of 50,530 publishers and they distributed some 1.3 million pieces of literature. The next service year the peak was 56,883. Brother Knorr arrived in Wiesbaden at the end of November 1956 on a flying visit of less than twenty-four hours. The reason? He himself explains in his published report in the English *Watchtower* of May 1, 1957. "Here too the purpose of the visit was to work on the expansion problem. Our Bethel home and present factory are too small and we called in an architect, a brother. With him we worked all day in designing a larger factory and Bethel

home. The Society was able to purchase some property from the city of Wiesbaden, and after considerable discussion the city authorities consented to our changing the location of a street, thus making it possible for us to put our new structure right up against our present one, relocating the street beyond our new building. . . . The building will be sufficiently large to take in some new presses, now being built, its high ceiling giving us plenty of headroom."

Instead of having the traditional "Richtfest" with its drinking (held after the framework of a building is completed), a tasty meal was prepared for the workers and the building officials and served in the dining room of the Bethel home. They were waited on by our brothers and seated at tables covered with white tablecloths. They heard a talk in explanation of the purpose of the building, Jehovah's witnesses' activity in general, and how the financial end of the building project had been handled. Members of the Bethel family presented a musical program. Most of the guests got an altogether different opinion of Jehovah's witnesses and their activity. The delicious food served and the way all were treated as equals was a matter of discussion among construction workers in Wiesbaden for years thereafter. At the conclusion each of them was given a book and a booklet as a gift. Some of the workers who due to prejudice had not attended the supper came the next day and asked if they might at least have the gift book. That they had missed the meal was their own fault; now it was up to them to take in spiritual food with the help of the gift publication.

In January 1959 the various departments began moving into the new building.

Meanwhile, as Günter Künz, the factory overseer, relates, "we continued to receive better equipment for producing books, magazines and other printed material. In 1958 we received the bindery machines that formerly had been used in Bern, Switzerland. It was possible to bind up to 5,000 books per day. In the course of the years Brother Knorr gave permission to replace most of these machines, which had already been in use for about forty years." In that way by 1973 it was possible to increase the book production greatly.

The brothers in the production office once figured out that in the last months of 1966, when 61,622 copies of the *Babylon* book, 500,796 copies of "*Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie*" and 98,885 *Yearbooks* were printed, if stacked on top of one another these would have made a tower reaching fifteen kilometers

skyward. That was a thrilling accomplishment. Production often ran at top speed to provide the congregations with the necessary literature. In the spring of 1968, twenty-two additional workers were temporarily called into Bethel to help finish the book *Did Man Get Here by Evolution or by Creation?* The bookbindery worked in two shifts and 10,000 books were produced daily. They were at once sent to the congregations so that this new book might be used during the May campaign to let the people know the truth on this subject. The hard work paid off, as we placed 136,525 books, the highest figure since 1963.

In 1968 Brother Knorr visited Wiesbaden twice. His first visit was in June, and, to the joy of the family, he announced that a new rotary press and three new machines for the bookbindery were being purchased for our factory. Shortly thereafter two of these machines were installed and put into operation. During his November visit Brother Knorr made extensive arrangements to increase the amount of work we were doing in the factory. The brothers began to work in two shifts, some fifteen to twenty working at night. Brother Knorr had called to our attention the importance of keeping up spirituality, so a special congregation was formed for the benefit of the brothers on the night shift, who otherwise could not have attended the meetings. Their meetings were held during the day. Book production picked up and we were able to take over the production of books for the Dutch, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish brothers. With additional new machines some 20,000 books could be produced daily in two shifts. The year 1969 was to be another busy and productive year, with production running at top speed and reaching peaks never before attained.

"It Is Later than You Think" was the title of the special German *Awake!* dated April 8, 1969. Orders constantly poured in from the congregations, and more and more magazines had to be printed. In fact, our factory printed 10,241,250 copies. The brothers on both shifts were even willing to work overtime, for besides the magazines a large number of books had to be produced (by the end of the 1969 service year 3,343,304 books, six times as many as in 1966). Our machines ran practically around the clock. For several months we worked in two shifts, ate in two shifts and slept in two shifts. It was a very busy, but also very gratifying and happy time.

The brother at the pioneer desk was very happy when he discovered that 11,454

temporary pioneers had been active in April, besides 1,959 regular pioneers.

During the 1969 service year about forty million pieces of literature—magazines, books and booklets—were produced. Shipping some 2,000 tons of magazines and books, besides other pieces of literature, was, of course, expensive. To cut down on these expenses we began delivering literature with our own trucks on December 3, 1959. Albert Kamm, who has been in this department from the very beginning, relates: "People everywhere are interested in knowing what we have in our trucks: The police, filling-station attendants, customs officials, even persons we stop to ask directions of. They are always astonished when we tell them the truck is full of *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. When you tell them in the course of conversation that we have five of these large trucks and two somewhat smaller ones, and that they are all full of magazines, then you can see the amazement on their faces. A person can often give a good witness. When we return two weeks later, many still cannot completely grasp the fact that *The Watchtower* is already back again."

Wiesbaden is centrally located and so our trucks have eleven routes in Germany. The long trips cover some 750 to 950 miles. Each truck travels about 70,000 to 80,000 kilometers yearly. Books printed in Wiesbaden are also delivered to Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and Austria.

While the factory was running at top speed, additional construction work was done during 1969. The attic section of the older part of the building was converted into thirteen new rooms. The work was done by brothers happy to spend their time, strength and abilities at Bethel on a temporary basis. Furniture for the rooms, such as beds, cabinets, and so forth, was built in our carpenter shop.

Despite this construction work the Bethel home was still too small. In May of 1970 Brother Knorr and Brother Larson, the factory overseer in Brooklyn, visited us for about a week. While checking through the home and factory Brother Knorr decided that it would be in the best interests of the work to enlarge. This meant a great deal of work for Richard Kelsey, who had started serving as the new branch overseer in the fall of 1969. A contract was made with a firm to do the main construction work, whereas interior work was to be done by the brothers. In the carpenter shop Ferdinand Reiter readied everything for making furniture to furnish the new rooms. This was nothing new for him, for away back in 1947 he



had already helped out in providing the naked skeleton of the present old building with windows and doors. Meanwhile, he has got somewhat older but, despite his eighty years (the next to the oldest member of the family), he is still quite robust and works every day, setting a good example. Young brothers even say, "It's hard to keep up with Ferdinand."

This expansion was truly necessary. In April 1971 a new peak of 89,706 publishers was reached, with 145,419 present at the Memorial. In June we had the best average in hours since 1954. Up until the end of the 1971 service year we had placed nineteen million Bibles, books, booklets and magazines. That meant, on an average, one Bible study help for each family in West Germany and West Berlin.

February 11, 1972, was a memorable day. Why? At 10:00 o'clock in the morning the first copies of the German edition of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* arrived from Brooklyn. How great our joy! Arrangements were at once made to have a Bible campaign during May and June. News releases were handed to the newspapers by the congregations in their territories. These articles helped to call everyone's attention to the *New World Translation*. Some headlines read "Rush to Obtain New Bible Translation," "96,000 Ministers to Carry on 'Bible Campaign,'" "Jehovah's Witnesses Bringing Every Family a Bible." Even religious newspapers and magazines reacted and helped, in their own way, to call the attention of their church members to this Bible. The *Evangelische Gemeindeblatt* for Württemberg, for example, wrote: "The first edition of the German translation has been printed in the unusual quantity of 1 million copies. The demand for Luther Bibles here in Germany runs at some 500,000 copies a year. Jehovah's witnesses certainly have not planned on taking care of their needs for Bibles for years to come. With their usual industriousness it is to be expected that they will use this new publication for an extensive campaign. . . . In addition to the Bible, which only costs 5 D-Marks, . . . the buyers are encouraged to have a Bible study and the sellers offer to conduct such a study in the home of the buyer." The *Katholische Sonntagsblatt* published the same article. The release of the *New World Translation* and its distribution was truly a highlight in the 1972 service year.

By the beginning of the 1973 service year there were 95,975 proclaimers of the good news in West Germany and West Berlin, and production of literature to supply their needs reached new peaks. During the service year seventeen new

books were printed and bound in the Wiesbaden factory; some of them were for Germany, and others were for the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands. You can imagine the thrill that the Bethel family felt when the production was totaled up—more than 3,500,000 books in just one year!

And good results have been seen in the lives of those who received these publications. A twelve-year-old lad, for instance, was so moved by what he learned that he asked the Witness who was studying with his mother and him to take him along in the field ministry. The Witness explained, of course, that first he would have to get out of Babylon the Great, having his name removed from the list of church members. The very next day during school recess the boy, feeling the urgency of the matter, went to the city office to fill out the required form. The official said that the boy should come back another time, since he could not attend to the matter then. That afternoon when school was out he went back to the office. Again the official tried to put him off, saying that his mother must sign the form, so he would have to come some other time. The boy urgently requested the official to call his mother on the phone and ask her to come now. The official made the call, but simply suggested that she come at some convenient time with the boy to see about the matter. At that the lad protested loudly into the phone: “No, mother, come down right away!” She did, bringing along her younger son. The forms were filled out and signed. Then she said: “Well, since we are here, we may as well get out too.”

In the Society's office the brothers watched with keen interest the reports that came in during the year. There were 150,313 present for the Memorial in West Germany and 7,911 in West Berlin. Month by month there was a marked increase in the number baptized. By July there were 5,209, to compare with 3,812 for the same time the previous year. At the end of the 1973 service year, this had reached the grand total of 6,472 more persons who had taken their stand on Jehovah's side. By that time, 98,551 persons in West Germany and West Berlin were sharing in publicly proclaiming God's kingdom as the hope of mankind.

## **PEACE ON EARTH—BUT ONLY BY GOD'S KINGDOM**

Back in 1939 Adolf Hitler had chosen “Peace” as the motto for his annual Reich's party day. Memorial coins and special stamps were issued for this “Reich's Party Day of Peace.” But the celebration was canceled because of the outbreak of war.

Thirty years later, in August of 1969, on the Zeppelin Meadows in Nürnberg, that is to say, on the same grounds where the “Reich’s Party Day of Peace” was to have been celebrated thirty years previously, the “Peace on Earth” International Assembly of Jehovah’s Witnesses was held.

A grand total of 130,000 delegates was provided some kind of lodging at this assembly. To make this possible, a year ahead of time the Witnesses rented over 60,000 square meters of tent, so they could erect forty-eight large tents. About a year and a half ahead of time they had also asked the city of Nürnberg to rent them all the schools and athletic halls in the city to use as dormitories. During the early autumn of the previous year preparatory work was also undertaken for the cafeteria.

When the assembly got under way, there were delegates on hand from seventy-eight different countries. The convention program itself was presented, not only in German, but also in Greek, Croatian, Dutch, Slovenian and Turkish. Here people had met together from all parts of the globe and they were dwelling together in peace, enjoying the warm bonds of Christian brotherhood.

From the gigantic stone tribune, where Nazi Party leaders had once dreamed of a “thousand-year reign,” Brother Knorr delivered to 150,645 listeners the public talk “The Approaching Peace of a Thousand Years.” But he was not encouraging his audience to dream about what men might claim that they could do. He was pointing to the only means by which lasting peace will ever come to mankind, namely, the kingdom of God in the hands of his Son Jesus Christ. And he showed from the Scriptures that the incoming of that era of peace is near at hand!

## **PREPARATION FOR DIVINE VICTORY**

With firm conviction that the time is immediately ahead of us when God will be victorious over all his enemies, Jehovah’s witnesses planned a series of international assemblies for 1973 featuring the theme “Divine Victory.” Two of these assemblies were held in Germany, with delegates present from at least seventy-five lands. On the final day, when the discourse “Divine Victory—Its Meaning for Distressed Humanity” was delivered at the Rhine Stadium in Düsseldorf, there were 67,950 in the audience. For the same talk at the five-day assembly in Olympia Park in Munich, there were 78,792 on hand. A total

attendance of 146,742!

It was in Munich fifty years earlier that Hitler had made a bid for power in his "Beer Hall putsch." Now he and his Nazi regime are gone, but Jehovah's witnesses, in ever-increasing numbers, continue to point confidently to the triumph of God's kingdom.

It was also in Munich that athletes from many lands had competed in the Olympic Games in 1972. The event was called a "Peace Festival," but, as the world looks back, what many recall most vividly is the bloodshed that took place, reflecting the world's nationalistic strife. Calling this to mind, a reporter wrote in the *Münchner Anzeiger*: "As I stood on the empty tier of the stadium one day before the beginning of the 'Divine Victory' assembly and was impressed by the willingness of helpers working here (altogether there were 7,000) I automatically had to think of September 5, 1972. At that time violence and murder slipped into the grounds. In these days it is the faithful, who, according to their conviction, try to arouse that which is good and noble in their fellowman." Jehovah's witnesses were not there in Olympia Park to compete, each one trying to prove that he or his nation was better than the others. Rather, they "walk in the name of Jehovah" the "God who gives peace." Love for him is what brought them from many nations to this assembly, and it is that same love that moves them unitedly to magnify God's name and to look forward to the day when it will be vindicated of all reproach.—[Mic. 4:5](#); [Rom. 15:33](#).

It was emphasized at these assemblies that it is vital for each one to 'keep close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah,' the "day" when God will execute judgment on the wicked and reward his servants, the "day" of divine victory. ([2 Pet. 3:11, 12](#)) They were reminded that, in imitation of Jesus Christ, they must individually prove themselves victors over the world if they are to enjoy divine favor when that "day of Jehovah" arrives. ([John 16:33](#)) They must not allow themselves to be cast into the mold of the world, doing things in its way, nor may they allow personal indifference or fear of the world's reaction to cause them to hold back from doing the will of God.

Jehovah's witnesses did not leave the assembly feeling that this is a time to slow down in their preaching, since the Divine Victory is now so near. To the contrary, they were encouraged to make full use of the remaining time, and they were

supplied with equipment with which to work. A program was outlined for intensive international distribution of a tract bearing the headline "Is Time Running Out for Mankind?" They were provided with a new book bearing the stirring title "God's Kingdom of a Thousand Years Has Approached." They also received the book *True Peace and Security—From What Source?*, which focuses attention on the great issue of universal sovereignty, an issue that confronts every intelligent creature. Already they are sharing this information with other people. Regardless of what conditions may develop in this troubled world before the end comes, Jehovah's witnesses have made it their resolve to press on in their God-given work, preaching the good news of His kingdom.

Over the years, Jehovah's witnesses in Germany, as elsewhere, have been put to the test. It has come as no surprise to them. They know that their Lord and Master Jesus Christ suffered persecution at the hands of wicked men, and they expect the same. ([John 15:20](#)) Jehovah's witnesses clearly understand the issue. They know that Satan the Devil has challenged the rightfulness of Jehovah's sovereignty. He has openly charged that those who serve Jehovah do so, not because of any love for God, but selfishly, with a view to personal gain. Satan has inferred that, when put under pressure no one will prove to be a loyal supporter of Jehovah's sovereignty, and that adversary of God and of man uses humans who yield themselves to him to try to prove his side of the issue.—[Luke 22:31](#).

In contrast, Jehovah's witnesses appreciate that everything that they have and all their hopes for the future are because of Jehovah's undeserved kindness. Moved by genuine love for their Creator, they count it a privilege to prove their integrity to him, regardless of the personal cost. Because they refuse to compromise with an ungodly world, many have experienced the loss of employment and their homes. Some have endured the loss of their children and their marriage mates. Others have been beaten into unconsciousness with steel whips, starved to death or executed by firing squads.

But in all of this, who has come off the victor? Not the Devil. Nor the world that lies in his power. Instead, it is Jehovah's Christian witnesses, who have put their faith in the only true God and in his Son. As the apostle John wrote: "Every child of God is victor over the godless world. The victory that defeats the world is our faith, for who is victor over the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

(1 [John 5:4, 5](#), *The New English Bible*) True, some of them died at the hands of the enemies of God, but, having the hope of being joint heirs with Christ in his heavenly kingdom and living during the time of his presence, they were, “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” resurrected to immortal heavenly life—victorious over the world. (1 [Cor. 15:51, 52](#)) Others, with hope of earthly life in God’s new order, were temporarily laid to rest, with the conviction that God, who cannot lie, will restore them to life under the righteous rule of his kingdom. Thousands more, with the help of God, have survived the cruel onslaughts of Satan and his visible agents. Many of these are still alive, still preaching the good news, still proving their loyalty to Jehovah. And it is their determination to continue in that faithful course no matter what tests they may face in the days ahead.

May all who read this report be encouraged thereby to faithful endurance. Keep in mind these inspired words of the apostle Paul: “Let us exult while in tribulations, since we know that tribulation produces endurance; endurance, in turn, an approved condition; the approved condition, in turn, hope, and the hope does not lead to disappointment; because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy spirit, which was given us.” ([Rom. 5:3-5](#)) May your response to God’s love move you to make the doing of God’s will the most important thing in your life, having full confidence in the Divine Victory now so near at hand.

### **[Picture on page 192]**

Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen

SS Barracks

Roll-Call Courtyard

Cell-Building

Isolation

### **[Picture on page 193]**

Gas Chamber



Place of Execution

Delousing Station

**[Picture on page 214]**

Building obtained by the Watch Tower Society in Wiesbaden

**[Picture on page 243]**

Watch Tower Society's Bethel home and printery in Wiesbaden, in 1973.

**[Picture on page 250]**

"Divine Victory" assembly in Düsseldorf (above) was attended by 67,950; the one in Munich (below), by 78,792




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## 1975 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses

## Part 1—United States of America



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**Part 1—United States of America**

Our narrative begins in the mid-nineteenth century. Covered wagons still roll across the open plains, carrying settlers to remote sectors of the American West. Vast herds of bison or buffalo—some twenty million in 1850—yet roam between the Appalachian and Rocky Mountain ranges.

The devastating Civil War ravages the land and takes its deadly toll from 1861 to 1865, followed by an era of industrialization. In 1869 the first transcontinental railway comes to completion. During the 1870's the electric light and the telephone first come on the scene. The electric streetcar facilitates urban travel by the 1880's, and by the century's end a few automobiles noisily proclaim their presence.

What the religious climate of this era would be was unpredictable, to say the least. Charles Darwin had espoused the theory of man's evolution in his 1859 work *Origin of Species*. As evolution, higher criticism of the Bible, atheism, spiritism and infidelity assailed organized religion, the Roman Catholic Church held the first Vatican Council (1869-1870), thus making an effort to strengthen her weakening position. Various other groups eagerly anticipated the imminent *fleshly* return of Christ—but in vain.

Yet, “the conclusion of the system of things” was approaching. Surely “wheat”—true Christians—must exist somewhere in God’s earth-wide field under cultivation. But where?

### **‘A DAY OF SMALL THINGS’**

It is about 1870; the place, Allegheny City, Pennsylvania. Allegheny, which later became a part of Pittsburgh, is a city of many churches. One evening a young man of eighteen is walking along one of Allegheny’s streets. By his own later admission, he had been “shaken in faith regarding many long-accepted doctrines” and had fallen “a ready prey to the logic of infidelity.” But tonight he is attracted by some singing. He enters a dusty, dingy hall. His object? In his own words, “to see if the handful who met there had anything more sensible to offer than the creeds of the great churches.”

The young man sat and listened. Jonas Wendell, a Second Adventist, delivered the sermon. “His Scripture exposition was not entirely clear,” our listener later remarked. But it did something. He had to admit: “It was sufficient, under God, to reestablish my wavering faith in the Divine inspiration of the Bible, and to show that the records of the Apostles and the Prophets are indissolubly linked. What I heard sent me to my Bible to study with more zeal and care than ever before.”

The inquisitive young man was Charles Taze Russell. Born in Allegheny on February 16, 1852, he was the second son of Joseph L. and Ann Eliza (Birney) Russell, both of Scottish-Irish descent. Charles’ mother, who had dedicated him to the Lord’s work at birth, died when he was a lad of nine. But at an early age Charles received his first impressions of religion from his Presbyterian parents. Eventually he joined the nearby Congregational Church because of its more liberal views.

As a mere boy of eleven years, Charles entered a business partnership with his father, the youngster himself writing the articles of agreement under which their enterprise operated. At fifteen he was associated with his father in a growing chain of men’s clothing stores. In time, they had stores in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and elsewhere.

All along, young Charles was a sincere student of the Scriptures. He wanted to

serve God to the best of his ability. In fact, once, when he was twelve years old, his father found him in the family store at two o'clock in the morning, poring over a Bible concordance, heedless of the hour.

Growing older, Russell was spiritually troubled. Especially was he concerned about the doctrines of eternal punishment and predestination. He reasoned: "A God that would use his power to create human beings whom he foreknew and predestinated should be eternally tormented, could be neither wise, just nor loving. His standard would be lower than that of many men." (1 John 4:8) Nonetheless, young Russell continued to believe in God's existence. His mind beleaguered by concern over doctrine, he examined the various creeds of Christendom, studied leading Oriental religions—and experienced grave disappointment. Where was truth to be found?

By the time Russell was seventeen, a later associate says that this is the way he reasoned, namely: "There is no use in my trying to find out anything reasonable about the future from any of the creeds or even from the Bible, so I'm just going to forget the whole thing and give all my attention to business. If I make some money I can use that to help suffering humanity, even though I cannot do them any good spiritually."

It was while young Russell had such thoughts that he stepped into that dingy hall in Allegheny and heard the sermon that 'reestablished his wavering faith in the Bible's divine inspiration.' Approaching several young men of his acquaintance, he told them of his intention to study the Scriptures. Soon this small group—about six in number—began meeting weekly for systematic Bible study. At their regular gatherings during the years 1870 to 1875, the religious thinking of these men underwent profound changes. With the passing of time, Jehovah blessed them with increasing spiritual light and truth.—Ps. 43:3; Prov. 4:18.

"We came to recognize," wrote Russell, "the difference between our Lord as 'the man who gave himself,' and as the Lord who would come again, a spirit being. We saw that spirit-beings can be present, and yet invisible to men. . . . we felt greatly grieved at the error of Second Adventists, who were expecting Christ in the flesh, and teaching that the world and all in it except Second Adventists would be burned up in 1873 or 1874, whose time-settings and disappointments and crude ideas generally as to the object and manner of his coming brought more or less

reproach upon us and upon all who longed for and proclaimed his coming Kingdom.”

Earnestly endeavoring to counteract such erroneous teachings, in 1873 twenty-one-year-old C. T. Russell wrote and published at his own expense a booklet entitled “The Object and Manner of the Lord’s Return.” Some 50,000 copies were published and it enjoyed a wide distribution.

About January of 1876, Russell received a copy of the religious periodical *The Herald of the Morning*. From the cover, he identified it with Adventism, but its contents were a surprise. The editor, N. H. Barbour of Rochester, New York, understood that the object of Jesus Christ’s return was not to destroy but to bless all families of the earth and that his coming would be thieflike and not in the flesh, but as a spirit. In fact, from Biblical time-prophecies Barbour thought Christ then was present and that the harvest work of gathering the “wheat” and “tares” (“weeds”) was already due. Russell arranged a meeting with Barbour and, as a result, the Pittsburgh Bible class of about thirty persons became affiliated with Barbour’s slightly larger Rochester, New York, group. From his own funds Russell contributed money to print the then nearly suspended *Herald*, becoming coeditor of the journal.

At the age of twenty-five, in 1877, Russell began selling out his business interests and went into full-time preaching activity. He then was traveling from city to city delivering Bible discourses at public gatherings, on the streets and in Protestant churches. Because of this work, he became known as “Pastor” Russell. He determined to invest his fortune in the promulgation of the work, devote his life to the cause, prohibit collections at all meetings and depend on unsolicited contributions to continue the work after his own money was exhausted.

In 1877, Barbour and Russell jointly published *Three Worlds, and the Harvest of This World*. This 196-page book combined information about Restitution with Biblical time prophecies. It presented the view that Jesus Christ’s invisible presence and a forty-year period opening with a three-and-a-half-year harvest dated from the autumn of 1874.

Very noteworthy was the striking accuracy with which that book pointed to the end of the Gentile Times, “the appointed times of the nations.” ([Luke 21:24](#)) It

showed (on pages 83 and 189) that this 2,520-year period, during which Gentile or non-Jewish nations would rule the earth without interference by any kingdom of God, began with the Babylonian overthrow of the kingdom of Judah in the late seventh century B.C.E. and would end in 1914 C.E. Even earlier, however, C. T. Russell wrote an article entitled “Gentile Times: When Do They End?” It was published in the *Bible Examiner* of October 1876, and therein Russell said: “The seven times will end in A.D. 1914.” He had correctly linked the Gentile Times with the “seven times” mentioned in the book of Daniel. ([Dan. 4:16, 23, 25, 32](#)) True to such calculations, 1914 did mark the end of those times and the birth of God’s kingdom in heaven with Christ Jesus as king. Just think of it! Jehovah granted his people that knowledge nearly four decades before those times expired.

All went well for a while. Then came the spring of 1878. Barbour expected that the living saints on earth would then be caught away bodily to be forever with the Lord in heaven. But it did not happen. According to Russell, Barbour “seemed to feel that he must of necessity get up something new to divert attention from the failure of the living saints to be caught away en masse.” He soon did so. “To our painful surprise,” says Russell’s account, “Mr. Barbour soon after wrote an article for the *Herald* denying the doctrine of the atonement—denying that the death of Christ was the ransom-price of Adam and his race, saying that Christ’s death was no more a settlement of the penalty of man’s sins than would the sticking of a pin through the body of a fly and causing it suffering and death be considered by an earthly parent as a just settlement for misdemeanor in his child.”

In the September issue of the *Herald* appeared Russell’s article “The Atonement,” upholding the ransom and contradicting Barbour’s error. Until December 1878 the controversy continued in the journal’s pages. “It now became clear to me,” wrote Russell, “that the Lord would no longer have me assist financially, or be in any way identified with, anything which cast an influence in opposition to the fundamental principle of our holy religion.” So, what did C. T. Russell do? He continues: “Therefore, after a most careful though unavailing effort to reclaim the erring, I withdrew entirely from *The Herald of the Morning*, and from further fellowship with Mr. Barbour.” But this was not enough to show his “continued loyalty to our Lord and Redeemer.” Hence, further action was taken. Writes Russell: “I therefore understood it to be the Lord’s will that I should start another journal, in which the standard of the Cross should be lifted high, the doctrine of the Ransom defended



and the Good Tidings of great Joy proclaimed as extensively as possible.”

C. T. Russell took it as the Lord's leading that he give up traveling and begin publishing a journal. Thus in July 1879 the first issue of *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence* made its appearance. Now known world wide as *The Watchtower*, this magazine has always upheld the Biblical doctrine of the ransom. As Russell once wrote: “From the first, it has been a special advocate of the Ransom; and, by the grace of God, we hope it will be so to the end.”

The journal's beginning was a “day of small things,” as its first issue consisted of only some 6,000 copies. ([Zech. 4:10](#)) C. T. Russell, chairman of the Pittsburgh Bible class, was the editor and publisher. Five other mature Bible students served originally as regular contributors to its columns. The magazine was dedicated to Jehovah and to the interests of God's kingdom. Reliance was placed upon God, as indicated, for instance, when it was said in the second issue: “‘Zion's Watch Tower’ has, we believe, JEHOVAH for its backer, and while this is the case it will never *beg* nor *petition* men for support. When He who says: ‘All the gold and silver of the mountains are mine,’ fails to provide necessary funds, we will understand it to be time to suspend the publication.” Never has the publication been suspended. Instead, its printing has soared to an average each issue of more than 8,500,000 copies by late 1974.

Firm determination to uphold and declare Biblical truth had resulted in divine blessing for those Bible students of the 1870's. Despite the growth of many religious “weeds” in the worldwide field, God had acted to identify the “wheat” or true Christians. ([Matt. 13:25, 37-39](#)) Undeniably Jehovah was calling persons “out of darkness into his wonderful light.” ([1 Pet. 2:9](#)) In 1879 and 1880 C. T. Russell and his associates founded some thirty congregations in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, Delaware, Ohio and Michigan. Russell himself arranged personal visits to each congregation. His program called for one or several Bible meetings with each group.

Those early congregations were called “ecclesias” (from the Greek *ek·kle·si'a*, meaning “congregation”) and at times were spoken of as “classes.” All congregation members voted congregationally on certain matters and also elected a board of elders, responsible for directing congregational matters. The ecclesias were linked together by accepting the pattern of activity of the

congregation in Pittsburgh, where C. T. Russell and other *Watch Tower* writers were elders.

Jesus Christ 'preached release to imprisoned captives.' (Luke 4:16-21; Isa. 61:1, 2) If honest-hearted ones of the nineteenth century were to gain God-given freedom, religious error had to be exposed. *Zion's Watch Tower* was serving that purpose. Yet, something else helped to fill the need—"Bible Students' Tracts" (also called "Old Theology Quarterly"), written in 1880 and thereafter by Russell and his colleagues. These tracts were provided free for distribution by *Watch Tower* readers.

C. T. Russell and his associates believed they were in the time of harvest, and they were few in number—only about one hundred strong in 1881. But people needed liberating truth, and by God's undeserved kindness they were going to receive it. "Wanted 1,000 Preachers" was the striking title of an article in *Zion's Watch Tower* of April 1881. To those able to give one half or more of their time exclusively to the Lord's work, it was suggested: "That you go forth into large or small cities, according to your ability, as Colporteurs or Evangelists, seek to find in every place the earnest Christians, many of whom you will find possessed of a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge; to these seek to make known the riches of Our Father's grace, and the beauties of His word, giving them tracts." Among other things, these colporteurs (forerunners of today's pioneer publishers) were to obtain *Watch Tower* subscriptions. Of course, not all *Watch Tower* readers could be full-time preachers. Yet, those who could not devote full time were not left out, for they were told: "If you have a *half* hour, or an hour, or two, or three, you can use it and it will be acceptable with the Lord of the harvest. Who can tell the blessings which may flow from one hour's service under God's direction."

The desired thousand preachers did not then answer the call to action. (During 1885 there were about 300 colporteurs.) But Jehovah's servants knew that they should preach the good news. Fittingly, *Zion's Watch Tower* of July and August 1881 stated: "Are you preaching? We believe that none will be of the little flock except preachers. . . . Yes, we were called to suffer with him and to proclaim the *good news* now, that in due time we might be glorified and perform the things now preached. We were not *called, nor anointed* to receive honor and amass wealth, but to spend and be spent, and to *preach* the good news."

In that same year—1881—C. T. Russell completed two large pamphlets. One was entitled “Tabernacle Teachings.” The other—*Food for Thinking Christians*—exposed certain doctrinal errors and explained the divine purpose.

Originally the printing of tracts and *Zion's Watch Tower* was done almost entirely by commercial firms. But if literature distribution was to expand, and if the Bible Students (as Jehovah's witnesses were then known) were to receive contributions to carry on the work, some sort of society was required. So, early in 1881, Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society was established as an unincorporated body with C. T. Russell as its manager. He and others generously contributed some \$35,000 to get this printing organization into operation. During 1884 the formerly unincorporated Society was incorporated as Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society, Russell serving as its president. Today this religious corporation is known as the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.

“The purpose for which the corporation is formed,” said its charter, “is, the dissemination of Bible truths in various languages by means of the publication of tracts, pamphlets, papers and other religious documents, and by the use of all other lawful means which its Board of Directors, duly constituted, shall deem expedient for the furtherance of the purpose stated.”

“The dissemination of Bible truths” took a notable step forward with a series of books entitled “Millennial Dawn” (later, “Studies in the Scriptures”). Written by C. T. Russell in easily understood language, Volume I was published in 1886. First called “The Plan of the Ages” and later “The Divine Plan of the Ages,” it covered such subjects as “The Existence of a Supreme Intelligent Creator Established,” “Our Lord's Return—Its Object, the Restitution of All Things,” “The Day of Judgment,” “The Kingdom of God” and “The Day of Jehovah.” During a forty-year period, six million copies of this publication were distributed, helping hundreds of sincere truth seekers to come out of false religious bondage into Christian freedom.

In the course, of time, C. T. Russell wrote five other books of the “Millennial Dawn” Series. They were: Volume II, *The Time is at Hand* (1889); Volume III, *Thy Kingdom Come* (1891); Volume IV, *The Battle of Armageddon* (1897; originally called “*The Day of Vengeance*”); Volume V, *The At-one-ment Between God and Man* (1899); Volume VI, *The New Creation* (1904). Russell did not survive to write an intended seventh volume of this series.

What a response there was to such Christian publications! God's spirit prompted individuals to act. In some cases, withdrawal from false religion was quick. "Its truth captured my heart at once," wrote one woman in 1889, after reading a volume of *Millennial Dawn*. "Forthwith I withdrew from the Presbyterian Church where I had so long been groping in the dark for the truth, and found it not." A clergyman wrote in 1891: "After preaching in the M[ethodist] E[piscopal] church for three years, during all of which time I have been earnestly seeking the truth, I am now, by the help of God, able to 'come out of her.'"—[Rev. 18:4](#).

A keen desire to preach the good news is displayed in the thoughts others expressed to the Society by letter. For instance, in 1891 a man and his wife wrote: "We have consecrated our all to the Lord and to his service to be used to his glory; and, the Lord willing, I am going to try the colporteur work as soon as I can get things arranged, and if the Lord accepts of my service and blesses me in doing his work, then we will break up housekeeping and both wife and I will engage in the harvest work."

Quite interesting was correspondence the Society received in 1894 from one man who had obtained volumes of *Millennial Dawn* from two women who were colporteurs. He read the books, ordered additional copies, subscribed to *Zion's Watch Tower*, and was moved to write: "My dear wife and myself have read these books with the keenest interest, and we consider it a God-send and a great blessing that we have had the opportunity of coming in contact with them. They are indeed a 'helping hand' to the study of the Bible. The great truths revealed in the study of this series have simply reversed our earthly aspirations; and realizing to some extent, at least, the great opportunity for doing something for Christ, we intend to take advantage of this opportunity in distributing these books, first, among our nearest relatives and friends, and then among the poor who desire to read them and are unable to purchase." This letter was signed by J. F. Rutherford, who dedicated himself to Jehovah twelve years later and eventually succeeded C. T. Russell as president of the Watch Tower Society.

## THE BIBLE HOUSE

The Bible Students had headquarters offices first at 101 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, and thereafter at 44 Federal Street, Allegheny, Pennsylvania. By the late 1880's, however, the accelerating work of publishing the good news and gathering

sheeplike ones made expansion a necessity. So, Jehovah's people built their own structure. Completed in 1889 at a cost of \$34,000, this four-story brick building situated at 56-60 (later renumbered 610-614) Arch Street, Allegheny, was known as the "Bible House." Originally it was held in title by the Tower Publishing Company, a private concern managed by C. T. Russell that for some years published literature for the Watch Tower Society at an agreed price. In April 1898, ownership of this plant and real estate was transferred by donation to the Watch Tower Society, its board of directors evaluating the structure and equipment at \$164,033.65.

The Bible House served as the Society's headquarters for some twenty years.

"What was it like at the Bible House in 1907?" asks Ora Sullivan Wakefield. Answering her own query, she says, in part: "There were only thirty of us in the 'family' and being small it was truly a family. . . . We all ate, slept, worked and worshipped in that one building. The chapel also had a place for baptism under the platform."

Just think of it! Back in 1890 there were only about four hundred active associates of the Watch Tower Society. But Jehovah's holy spirit was at work and was producing fine results. ([Zech. 4:6, 10](#)) Accordingly, the 1890's were times of increase. In fact, hundreds gathered, on March 26, 1899, to memorialize the death of Jesus Christ, an incomplete report citing 339 groups with 2,501 participants. Indeed, sheeplike ones were flocking 'into the pen.'—[Mic. 2:12](#).

Growth of the preaching work had been spurred on by C. T. Russell's trip abroad in 1891. This 17,000-mile journey took him and his party to Europe, Asia and Africa. Thereafter a publications depot was set up in London. Also, arrangements were made to publish the Society's literature in German, French, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Polish, Greek and, later, in Italian.

### **"TO THE HOUSE OF JEHOVAH LET US GO"**

David rejoiced when it was said: "To the house of Jehovah let us go." ([Ps. 122:1](#)) Comparably, the early Bible Students were delighted to gather for meetings and conventions. ([Heb. 10:23-25](#)) The spiritual rewards were many, but one thing always was lacking—the collection plate. Applicable to all meetings and

conventions of Jehovah's Christian witnesses is the slogan "Seats free, no collection." Properly so, too, in view of Jesus Christ's words: "You received free, give free." Voluntary contributions have served to cover any expenses associated with meeting places of Jehovah's people.—[Matt. 10:8](#); [2 Cor. 9:7](#).

Suppose we join our fellow believers of earlier times as they travel to their weekly meetings. "Before and after the turn of the century," comments Ralph H. Leffler, "there were very, very few meetings missed by us. In those days we had no cars. The only way that we who lived out in the country five miles from town could get to the meetings was either walk . . . or use a horse and buggy. Many, many times we used a horse and buggy or carriage to drive the ten miles round trip twice on Sundays to attend the meetings. Year after year, summer and winter, rain or shine, we realized it was our privilege to learn ever more and more about the truths of the Bible and to strengthen our faith. We did not want to miss any opportunity to associate with others of like faith." Hazelle and Helen Krull remark: "When the snow covered the ground we went by horse and sleigh, covering the horse with a blanket during the meeting. Sometimes the horse waited patiently and sometimes it pawed impatiently."

What were those early meetings like? One of them was based on *Tabernacle Shadows of the Better Sacrifices*, first published by the Society in 1881. It considered the prophetic significance of Israel's tabernacle and the sacrifices offered there. Even children benefited greatly from these studies. Recalling these meetings as held in one home, Sara C. Kaelin comments: "The group had increased and sometimes the children had to sit on the steps leading upstairs, but all had to learn and answer questions. What did the bullock represent? The Court? The Holy? The Most Holy? Day of Atonement? High Priest? Underpriest? It was so impressed on our minds that we could visualize the High Priest performing his duties and we knew what it meant."

"Cottage Meetings" were held on Wednesday evenings. These also became known as Prayer, Praise and Testimony Meetings. Concerning them Edith R. Brenisen writes: "After a hymn and a prayer, the leader read an appropriate scripture, giving a few comments, and then the meeting was turned over to the friends to comment as they wished. Sometimes it would be a joyful experience one had in the service work or some evidence of Jehovah's special leading or protection. One



was free to offer a prayer or ask for a certain hymn to be sung, the words often expressing the thoughts of one's heart better than the person could. It was an evening for meditation upon Jehovah's loving care and for close association with our brothers and sisters. As we listened to some of their experiences we grew to know them better. Observing their faithfulness, seeing how they overcame their difficulties, often helped us in solving some of our own perplexities." This meeting was the forerunner of what has since developed into the service meeting, held weekly by Jehovah's witnesses today and so helpful to them in their preaching work.

In those early days, "Dawn Circles" were held on Friday evenings. These Bible studies were so named because volumes of *Millennial Dawn* were used. Ralph H. Leffler recalls that Sunday evening usually was devoted to a Bible study or a discourse on the Scriptures. What was known as a "chart talk" might be given. What was this? He explains: "Under the front cover of Volume I of *Studies in the Scriptures* there was a long chart. . . . That chart was enlarged to the size of a banner . . . and could be purchased from the Bible House in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. That chart was hung on the wall in front of the audience for all to see as the speaker for the occasion went about explaining its many arches and pyramids. The chart was a graphic illustration of the main Bible events from man's creation to the end of the millennium and the beginning of 'ages to come.' . . . We learned much about Bible history from these 'chart' talks. And they were delivered frequently."

"Chart talks" might be delivered at the regular meeting places of Jehovah's people or elsewhere. Were these discourses effective? C. E. Sillaway recalls: "The talks must have borne some fruit, for the little group grew from six adults to about fifteen in less than two years." On one occasion, William P. Mockridge gave a chart talk in a Baptist church in Long Island City, New York, "with the result that several members of [the Baptist preacher's] church came into the truth and the minister . . . C. A. Erickson also came into the truth and became one of the Society's traveling . . . speakers."

The annual commemoration of Jesus Christ's death afforded early Bible Students opportunities to hold conventions. (1 Cor. 11:23-26) One such gathering took place in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, April 7-14, 1892. Present were about 400 servants of

Jehovah and interested persons from some twenty states and Manitoba, Canada. Since then, of course, spiritually rewarding conventions of God's people have been held in many cities throughout the United States and the world. And how Jehovah has made things grow! From over 123 lands the 1958 Divine Will International Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses drew to New York city's Yankee Stadium and Polo Grounds a combined audience of 253,922!

## **COURAGEOUS AND STRONG-HEARTED IN GOD'S SERVICE**

"Volunteers Wanted!"—that was the striking title of an article in *Zion's Watch Tower* of April 15, 1899. It proposed a new method of disseminating Bible truths—one sure to take Christendom's clergy by storm. To participate in this work, a person would have to be courageous and strong-hearted. (Ps. 31:24) Jehovah's people of that time were given the opportunity to engage in mass free distribution of 300,000 copies of a new booklet entitled "The Bible vs. Evolution." It was to be handed to the people as they left the churches on Sunday. Christian volunteers by the thousands responded wholeheartedly, and a great work was done in the United States, Canada and Europe.

This volunteer work continued for years, especially on Sundays, and eventually was expanded to include house-to-house tract distribution. New tracts were published at least twice a year and were delivered to churchgoers by the millions. From 1909 onward, the Watch Tower Society released a new series of tracts called "Peoples Pulpit" (then "Everybody's Paper" and later "The Bible Students Monthly"). Through these monthly tracts religious error was exposed, Scriptural truths were explained and the nations were warned about the highly significant year 1914. Cartoons and illustrations added to the effectiveness of these tracts. By such tract distribution, God's servants were more and more noticed by the public, becoming widely known as Bible Students and International Bible Students.

"Each class had a Volunteer Captain who planned the work," says Edith R. Brenisen, "and the workers were called Volunteers. . . . Sunday mornings were spent in this volunteer work. It took us to the church doors. We passed out the tracts as the people came out of church. . . . At twelve o'clock, as the people came out, we handed the literature to them and then waited until one o'clock so as to serve those who stayed for Sunday school. Almost everyone took a tract. Some threw theirs on the ground and, of course, we gathered those up. The message

the tracts contained was 'Come Out of Her, My People.'"

Many pleasant evenings were spent preparing the tracts for distribution. Margaret Duth recalls evenings when fellow Christians met at her home for that purpose, and writes: "We would open the dining room table full length and some of us would separate the tracts while others folded them; another group would stamp them with the time and location of the Sunday afternoon lecture."

Next came the distribution itself. According to Samuel Van Sipma, this "was an activity of the Bible Students in which practically everyone shared." He adds: "Many of us would get up early on Sunday morning [about five o'clock] and leave tracts on the porches or under the doors of the homes in a section of territory assigned, two or four usually working together. Of course, tracts were also distributed at other times . . . Some have not inappropriately referred to this tracting activity as scattering gems like morning dew, and unquestionably many were indeed refreshed as a result of reading these inspiring pages of divine truth."

Even Christian children shared in tract distribution work. Grace A. Estep recalls how she and her two eldest brothers "would tiptoe onto the porches early on Sunday mornings and slip the tracts under the doors." Opposition might well be encountered, for Sister Estep continues: "Sometimes a door would suddenly open and a veritable giant of a grown-up would appear, usually screaming invectives and sometimes chasing us with brooms or canes or flailing arms, and making dire threats if we should ever dare to return . . . Now and then, however, someone would accept the tract or smile at us, and then we'd rush home to tell our parents."

Use of tracts produced good results. For example, Victor V. Blackwell tells us: "It was a *tract* which brought the Kingdom truth into our home. A *tract* was the beginning of a solid foundation of Bible truth for my father, my mother, myself and children, besides many others who accepted and embraced the hope-and faith-inspiring information about the Kingdom government for all mankind."

## USING THE PUBLIC PRESS

"Another feature [of the work] that cannot be overlooked lightly," says George E. Hannan, "was the publishing of Pastor Russell's sermons in the newspapers." An international newspaper syndicate featuring C. T. Russell's sermons was

developed. Though Russell might be traveling, weekly he would send this syndicate, made up of four members of the Society's headquarters staff, a sermon about two newspaper columns in length. They, in turn, retelegraphed it to newspapers in the United States, Canada and Europe. The Society bore the telegraph expense, but the newspaper space was given free.

A publication named "The Continent" once stated concerning C. T. Russell: "His writings are said to have greater newspaper circulation every week than those of any other living man; a greater, doubtless, than the combined circulation of the writings of all the priests and preachers in North America; greater even than the work of Arthur Brisbane, Norman Hapgood, George Horace Lorimer, Dr. Frank Crane, Frederick Haskins, and a dozen other of the best known editors and syndicate writers put together." But it was not Russell as a man that was important. The wide circulation of the good news was vitally significant. "More than 2,000 newspapers, with a combined circulation of fifteen million readers, at one time published his discourses," said *The Watch Tower* of December 1, 1916. "All told, more than 4,000 newspapers published these sermons." Here, then, was another means of spreading Bible truths.

### **"CLASS EXTENSION WORK"**

The courageous activities of Jehovah's servants were intensifying as another feature of their work came on the scene in 1911. Known as the "class extension work," it was an extensive public lecture campaign. Taking up this new work were forty-eight traveling ministers sent out on assigned routes as public speakers. But "class extension work" involved more than this. The names and addresses of interested persons who attended the discourses were obtained, and these individuals were visited at home by Bible Students, all in an effort to gather such ones together and form new congregations. Colporteurs helped to organize these congregations, and many new ones were formed. By 1914, in fact, 1,200 congregations were functioning in connection with the Watch Tower Society throughout the earth.

"After obtaining the use of a hall for a public talk," say Hazelle and Helen Krull, "we arranged for announcements in the weekly newspaper and made calls giving personal invitations. We also set a slant board at the entrance of the hall with a chalk-written announcement of the meeting. Many of these halls had only

lamplight. If interest was shown at the initial meeting, we followed up with further talks. We made it a point to greet and talk personally to each one of the little group that gathered (and it was usually a *little* group) and to call at the homes of the interested ones to further their interest.”

## TRAVELING WITH THE PILGRIMS

As early as 1894, twenty-one traveling representatives of the Watch Tower Society were sent out to hold public meetings and to upbuild congregations of Bible Students spiritually. They traveled on a fixed route, and as congregations grew in number additional pilgrims, as they were called, were sent on the road. Pilgrims served the interests of God’s people from the 1890’s to the late 1920’s. Their attitude was like that of Paul, who told Roman Christians: “I am longing to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift to you in order for you to be made firm; or, rather, that there may be an interchange of encouragement among you, by each one through the other’s faith, both yours and mine.”—[Rom. 1:11, 12](#).

Personality traits of the traveling pilgrims varied, as did those of Jesus Christ’s apostles. ([Luke 9:54](#); [John 20:24, 25](#); [21:7, 8](#)) “Brother Thorn had a most mild manner, was an exceedingly well-groomed, goateed little man,” comments Grant Suiter, adding: “The pilgrims were impressively neat. . . . More importantly, they aided their listeners to develop faith in the Word of God.” When Harold B. Duncan first met Brother Thorn, “it made a loving and lasting impression.” Brother Duncan says: “His talk to the group was like a father giving loving and affectionate counsel to his sons and daughters, and grandsons, sort of like a patriarch in times of old.”

Grace A. Estep recalls: “Brother Hersee loved music, and after we children had been sent to bed, mom would play the piano, dad the violin, and Brother Hersee would sing the ‘hymns.’ . . . Of the others whom we knew and loved so much—Brother [Clayton J.] Woodworth, Brother Macmillan and others whose lives were such a fine example of endurance—there is a special affection for Brother Van Amburgh. He was so full of gentleness and tenderness toward the ‘dearly beloved’ that he often made me think of what the beloved apostle John must have been like.”

Looking back to the days when she was a young girl and pilgrim brothers stayed in her home, Ethel G. Rohner states: “They were always interested in us young

folks—my sister and brother also. We always enjoyed their visits. As a young girl, I was a little awed by their quiet confidence and faith—accepting all things as Jehovah's will. They really left us young folks a fine example of Christian fortitude and faith."

Doubtless many of the pilgrims endeared themselves to their fellow believers also because they made themselves "at home" when visiting. "What made the visit so pleasant?" asks Mary M. Hinds. She answers: "Greetings dispensed with, the pilgrim questions daddy as to the public meetings, whether or not he has any questions about the articles in *The Watch Tower*, how things are moving along in the little town, if anyone else is showing interest since the last visit, and other routine questions. For a little while his attention is directed to us children (three of us now) before he retires to his room. 'Isn't he nice! He talks to us!' We are thrilled and off to a good start to enjoy every minute of his stay, usually one or two days. Maybe it is Benjamin Barton who has given me a picture postcard that he brought from the 1910 Chatauqua Lake convention, and he has pasted his picture on the back of it. Or perhaps Brother J. A. Bohnet has made my brother a kite and is helping him fly it. . . . Brother A. H. Macmillan may take a moment to go out to the cornfield with us and select six nice ears of corn for his dinner."

"Some of the pilgrims had personal peculiarities and these were noted, of course," admits Harold P. Woodworth, "but there were outstanding qualities—gifts of the holy spirit that left a deep and lasting influence." Sister Earl E. Newell remarks: "I will never, never forget a statement that Brother Thorn made that has helped me to this day. He said, and I quote, 'Whenever I get to thinking a great deal of myself, I take myself into the corner, so to speak, and say: "You little speck of dust. What have you got to be proud of?"'" A noteworthy trait, indeed, for "the result of humility and the fear of Jehovah is riches and glory and life."—[Prov. 22:4](#).

These traveling pilgrims did not have an easy time in journeying from place to place. Concerning trips of her husband Edward, who once served in this capacity, Edith R. Brenisen wrote: "To reach some of the out-of-the-way places it was often necessary to travel by train, stagecoach, wagons of all kinds and horseback. Some of such trips were very exciting. . . . One appointment was in or near Klamath Falls, Oregon. To get there after going part way by train he then had to take an overnight trip by stagecoach. The next day he was met at a little town by a brother



who was there with a buckboard. (In case you never saw or rode in one, I'll tell you that it is just a wooden wagon mounted on four wheels that are set on the axles, with no springs. If a person did not have back trouble before his ride, he surely did after.) A long ride took them into the mountains to the brother's farm in a beautiful valley beside a mountain stream."

What about that particular pilgrim visit itself? Sister Brenisen adds: "Soon the yard was well filled with teams of all descriptions, bringing the friends from afar to hear the pilgrim. The meeting began at three o'clock with a two-hour talk, after which questions were invited, and there were many. They did stop long enough for a nice evening meal that the sisters had provided, after which there was another two-hour talk, followed by more questions." That night the sisters slept in the house and the brothers in the hay. A room in the house had been reserved for the pilgrim, but Brother Brenisen preferred to go to the barn along with the brothers. "Morning came," says Sister Brenisen, "and after a hearty breakfast the brother saddled three horses, one a pack horse and one for each of them. To get to the train that would take him to his next appointment they had to take a trip of sixty miles right through the wilds to the nearest railroad station. Sometime later Edward received a letter from the sister telling him that after they left she went to the barn for the pillow and there it was with the impression his head had made in it. When she picked it up, right under that spot was a big rattlesnake all coiled up, having enjoyed the warmth of his head. The snake was quite indignant about being disturbed and showed it. How very often it is better to be ignorant of some facts!"

What about discourses of the pilgrims? What were they like? Concerning one pilgrim, Brother Toutjian, Ray C. Bopp says: "This brother was an instructor. He taught by illustrations . . . [He had] a scale model of the tabernacle in the wilderness, which he laid out on a table . . . The holy, the most holy, the courtyard with the altar of burnt offering and the basin were enclosed with a cloth fence about four inches high hanging like drapery from little metal bars. Figurines of priests in authentic robes were set in their proper places and were moved about as they performed their functions . . . [as Brother Toutjian] described each observance and its prophetic meaning based on the reference book *Tabernacle Shadows*."

“A public lecture was always scheduled,” comments Mary M. Hinds, “and oftentimes the pilgrims would give a talk on the Chart, explaining the ‘dispensations’ and ‘ages’ marked on it. At least one brother, M. L. Herr, had an illustrated lecture. Using still-life slides, he made the little Ruthie of his talk come to life by means of the resurrection. Yes, lifelong impressions were made by these brothers, the connecting link in those days between the headquarters of this growing organization and the isolated subscribers to the *Watch Tower* and the ‘ecclesias’ that were being organized.” Ollie Stapleton expresses her sentiments, saying: “These visits were occasions for spiritual upbuilding and instruction, and helped us to work more closely at unity with Jehovah’s organization.”

## EXPANSION AS THE GENTILE TIMES NEAR THEIR END

As the Bible Students found themselves in the first decade of the twentieth century, they were aware that time was running out for the nations. Long had God’s people looked to 1914 as the end of the 2,520-year-long Gentile Times. ([Luke 21:24](#), *King James Version*) Now it was a few short years away, and C. T. Russell prepared to undertake an all-out worldwide campaign as a testimony to the nations. But for such extensive international work the Bible House in Allegheny was far too small.

In 1908, therefore, several representatives of the Watch Tower Society, including J. F. Rutherford (then its legal counselor), were sent to New York city. Why? To secure more suitable quarters, property that Russell himself had located on an earlier trip. This they did, purchasing the old “Plymouth Bethel,” 13-17 Hicks Street, Brooklyn, New York. It was a mission structure completed in 1868 for the nearby Plymouth Congregational Church, where Henry Ward Beecher once served as pastor. The Society’s delegation also bought Beecher’s old four-story brownstone parsonage at 124 Columbia Heights, only a few blocks away.

Beecher’s former residence soon became the new home of the Society’s headquarters staff of over thirty persons, and it was called “Bethel,” meaning “House of God.” The remodeled Hicks Street building became known as “The Brooklyn Tabernacle.” It housed the Society’s offices and a fine auditorium. On January 31, 1909, 350 persons were present for the dedication of the Society’s new headquarters.

At Bethel was located C. T. Russell's study. Downstairs was the dining room, with a long table that would accommodate forty-four persons. The family would assemble here to sing a hymn, read the "Vow" and join in prayer before breakfast. At the beginning of the meal a Bible text was read from *Daily Heavenly Manna for the Household of Faith*, and this was discussed during breakfast.

Would you like to hear the vow that was daily impressed on their minds? Entitled "My Solemn Vow to God," it goes like this:

"Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. May thy rule come into my heart more and more, and thy will be done in my mortal body. Relying on the assistance of thy promised grace to help in every time of need, through Jesus Christ our Lord, I register this Vow.

"Daily will I remember at the throne of heavenly grace the general interests of the harvest work, and particularly the share which I myself am privileged to enjoy in that work, and the dear co-laborers at the Brooklyn Bethel, and everywhere.

"I Vow to still more carefully, if possible, scrutinize my thoughts and words and doings, to the intent that I may be the better enabled to serve thee, and thy dear flock.

"I Vow to thee that I will be on the alert to resist everything akin to Spiritism and Occultism, and that, remembering that there are but the two masters, I shall resist these snares in all reasonable ways, as being of the Adversary.

"I further Vow that, with the exceptions below, I will at all times and at all places, conduct myself toward those of the opposite sex in private exactly as I would do with them in public—in the presence of a congregation of the Lord's people, and so far as reasonably possible I will avoid being in the same room with any of the opposite sex alone, unless the door to the room stand wide open:—In the case of a brother—wife, children, mother and sisters excepted. In the case of a sister—husband, children, father and brothers excepted."

Recitation of this vow was later discontinued among God's people at Bethel and elsewhere. Yet, the high principles embodied in its words are still sound.

About three blocks from Bethel was the Brooklyn Tabernacle, a quaint old red-

brick structure consisting of two floors and a basement. It housed the Society's general offices, the composing room, where type was set for *The Watch Tower*, a stock room and also a shipping room. On the second floor was an auditorium with seating for 800. Here Brother Russell regularly spoke.

For a time the Society's headquarters staff was housed largely at 124 Columbia Heights. Later, the adjoining building at 122 Columbia Heights was purchased, enlarging the Bethel home. The year 1911 saw the completion of a rear addition extending nine floors down a precipice to Furman Street. It provided much more space for living quarters and other facilities, including a new dining room. To hold title to such properties, in 1909 Jehovah's servants formed the People's Pulpit Association, now known as the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Incorporated. It and other corporations formed by God's people in various lands all cooperate with one another and with the governing body of Jehovah's witnesses.

### **'BLESSING JEHOVAH AMONG CONGREGATED THRONGS'**

Regular conventions and other public gatherings of the Bible Students were excellent occasions to 'bless Jehovah among congregated throngs,' even as God's servants had done in times past. ([Ps. 26:12](#)) What was the nature of these events? Let us see.

'Even here, in the highest balcony of the world-famed Auditorium Theater, home of the Chicago Grand Opera, not a seat is unoccupied. As I look seven floors down toward the stage, one-half block away, I wonder if it will be necessary to strain my ears to hear. Following the chairman's introduction, Charles Taze Russell rises to his feet, places his left forefinger to his right palm and begins to speak in a normal tone of voice. He has no notes. There is no podium. He moves freely about the platform. Every word is clearly discernible, as he describes the prophetic ending of the Gentile Times and the ushering in of the Millennial Age.'

This is the recollection of Ray C. Bopp. It is but an example. The place might just as well have been London's Royal Albert Hall, where C. T. Russell spoke to great audiences in May 1910. Then, again, it might have been New York city's noted Hippodrome Theatre, where Russell addressed a large Jewish audience on Sunday, October 9, 1910. Regarding that discourse, the *New York American* of October 10,

1910, said, in part: "The unusual spectacle of 4,000 Hebrews enthusiastically applauding a Gentile preacher, after having listened to a sermon he addressed to them concerning their own religion, was presented at the Hippodrome yesterday afternoon, where Pastor Russell, the famous head of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, conducted a most unusual service." Scores of rabbis and teachers were present. "There were no preliminaries," said the newspaper. "Pastor Russell, tall, erect and white-bearded, walked across the stage without introduction, raised his hand, and his double quartette from the Brooklyn Tabernacle sang the hymn, 'Zion's Glad Day.'" As reported, eventually the audience 'warmed up' to the speaker. Next there was applause, finally enthusiastic response. The discourse over, Russell signaled again and the choir "raised the quaint, foreign-sounding strains of the Zion hymn, 'Our Hope,' one of the masterpieces of the eccentric East Side poet Imber." The effect? This, according to the press account: "The unprecedented incident of Christian voices singing the Jewish anthem came as a tremendous surprise. For a moment the Hebrew auditors could scarcely believe their ears. Then, making sure it was their own hymn, they first cheered and clapped with such ardor that the music was drowned out, and then, with the second verse, joined in by hundreds. At the height of the enthusiasm over the dramatic surprise he prepared, Pastor Russell walked off the stage and the meeting ended with the end of the hymn."

Times have changed, and so have Christian views of Biblical prophecies once thought to apply to natural Jews in our day. With increased light from God, his people have discerned that such words foretell good things for the spiritual "Israel of God," Jesus Christ's anointed followers. ([Rom. 9:6-8, 30-33; 11:17-32; Gal. 6:16](#)) But we have been reviewing the early twentieth century, and this is how things were in those days.

Since Brother Russell was so widely known and spoke to large audiences on many occasions, you may wonder what it was like to listen to him. "How different from the ordinary preacher!" exclaims C. B. Tvedt, adding: "No oratory, no emotionalism. No begging to hit the sawdust trail. There was something far more effective and powerful than all of these put together! That was the simple, quiet, confident expounding of the Word of God—letting one scripture unlock another one until it became, as it were, a powerful magnet. In this way Brother Russell held his audience in rapt attention." Ralph H. Leffler says that before giving a discourse Brother Russell made several graceful bows to the audience. When

speaking, he usually stood on the open platform and would walk about, using his arms freely in gesturing. "He never used notes . . . but always spoke freely from the heart," according to Brother Leffler, who continues: "His voice was not loud, but it had peculiar carrying power. Without ever using sound amplifying equipment (there was none in those days), he could be heard and understood by large audiences, holding them as if spellbound for one, two and sometimes three hours at a time."

Yet, the man was not important. The message was, and Bible truth was being declared to multitudes. There were many capable Christians proclaiming the good news in those days, and some persons heard their words with appreciation. Opponents were numerous, of course, and they sometimes sought to promote their unscriptural views in public debate with Jehovah's servants.

In what later appeared to be an attempt by the Pittsburgh ministerial alliance to discredit C. T. Russell's scholarship and Biblical views, on March 10, 1903, Dr. E. L. Eaton, minister of the North Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, challenged Russell to a six-day debate. During each session of this debate, held that autumn in Allegheny's Carnegie Hall, on the whole Russell came off victorious. Among other things, he Scripturally maintained that the souls of the dead are unconscious while their bodies are in the grave and that the object of both Christ's second coming and the millennium is the blessing of all the families of the earth. Russell also made a very strong Biblical denial of the hellfire doctrine. Reportedly, one clergyman approached him after the last session of the debate and said: "I am glad to see you turn the hose on hell and put out the fire." Interestingly, after this debate many members of Eaton's congregation became Bible Students.

Another significant debate took place on February 23-28, 1908, at Cincinnati, Ohio, between C. T. Russell and L. S. White of the "Disciple" denomination. Thousands attended. Russell courageously upheld such Scriptural teachings as the unconscious state of the dead between death and resurrection, and Biblically maintained that Christ's second coming will precede the millennium and that the object of both is the blessing of all families of the earth. Hazelle and Helen Krull were present and tell us: "Beauty and harmony of truth and fine Scriptural arguments on each subject of debate stood out in stark contrast to the confusing



teachings of men. At one point 'Elder White,' spokesman and debater for the opposing views, in desperation said that he was reminded of a sign over a blacksmith shop reading 'All kinds of twisting and turning done here.' But, to the honest truth seeker, was a demonstration of 'handling the word of the truth aright' [on the part of Russell; [2 Tim. 2:15](#)], with resultant harmony." The Krull sisters recall that Jehovah blessed Brother Russell with His spirit to present the truth ably, and they term the event "a triumph of truth over error."

J. F. Rutherford accepted a Baptist debate challenge in behalf of the Watch Tower Society against J. H. Troy. It took place in April 1915 at the Trinity Auditorium in Los Angeles, California, before an audience of 12,000 (with an estimated 10,000 being turned away for lack of space) during the four nights of the debate. Rutherford was victorious in courageously defending Bible truth.

In the twelve years following the Eaton-Russell debate, other debating challenges were accepted by God's servants, though the opponents, perhaps out of fear, usually called off the engagements. C. T. Russell himself did not favor debates, for he was aware of their disadvantages for Christians. In *The Watch Tower* of May 1, 1915, he pointed out, among other things, that 'those who are of the truth are bound by the Golden Rule and their presentation must be along absolutely fair lines, whereas their opponents seem to have no restrictions or restraints.' "Any kind of argument," wrote Russell, "regardless of the context, regardless of the Golden Rule, regardless of everything, is considered permissible." He also stated: "So far as the Editor is concerned, he has no desire for further debates. He does not favor debating, believing that it rarely accomplishes good and often arouses anger, malice, bitterness, etc., in both speakers and hearers. Rather he sets before those who desire to hear it, orally and in print, the message of the Lord's Word and leaves to opponents such presentations of the error as they see fit to make and find opportunity to exploit.—[Hebrews 4:12](#)."

Bible discourses themselves afforded better opportunities to present Scriptural truths, and C. T. Russell often spoke to large audiences. During the years of 1905 to 1907, for instance, he toured the United States and Canada by special train or car and conducted a series of one-day conventions. His public lecture then was "To Hell and Back." Delivered before packed houses in nearly every large city in both countries, this discourse featured a humorous, imaginary trip to hell and back.

Louise Cosby recalls that Russell agreed to give this lecture in Lynchburg, Virginia, and she says: "My father had big posters made advertising this lecture and got permission to place them on the front of the streetcars. This was quite amusing and people asked, If this car takes us to hell, will it bring us back?"

Bible lectures also were featured during C. T. Russell's trips abroad. In 1903 he had made a second journey to Europe, speaking to audiences in various cities. Then, from December 1911 to March 1912, Russell, as chairman of a seven-man committee, made a round-the-world tour, traveling to Hawaii, Japan, China, through southern Asia into Africa, on to Europe and back to New York. A study of Christendom's foreign missions was undertaken and many lectures were given, thus spreading seeds of truth that, in time, brought into fruitful activity groups of anointed Christians in far-flung areas of the earth. Besides this worldwide tour, however, C. T. Russell journeyed to Europe regularly and traveled extensively throughout North America on "convention tour" special trains, accompanied by many fellow workers.

### **ABOARD A "CONVENTION TRAIN"**

As time passed, requests for personal appearances by C. T. Russell increased. In fulfilling some speaking engagements, he sometimes had traveled aboard a special railroad "convention car," a small group accompanying him. But larger parties were organized in "convention trains," as many as 240 traveling with Russell on one occasion. Several railroad cars were linked together and the party traveled from one city to another according to a prearranged schedule. Arriving in a particular city, Russell's assistants advertised the public meeting by distributing handbills. At the meeting they greeted individuals, obtained the names and addresses of interested ones and, when possible, would visit these and establish congregations. It was not uncommon for these "convention trains" to be used in visiting large cities in the United States and Canada.

Why not board a "convention train" and ride with a happy company of Christians? In June 1913 a special train was engaged for over 200 Bible Students who would accompany C. T. Russell from Chicago, Illinois, on a trip that would take them to Texas, California, Canada and then to a convention in Madison, Wisconsin, with a side-run to Rockford, Illinois. Malinda Z. Keefer supplies these details: "Our train was to leave from the Dearborn station over the Wabash Railroad at noon, June 2.

The friends began to arrive about ten o'clock, and it was a happy and exciting time, meeting old friends I had not seen for a long time and getting acquainted with new ones. It didn't take long to realize we were one big family. . . . and the train was our home for a month."

Finally, it is time to leave. "As the train pulled out of the station on its 8,000-mile journey," continues Sister Keefer, "the friends who had come to say good-bye sang 'Blest Be the Tie That Binds' and 'God Be with You Till We Meet Again,' all the while waving hats and handkerchiefs until we were lost to their view, and were on our way for a most memorable trip. We picked up some friends in St. Louis, Missouri, and some in a few other places until we finally numbered two hundred and forty. Brother Russell joined us at Hot Springs, Arkansas, where an eight-day convention was in session."

It truly was a spiritually upbuilding journey. Says Sister Keefer: "At every stop on the trip there were conventions being held—most were for three days, and we stayed one day with each convention. During these stops Brother Russell gave two talks, one to the friends in the afternoon, and another to the public in the evening on the subject 'Beyond the Grave.'" As to her own feelings about the trip, Sister Keefer says: "My appreciation for the fellowship of the friends all along the way and the spiritually upbuilding talks and instructions I had received during that trip cannot be expressed in words. I was grateful to Jehovah for having had such a privilege."

At those early conventions of God's people some things were a little different from what they are today. For example, take the "love feast." What was that? Recalling this feature of the early assemblies, J. W. Ashelman states: "Some practices not needed or continued did seem a blessing at the time, such as the speakers lining up in front of the platform holding plates of diced bread as the audience filed along the line partaking of the bread and shaking hands with each speaker and joining in singing 'Blest Be the Tie That Binds Our Hearts in Christian Love.'" That was it—the "love feast." And it was a moving experience. Edith R. Brenisen readily admits: "The love for each other filled our hearts to overflowing, often running down our cheeks in tears of joy. We were not ashamed of our tears nor did we try to hide them."

Early Christians sometimes held "love feasts," but the Bible does not describe

them. ([Jude 12](#)) Some think they were occasions when materially prosperous Christians held banquets to which they invited their poorer fellow worshipers. But the Scriptures do not make “love feasts” obligatory, whatever their early nature, and so they are not in vogue among true Christians today.

## A NEW WAY TO DECLARE THE GOOD NEWS

The Bible Students were keenly aware of Jesus Christ’s prophecy: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” ([Matt. 24:14](#), *King James Version*) So, as that significant year 1914 drew closer, God’s people undertook an all-out campaign of worldwide proportions—a hitherto unparalleled educational and warning work. They employed a bold, new method of declaring the good news.

Say it now is the year 1914. Imagine that you are seated among hundreds of persons in a darkened auditorium. Before you is a large motion-picture screen. To your surprise, a white-haired man in a frock coat appears, and, without a note in hand, he begins to speak. Oh, you have been to the movies before. But this one is different. The man speaks and you hear his words. This is no common silent movie. It is something special, both technically and in the message it conveys, and you are impressed. The man? He is Charles Taze Russell. This production? It is the “Photo-Drama of Creation.”

C. T. Russell recognized that motion pictures were a fine medium for reaching masses of people. In 1912, therefore, he began preparing the Photo-Drama of Creation. It turned out to be an eight-hour-long photographic slide and moving picture production, complete with color and sound. Designed to be shown in four parts, the Photo-Drama carried viewers from creation through human history to the climax of God’s purpose for earth and mankind at the end of Jesus Christ’s thousand-year reign. Pictorial slides and motion pictures were synchronized with phonograph records of talks and music. There had been various experiments with color and sound movies, but years would pass before they would be commercially successful. Not until 1922 did an all-color, feature-length motion picture make an appearance. And film audiences in general had to wait until 1927 to hear both dialogue and music combined in a commercial movie. Yet, the Photo-Drama of Creation was not without the color, the spoken word and the music. It was years ahead of its time, and millions saw it free of charge!

A fortune for those days—some \$300,000—was spent by the Society in producing the Photo-Drama. And of the work involved, Russell wrote: “God kindly veiled our eyes as respects the amount of labor connected with the DRAMA. Had we foreknown the cost of time and money and patience necessary for the start we would never have begun it. But neither did we know in advance the great success that would attend the DRAMA.” Choice musical recordings and ninety-six phonograph-record talks were prepared. Stereopticon slides were made of fine art pictures illustrating world history, and it was necessary to make hundreds of new paintings and sketches. All the color slides and films had to be hand painted, some of this work being accomplished in the Society’s own Art Room. And, think of it! This had to be done repeatedly, for there were at least twenty four-part sets prepared, making it possible to show a portion of the Drama in eighty different cities on a given day.

What took place behind the scenes during exhibitions of the Photo-Drama of Creation? “The Drama started with a movie of Brother Russell,” says Alice Hoffman. “As he would appear on the screen and his lips began to move, a phonograph would be started at the precise moment and we would enjoy listening to his voice.”

The unfolding of a flower and the hatching of a chick were among the memorable features of the Photo-Drama movies. These examples of time-lapse photography truly impressed viewers. “At the same time that these pictures were being shown,” comments Karl F. Klein, “there was an accompaniment of very fine music, such gems as Narcissus and Humoreske.”

There were also many other things to remember. “Right now,” says Martha Meredith, “I see Noah and his family walking into the ark with the animals, and the picture of Abraham and Isaac walking to Mount Moriah where Abraham was going to offer his son as a sacrifice. When I saw Abraham put his son on the altar—this son he dearly loved—I shed tears. No wonder Jehovah called Abraham his friend . . . he knew that Abraham would obey his voice at all times.”—[Jas. 2:23](#).

Besides the regular Photo-Drama of Creation, there were “Eureka Drama” outfits. One was made up of the ninety-six recorded lectures, as well as musical recordings. The other consisted of both the records and the slides. Though the latter Eureka Drama lacked motion pictures, it was very successful when shown in

less densely populated areas.

During 1914 the Photo-Drama of Creation was shown free throughout the United States. This was very expensive, both for the Society and for the local Bible Students, who contributed money to rent suitable places for its exhibition. And so, in the course of time, it no longer was shown to large audiences. But the Photo-Drama of Creation had done a great work in acquainting persons with God's Word and purposes.

To illustrate: In a letter to C. T. Russell, one person wrote: "My wife and I truly thank our heavenly Father for the great and priceless blessing which has come to us through your instrumentality. It was your beautiful Photo-Drama which was the cause of our seeing and accepting the truth as our own." And Lily R. Parnell, tells us: "These pictorial demonstrations of Jehovah's purposes for mankind aroused the interest of many thinking people so that the congregation [at Greenfield, Massachusetts] grew larger, since they made the Bible a living book and proved to thoughtful ones what precious information our God had provided for salvation to those who would avail themselves of his provision."

Not without reason, therefore, has it been said by Demetrius Papageorge, long a member of the Society's headquarters staff: "The Photo-Drama was a masterpiece of a project, when we consider the small number of Bible Students and the proportionately small amount of finances available. It really was Jehovah's spirit behind it!"

## **COLPORTEURS "AGLOW WITH THE SPIRIT"**

For many years prior to 1914 zealous colporteurs—Christian men and women "aglow with the spirit"—had been spreading the good news far and wide. ([Rom. 12:11](#)) The colporteur service began in 1881, when *Zion's Watch Tower* carried the article "Wanted 1,000 Preachers." To persons without dependent families and who could give one half or more of their time to the Lord's work a plan was suggested. It was that they go into large and small cities as colporteurs or evangelists. For what purpose? Said the *Watch Tower*: "Seek to find in every place the earnest Christians . . . to these seek to make known the riches of Our Father's grace, and the beauties of His word." Bible publications were to be placed in the hands of such persons, and colporteurs were permitted to pay their own expenses with



money received from literature placements and *Watch Tower* subscriptions that they obtained.

For the colporteurs *Zion's Watch Tower* of May 1887 had some fine suggestions on what to say at the doors. It also said: "Take a *big heart* full of *love* for God and for those you would lead into the light, full of *faith* in God and trust in his promises, and full of *hope* that God will be pleased to use you to his glory now as well as hereafter."

Willing to work hard in Jehovah's service, the colporteurs made their mark. Wherever they went—into cities, towns, villages—they were noticed. A writer in *The Gospel Messenger* of the late 1890's was moved to say: "In the city of Birmingham [Alabama] there are several persons now working who call themselves 'Non-Sectarian Christians.' . . . They have worked this city from house to house, selling MILLENNIAL DAWN and circulating other brief literature. They talk their religion every chance, and preach on Sunday. They call themselves 'Colporteurs.' They have put over two thousand copies of their books in this city. . . . Now, why cannot we disseminate our literature and the Bible doctrine, as we understand it, in this way? The fact is, I fear, we have stagnated on methods, and God is gradually hinting to us that, if we do not get to moving forward, he will give us a back seat."

"Yes, we had colporteurs cover the towns and rurals in those early days," writes Henry Farnick. He remembers them well: "Sometimes they would trade for farm produce, chickens, soap and what-not, which they would use or sell to others. At times, in a sparsely settled area, they stayed with farmers and ranchers overnight, and at times even slept in haystacks . . . These faithful ones kept on for years and years until age overtook them."

Through the years Jehovah made ample provision for faithful colporteurs. So, they really lacked nothing essential. (Ps. 23:1) "We lived frugally on the contributions received from the placement of literature," says Clarence S. Huzzey. "This took faith in Jehovah's loving provisions and I can honestly say that we never went hungry and we had the necessary shelter and clothing during the many years in the full-time ministry. (Ps. 37:25) How wonderfully Jehovah provided what was needed!"

Living costs were not very high years ago, but that did not mean that colporteurs could afford to be extravagant. Take the year 1910 as an example. Malinda Z. Keefer recalls a colporteur assignment in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and she writes: "Council Bluffs was harder territory, but by going with a positive attitude one could get along. The cost of living was so much cheaper in those days. Our mode of transportation (walking) didn't cost much and neither did the food: bread was 5c a loaf, sugar 5c a pound, steak 25c a pound—and this was a real treat, if we could get any. Room rentals were reasonable and trolley car fares were 5c. What a different world compared with the nineteen seventies!"

Late in 1921, George E. Hannan entered colporteur service. Concerning the cost of living, he once wrote: "My food bill came to \$4 per week. I had one warm meal a day, the other two consisting of dried fruits and some vegetables that I received in trade for literature. When asked what I would do when I ran out of funds, I would say: 'Just wait and see what Jehovah works out for me.' I had heard of some who had quit when they got down to their last \$50. My thought was that Jehovah's intervention was not needed in this regard as long as one had \$50 or even \$10 or \$1. I had confidence he would aid me to meet the high cost of living, not the cost of high living."

What about transportation? Well, Charles H. Capen recalls working several Pennsylvania counties "by 'shanks' mare' (on foot)." Other colporteurs found the bicycle to be a real help. "In the years from 1911 to 1914, colporteurs were working counties in our section of Ohio," comments LaRue Witchey, continuing: "They labored hard in the service, pedaling bicycles many miles, loaded with 'Scripture Studies.'" Of course, a colporteur's first ride on a bicycle could be quite an experience.

Maybe a horse would be better. Malinda Z. Keefer fondly recalls old Dobbin. "Dobbin was a gentle horse and never had to be tied. He would wait for me when I went to the doors and then walk along with me to the next place."

But, then, not all horses were like old Dobbin, as colporteur Anna E. Zimmerman and Esther Snyder learned. Imagine two women in a rented buggy pulled by a horse just shipped in from the west. Sister Zimmerman tells us that the horse "would let nothing pass him by, not even the train, which for several miles before reaching the livery stable ran parallel with the road. I called over to the engineer,

‘Please hold your train at the station until we get our horse to the livery stable.’ He replied: ‘O.K. Take your time.’ The horse continued putting up and down all four as fast as ever. We reached the stable O.K. with the stable owner apologizing that he was at lunch when we hired the horse and that the stable boy, being afraid of the horse, which it was his job to break in, gave me that job.”

Then there was the automobile, used by some colporteurs in later years. Today, of course, well-paved roads are common in most areas of the United States. But not so decades ago. So, auto travels could present problems too. Once, for instance, “one covered hole was so vast and the filled-in ground so soft, the car suddenly sank into the hole to the axle,” write Hazelle and Helen Krull. “Our often-used shovel wasn’t enough for this predicament,” they recall. “A kind neighbor offered the use of his mule, but, in addition, we scoured the roadside for logs, beams or branches to pry up the deeply sunken rear end. So with mule power at the fore, engine power in the middle, and vigorous push power from the rear, after many unsuccessful attempts it was a happy moment for all when the car was finally up and out of the hole. But the day had its joys. Before this happened we had made some interesting calls, some away in off the road to which we walked; so the hardship was balanced with joy. As with David, our hearts so often pleaded: ‘Do hear, O God, my entreating cry. Do pay attention to my prayer.’—[Ps. 61:1](#).”

Much more significant than any problems they encountered were the preaching activities of the colporteurs. Suppose we accompany them now as they call at the homes of the people. William P. Mockridge joined Vincent C. Rice in colporteur work during 1906 at Schenectady, New York. He helps us to step back to those days by saying: “The first day I worked all day without making a single placement and yet I was supposed to be a supersalesman. That night I prayed to Jehovah to help me get ‘asbestos’ and material things out of my mind and learn to follow the humble and kind approach of Brother Rice, who always had a cheerful word for whoever came to the door. So, soon I commenced placing many bound books, using a ‘prospectus’ furnished by the Society. . . . We would ‘take orders’ for the first three volumes [of *Studies in the Scriptures*] for 98c or the six volumes for \$1.98. These orders would be delivered on ‘payday,’ usually the 1st or 15th of the month.”

Did you notice that Brother Mockridge mentioned using a “prospectus”? For years it was used by colporteurs and other Bible Students engaging in the house-to-

house preaching work. This was an array of covers for six volumes of *Millennial Dawn (Studies in the Scriptures)*, bound together in accordion fashion. At the door the colporteur stretched this out along his arm and gave a talk on the subject of each volume. He took orders and delivered the literature at a later time.

“Delivery days were hard,” admits Pearl Wright, “as a suitcase full of books was heavy to carry around.” It certainly was. Suppose a colporteur took orders for fifty volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*. That number weighed forty pounds, a heavy load for women and even for a good many men. In time, however, colporteur James H. Cole invented a two-wheeled, nickel-plated attachment that could be affixed to a suitcase.

It “was an eye-catcher,” according to Anna E. Zimmerman, who tells us: “I recall one occasion when colporteur in the town of Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, that I had to wheel my suitcase right through the business section during the dinner hour. This I dreaded, but went right along rolling my suitcase by my side, when suddenly a well-dressed gentleman politely stepped up to me from the rear and, taking hold of the handle of my suitcase, asked: ‘Would you mind if I would roll this along for a little while? I would like to see how it goes. You seem to go along with it with such ease.’ Well, he rolled it the entire way through the business section and I did not have to do it at all. I learned he was the newspaper editor of the town.” The next day there was a detailed report in the local paper.

With unselfish motives, the faithful colporteurs labored diligently, depending upon Jehovah. And their efforts were rewarded. At times congregations developed as a result of colporteur activity. There were deep satisfactions and rich spiritual rewards. With joy Edythe Kessler and her sister Clara entered colporteur service back in 1907. They walked a lot, and there were many volumes to carry on “delivery day.” Yes, they got tired, but Edythe seems to speak for the faithful old-time colporteurs in general when she says: “We were young and happy in the service, delighted to expend our strength in serving Jah.”

### **‘NO WEAPON FORMED AGAINST YOU WILL SUCCEED’**

During all the years that faithful colporteurs and other Bible Students zealously proclaimed the good news, Satan the Devil never relaxed his hand and halted efforts to crush and destroy them. He would have accomplished this, too, were it

not for the divine protection they enjoyed. (1 [Pet. 5:8, 9](#); [Heb. 2:14](#)) They realized the truthfulness of God's promise to his people of ancient times: "Any weapon whatever that will be formed against you will have no success, and any tongue at all that will rise up against you in the judgment you will condemn."—[Isa. 54:17](#).

Jesus Christ was persecuted, and his followers can expect the same treatment from practicers of false religion and the world in general. ([John 15:20](#)) Sometimes, however, Satan's attack has been an internal one, originating with unscrupulous individuals within the Christian organization, stemming from incidents involving persons really "not of our sort."—1 [John 2:19](#).

It will be recalled that in the 1870's C. T. Russell disassociated himself from N. H. Barbour, publisher of *The Herald of the Morning*. This he did because Barbour denied the Scriptural doctrine of the ransom, which Russell staunchly upheld. Then in the early 1890's certain prominent persons in the organization unscrupulously tried to seize control of the Watch Tower Society. The conspirators planned to explode veritable "bombs" designed to end Russell's popularity and bring about his finish as the Society's president. After brewing for nearly two years, the conspiracy erupted in 1894. Mainly, the grievances and false charges centered around alleged dishonesty in business on the part of C. T. Russell. Indeed, some of the charges were very petty and betrayed the accusers' basic intention—the defamation of C. T. Russell. Impartial fellow believers investigated matters and found Russell to be in the right. Hence, the conspirators' plan to "blow Mr. Russell and his work sky-high" was a complete failure. Like the apostle Paul, Brother Russell had experienced trouble owing to "false brothers," but this trial was recognized as a design of Satan, and the conspirators henceforth were viewed as unfit to enjoy Christian fellowship.—2 [Cor. 11:26](#).

This, of course, was not the end of C. T. Russell's trials and difficulties. He was yet to be touched in a very personal way, by circumstances arising in his own household. During the trouble in 1894, Mrs. C. T. Russell (the former Maria Frances Ackley, whom Russell had married in 1879) undertook a tour from New York to Chicago, meeting with Bible Students along the way and speaking in her husband's behalf. Being an educated, intelligent woman, she was well received when visiting the congregations at that time.

Mrs. Russell was a director of the Watch Tower Society and served as its secretary

and treasurer for some years. She also was a regular contributor to the columns of *Zion's Watch Tower* and for a time was an associate editor of the journal. Eventually, she sought a stronger voice in what should be published in the *Watch Tower*. Such ambition was comparable to that of Moses' sister Miriam, who rose up against her brother as leader of Israel under God and tried to make herself prominent—a course that met with divine disapproval.—[Num. 12:1-15](#).

What had contributed to this attitude on Mrs. Russell's part? "I was not aware of it at the time," wrote C. T. Russell in 1906, "but learned subsequently that the conspirators endeavored to sow seeds of discord in my wife's heart by flattery, 'woman's rights' arguments, etc. However, when the shock came [in 1894], in the Lord's providence I was spared the humiliation of seeing my wife amongst those conspirators. . . . As matters began to settle down, the 'woman's rights' ideas and personal ambition began again to come to the top, and I perceived that Mrs. Russell's active campaign in my defense, and the very cordial reception given her by the dear friends at that time throughout a journey . . . had done her injury by increasing her self-appreciation. . . . Gradually she seemed to reach the conclusion that nothing was just proper for the WATCH TOWER columns except what she had written, and I was continually harassed with suggestions of alterations of my writings. I was pained to note this growing disposition so foreign to the humble mind which characterized her for the first thirteen happy years."

Mrs. Russell became very uncooperative, and strained relations continued. But early in 1897 she became ill and her husband gave her much attention. This he gave cheerfully and he felt that his kind care would touch her heart and restore it to its former loving and tender condition. When she recovered, however, Mrs. Russell called a committee and met with her husband "specially with the object of having the brethren instruct me that she had an equal right with myself in the WATCH TOWER columns, and that I was doing her wrong in not according her the liberties she desired," wrote C. T. Russell. As matters turned out, though, she was told by the committee that neither they nor other persons had the right to interfere with her husband's management of the *Watch Tower*. Mrs. Russell said, in substance, that though unable to agree with the committee, she would try to look at matters from their standpoint. Russell further reported: "I then asked her in their presence if she would shake hands. She hesitated, but finally gave me her hand. I then said, 'Now, will you kiss me, dear, as a token of the degree of change



of mind which you have indicated?' Again she hesitated, but finally did kiss me and otherwise manifested a renewal of affection in the presence of her Committee."

So the Russell's 'kissed and made up.' Later, at Mrs. Russell's request, her husband arranged for a weekly meeting of "The Sisters of the Allegheny Church," with her as its leader. This led to further trouble—the circulating of slanderous remarks about C. T. Russell. However, this difficulty also was settled.

Eventually, though, growing resentment led Mrs. Russell to sever her relationship with the Watch Tower Society and with her husband. Without notice, she separated from him in 1897, after nearly eighteen years of marriage. For almost seven years she lived separately, C. T. Russell providing a separate home for her and also making financial provision for her support. In June 1903 Mrs. Russell filed in the Court of Common Pleas at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a suit for legal separation. During April 1906 the case came up for trial before Justice Collier and a jury. Nearly two years later, on March 4, 1908, a decree was issued that was styled "In Divorce." The language of the decree is: "It is now ordered, adjudged and decreed that Maria F. Russell, the Libellant; and Charles T. Russell, the Respondent, be separated from bed and board." "Separated from bed and board" is the language of both the decree and the docket entries made by the clerk of the court. This was a legalized separation and there never was an absolute divorce, as some erroneously have held. *Bouvier's Law Dictionary* (Banks-Baldwin Law Publishing Company, 1940) defines the action as "A partial or qualified divorce, by which the parties are separated and forbidden to live or cohabit together, without affecting the marriage itself. 1 Bl. Com. 440." (Page 314) On page 312 it says that it "may more properly be termed a legal separation."

C. T. Russell himself fully understood that the court did not grant an absolute divorce, but that this was a legalized separation. At Dublin, during a 1911 tour of Ireland, he was asked: "Is it *true* that you are divorced from your wife?" Of his answer, Russell wrote: "'I am not divorced from my wife. The decree of the court was not *divorce*, but *separation*, granted by a sympathetic jury, which declared that we would both be happier separated. My wife's charge was cruelty, but the only cruelty put in evidence was my refusal on one occasion to give her a kiss when she had requested it.' I assured my audience that I disputed the charge of cruelty and believed that no woman was ever better treated by a husband. The applause

showed that the audience believed my statements.”

What took place at C. T. Russell's funeral at Pittsburgh in 1916 also is significant along these lines. Anna K. Gardner, whose recollections are similar to those of others present, tells us this: “An incident occurred just before the services at Carnegie Hall that refuted lies told in the paper about Brother Russell. The hall was filled long before the time for the services to begin and it was very quiet, and then a veiled figure was seen to walk up the aisle to the casket and to lay something on it. Up front one could see what it was—a bunch of lilies of the valley, Brother Russell's favorite flower. There was a ribbon attached, saying, ‘To My Beloved Husband.’ It was Mrs. Russell. They had never been divorced and this was a public acknowledgment.”

One can but imagine the heartache and emotional strain C. T. Russell's domestic trials brought upon him. In an undated handwritten letter to Mrs. Russell at one point in their marital difficulties, he wrote: “By the time this reaches you it will be just one week since you deserted the one whom before God and man you promised to love and obey and serve, ‘for better or for worse, until death do you part.’ Surely it is true that ‘experience is a wonderful teacher.’ Only *it* could have persuaded me thus of you, of whom I can truly say that at one time there could not have been a more loving and devoted helpmate. Had you been other than that I am confident that the Lord would not have given you to me. He doeth all things well. I still thank him for his providence toward me in that respect, and look back with sensations of pleasure to the time when you kissed me at least thirty times a day, and repeatedly told me that you did not see how you could live without me; and that you feared that I would die first . . . And I reflect that some of these evidences of love were given me only a year and a half ago, though for a year previous your love had been less fervent—because of jealousy and surmisings, notwithstanding my assurances of the ardor of my love for you, repeated a hundred times, and still asseverated.”

Russell did feel that the great Adversary then had a “very firm hold” on his wife. He said, “I have prayed earnestly to the Lord on your behalf,” and he also sought to aid her. Among other things, he wrote: “I will not burden you with accounts of my sorrow, nor attempt to work upon your sympathies by delineating my emotions, as I from time to time run across your dresses and other articles which bring

vividly before my mind your former self—so full of love and sympathy and helpfulness—the spirit of Christ. My heart cries out, ‘Oh that I had buried her, or that she had buried me, in that happy time.’ But evidently the trials and testings were not sufficiently advanced. . . . Oh, do consider prayerfully what I am about to say. And be assured that the keen edge of my sorrow, its poignancy, is not my own loneliness for the remainder of life’s journey, but your fall, my dear, your everlasting loss, *so far as I can see.*”

## **NOT IMMORAL**

As though the strain of Russell’s marital difficulties was not enough, his foes stooped to making scurrilous charges against him to the effect that he was immoral. These deliberate falsehoods centered around a so-called “jellyfish” story. During the trial in April 1906, Mrs. Russell testified that a certain Miss Ball told her that C. T. Russell had once said: “I am like a jellyfish. I float around here and there. I touch this one and that one, and if she responds I take her to me, and if not I float on to others.” On the witness stand C. T. Russell emphatically denied the “jellyfish” story, and all this matter was stricken from the court record, the judge saying in his charge to the jury: “This little incident about this girl that was in the family, that is beyond the ground of the libel and has nothing to do with the case.”

The girl in question came to the Russells in 1888 as an orphan about ten years old. They treated her as their own child and she kissed both Mr. and Mrs. Russell good night each evening when retiring. (Court Record, pages 90 and 91) Mrs. Russell testified that the alleged incident occurred in 1894, when this girl could not have been more than fifteen years old. (Court Record, page 15) After that Mrs. Russell lived with her husband for three years and was separated from him for about seven years more before filing suit for separation. In her bill for separation no reference was made to this matter. Though Miss Ball was then living and Mrs. Russell knew where, she made no attempt to procure her as a witness and presented no statement from her. C. T. Russell himself could not have had Miss Ball present to testify because he had no notice or intimation that his wife would bring such a matter into the case. Furthermore, three years after the alleged incident, when Mrs. Russell had called together a committee before whom she and her husband discussed certain differences, the “jellyfish” story was never even intimated. In the suit for separate maintenance, Mrs. Russell’s attorney had

said: "We make no charge of adultery." And that Mrs. Russell actually never believed her husband was guilty of immoral conduct was shown by the record (page 10). Her own counsel asked Mrs. Russell: "You don't mean that your husband was guilty of adultery?" She answered: "No."

Throughout the trialsome period of Charles Taze Russell's domestic difficulties and the related hardships, Jehovah sustained him by means of the holy spirit. God continued to use Russell during those years, not only to write material for *Zion's Watch Tower*, but to discharge other weighty duties and to pen three volumes of *Millennial Dawn* (or *Studies in the Scriptures*). How encouraging this is to Christians today as they go on doing the divine will though beset by various trials! Especially heartening to Jesus' faithful anointed followers are these words of James: "Happy is the man that keeps on enduring trial, because on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life, which Jehovah promised to those who continue loving him."—[Jas. 1:12](#).

## MIRACLE WHEAT

Foes of C. T. Russell used not only his domestic affairs but other "weapons" against him. For instance, his enemies have charged that he sold a great quantity of ordinary wheat seed under the name of "Miracle Wheat" at one dollar per pound, or sixty dollars per bushel. They have held that from this Russell realized an enormous personal profit. However, these charges are absolutely false. What are the facts?

In 1904 Mr. K. B. Stoner noticed an unusual plant growing in his garden in Fincastle, Virginia. It turned out to be wheat of an uncommon kind. The plant had 142 stalks and each bore a head of fully matured wheat. In 1906 he named it "Miracle Wheat." Eventually others obtained and grew it, enjoying extraordinary yields. In fact, Miracle Wheat won prizes at several fairs. C. T. Russell was very interested in anything related to the Biblical predictions that "the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose" and "the earth shall yield her increase." ([Isa. 35:1](#); [Ezek. 34:27](#), AV) On November 23, 1907, H. A. Miller, Assistant Agriculturalist of the United States Government, filed in the Department of Agriculture a report commending this wheat grown by Mr. Stoner. Throughout the country the public press took note of the report. C. T. Russell's attention was drawn to it, and so in *Zion's Watch Tower* of March 15, 1908, on page 86, he published some press

comments and extracts from the government report. Then, in conclusion, he commented: "If this account be but one-half true it testifies afresh to God's ability to provide things needful for the 'times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.'—[Acts 3:19-21](#)."

Mr. Stoner was not a Bible Student or an associate of C. T. Russell, and neither were various other persons who experimented with Miracle Wheat. In 1911, however, *Watch Tower* readers J. A. Bohnet of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Samuel J. Fleming of Wabash, Indiana, presented to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society the aggregate of about thirty bushels of this wheat, proposing that it be sold for one dollar per pound and that all the proceeds be received by the Society as a donation from them, to be used in its religious work. The wheat was received and sent out by the Society and the gross receipts from it amounted to about \$1,800. Russell himself did not get a penny of this money. He merely published a statement in *The Watch Tower* to the effect that the wheat had been contributed and could be obtained for a dollar a pound. The Society itself made no claim for the wheat on its own knowledge and the money received went as a donation into Christian missionary work. When others criticized this sale, all who had contributed were informed that if they were dissatisfied their money would be returned. In fact, the identical money received for the wheat was held for a year for that purpose. But not one person asked for a refund. The conduct of Brother Russell and the Society in connection with Miracle Wheat was completely open and aboveboard.

Because Charles Taze Russell taught the truth from God's Word, he was hated and maligned, often by the religious clergy. But then, Christians of modern times expect such treatment, for Jesus and his apostles were dealt with similarly by religious opposers.—[Luke 7:34](#).

### **"JEHOVAH WILL NOT DESERT HIS PEOPLE"**

Jehovah is a faithful God. The prophet Samuel counseled the people of Israel to serve God with all their heart, and declared: "Jehovah will not desert his people for the sake of his great name, because Jehovah has taken it upon himself to make you his people."—[1 Sam. 12:20-25](#).

The Bible Students certainly found this to be true in their case. Some of their experiences during the years 1914 through 1916, for instance, brought disappointment and sorrow. Yet, Jehovah upheld his people, never forsaking them. —1 Cor. 10:13.

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS

At that time there also were reasons for rejoicing. For years God's people had pointed forward to 1914 as the year that would mark the end of the Gentile Times. Their expectations did not lead to disappointment. On July 28, 1914, World War I erupted, and as time marched on toward October 1 more and more nations and empires got involved. As Jehovah's Christian witnesses know from their Scriptural studies, the period of uninterrupted Gentile world rule ended in 1914, with the birth of God's heavenly kingdom with Jesus Christ as king. (Rev. 12:1-5) But there also were other expectations regarding 1914. Concerning these, Brother A. H. Macmillan wrote in his book *Faith on the March*: "On August 23, 1914, as I well recall, Pastor Russell started on a trip to the Northwest, down the Pacific coast and over into the Southern states, and then ending at Saratoga Springs, New York, where we held a convention September 27-30. That was a highly interesting time because a few of us seriously thought we were going to heaven during the first week of that October."

The idea of going to heaven in 1914 was strong among some Bible Students. "Our thought," remarks Sister Dwight T. Kenyon, "was that the war would go into revolution and into anarchy. Then those of the anointed or the consecrated at that time would die and be glorified. One night I dreamed that the whole ecclesia (congregation) was on a train going somewhere. There was thunder and lightning, and all at once the friends began dying all around me. I thought that was all right, but try as I would, I couldn't die. This was quite upsetting! Then all at once I died and felt so relieved and satisfied. I tell this just to show how sure we were that all was going to end soon as far as this old world was concerned and that the remnant of the 'little flock' was to be glorified.—Luke 12:32."

Hazelle and Helen Krull recall that during 1914 discussions at the Bethel dining table often centered on the end of the Gentile Times. From time to time, they say, Brother Russell made extended remarks, urging faithfulness and explaining that the time features had been reviewed and still seemed accurate, but also that "if we



were expecting more than what the Scriptures warranted, then we must bow to Jehovah's will and adjust our minds and hearts in faith to His way, still faithfully watching and waiting for the outworking of associated events."

An incident at the Saratoga Springs convention in 1914 highlights Brother Macmillan's view of "going home" to heaven in that year. He wrote: "Wednesday (September 30) I was invited to talk on the subject, 'The End of All Things Is at Hand; Therefore Let Us Be Sober, Watchful and Pray.' Well, as one would say, that was down my road. I believed it myself sincerely—that the church was 'going home' in October. During that discourse I made this unfortunate remark: 'This is probably the last public address I shall ever deliver because we shall be going home soon.'"

The next morning, October 1, 1914, about five hundred Bible Students enjoyed a lovely ride down the Hudson River on a steamer from Albany to New York. On Sunday the conventioners were to open sessions in Brooklyn, where the assembly would end. Quite a few delegates stayed at Bethel, and, of course, members of the headquarters staff were present at the breakfast table on Friday morning, October 2. Everyone was seated when Brother Russell entered. As usual, he said cheerily, "Good morning, all." But this particular morning was different. Instead of proceeding promptly to his seat, he clapped his hands and joyfully announced: "The Gentile times have ended; their kings have had their day." "How we clapped our hands!" exclaims Cora Merrill. Brother Macmillan admitted: "We were highly excited and I would not have been surprised if at that moment we had just started up, that becoming the signal to begin ascending heavenward—but of course there was nothing like that, really." Sister Merrill adds: "After a brief pause he [Russell] said: 'Anyone disappointed? I'm not. Everything is moving right on schedule!' Again we clapped our hands."

C. T. Russell made some remarks, but it was not long before A. H. Macmillan became the object of attention. Good-naturedly, Russell said: "We are going to make some changes in the program for Sunday. At 10:30 Sunday morning Brother Macmillan will give us an address." That brought hearty laughter from everyone. After all, just that past Wednesday Brother Macmillan had given what he thought would probably be his "last public address." "Well," wrote A.H. Macmillan years later, "then I had to get busy to find something to say. I found [Psalm 74:9](#), 'We see

not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.' Now that was different. In that talk I tried to show the friends that perhaps some of us had been a bit too hasty in thinking that we were going to heaven right away, and the thing for us to do would be to keep busy in the Lord's service until he determined when any of his approved servants would be taken home to heaven."

C. T. Russell himself had warned against private speculations. For instance, he discussed the end of the Gentile Times and then said in *The Watch Tower* of December 1, 1912: "Finally, let us remember that we did not consecrate [dedicate] either to October, 1914, nor to October, 1915, or to any other date, but 'unto death.' If for any reason the Lord has permitted us to miscalculate the prophecies, the signs of the times assure us that the miscalculations cannot be very great. And if the Lord's grace and peace be with us in the future as in the past, according to His promise, we shall rejoice equally to go or to remain at any time, and to be in His service, either on this side the veil or on the other side [on earth or in heaven], as may please our Master best."

Even as the climactic year 1914 began, Russell wrote in *The Watch Tower* of January 1: "We may not read the *time* features with the same absolute certainty as *doctrinal* features; for time is not so definitely stated in the Scriptures as are the basic doctrines. We are still walking by faith and not by sight. We are, however, not faithless and unbelieving, but faithful and waiting. If later it should be demonstrated that the Church is not glorified by October, 1914, we shall try to feel content with whatever the Lord's will may be."

So, there were great expectations concerning 1914 on the part of many of the Bible Students. Yet, they also had received sound admonition in pages of *The Watch Tower*. Indeed, some Christians thought they were 'going home' to heaven in the autumn of that year. "But," says C. J. Woodworth, "October 1st, 1914, came and went—and years accumulated after that date—and the anointed were still here on earth. Some grew sour and fell away from the truth. Those who put their trust in Jehovah saw 1914 as truly a marked time—the 'beginning of the end'—but they also realized their previous concept was wrong concerning the 'glorification of the saints,' as it was stated. They now perceived that much work yet remained for the faithful anointed ones—and of that group my father [Clayton J. Woodworth] was

one.”

But disappointments about going to heaven in 1914 really were very minor, compared with the great expectations realized in connection with that year. During the first six months of 1914, nothing happened to the Gentile nations, though the Bible Students long had pointed out that the Gentile Times would expire in that year. Hence, religious leaders and others ridiculed C. T. Russell and the Watch Tower Society. Yet, Jehovah certainly had not forsaken his people or allowed them to be misled. Moved by his holy spirit, they carried on their witness work, not expecting the end of the Gentile Times until autumn of that year. As the months wore on, tension increased throughout Europe, and still ridicule against the Kingdom message was mounting. When nation after nation became enmeshed in the first world war, however, there was a difference. The work of Jehovah's Christian witnesses was brought prominently into view.

A typical press reaction of the time appeared in *The World*, then a leading New York city newspaper. Its Sunday magazine section of August 30, 1914, contained the article “End of All Kingdoms in 1914.” There it was stated, in part:

“The terrific war outbreak in Europe has fulfilled an extraordinary prophecy. For a quarter of a century past, through preachers and through press, the ‘International Bible Students,’ best known as ‘Millennial Dawners,’ have been proclaiming to the world that the Day of Wrath prophesied in the Bible would dawn in 1914. ‘Look out for 1914!’ has been the cry of the hundreds of travelling evangelists who, representing this strange creed, have gone up and down the country enunciating the doctrine that ‘the Kingdom of God is at hand.’ . . .

“Rev. Charles T. Russell is the man who has been propounding this interpretation of the Scriptures since 1874. . . . ‘In view of this strong Bible evidence,’ Rev. Russell wrote in 1889, ‘we consider it an established truth that the final end of the kingdoms of this world and the full establishment of the Kingdom of God will be accomplished by the end of A.D. 1914.’ . . .

“But to say that the trouble must culminate in 1914—that was peculiar. For some strange reason, perhaps because Rev. Russell has a very calm, higher mathematics style of writing instead of flamboyant soap box manners, the world in general has scarcely taken him into account. The students over in his ‘Brooklyn

Tabernacle' say that this was to be expected, that the world never did listen to divine warnings and never will, until after the day of trouble is past. . . .

"And in 1914 comes war, the war which everybody dreaded but which everybody thought could not really happen. Rev. Russell is not saying 'I told you so'; and he is not revising the prophecies to suit the current history. He and his students are content to wait—to wait until October, which they figure to be the real end of 1914."

True, the Bible Students were not 'taken home' to heaven in October 1914. But the 2,520-year-long Gentile Times then ended. And, as Jehovah's servants later realized more fully, they had plenty of work to do after that time right here on earth in preaching the good news of God's established kingdom. Evidently many would yet respond favorably to Bible truth. Regarding this, Russell wrote in *The Watch Tower* of February 15, 1915: "There are certain indications that the Lord has a great work for all His people, His watching saints, at the present time. . . . There are some of the Lord's children who seem possessed with the idea that 'the door is shut,' and that there is no further opportunity for service. So they become indolent in regard to the Lord's work. We should lose no time dreaming that the door is shut! There are people who are seeking the Truth—people who are sitting in darkness. There never was a time like the present. Never have so many people been ready to hear the good Message. In all the forty years of Harvest there have not been such opportunities to proclaim the Truth as now present themselves. The great war and the ominous signs of the times are waking people up, and many are now inquiring. So the Lord's people should be very diligent, doing with their might what their hands find to do."

### **"THERE IS A GREAT WORK AHEAD"**

In essence, then, God's people were told to remain steadfast and 'have plenty to do in the work of the Lord.' (1 Cor. 15:58) Further indicating that Brother Russell was convinced that there was a great work ahead for Jehovah's servants was an incident related years later by A. H. Macmillan. C. T. Russell always spent his mornings, from 8:00 a.m. until noon, preparing *Watch Tower* articles and engaging in other writing and Bible research. Macmillan wrote: "Nobody ever went near the study during those hours unless they were sent for or had something very important. About five minutes after eight, a stenographer came running down the

stairs and said to me: 'Brother Russell wants to see you in the study.' I thought, 'What have I been doing now?' To be called to the study in the morning meant there was something important." Listen to Brother Macmillan's further account:

"I went to the study and he said: 'Come in, brother. Please walk into the drawing room.' It was an extension of the study. He said: 'Brother, are you as deeply interested in the truth as you were when you began?' I looked surprised. He said: 'Don't be surprised. That was just a leading question.' Then he described to me his physical condition, and I knew enough about physical diagnosis to know that he would not live very many more months unless he had some relief. He said: 'Well, now, brother, what I wanted to tell you is this. I am not able to carry on the work any longer, and yet there is a great work to be done. . . .

"I said: 'Brother Russell, what you are talking about doesn't add up. It doesn't make good sense.'

"What do you mean, brother?' he asked.

"Your dying and this work going on?' I replied. 'Why, when you die we will all complacently fold our arms and wait to go to heaven with you. We will quit then.'

"Brother,' he said, 'if that is your idea, you don't see the issue. This is not man's work. I am not important to this work. The light is getting brighter. There is a great work ahead.' . . .

"After outlining the work ahead, Brother Russell said: 'Now, what I want is someone who will come in here to take the responsibility from me. I'll still direct the work, but I'm not able to attend to it as I have in the past.' So we discussed various persons. Finally, when I left and passed through a sliding door into the hallway, he said: 'Just a minute. You go to your room and talk to the Lord on this matter and come and tell me if Brother Macmillan will accept this job.' He closed the door without my saying anything more. Well, I think I stood there half dazed. What could I do to assist Brother Russell in this work? It required a man that would have some business abilities about him, and all I knew was how to preach religion. However, I thought it over and came back later and said to him: 'Brother, I'll do anything that I possibly can. I don't care where you put me.'"

Convinced that there was so much work ahead for God's people, C. T. Russell told

his close associates to prepare for a growth in their numbers. He made certain changes that would draw the organization together, and recommended future changes in the event that he could not carry them out personally. A. H. Macmillan was placed in charge of the office and the Bethel home. Then, despite Russell's rapidly failing health and extreme physical discomfort by autumn of 1916, he set out on a previously arranged lecture tour.

## A FINAL JOURNEY

Departing from New York on October 16, 1916, Brother Russell and his secretary, Menta Sturgeon, traveled to Detroit, Michigan, by way of Canada. The two men then went on to Chicago, Illinois, down through Kansas and on into Texas. His condition of health was such that his secretary had to substitute for him at several speaking engagements. On Tuesday evening, October 24, at San Antonio, Texas, Russell delivered his last public talk, on the subject "The World on Fire." During this discourse he had to leave the platform three times, while his secretary filled in for him.

Tuesday night, Brother Russell and his secretary and traveling associate were aboard a train en route to California. A sick man, Russell remained in bed all day Wednesday. At one point, taking the ailing man's hand, Russell's traveling associate said: "That is the greatest creed-smashing hand I ever saw!" Russell replied that he did not think it would smash any more creeds.

The two men were detained one day at Del Rio, Texas, because a bridge had been burned and another had to be erected. They pulled out of Del Rio on Thursday morning. On Friday night they changed trains at a junction point in California. All day Saturday Russell was in severe pain and experiencing great weakness. They arrived in Los Angeles on Sunday, October 29, and there that evening C. T. Russell gave his last talk to a congregation. By that time he was so weak that he was unable to stand for the discourse. "I regret that I am not able to speak with force or power," said Russell. He then beckoned to the chairman to remove the stand and bring a chair, saying as he sat down, "Pardon me for sitting down, please." He spoke for about forty-five minutes, then answered to questions for a short time. Dwight T. Kenyon says of that occasion: "I had the privilege of attending Brother Russell's last talk in Los Angeles on October 29, 1916. He was very ill and remained seated during his discourse on [Zechariah 13:7-9](#). How his good-bye text, [Numbers](#)



## 6:24-26, impressed me!"

Realizing that his severe condition would not allow him to go on, Russell decided to cancel the rest of his speaking appointments and return quickly to the Bethel home in Brooklyn. On Tuesday, October 31, C. T. Russell was on the verge of death. At Panhandle, Texas, a physician summoned earlier by telegraph temporarily boarded the train and observed Russell's condition, recognizing the critical symptoms. Then the train was under way again. Shortly thereafter, in early afternoon of Tuesday, October 31, 1916, sixty-four-year-old Charles Taze Russell died at Pampa, Texas.

## 'GOD STILL AT THE HELM'

Charles Taze Russell's many trials, preaching activities, writing responsibilities and other duties had drawn greatly on his vitality. For about thirty-two years he had served as president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. Reportedly, he traveled more than a million miles as a public speaker, preaching over 30,000 sermons. He wrote literature totaling more than 50,000 pages, often dictated a thousand letters a month, while managing a world-encircling evangelistic campaign that at one time employed 700 speakers. Furthermore, Russell personally compiled the most informative Biblical drama ever exhibited, the Photo-Drama of Creation.

Since Brother Russell had played such a prominent role in the work of declaring the good news, he was missed greatly by many Bible Students. "When I read the telegram regarding his death to the Bethel family at breakfast the next morning," said A. H. Macmillan, "there were moans all over the dining room." Among God's people in general there were mixed reactions. Arden Pate, who, incidentally, was an attendant at the Majestic Theatre in San Antonio when C. T. Russell gave his last public talk, observes: "Some said, 'That's the end of it,' and for them it was because they didn't see Jehovah leading his people, but they looked too much to one man." At Russell's funeral services on Sunday, November 5, 1916, in the New York City Temple, a number of his close associates spoke of the great loss. However, there were also exhortations to continued faithfulness. Separate services were held at the Carnegie Music Hall in Pittsburgh (Allegheny), Pennsylvania, beginning at 2 p.m. on November 6, with interment in the Bethel Family plot of the Rosemont United Cemeteries, Allegheny, at dusk of that day.

During the morning funeral service in New York city, A. H. Macmillan told about the talk Brother Russell had with him shortly before his death, mentioning also certain steps Russell took in connection with the work at the Society's headquarters. Then, among other things, Macmillan declared: "The work before us is great, but the Lord will give us the necessary grace and strength to perform it. . . . some faint-hearted workers may think the time has come to lay down our harvesting instruments and wait until the Lord calls us home. This is not the time for slackers to be heard. This is a time for action—more determined action than ever before!"

Nearing the conclusion of his discourse at the evening service, J. F. Rutherford said: "My beloved brethren—we who are here, and all who are in the earth—what shall we do? Shall we slacken our zeal for the cause of our Lord and King? No! By his grace we will *increase* our zeal and energy, to finish our course with joy. We will not fear nor falter, but will stand shoulder to shoulder, contending for the faith, rejoicing in our privilege of proclaiming the Message of his Kingdom."

Noteworthy, too, were the remarks of the Society's secretary-treasurer, W. E. Van Amburgh. At Russell's services, he stated: "This great worldwide work is not the work of one person. It is far too great for that. It is God's work and it changes not. God has used many servants in the past and He will doubtless use many in the future. Our consecration is not to a man, or to a man's work, but *to do the will of God*, as He shall reveal it unto us through His Word and providential leadings. God is still at the helm."

For God's people those were difficult days, indeed. Yet, they looked to Jehovah for aid. (Ps. 121:1-3) God would raise up others to carry major responsibilities in his organization. The preaching work would go on.

Jehovah's servants had just passed through a trying time, but years of crisis were ahead of them. With the death of C. T. Russell on October 31, 1916, the Watch Tower Society lacked a president. Until its annual meeting on January 6, 1917, an executive committee managed the Society's affairs. During that period, of course, the question of who would be the next president arose. One day Brother Van Amburgh asked A. H. Macmillan: "Brother, what do you think about it?" "There is only one person, whether you like it or not," replied Macmillan. "There is only one man who can take charge of this work now, and that is Brother Rutherford."

Taking Macmillan's hand Brother Van Amburgh said: "I'm with you." J. F. Rutherford knew nothing about this and did no electioneering for votes. But at the Society's annual meeting on January 6, 1917, he was nominated and elected as the president of the Watch Tower Society.

Humbly assuming his new responsibility, Brother Rutherford spoke briefly on that occasion, requesting the "united prayers, deep sympathy and unqualified cooperation" of his fellow believers. He assured them: "He who has thus far led us will continue to lead us. Let us have brave hearts, ready minds and willing hands, trusting implicitly always in the Lord, looking to Him for guidance. He will lead us to certain victory. Renewing our Covenant with Him today, united in the holy bonds of Christian love, may we go forth proclaiming to the world, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.'"

## **RUTHERFORD'S BACKGROUND**

Rutherford himself was a courageous fighter for the truth. He was born of Baptist parents in Morgan County, Missouri, on November 8, 1869. From Sister Ross, the elder natural sister of Joseph Franklin Rutherford, A. D. Schroeder learned this: "Their father was a staunch Baptist out in Missouri where the family lived. Her younger brother Joseph never could accept the Baptist 'hellfire' teaching. This resulted in many heated debates in the household even before they had heard of the truth. Her brother always had been one of strong convictions with a deep sense of justice. From youth he wanted to be a lawyer and a judge. Their father wanted him to stay on the farm rather than go to college to study law. Joseph had to get a friend who would loan him money, not only to hire a replacement for him on his father's farm, but also to finance his studies in law."

Joseph Rutherford paid his own way through school. Among other things, he became an expert at taking shorthand, a skill very useful years later in quickly recording his thoughts for Biblical articles and other material. While still in school, Joseph Rutherford became a court stenographer. This enabled him to finish paying for his course and also gave him practical experience. After completing his academy education, Rutherford spent two years under the tutelage of Judge E. L. Edwards. At twenty years of age, Joseph Rutherford became the official reporter for the courts of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit in Missouri. When twenty-two, he was admitted to the Missouri bar. His license to practice law in that state

was granted on May 5, 1892, according to the records of the Cooper Circuit Court. Rutherford began practicing law at Boonville, Missouri, as a trial lawyer with the law firm of Draffen and Wright.

J. F. Rutherford later served for four years as public prosecutor in Boonville, Missouri. Still later he became a special judge in the same Fourteenth Judicial District of Missouri. In this capacity, if the regular judge was unable to hold court, Rutherford sat as a substitute judge. Court records substantiate his appointment as a special judge on more than one occasion. Hence, he came to be known as “Judge” Rutherford.

Hazelle and Helen Krull remember hearing J. F. Rutherford tell how he first became interested in the truth proclaimed by Jehovah’s servants. They tell us: “During one of Brother Rutherford’s visits he suggested a walk in the moonlight out into the countryside. As we walked, he talked, telling of his early life and how he became interested in the truth. He was brought up on a farm but he wanted to study law. His father felt the need of his help on the farm but finally consented to let him go if he paid his own way in school and also paid for a helper on the farm to take his place. During summer vacation time he sold books in order to live up to his agreement. . . . He made a promise to himself that when he became a practicing lawyer, if anyone ever came to his office selling books he would buy them. That day came [in 1894], but his law partner talked to the caller. She was a ‘colporteur’—Sister Elizabeth Hettenbaugh—and was presenting three volumes of *Millennial Dawn*. His partner was not interested and dismissed her [and her associate colporteur, Sister Beeler]. Brother Rutherford, emerging from his private office, having overheard something about books and remembering his resolve, called her back, took the books and placed them in his library at home and there they remained for a while. One day as he was convalescing from a sick spell he opened one of the books and started to read. That was the beginning of a lifelong interest and a never-ceasing devotion and service to his God.”

Meetings of the Bible Students were not held in the immediate vicinity of the Rutherford home. However, Clarence B. Beaty says: “From 1904 on, meetings were held in our home. Sister Rutherford and Judge Rutherford came up from Boonville, Missouri, for the Memorial [of Christ’s death]. . . . He partook of his first Memorial and gave his first pilgrim talk to the friends in our home. They had no one in the

truth in Boonville except themselves.”

But how did J. F. Rutherford get started as a preacher of the good news? Well, A. H. Macmillan largely was responsible for that. Macmillan met Rutherford in 1905 at Kansas City during a trip across the United States with Brother Russell. A little later Brother Macmillan stopped to visit Judge Rutherford for a day or two. One conversation between them went like this:

“Judge, you ought to be preaching the truth here.”

“I’m not a preacher. I’m a lawyer.”

“Well, now, Judge, I’ll show you what you can do. You go and get a copy of the Holy Bible and a small group of people, and teach them about life, death and the hereafter. Show them where we got our life, why we came into the condition of death and what death means. Take the Scriptures as a witness, and then wind up by saying, ‘There I have fulfilled everything like I said,’ just as you would to the jury in a court trial, and drive it home in conclusion.”

“That doesn’t sound too bad.”

What happened after that? Did Rutherford do anything about that advice? Brother Macmillan reported: “There was a colored man that worked on a little farm that was next to his city home, close to the edge of town. About fifteen or twenty colored people were there, and he went over there to give them a sermon on ‘Life, Death and the Hereafter.’ While he was talking they kept saying, ‘Praise the Lord, Judge! Where did you get all that?’ He had a great time. That was the first Bible talk he ever gave.”

Not long thereafter, in 1906, J. F. Rutherford symbolized his dedication to Jehovah God. Wrote Brother Macmillan: “I had the privilege of baptizing him at Saint Paul, Minnesota. He was one of 144 persons that I personally baptized in water that day. So when he became president of the Society, I was especially pleased.”

In 1907 Rutherford became the Watch Tower Society’s legal counselor, serving at its Pittsburgh headquarters. He was privileged to negotiate matters when the Society transferred its operations to Brooklyn, New York, in 1909. To do this, he made application and was admitted to the New York bar, becoming a recognized

lawyer for that state. On May 24 of the same year, Rutherford was also admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court.

J. F. Rutherford frequently gave discourses as a pilgrim, a traveling representative of the Watch Tower Society. He journeyed widely as a Bible lecturer in the United States, speaking in many colleges and universities by request, and he also addressed large audiences throughout Europe. Rutherford visited Egypt and Palestine, and in 1913, accompanied by his wife, he traveled to Germany, where he addressed audiences totaling 18,000.

## HIS TRAITS

Jesus Christ said that all his followers were “brothers” and that ‘the one greatest among them must be their minister.’ ([Matt. 23:8-12](#)) Hence, no true Christian accords any fellow believer undue importance. Yet, the Bible reveals the traits of various servants of God. Moses, for example, was noted for meekness; James and John, the sons of Zebedee, for their fiery enthusiasm. ([Num. 12:3](#); [Mark 3:17](#); [Luke 9:54](#)) Since Joseph F. Rutherford was entrusted with much responsibility in God’s earthly organization, it is of some interest to note his traits and qualities.

“Rutherford had always manifested a deep Christian love for his associates,” said A. H. Macmillan, “and was very kindhearted; but he was not naturally of the same gentle, quiet-mannered disposition as Russell. He was direct and outspoken and did not hide his feelings. His bluntness, even when spoken in kindness, was sometimes misunderstood. But he had been president only a short time when it became apparent that the Lord had chosen the right man for the job.”

Further insight into Rutherford’s personality is gained from what took place in the Bible Students’ old London Tabernacle when he gave the Memorial talk there on April 18, 1924. Concerning this, Sister William P. Heath writes: “The Tabernacle was an old Episcopalian church that the Society had bought cheap, and they used it for Sunday meetings as we use a Kingdom Hall today. . . . The place for the speaker was way up at the ceiling, about twenty feet off the floor. Only his head would be visible when addressing the audience. Maybe this is why Brother Rutherford called it the ‘horse trough.’ He refused to speak from it; in fact, he shocked the brothers by coming down and standing on a level with them.”



When Brother Rutherford first assumed the presidency of the Watch Tower Society, there was a need for courage, faithfulness and determination. He manifested such qualities. For instance, Esther I. Morris recalls a talk Rutherford gave before a large audience as a pilgrim in what was then the biggest theater in Boise, Idaho. She states: "His exposé of false religion aroused the ire of several local clergymen, who tried to interrupt and challenge him, but his emphatic 'Sit down! I demand the protection of the law!' made him able to continue. Bible Students from adjacent towns came and we hired a hall and so had a small convention. He was most emphatic to let it be known that this message and ministry was no small thing."

A rather touching reflection on Brother Rutherford's nature is provided by Anna Elsdon. Recalling her youth, she writes: "We visited many times with Brother Rutherford. On one occasion several of us younger people were gathered together and Brother Rutherford came over to us. We asked many questions about school, flag-saluting, etc., and he talked to us a long time. When he was ready to say good-bye, he held the hands of all five of us in his two big hands so lovingly and he had tears in his eyes. He was so happy and touched to see us, so young and yet talking about the deep things of the truth. I've never forgotten it. Just as Brother Russell was loving, we also felt the love of this big Brother Rutherford."

## **ON WITH THE WORK!**

Brother Rutherford was determined to press on with the work of Kingdom-preaching. For years, under the guidance of Jehovah's holy spirit, the Bible Students had carried on a remarkably extensive campaign in declaring God's truth. Why, from 1870 through 1913 they had distributed 228,255,719 tracts and pamphlets and 6,950,292 bound books. In the momentous year 1914 alone Jehovah's servants put out 71,285,037 tracts and pamphlets and 992,845 bound books. The years 1915 and 1916, however, saw a decline in publishing activities because of the expanding of World War I and the breakdown of communications. In 1917, though, the work began showing an upward trend. Why?

The Society's new president promptly reorganized the headquarters office in Brooklyn. Furthermore, he acted to revitalize the field work. These changes, however, and the programs he stepped up were those that C. T. Russell had

begun. Pilgrim representatives of the Society were increased from sixty-nine to ninety-three. Distribution of free tracts was accelerated on occasional Sundays in front of the churches and regularly from house to house. A new four-page tract, *The Bible Students Monthly*, was published and in 1917 alone 28,665,000 free copies were distributed.

Also stepped up was a new activity started prior to C. T. Russell's death. Called the "Pastoral Work," it was a forerunner of the return visits now made by Jehovah's Christian witnesses. In Russell's time this activity was limited to about 500 congregations that had voluntarily elected him as their pastor. In a letter to these he described the undertaking as "an important Follow-up Work possible in connection with addresses received at Public Meetings, DRAMA Exhibitions, from Colporteur Lists, etc.—persons who supposedly have some interest in religious matters and who presumably would be more or less amenable to the Truth."

Women in the congregation who were interested in performing this work elected one of their number to serve as a lieutenant and another as secretary-treasurer. A city was divided into territorial districts, assigned to individual sisters who called on all whose names had been supplied as interested persons. The callers loaned books, which could be read and studied by the borrower. "Then none had the excuse, 'I have no money,' as it was a free loan," remarks [Esther I. Morris](#). At the call's conclusion the householder was told that a chart talk on the "Divine Plan" would soon be given in the district, and those manifesting interest were encouraged to attend. Afterward follow-up calls were made on individuals attending, in an effort to begin a study in the first volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*, entitled "The Divine Plan of the Ages." So the culmination of the program was to gather persons into "classes," first to hear chart talks and later to become regular groups called "Berean Classes."—[Acts 17:10, 11](#).

Other steps were taken by the Society's new president, J. F. Rutherford, to revitalize the preaching work. The colporteur service was expanded. This brought the total up from 373 to 461 colporteurs. To assist them, in early 1917 the Society began issuing a paper called "Bulletin." It contained periodic service instructions from headquarters. Later, after October 1922, the *Bulletin* became available monthly to the Bible Students in general. (Eventually it was named "Director," then "Informant" and thereafter "Kingdom Ministry.") Sister H. Gambill says that, in

time, "it had prepared testimonies which we called 'canvasses' that we were encouraged to memorize to use in field service. My sister-in-law . . . would follow me all over from room to room trying to get every word just exact. She so wanted to get it just right." Reflecting on the fact that the *Bulletin* contained prepared testimonies, Elizabeth Elrod says: "I appreciated this, for we did not have an arrangement, as we now have, of a person going along with another to train and help one to become an effective publisher. This unified the message going out."

As the rejuvenation campaign continued, other steps were taken by the Society's new administration back in 1917. For instance, a number of regional conventions were held. These were designed to encourage the Bible Students to press on with their work and not become weary in well-doing.

Just before 1914 C. T. Russell placed emphasis on a public speaking program. Now it was time to arrange for further qualified speakers to represent the Watch Tower Society from the public platform. How was this done? The program used was the V. D. M. arrangement. These letters stood for the Latin words *Verbi Dei Minister*, meaning "Minister of the Word of God." The program consisted of a questionnaire made available to both men and women associated with congregations of Bible Students.

Here are some sample questions appearing on the V.D.M. questionnaire. How well could you answer them? (1) What was the first creative act of God? (4) What is the divine penalty for sin upon the sinners? and who are the sinners? (6) Of what nature was the Man Christ Jesus from infancy to death? (7) Of what nature is Jesus since the resurrection; and what is his official relation to Jehovah? (13) What will be the reward or blessings which will come to the world of mankind through obedience to Messiah's kingdom? (16) Have you turned from sin to serve the living God? (17) Have you made a full consecration of your life and all your powers and talents to the Lord and his service? (18) Have you symbolized this consecration by water immersion? (22) Do you believe you have a substantial and permanent knowledge of the Bible which will render you more efficient as a servant of the Lord throughout the remainder of your life?

Those submitting their answers to the Society's V. D. M. department received a reply that included "some kindly suggestions and hints" respecting their answers. Among other things, it was desired that the questions be answered by individuals

in their own words.

Explaining matters a little further, George E. Hannan writes: “These questions were to serve as a guide in determining how well an individual understood the basic doctrines of the Bible. Any dedicated person who obtained an 85-percent rating was considered qualified to teach. All such brothers were qualified to give public talks and chart talks. These questions encouraged all who associated with the Society to read the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*, looking up all the Scriptural references.”

So it was that, as the new president of the Watch Tower Society, J. F. Rutherford took immediate steps to accelerate the work of preaching the good news of God’s kingdom. Blessings followed. The year 1917 witnessed increased field activity to the praise of Jehovah God.

### **“DO NOT BE PUZZLED AT THE BURNING AMONG YOU”**

Not all persons within the organization, however, were happy when J. F. Rutherford was elected president. In fact, beginning early in 1917, several individuals ambitiously sought to gain administrative control of the Society. They became very uncooperative, and thus a period of fiery testing began. Of course, Christians expect to be opposed and persecuted by worldly foes. But trials that originate within the Christian organization itself often are unexpected and are more difficult to bear. Yet, with divine aid all such hardships can be borne. Peter told fellow believers: “Beloved ones, do not be puzzled at the burning among you, which is happening to you for a trial, as though a strange thing were befalling you. On the contrary, go on rejoicing forasmuch as you are sharers in the sufferings of the Christ.”—[1 Pet. 4:12, 13](#).

Jehovah and his “messenger of the covenant,” Jesus Christ, came to inspect the spiritual temple in 1918 C.E. Judgment then began with the “house of God” and a period of refining and cleansing commenced. ([Mal. 3:1-3](#); [1 Pet. 4:17](#)) Something else also occurred. Men manifesting the marks of an “evil slave” came forward and figuratively began ‘beating’ their fellow slaves. Jesus Christ had foretold how such ones would be dealt with. At the same time he showed that a “faithful and discreet slave” class would be in evidence, dispensing spiritual food.—[Matt. 24:45-51](#).

The identity of the “faithful and discreet slave,” or “faithful and wise servant” (*King James Version*), was a matter of quite some concern back in those years. Much earlier, in 1881, C. T. Russell wrote: “We believe that every member of this body of Christ is engaged in the blessed work, either directly or indirectly, of giving meat in due season to the household of faith. ‘Who then is that *faithful* and *wise servant* whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household,’ to give them meat in due season? Is it not that ‘little flock’ of consecrated servants who are *faithfully* carrying out their consecration vows—the body of Christ—and is not the whole body individually and collectively, giving the meat in due season to the household of faith—the great company of believers?”

So it was understood that the “servant” God used to dispense spiritual food was a class. With the passing of time, however, the idea adopted by many was that C. T. Russell himself was the “faithful and wise servant.” This led some into the snare of creature worship. They felt that all the truth God saw fit to reveal to his people had been presented through Brother Russell, that nothing more could be brought forth. Annie Poggensee writes: “This caused a great sifting out of those who chose to stay back with Russell’s works.” In February 1927 this erroneous thought that Russell himself was the “faithful and wise servant” was cleared up.

Shortly after Brother Rutherford became president of the Watch Tower Society, a real conspiracy developed. The seed of rebellion was planted and then the trouble spread, as explained below.

C. T. Russell had seen the need to send someone from headquarters to Britain to strengthen the Bible Students there after the outbreak of World War I. He intended to send Paul S. L. Johnson, a Jew who forsook Judaism and became a Lutheran minister before coming to a knowledge of God’s truth. Johnson had served as one of the Society’s traveling speakers and was well known for his ability. Out of respect for Russell’s wish, the executive committee that served for a short time before Rutherford’s election as president sent Johnson to England, giving him certain papers that would facilitate entry into that country. He was to learn all he could about the work in England and then make a full report to the Society, but he was to make no personnel changes at the British headquarters. However, his reception in England during November 1916 seemed to warp his judgment and finally his reason, “until,” as A. H. Macmillan stated, “he came to the

ridiculous conclusion that he was the 'steward' of Jesus' parable of the penny. He later thought he was the world's high priest." In discourses to Bible Students throughout England, Johnson characterized himself as Russell's successor, contending that the mantle of Pastor Russell had fallen upon him just as Elijah's cloak ("official garment") fell upon Elisha.—2 Ki. 2:11-14.

Evidently, Johnson's aspirations had developed even earlier, for Edythe Kessler recalls: "In 1915 I left Bethel and, before starting for Arizona, I visited a couple of old friends I had known for years, and while I was there they entertained a pilgrim, P. S. L. Johnson by name. Satan was already showing his ugly underhanded methods to gain control, no matter how. Johnson said, 'I'd like to talk with you. Let's sit in the living room,' which we did. He commenced by saying: 'Sister, we know that it is possible for Brother Russell to pass on most any time, but the friends need not be fearful when that happens. I can step into his place and take right over without any stopping of the work.'"

While in England, Johnson endeavored to take complete control of the British field of activity, even trying, without authority, to dismiss certain members of the London headquarters staff. So much confusion resulted that the branch overseer complained to Brother Rutherford. In turn, Rutherford appointed a commission of several brothers in London who were not members of the headquarters staff. They met, heard and weighed the facts and recommended that Johnson be recalled. Rutherford told Johnson to return. Instead of doing so, Johnson sent letters and cablegrams charging the committee with bias, and also trying to justify his course. Seeking to make his position indispensable in Britain, he improperly used the documents furnished him by the Society and impounded its funds in the London bank. Later it became necessary to take court action to have these monies freed.

Johnson finally returned to New York, where he persistently attempted to persuade J. F. Rutherford to send him back to England, but to no avail. Thinking Rutherford was not the right man for the position, Johnson was sure that he himself ought to be the Society's president. He sought to influence the board of directors. By making it appear that Brother Rutherford was unfit as president, Johnson persuaded four of the seven board members to side with him. The four opposed the Society's president, vice-president and secretary-treasurer, and the



dissident directors sought to wrest administrative control from the president.

J. F. Rutherford held meetings with the opposers and tried to reason with them. A. H. Macmillan says that Rutherford “even came to several of us and asked, ‘Shall I resign as president and let those opposing ones take charge?’ We all replied, ‘Brother, the Lord put you where you are, and to resign or quit would be disloyalty to the Lord.’ Furthermore, the office force threatened they would quit if these men got control.”

At an extended session of the Society’s 1917 annual meeting, the four dissident directors tried to present a resolution to amend the bylaws of the Society. This was a design to place administrative powers in the hands of the board of directors. Since this was contrary both to the organizational arrangement in vogue during Brother Russell’s presidency and to the wish of the shareholders, Rutherford ruled the motion out of order and the plan was foiled. Opposition got stiffer thereafter, but there were some developments the opponents never expected.

### **“THE FINISHED MYSTERY”**

Throughout his entire administration as the Society’s president, Brother Russell, along with the vice-president and secretary-treasurer, had made decisions about new publications. As a group, the board of directors had not been consulted. Rutherford followed the same policy. Hence, in the course of time the Society’s three officers made a far-reaching decision.

Charles Taze Russell had written six volumes of *Millennial Dawn*, or *Studies in the Scriptures*, but often spoke about writing a seventh volume. “Whenever I find the key,” said he, “I will write the Seventh Volume; and if the Lord gives the key to someone else, he can write it.” The Society’s officers arranged to have two Bible Students, Clayton J. Woodworth and George H. Fisher, compile a book consisting of commentaries on Revelation, The Song of Solomon and Ezekiel. The coeditors assembled material from Brother Russell’s writings and this was published under the title “The Finished Mystery” as the seventh volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*. Containing largely the thinking and comments of C. T. Russell, it was termed the “posthumous work of Pastor Russell.”

By about mid-1917 it was time to release the new book. That significant day was

July 17. "I was on duty in the [Brooklyn Bethel] dining room when the phone rang," says Martin O. Bowin. "We were getting ready for the noonday meal. I was the nearest one to the phone, so I answered it. Brother Rutherford was on the other end. 'Who is there with you?' he asked. I answered, 'Louis.' He said to come to his study quickly, and 'Don't bother to knock.' A stack of books was handed to us, with orders to put one at each place setting and get it done before the family arrived for the noon meal." Soon the dining room was filled with members of the Bethel family.

"As usual," continues Brother Bowin, "thanks to God was given. Then it started! . . . Headed by . . . P. S. L. Johnson, . . . this demonstration against dear Brother Rutherford began. Hurling vicious charges loudly, they walked back and forth, stopping only at Brother Rutherford's table to shake their fists at him and further denounce him. . . . All this lasted for about five hours. Then everyone got up from the table with all the dishes and a lot of untouched food still on the table, to be cleaned up by brothers with little energy with which to accomplish it."

This incident revealed that some members of the Bethel family sympathized with the opposers. If such opposition continued, eventually it would disrupt the entire operation of Bethel. So J. F. Rutherford acted to correct the situation. Though fully acquainted with the legal structure of the Society, Rutherford had consulted a prominent corporation lawyer in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, concerning the status of the Society's board of directors. The written opinion received disclosed that the four dissidents were not legal members of the board. Why not?

C. T. Russell had appointed those men as directors, but the Society's charter required that directors be elected by vote of the shareholders. Rutherford had told Russell that appointees had to be confirmed by vote at the following annual meeting, but Russell never took that step. So, only the officers who had been elected at the Pittsburgh annual meeting were duly constituted board members. The four appointees were not legal members of the board. Rutherford knew this throughout the period of trouble, but had not mentioned it, hoping that these board members would discontinue their opposition. However, their attitude showed that they were not qualified to be directors. Rightly Rutherford dismissed them and appointed four new board members whose appointment could be confirmed at the next general corporation meeting, early in 1918.

Brother Rutherford did not summarily dismiss the former directors from the Christian organization. Instead, he offered them positions as pilgrims. They refused, voluntarily left Bethel and began spreading their opposition by an extensive speaking and letter-writing campaign throughout the United States, Canada and Europe. Consequently, after the summer of 1917, many congregations of Bible Students were composed of two parties—those loyal to Jehovah's organization and others who had become spiritually drowsy and had fallen victim to the smooth talk of the opposers. The latter became uncooperative and would not engage in the work of preaching the good news of God's kingdom.

## **FUTILE EFFORTS TO GAIN CONTROL**

The opposition group that had recently left Bethel thought they would be able to control the Bible Students' convention held at Boston, Massachusetts, in August 1917. Mary Hannan, who was in attendance at that assembly, reports: "Brother Rutherford was alert to this effort on their part and did not give them an opportunity to get on the platform at any time during the sessions. He acted as the chairman all the time." The convention was a thorough success, to Jehovah's praise, and the opposers were unable to disrupt it.

J. F. Rutherford knew that the annual corporation meeting of January 5, 1918, would afford the dissidents another chance to get control. He was reasonably sure that the Bible Students in general did not favor such a move. Yet, they would have no opportunity to express themselves at the election, since it was a matter to be handled only by members of the legally constituted corporation, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. So, what could Rutherford do? He could give all of Jehovah's dedicated servants an opportunity to make expression. Accordingly, *The Watch Tower* of November 1, 1917, suggested that a referendum vote be taken by each congregation. By December 15, 813 congregations sent in their votes and the poll indicated that 10,869 of the 11,421 votes were for J. F. Rutherford as the Society's president. Among other things, the referendum vote also showed that all the faithful members of the board of directors as reconstituted in July 1917 were preferred over the rebellious individuals who claimed to be board members.

At the annual shareholders' meeting on Saturday, January 5, 1918, the seven individuals receiving the highest number of votes were J. F. Rutherford, C. H. Anderson, W. E. Van Amburgh, A. H. Macmillan, W. E. Spill, J. A. Bohnet and

George H. Fisher. Not one of the opponents succeeded in establishing himself on the board. The officers of the Society were then elected from the duly chosen board members, J. F. Rutherford receiving all the votes cast for president, Charles H. Anderson all of those for vice-president and W. E. Van Amburgh all the votes for secretary-treasurer. Therefore, these men were duly elected as officers of the Society. The opposers' attempt to gain control had been foiled completely.

Faithful ones and opposers now were beyond reconciliation. The opposition group formed an entirely separate organization headed by a "Committee of Seven." Separation certainly was complete by March 26, 1918, when the opposers celebrated the Memorial of Christ's death apart from the faithful congregations of God's people. The unity of those forming the opposition group was short-lived, however, for at their convention in the summer of 1918 differences arose and a split occurred. P. S. L. Johnson organized a group with headquarters in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he published *The Present Truth and Herald of Christ's Epiphany*. There he remained, characterizing himself as "earth's great high priest" until his death. Further dissension from 1918 onward caused division until the original dissident group that had separated from the Watch Tower Society disintegrated into a number of schismatic sects.

Many who withdrew in the years following the death of C. T. Russell did not actively oppose their former Christian associates. Some returned, repented of their actions and associated with God's people once again. This was a time of severe testing, as Mabel P. M. Philbrick indicates in stating: "My own sorrow was great as I realized that my own father and dearly loved stepmother who had been in line for the heavenly prize were falling away. Many efforts were put forth and many tears shed until I got my bearings, for I well knew that one who lost his crown had no life to look forward to anywhere. The thought of second death for them seemed unbearable. However, one day in prayer Jehovah gave me much comfort as I fully began to want his will to be done. Suddenly I began to appreciate that his love and justice were far greater than my own and that if he didn't count them worthy of life, I couldn't hold on to them either, for my father and mother were no different than someone else's father and mother. From that moment on I had peace of mind."

Not only did those who separated from Jehovah's faithful servants in those days

break up into sects, but, in most cases, their numbers dwindled and their activities became inconsequential or ceased entirely. Surely they are not fulfilling Jesus' commission to his followers to preach the good news in all the earth and make disciples.—[Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20](#).

How many forsook true Christianity during the critical years of 1917 and 1918? An incomplete earthwide report shows that the Memorial of Jesus Christ's death on April 5, 1917, was attended by 21,274. (Due to difficulties inside and outside the organization in 1918, attendance figures were not gathered that year.) At the Memorial celebration on April 13, 1919, a partial report gave an attendance of 17,961. Though incomplete, these figures make it clear that far less than 4,000 had ceased walking with their former associates in God's service.

## CHRISTIANS IN THE CRUCIBLE

During 1917 to 1919 the Bible Students were also objects of an international conspiracy fomented particularly by the clergy of Christendom. *The Finished Mystery*, seventh volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*, roused their clerical ire. Within seven months of this publication's initial release it was enjoying unparalleled circulation. The Society's outside printers were busy on the 850,000 edition. By the end of 1917 the book also was available in Swedish and French, and translation into other languages was under way.

On December 30, 1917, mass distribution of 10,000,000 copies of a new issue of the four-page, tabloid-size tract *The Bible Students Monthly* began. Entitled "The Fall of Babylon" and with the subtitles "Ancient Babylon a Type—Mystic Babylon the Antitype—Why Christendom Must Now Suffer—the Final Outcome," it contained excerpts from the Seventh Volume, with very pointed references to the clergy. On its back page appeared a graphic cartoon depicting a crumbling wall. Some of its stones bore such words as "Protestantism," "Eternal torment theory," "Doctrine of the trinity," "Apostolic succession" and "Purgatory." With Scriptural foundation the tract showed that the great majority of the clergy "have been unfaithful, disloyal, unrighteous men" who were more responsible than any other class on earth for the war then raging and the great trouble that would follow it. As part of the tract-distribution campaign, widely advertised public lectures on the same subject were delivered on that very day.

How would you like to distribute a tract like that? C. B. Tvedt admits that he 'will never forget that particular day,' and states: "It was a most bitter cold day. But the message I was distributing was surely hot. . . . I had a thousand of these papers to distribute under the apartment-house doors and occasionally directly to individuals as I would meet them. I cannot deny that I preferred to make distribution under the doors, for I realized that this was a fiery message and would result in explosive repercussions."

By late 1917 and early 1918 *The Finished Mystery* was being distributed in increasing numbers. Angered, the clergy falsely claimed that certain statements in this book were of a seditious nature. They were out to "get" the Watch Tower Society and, like the Jewish religious leaders when Jesus was on earth, they wanted the State to do the work for them. (Compare [Matthew 27:1, 2, 20](#).) Both Catholic and Protestant clergymen falsely represented the Bible Students as being in the employ of the German government. For example, referring to the work of the International Bible Students Association, a legal agency of God's people, Doctor Case of the Divinity School of Chicago University published this statement: "Two thousand dollars a week is being spent to spread their doctrine. Where the money comes from is unknown; but there is a strong suspicion that it emanates from German sources. In my belief, the fund would be a profitable field for government investigation."

"This, stimulated by similar charges from other nominal churchmen, evidently had something to do with Army Intelligence officers seizing the books of the Treasurer of the Society," said *The Watch Tower* of April 15, 1918. It continued: "The authorities doubtless thought that they would find some evidence to substantiate the charge that our Society is working in the interest of the German government. Of course, the books disclose nothing of the kind. All the money used by our Society is contributed by those who are interested in preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and his kingdom, and nothing else." Nationwide newspaper publicity about seizure of the Society's books tended to excite suspicion.

February 12, 1918, was a marked date for God's people in Canada. The Watch Tower Society was then banned throughout that land. A public press dispatch stated: "The Secretary of State, under the press censorship regulations, has issued warrants forbidding the possession in Canada of a number of publications,



amongst which is the book published by the International Bible Students Association, entitled 'STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES—The Finished Mystery,' generally known as the posthumous publication of Pastor Russell. 'The Bible Students Monthly,' also published by this Association at its office in Brooklyn, New York, is also prohibited circulation in Canada. The possession of any prohibited books lays the possessor open to a fine not exceeding \$5,000 and five years in prison."

Why the ban? The Winnipeg, Manitoba, *Tribune* shed some light on that, in saying: "The banned publications are alleged to contain seditious and anti-war statements. Excerpts from one of the recent issues of 'The Bible Students Monthly' were denounced from the pulpit a few weeks ago by Rev. Charles G. Paterson, Pastor of St. Stephen's Church. Afterward Attorney General Johnson sent to Rev. Paterson for a copy of the publication. The censor's order is believed to be the direct result."

Not long after the clergy-inspired ban in Canada, the international nature of the conspiracy became evident. In February 1918 the United States Army Intelligence Bureau in New York city began investigating the Watch Tower Society's headquarters. Not only had it been intimated falsely that the Society was in contact with the German enemy; it had also been reported lyingly to the United States government that the Society's headquarters in Brooklyn was a center for transmitting messages to the German regime. Eventually the public press reported that government agents had seized a wireless apparatus erected and ready for use at the Bethel home. But what were the facts?

In 1915 C. T. Russell was given a small wireless receiver. Personally he was not too interested in it, but a small aerial was erected on the roof of the Bethel home and some younger brothers were given opportunity to learn how to operate the equipment. However, there was not much success in picking up messages. When the United States was about to enter the war, it was required that all wireless instruments be dismantled. So the aerial was taken down and the poles were sawed up and used for other purposes, while the instrument itself was carefully packed away in the Society's Art Room. It had not been used at all for more than two years when two Army Intelligence men were told about the outfit while in conversation with a member of the Bethel family. They were taken to the roof and

shown where it was formerly. Then they were shown the instrument itself, all packed away. By consent, these men took it because there was no use for it at Bethel. The apparatus was a *receiver* only, not a *transmitter*. Never was there a *sending* instrument at Bethel. So it was impossible to transmit a message anywhere.

Opposition and pressure continued to mount against Jehovah's people. On February 24, 1918, J. F. Rutherford delivered a public lecture at Los Angeles, California, to an audience of 3,500. The morning thereafter the Los Angeles *Tribune* printed a full-page report of the lecture. This aroused the indignation of local clergymen. The ministerial association held a meeting on Monday morning and sent its president to the managers of the newspaper, demanding that they explain why they had published so much about the lecture. On the following Thursday, the Army Intelligence Bureau took possession of the Bible Students' Los Angeles headquarters, also taking many of the Society's publications.

Monday, March 4, 1918, saw the arrest at Scranton, Pennsylvania, of Clayton J. Woodworth (one of the compilers of *The Finished Mystery*) and several other brothers. They were falsely charged with conspiracy and were put under bond for an appearance for trial in May. Furthermore, as outside pressure increased rapidly against the Society, more than twenty Bible Students were detained in army camps and military prisons because of being denied military exemption. Some of them were court-martialed and sentenced to long prison terms. On March 14, 1918, the United States Department of Justice termed the distribution of *The Finished Mystery* a violation of the Espionage Act.

A counteroffensive by God's people—that was a necessity. There must be exposure of the clergy-fomented opposition to the Christian work of the Bible Students. Hence, on March 15, 1918, the Watch Tower Society released a newspaper-size, two-page tract, *Kingdom News* No. 1. It bore the bold heading 'Religious Intolerance—Pastor Russell's Followers Persecuted Because They Tell the People the Truth—Treatment of Bible Students Smacks of the 'Dark Ages.'" This tract did indeed expose the clergy-inspired persecution of Jehovah's Christian witnesses in Germany, Canada and the United States. Millions of copies were distributed.

Interestingly, this tract said: "We recognize that the United States Government,

being a political and economic institution, has the power and authority, under its fundamental law, to declare war and to draft its citizens into military service. We have no disposition to interfere with the draft or the war in any manner. The fact that some of our members have sought to take advantage of the protection of the law, has been used as another means of persecution."

*Kingdom News* No. 2 appeared on April 15, 1918. Its striking headline read "'The Finished Mystery' and Why Suppressed." Under the subheading "Clergymen Take a Hand," this tract showed that the clergy encouraged government agencies to harass the Society, make arrests, object to *The Finished Mystery* and pressure the Bible Students to cut certain pages (247-253) from that volume. Also, the tract explained why clergymen opposed Jehovah's servants, and it clarified their stand on war, as well as their belief about the true church.

A petition was circulated in connection with distribution of this *Kingdom News*. Addressed to United States President Wilson, it read: "We, the undersigned Americans, hold that any interference by the clergy with independent Bible study is intolerant, un-American and un-Christian; and that any attempt to combine Church and State is radically wrong. In the interest of liberty and religious freedom, we solemnly protest against the suppression of *The Finished Mystery*, and petition the Government to remove all restrictions as to its use, that the people may be permitted without interference or molestation to buy, sell, have and read this aid to Bible study."

On May 1, 1918, just six weeks after the first *Kingdom News*, *Kingdom News* No. 3 was released, bearing the headline "Two Great Battles Raging—Fall of Autocracy Certain" and the subtitle "Satanic Strategy Doomed to Failure." This issue dealt with the Seed of Promise versus the seed of Satan the Devil. ([Gen. 3:15](#)) It traced the development of the antichrist from its birth to the current deeds of the Catholic and Protestant clergy. Boldly this tract showed how the Devil used such agents in an effort to destroy the remnant of Jesus Christ's anointed followers on earth.

Courage was required to distribute the issues of *Kingdom News* then published. Some Bible Students were arrested. At times supplies of *Kingdom News* were confiscated temporarily. Though they found themselves in a crucible of opposition and persecution, Jehovah's servants maintained faithfulness to God and continued

doing their Christian work.

## ATROCITIES COMMITTED

Atrocities were committed against Jehovah's servants as clergy-laity opposition increased. Giving a partial report of the unbelievable persecutions experienced by the Bible Students, a later publication of the Watch Tower Society said, in part:

"April 12, 1918, at Medford, Oregon, E. P. Taliaferro was mobbed and chased out of town for preaching the gospel and George R. Maynard was stripped, painted and driven from town for permitting Bible study in his home. . . .

"April 17, 1918, at Shawnee, Oklahoma, G. N. Fenn, George M. Brown, L. S. Rogers, W. F. Glass, E. T. Grier and J. T. Tull were jailed. During the trial the Prosecuting Attorney said, 'To hell with your Bible; you ought to be in hell with your back broken; you ought to be hung.' When G. F. Wilson, of Oklahoma City, attempted to act as counsel for the defense he also was arrested. Each was fined \$55 and costs; offense, distributing Protestant literature. The trial judge encouraged mob action following the trial, but the mobs were foiled.

"April 22, 1918, at Kingsville, Texas, L. L. Davis and Daniel Toole were chased by a mob led by the Mayor and a County Judge and subsequently caught and jailed without a warrant. Davis was forced out of his job. In May, 1918, at Tecumseh, Oklahoma, J. J. May was seized and incarcerated thirteen months in an insane asylum by the order of a Judge, after threatening and abuse. His family was not advised as to what had been done with him. . . .

"March 17, 1918, at Grand Junction, Colorado, a meeting for Bible study was broken up by a mob composed of the Mayor, leading newspaper men and other prominent business men. . . .

"April 22, 1918, at Wynnewood, Oklahoma, Claud Watson was first jailed and then deliberately released to a mob composed of preachers, business men and a few others that knocked him down, caused a negro to whip him and, when he had partially recovered, to whip him again. They then poured tar and feathers all over him, rubbing the tar into his hair and scalp. April 29, 1918, at Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, W. B. Duncan, 61 years of age, Edward French, Charles Franke, a Mr. Griffin and Mrs. D. Van Hoesen were jailed. The jail was broken into by a mob

that used the most vile and obscene language, whipped, tarred, feathered and drove them from town. Duncan was compelled to walk twenty-six miles to his home and barely recovered. Griffin was virtually blinded and died from the assault a few months later.”

After all these years, T. H. Siebenlist remembers well what happened to his father in Shattuck, Oklahoma. He writes:

“In September of 1917 I started to school and all went well until about March when all schoolchildren were required to buy a Red Cross pin. I took the note home at noon. Dad was at work and mom could only read German at that time. However, Brother Howlett, a pilgrim brother, was visiting the ‘class’ and he took care of the matter. No pin was bought!

“It was shortly after this that the officials picked up dad at work and tried to make him stand on the book *The Finished Mystery* and salute the flag—this right on Main Street in Shattuck. He was taken to jail . . .

“Shortly after this dad was picked up again and held another three days. This time he was fed very little. His release this time was another story. About midnight three men simulated a jail ‘break-in.’ They put a sack over dad’s head and marched him to the west edge of town barefooted. This was rough terrain and full of sandburs. Here they stripped him to the waist and whipped him with a buggy whip that had a wire at the tip. Then they applied hot tar and feathers, leaving him for dead. He managed to get up and walk and crawl around town toward the southeast. Then he intended to head north and home. However, a friend of his found him and brought him home. I never saw him that night, but it was a terrible shock to mom, especially with a tiny baby in the house, and Grandma Siebenlist fainted when she saw him. My brother John had been born only a few days before all of this happened. However, mom held up under all the strain very well, never losing sight of Jehovah’s protective power. . . .

“Grandma and Aunt Katie, dad’s half sister, began nursing him back to life. The tar and feathers were imbedded in his flesh; so they used goose grease to heal up the wounds and gradually the tar came off. . . . Dad never saw their faces, but he recognized their voices and knew who his assailants were. He never told them. In fact, it was hard to get him ever to talk about it. Yet, he carried those scars to the

grave.”

## “CAUTIOUS AS SERPENTS”

The banning of *The Finished Mystery* and certain other Christian publications placed Jehovah’s servants in difficult circumstances. However, they had God-given work to do and they carried on with it, proving themselves “cautious as serpents and yet innocent as doves.” ([Matt. 10:16](#)) Accordingly, at times Bible study aids were hidden in various places—perhaps in an attic, or the coal bin, under floor boards or in furniture.

Brother C. W. Miller tells us this: “As our home was the local Bible Student headquarters at this time, brothers would come at midnight in a truck to bring the literature and we would hide the cartons of books in a chicken coop, camouflaged with Rhode Island Red hens and foliage.”

Recalling an incident that occurred in those days, Brother D. D. Reusch writes: “At the home of the Reed family, the books were stored out of sight outdoors at the rear of the house and, as the police approached, the Reeds held their breath when they neared the hiding site. Just then a huge drift of snow fell from the roof, completely covering that area.”

## “FRAMING TROUBLE BY DECREE”

Centuries ago the psalmist asked: “Will the throne causing adversities be allied with you while it is framing trouble by decree?” ([Ps. 94:20](#)) Jehovah’s servants always obey all the laws of the nations that are not out of harmony with the laws of God. But, as might be expected, when there is a conflict between the demands of mere men and the laws of God, Christians take the apostolic position and “obey God as ruler rather than men.” ([Acts 5:29](#)) Sometimes good laws are misapplied in an effort to stop their work. In other instances, foes succeed in having decrees passed that work injury to God’s people.

The Selective Draft Act was passed by the United States Congress on June 15, 1917. It provided for the conscription of manpower but also for exemption of men who, because of religious beliefs, could not engage in war. Many young men throughout the country wrote to the Watch Tower Society, asking Judge Rutherford what course they should pursue. He later said regarding this: “I was



asked by many young men in the country as to what course they should take in this regard. In every instance my advice was to this effect, given to young men who requested it, to wit: 'If you cannot conscientiously engage in war, Section 3 of the Selective Draft Act makes provision for you to file application for exemption. You should register and file your application for exemption, setting forth the reason, and the draft board will pass on your application.' I never did more than to advise them to take advantage of the act of Congress. I always insisted that every citizen should obey the law of the land as long as that law was not in conflict with God's law."

Back in the World War I era a definite conspiracy against Jehovah's servants came to light. In furtherance of it, many clergymen held a conference at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1917. They there appointed a committee to visit the nation's capital, Washington, D.C., and insist on a revision of the Selective Draft Act and the Espionage Act. The committee called on the Department of Justice. At the instance of the clergymen, a member of the department, John Lord O'Brian, was selected to prepare an amendment to the Espionage Law and have it introduced in the United States Senate. This amendment provided that all offenses committed in violation of the Espionage Law should be tried by a military court and that the death penalty should be inflicted upon those held guilty. However, the bill did not pass.

A provision known as the "France Amendment" was introduced at the time that Congress undertook the amending of the Espionage Law. This amendment exempted from the Act's provision any person who uttered "what is true, with good motives and for justifiable ends."

However, on May 4, 1918, Senator Overman had a memorandum from the Attorney General put in the *Congressional Record* (May 4, 1918, pages 6052, 6053). It stated, in part:

"The opinion of the Military Intelligence Branch is entirely adverse to the amendment to the espionage law to the effect that section 3, Title I, shall not apply to those who utter, 'what is true, with good motives and for justifiable ends.'"

"Experience teaches that such an amendment would to a large degree nullify the value of the law and turn every trial into an academic debate on insoluble riddles as to what is true. Human motives are too complicated to be discussed, and the

word 'justifiable' is too elastic for practical use. . . .

"One of the most dangerous examples of this sort of propaganda is the book called 'The Finished Mystery,' a work written in extremely religious language and distributed in enormous numbers. The only effect of it is to lead soldiers to discredit our cause and to inspire a feeling at home of resistance to the draft.

"The Kingdom News, of Brooklyn, prints a petition demanding that restrictions on 'The Finished Mystery' and similar works should be removed, 'so that people may be permitted, without interference or molestation, to buy, sell, have, and read this aid to Bible study, The passage of this amendment would reopen our camps to this poisonous influence.

"The International Bible Students' Association pretends to the most religious motives, yet we have found that its headquarters have long been reported as the resort of German agents. . . .

"The passage of this amendment would greatly weaken American efficiency and help none but the enemy. Results, not motives, count in war, therefore the law and its executors should be concerned with procuring desirable and preventing dangerous results, leaving motives to the mercy of the judges or to the perspective of historians."

As a consequence of these efforts by the Department of Justice, the amended Espionage Act was approved on May 16, 1918, without the "France Amendment."

### **"WE KNOW HOW TO GET YOU, AND WE ARE GOING TO DO IT!"**

Around this time, some young men associated with the Bible Students were called for military service and, as conscientious objectors, had been sent to Camp Upton on Long Island, New York. This camp was supervised by General James Franklin Bell. He visited J. F. Rutherford at his office and sought to induce him to instruct these men to take whatever service Bell might assign them, whether across the sea or elsewhere. Rutherford refused. The general insisted and finally Rutherford wrote a letter, which said, in essence: "Each one of you must decide for himself whether he wishes to engage in active military service or not. Do what you consider to be your duty and what is right in the sight of Almighty God." This letter did not satisfy Bell at all.

A few days later, J. F. Rutherford and W. E. Van Amburgh visited General Bell at Camp Upton. Bell, in the presence of his aide-de-camp and Van Amburgh, told Rutherford of the Philadelphia conference of clergymen. He mentioned their selection of John Lord O'Brian to present matters to the Senate, resulting in the introduction of a bill to have all cases against the Espionage Law tried before a military court, with death as the punishment. General Bell "showed considerable heat," according to Rutherford, who reported: "Before him on his desk lay a package of papers, and with his index finger he tapped these and, directing his speech to me, with real feeling said: 'That bill did not pass, because Wilson prevented it; but we know how to get you, and *we are going to do it!*' To that statement I replied: 'General, you will know where to find me.'"

### DEATHBLOW FOR "TWO WITNESSES"

After early October 1914, Christ's anointed followers proclaimed that the Gentile Times had ended and that the nations were approaching their destruction at Armageddon. ([Luke 21:24](#); [Rev. 16:14-16](#)) These figurative "two witnesses" declared this mournful message for the nations for 1,260 days, or three and a half years (October 4/5, 1914, to March 26/27, 1918). Then the Devil's beastly political system warred against God's "two witnesses," eventually 'killing' them as far as their tormenting work of prophesying "in sackcloth" was concerned, to the great relief of their religious, political, military and judicial foes. ([Rev. 11:3-7](#); [13:1](#)) That was the prophecy, and it was fulfilled. But how?

On May 7, 1918, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York issued a warrant for the arrest of certain principal servants of the Watch Tower Society. Involved were President J. F. Rutherford, Secretary-Treasurer W. E. Van Amburgh, Clayton J. Woodworth and George H. Fisher (the two compilers of *The Finished Mystery*), F. H. Robison (a member of the *Watch Tower* editorial committee), A. H. Macmillan, R. J. Martin and Giovanni DeCecca.

On the very next day, May 8, 1918, those of this group who were at Brooklyn Bethel were placed under arrest. Eventually all were in custody. Shortly thereafter they were arraigned in Federal Court, Judge Garvin presiding. All of them were met with an indictment previously returned by the Grand Jury, charging them with

"(1, 3) The offense of unlawfully, feloniously and willfully causing and attempting

to cause insubordination, disloyalty and refusal of duty in the military and naval forces of the United States of America, in, through and by personal solicitations, letters, public speeches, distribution and public circulation throughout the United States of America of a certain book called 'Volume Seven—SCRIPTURES STUDIES—The Finished Mystery'; and distributing and publicly circulating throughout the United States certain articles presented in pamphlets called, 'BIBLE STUDENTS MONTHLY,' 'THE WATCH TOWER,' 'KINGDOM NEWS' and other pamphlets not named, et cetera;

“(2, 4) The offense of unlawfully, feloniously, and willfully obstructing the recruiting and enlistment service of the United States when the United States was at war.”

Principally, the indictment was based on one paragraph in *The Finished Mystery*. It read: Nowhere in the New Testament is Patriotism (a narrow-minded hatred of other peoples) encouraged. Everywhere and always murder in its every form is forbidden; and yet, under the guise of Patriotism the civil governments of earth demand of peace-loving men the sacrifice of themselves and their loved ones and the butchery of their fellows, and hail it as a duty demanded by the laws of heaven.”

Brothers Rutherford, Van Amburgh, Macmillan and Martin faced a second indictment of trading with the enemy, based on a claim that the Society's officers sent \$500 to the manager of the Swiss branch of the Society at Zurich. Each brother arraigned was held over on bail of \$2,500 for each of the indictments. They were released on bail and appeared in court on May 15, 1918. The trial was set for June 3, 1918, in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York. The brothers pleaded “not guilty” to both indictments and considered themselves completely innocent of all the charges.

Owing to the feeling manifested in preliminary hearings, the defendants filed affidavits showing why they felt Judge Garvin was biased against them. In time, United States District Judge Harland B. Howe was brought in to preside at the trial. According to A. H. Macmillan, although the defendants were unaware of Howe's views, the government knew that he “had special prejudice in favor of the prosecution of the law and against the defendants charged with violating it.” Macmillan also stated: “But we were not left long in the dark. From the first conference of the attorneys in the judge's chambers before the trial began his

animosity was manifested, and he indicated, 'I'm going to give these defendants all that is coming to them.' However, it was now too late for our attorneys to file an affidavit of prejudice on the part of the judge."

Macmillan said that the indictment as originally returned charged that the defendants had entered into a conspiracy sometime between April 6, 1917, when the United States declared war, and May 6, 1918. Upon motion the government specified that the date of the alleged offense was between June 15, 1917, and May 6, 1918.

## **SCENES IN THE COURTROOM**

The United States was at war. A court trial of Bible Students on a sedition charge thus attracted great attention. What about public sentiment? It favored anything that would further the war effort. Outside the courtroom bands played and soldiers marched around nearby Brooklyn Borough Hall. Inside the courtroom the fifteen-day trial wore on, piling up a veritable mountain of testimony. Why not step inside and witness the proceedings.

A. H. Macmillan, one of the defendants, helps us to sense the atmosphere, for he later wrote: "During the trial the government said that if a person stood on the street corner and repeated the Lord's prayer with the intent of discouraging men from joining the army, he could be sent to the penitentiary. So you can see how easy it was for them to interpret intent. They thought they could tell what another person was thinking, and so they acted against us on that basis even though we testified that we never at any time conspired to do anything whatsoever to affect the draft and never encouraged anyone to resist it. It was all to no avail. Certain religious leaders of Christendom and their political allies were determined to get us. The prosecution, with consent of Judge Howe, aimed for conviction, insisting that our motive was irrelevant and that intent should be inferred from our acts. I was found guilty solely on the basis that I countersigned a check, the purpose of which could not be determined, and that I signed a statement of fact that was read by Brother Rutherford at a board meeting. Even then they could not prove that it was my signature. The injustice of this helped us later in our appeal."

At one point, a former officer of the Society was sworn in. After looking at an exhibit bearing two signatures, he said he recognized one as that of W. E. Van

Amburgh. Here the Transcript of Record reads:

“Q. I hand you Exhibit 31 for identification, and ask you to look at the two signatures or purported signatures, of Macmillan and Va[n] Amburgh, and ask you first as to Van Amburgh, if in your opinion that is a mimeograph copy of his signature? A. I think it is. I recognize it as such.

“Q. Mr. MacMillan's? A. Mr. MacMillan's is not so recognizable, but I think it is his signature.”

Concerning the defense presented by those on trial, Brother Macmillan later wrote:

“After the Government had completed its case we presented our defense. In essence we showed that the Society is wholly a religious organization; that the members accept as their principles of belief the holy Bible as expounded by Charles T. Russell; that C. T. Russell in his lifetime wrote and published six volumes, *Studies in the Scriptures*, and as early as 1896 promised the seventh volume which would treat Ezekiel and Revelation; that on his deathbed he stated that someone else would write the seventh volume; that shortly after his death the executive committee of the Society authorized C. J. Woodworth and George H. Fisher to write and submit manuscript for consideration without any promise made concerning publication; that the manuscript on Revelation was completed before the United States got into the war and all the manuscript of the entire book (except a chapter on the Temple) was in the hands of the printer before the enactment of the Espionage Law; hence, it was impossible for any such conspiracy as charged to have been entered into to violate the law.

“We testified that we never at any time combined, agreed or conspired to do anything whatsoever to affect the draft or interfere with the Government in the prosecution of the war, nor did we have any thought of so doing; that we never had any intention of interfering in any manner with the war; that our work was wholly religious and not at all political; that we did not solicit members and never advised or encouraged anyone to resist the draft; that the letters written were to those whom we knew to be dedicated Christians who were entitled under the law to advice; that we were not opposed to the nation going to war, but as dedicated Christians could not engage in mortal combat.”



But not everything said and done at that trial was open and aboveboard. Macmillan later reported: "Some of our people who were attending the trial later told me that one of the attorneys for the Government had gone out into the hallway, where he talked in low tones to some of those who had led the opposition within the Society. They said, 'Don't let that fellow [Macmillan] go; he's the worst of the bunch. He'll keep things going if you don't get him with the others.'" Remember that at this time ambitious men had been trying to get control of the Watch Tower Society. No wonder Rutherford later warned brothers left in charge at Bethel: "We are advised that seven who opposed the Society and its work during the past year attended upon the trial and lent aid to our prosecutors. We warn you, beloved, against the subtle efforts of some of them to fawn upon you now in an attempt to get hold of the Society."

Finally, after the lengthy trial, the awaited day of decision arrived. June 20, 1918, at about 5:00 p.m., the case went to the jury. J. F. Rutherford later recalled: "The jury hesitated a long while before rendering a verdict. Finally Judge Howe sent word in to them that they must bring in a verdict of 'Guilty,' as one of the jurors afterwards stated to us." After some four and a half hours of deliberation, at 9:40 p.m., the jury returned with their verdict—"Guilty."

Sentencing took place on June 21. The courtroom was full. When asked if they had anything to say, the defendants did not respond. Then came the sentence by Judge Howe. Angrily he said: "The religious propaganda in which these men are engaged is more harmful than a division of German soldiers. They have not only called in question the law officers of the Government and the army intelligence bureau but have denounced all the ministers of all the churches. Their punishment should be severe."

It was. Seven of the defendants were sentenced to eighty years in the penitentiary (twenty years each on four counts, to run concurrently). The sentence for Giovanni DeCecca was delayed, but he ultimately received forty years, or ten years on each of the same four counts. The defendants were to serve their sentences at the United States penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia.

The trial had lasted for fifteen days. Testimony recorded had been voluminous and the proceedings often unfair. In fact, it was demonstrated later that the trial contained over 125 errors. Only a few of these were needed by the Appellate Court

eventually to condemn the whole procedure as unfair.

"I went and suffered through it all with the brothers as they were subjected to this unfair ordeal," comments James Gwin Zea, who was present as an observer. He continues: "I can still see the judge refusing Brother Rutherford an opportunity to make a defense. 'The Bible doesn't go in this court' was his comment. I stayed with Brother M. A. Howlett in Bethel that night and about ten o'clock word came that they had been convicted. They were sentenced the next day."

Despite their unjust convictions and the severe sentences they had received, Brother Rutherford and his associates were undaunted. Interestingly, the New York *Tribune* of June 22, 1918, reported: "Joseph F. Rutherford and six of the other 'Russellites,' convicted of violation of the Espionage Act, were sentenced to 20 years in the Atlanta penitentiary yesterday, by Judge Howe. 'This is the happiest day of my life,' said Mr. Rutherford on his way from the court to the jail, 'to serve earthly punishment for the sake of one's religious belief is one of the greatest privileges a man could have.' One of the strangest demonstrations that the Marshal's Office in the Brooklyn Federal Court has ever seen, was held by the families and intimate friends of the convicted men soon after the prisoners had been taken to the Grand Jury room. The whole company made the old building ring with the strains of 'Blessed Be the Tie That Binds.' 'It is all God's will,' they told each other, with faces almost radiant. 'Some day the world will know what all this means. Meanwhile, let us be thankful for the grace of God that has sustained us through our trials and look forward to the Great Day that is to come.'"

While their case was on appeal, twice the brothers tried to obtain bail but were thwarted, first by Judge Howe and later by Judge Martin T. Manton. In the meantime, they first were held in Brooklyn's Raymond Street jail, "the dirtiest hole I ever got into," according to A. H. Macmillan. Clayton J. Woodworth jocularly called it the "Hotel de Raymondie" That unpleasant week-long stay was followed by another week spent in the Long Island City prison. Finally, on the fourth of July, United States Independence Day, the unjustly condemned men were sent on their way by train to the Atlanta, Georgia, penitentiary.





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## 1975 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses

### Part 2—United States of America



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### Part 2—United States of America

#### FOES REJOICE

The incarceration of these Christian witnesses of Jehovah was a figurative deathblow, much to the delight and relief of their enemies. Fulfilled were the words of [Revelation 11:10](#): “And those dwelling on the earth rejoice over them and enjoy themselves, and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those dwelling on the earth.” Religious, judicial, military and political foes of the “two witnesses” did “send gifts” to one another, in that they congratulated one another for the part they played in gaining a victory over their tormentors.

In his book *Preachers Present Arms*, Ray H. Abrams considered the trial of J. F. Rutherford and his associates and observes:

“An analysis of the whole case leads to the conclusion that the churches and the clergy were originally behind the movement to stamp out the Russellites. . . .

“When the news of the twenty-year sentences reached the editors of the religious press, practically every one of these publications, great and small, rejoiced over the event. I have been unable to discover any words of sympathy in any of the

orthodox religious journals. 'There can be no question,' concluded Upton Sinclair, that 'the persecution . . . sprang in part from the fact that they had won the hatred of "orthodox" religious bodies.' What the combined efforts of the churches had failed to do the government now seemed to have succeeded in accomplishing for them—the crushing of these 'prophets of Baal' forever."

### **OPTIMISM DESPITE 'BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY'**

From 607 to 537 B.C.E. the Jews languished as captives in ancient Babylon. Comparably, dedicated worshipers of Jehovah anointed with his holy spirit were brought into a Babylonish captivity and exiled during the World War I period of 1914-1918. Especially were the depths of their captive state felt when the eight faithful brothers from the Society's headquarters were incarcerated in the federal penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia.

But during this entire period of difficulty, not one issue of *The Watch Tower* failed to appear in print. An appointed editorial committee kept the journal in circulation. Furthermore, despite the hardships encountered at that time, the attitudes displayed by faithful Bible Students were exemplary. Brother T. J. Sullivan remarked: "It was my privilege to visit Brooklyn Bethel in the late summer of 1918 during the brothers' incarceration. The brothers in charge of the work at Bethel were in no wise fearful or downhearted. In fact, the reverse was true. They were optimistic and confident that Jehovah would give his people the victory ultimately. I was privileged to be at the breakfast table on Monday morning when the brothers sent out on weekend appointments gave their reports. A fine picture of the situation was obtained. In every case the brothers were confident, waiting for Jehovah to direct their activities further."

Interestingly, one morning after the trial of Brother Rutherford and his associates, R. H. Barber received a call from Rutherford asking him to come to the Pennsylvania Station, where the brothers were waiting for several hours for a through train to Atlanta. Brother Barber and some others rushed to the station. There Brother Rutherford said that if the brothers at headquarters were harassed too much by the police, they should sell Bethel and the Brooklyn Tabernacle and move either to Philadelphia, Harrisburg or Pittsburgh, since the Watch Tower Society was a Pennsylvania corporation. Prices of \$60,000 for Bethel and \$25,000 for the Tabernacle were suggested.

How did matters turn out? Well, those then in charge of the Society did encounter many problems. For instance, there were shortages of paper and coal. Patriotism ran high and many improperly viewed Jehovah's Christian witnesses as traitors. In Brooklyn there was great animosity against the Society, and it appeared impossible to continue operations there. Hence, the executive committee that was in charge at headquarters consulted with other brothers and it was decided that it was best to sell the Brooklyn Tabernacle and to close the Bethel home. Eventually the Tabernacle was sold for \$16,000, according to R. H. Barber's recollection. Later, all necessary arrangements for the sale of Bethel to the government were made except the transfer of cash. But something interfered—the armistice. The sale never was fully accomplished.

August 26, 1918, however, had begun the transfer of the Society's headquarters from Brooklyn, New York, to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. "As I look back," comments Hazel Erickson, "I can see that though the Bible Students were stunned because of the brothers' having been imprisoned, they never stopped witnessing. They were just a bit more cautious, perhaps." Sister H. M. S. Dixon recalled that "the faith of the friends remained strong and the meetings were held regularly." Jehovah's Christian witnesses continued to display faith in God. True, they were in a crucible of hardship and persecution. Yet, God's holy spirit was upon them. If only they could endure, surely the Divine One would save them from their persecutors and grant them deliverance from their state of 'Babylonish captivity'!

## THE MONTHS IN PRISON

By mid-1918 J. F. Rutherford and his seven associates found themselves in the federal penitentiary at Atlanta, Georgia. A letter written by A. H. Macmillan on August 30, 1918, enables us to look behind those prison walls. A copy submitted by Melvin P. Sargent reads, in part:

"No doubt you would like a word as to our condition in prison. I will briefly tell you a few things about life there. Brother Woodworth and I 'cell together.' Our cell is very clean, well aired and lighted. It is about 10 x 6 x 7 feet, has two berths with straw ticks, two sheets, blankets and pillows, two chairs, a table and plenty of clean towels and soap. We also have a cabinet in which to keep our toilet articles. . . .



“All the brethren work together in the tailor shop. This room is a well-aired, well-lighted room 60 x 40 [feet]. Brother Woodworth and I make buttonholes and sew buttons on shirts and prison suits. Brothers Van Amburgh, Robison, Fisher, Martin and Rutherford make, or rather help make, prison coats and pants. About one hundred men in all work in this department. From the place I work, I can see all the brethren, and I assure you it is interesting to see Brother Van Amburgh at a sewing machine, sewing seams that join the eastern and western portions of a pair of trousers together. . . . Brother Rutherford almost gave up hope of ever learning how to put a coat together. I don't think he has finished one yet, although he has been at work about three weeks. When I look at him he seems to be busy, but I really think he spends most of his time trying to thread a needle. [A guard dealt so unreasonably with him that some other prisoners took the jacket and completed it. Eventually, Brother Rutherford was transferred to a place where he was more 'at home'—the library.] . . .

“The first thing we do after reaching our cells after supper is to read the afternoon papers. Then for an hour, six to seven, everyone who wishes to may play on any musical instrument he may have. What a variety! I think that they play at every kind that is made except the Jew's harp, and I am thinking of getting me one of those, as that is the only thing that I can play except the ten-stringed harp. During this, that Brother Woodworth calls 'Dante's Inferno,' we play dominoes. After this we read the Dawns or Bible until bedtime, at 10:00 p.m., when the lights go out. The next day we do the same thing, and so on until Saturday. On Saturday afternoon all the inmates go out into the yard. There is a baseball game which is well played, in which the men take a deep interest. I usually spend the afternoon playing tennis. The other brethren walk around talking. The different classes of men gather in little groups—anarchists, socialists, counterfeiters, 'moonshiners,' pro-Germans, bank cashiers, lawyers, druggists, doctors, train robbers, burglars, ministers (of whom there are a goodly number), etc., etc., etc. The prison band plays several selections during the afternoon.”

The eight incarcerated Bible Students had opportunities to preach the good news of God's kingdom to other inmates. All prisoners were required to attend chapel service on Sunday morning and those so desiring could remain for Sunday school thereafter. The eight brothers formed a class for study and fellowship. In time other inmates joined them and the brothers took turns teaching the class. Some

of the officers even drew near to listen. Interest increased until ninety persons were in attendance.

The transforming power of God's truth had a profound effect on some of the inmates. For example, one remarked: "I am seventy-two years of age, and I had to get behind prison bars in order to hear the truth. I am glad for this reason that I was sent to the penitentiary. For fifty-seven years I have asked questions of the ministers, and never could get satisfactory answers. Every question I asked these men [the imprisoned Bible Students] has been answered to my satisfaction."

The Spanish influenza then was raging and this brought the Sunday-school classes to an end. However, just before the eight Bible Students were released from the Atlanta penitentiary, all the groups they had instructed were united and J. F. Rutherford spoke to those assembled for about forty-five minutes. Some officers were present, and many of the inmates shed tears of joy over the hope of liberty to come for mankind under Kingdom rule. When freed, the Bible Students left in prison a small group that remained faithful.

## **EXPRESSIONS OF CONFIDENCE**

The armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, and World War I came to its end. But the eight Bible Students were still in prison. There they remained while their fellow believers held a convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, January 2-5, 1919. This assembly was combined with the very significant annual meeting of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society on Saturday, January 4, 1919.

J. F. Rutherford realized that at this corporation meeting opposers within the organization would try to have him and the other officers of the Society replaced by men of their choice. That Saturday, January 4, A. H. Macmillan was playing out at the prison tennis court. Rutherford approached him, and, according to Macmillan, this is what took place:

"Rutherford said, 'Mac, I want to talk to you.'

"What do you want to talk to me about?"

"I want to talk to you about what's going on at Pittsburgh."

“‘I’d like to play this tournament out here.’

“‘Aren’t you interested in what’s going on? Don’t you know it’s the election of officers today? You might be ignored and dropped and we’ll stay here forever.’

“‘Brother Rutherford,’ I said, ‘let me tell you something perhaps you haven’t thought of. This is the first time since the Society was incorporated that it can become clearly evident whom Jehovah God would like to have as president.’

“‘What do you mean by that?’

“‘I mean that Brother Russell had a controlling vote and he appointed the different officers. Now with us seemingly out of commission the matter’s different. But, if we got out in time to go up to that assembly to that business meeting, we would come in there and would be accepted to take Brother Russell’s place with the same honor he received. It might look then like man’s work, not God’s.’

“Rutherford just looked thoughtful and walked away.”

That was an eventful day at Pittsburgh. “When the hour arrived for the business meeting, tensions were high,” recalls Mary Hannan. “We observed that some of the opposition were present, they hoping to get their man in office.”

A letter from Brother Rutherford was read to the audience. In it he sent love and greetings to all and warned against Satan’s chief weapons of pride, ambition and fear. Showing a desire to submit to Jehovah’s will, he even humbly suggested suitable men in the event that other officers of the Society should be elected.

Discussion had continued for quite some time, when Brother E. D. Sexton spoke up, saying:

“I just arrived. My train was forty-eight hours late, having been snowbound. I have something to say and for my own comfort I better say it now. My dear brethren, I have come here, as the balance of you have, with certain ideas in mind—pro and con. We might say, with all due respect to our legal friends, that we have been talking to some other lawyers. I find they are very much like doctors. They disagree sometimes. But I presume what I say will be in perfect agreement with what they have said. There is no legal obstacle in the way. If we desire to reelect

our brethren in the South to any office they can hold, I cannot see, or find from any advice I have received, how this will, in any shape or form, interfere with the aspect of their case before the Federal Court or before the public.

"I believe that the greatest compliment we can pay to our dear Brother Rutherford would be to reelect him as president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. I do not think there is any question in the mind of the public as to where we stand on the proposition. If our brethren in any way technically violated a law they did not understand, we know their motives are good. And before Almighty God they have neither violated any law of God or of man. We could manifest the greatest confidence if we reelected Brother Rutherford as president of the Association.

"I am not a lawyer, but when it comes to the legality of the situation I know something about the law of the loyal. Loyalty is what God demands. I cannot imagine any greater confidence we could manifest than to have an election and *reelect Brother Rutherford as president.*"

There were nominations, a vote was taken and J. F. Rutherford was elected as president, C. A. Wise, as vice-president, and W. E. Van Amburgh, as secretary-treasurer. Looking back, Anna K. Gardner remarks: "There was a deep happiness after that meeting to see again Jehovah's visible guidance of his people."

The scene changes to Atlanta penitentiary. It is Sunday, January 5, 1919. J. F. Rutherford raps on Brother Macmillan's cell wall and says: "Poke your hand out." At that, he hands Macmillan a telegram. Its message? Rutherford has been reelected president. Later that day Brother Rutherford said to A. H. Macmillan: "I want to tell you something. You made a remark yesterday that is working in my mind about our being put in Brother Russell's place and we would have influenced the election if we had been in Pittsburgh and the Lord would not have had the chance to show whom he wanted. Why, brother, if I ever get out of here, by God's grace I'll crush all this business of creature worship. What's more, I'll take the dagger of truth, and I'll rip the innards out of old Babylon. They got us in here, but we'll get out." Rutherford meant it. From the time of his release down to his death in early 1942, he carried out that promise by exposing the wickedness of false religion.

## **EFFORTS TO SECURE RELEASE**

In February 1919 nationwide agitation was started by certain newspapers to bring about the release of J. F. Rutherford and his incarcerated associates. Thousands of letters were written by the Bible Students to newspaper editors, congressmen, senators and governors, urging action in behalf of the eight imprisoned Christians. Many who received such requests made expressions in favor of the release and indicated that they would do something to help.

For instance, a letter from Congressman E. W. Saunders of Virginia read: "I am in receipt of your letter relating to the case of the Bible Students now in confinement at Atlanta. I beg to say that I favor the pardon of these men, and will be very glad to join in a recommendation to that effect. These people are not criminals in the ordinary sense of the word, though they may have been guilty of a technical violation of the law. But the war is over now, and we ought to try to put it beyond us as rapidly as possible." And Mayor Henry W. Kiel of Saint Louis, Missouri, wrote to United States President Woodrow Wilson, stating: "Allow me to add my individual request to those already forwarded to you asking that Messrs. Rutherford et. al., of the International Bible Students Association be admitted to bail pending a final decision of their case by the higher courts, and if possible that pardon be granted in these cases."

March 1919 saw a new effort to secure the release of Brother Rutherford and his associates. A nationwide petition was circulated and in a short time 700,000 signatures were obtained. The petition was the largest in its time. It never was presented to President Wilson or the government, however, because before that occurred action had been taken to release the eight Bible Students. Nevertheless, the petition served as an outstanding witness.

Regarding work with that petition, Sister Arthur L. Claus says: "Of course, we had all kinds of experiences. Some would sign gladly and we could give a witness, while others were hostile and would say, 'Let them stay there and rot.' Ordinarily this would have been humiliating work, but we felt Jehovah's spirit was directing us; so we enjoyed it all and kept right on to the finish."

## **RELEASE FROM PRISON**

On March 2, 1919, the trial judge, Federal District Judge Harland B. Howe, sent a telegram to Attorney General Gregory in Washington, D.C., recommending

“immediate commutation” of the sentences imposed on the eight imprisoned Bible Students. Gregory had sent Howe a telegram requesting that he make this move. It appears that this step was taken because the incarcerated brothers had entered an appeal and neither the attorney general nor Howe desired to have this case go to the higher courts. (The eight brothers were in prison while their appeal was pending only because Judge Howe and later Judge Manton had denied bail.) Interesting, too, was Judge Howe’s letter of March 3, 1919, to the attorney general. It read:

“The Honorable Attorney General,

“Washington, D.C.

“Sir:

“Answering your telegram of the 1st inst., I wired you that evening as follows:

“Recommend immediate commutation for Joseph Rutherford, William E. Van Amburgh, Robert J. Martin, Fred H. Robison, George H. Fisher, Clayton J. Woodworth, Giovanni DeCecca, A. Hugh Macmillan. They were all defendants in same case in Eastern District of New York. My position is to be generous now that the war is over. They did much damage by preaching and publishing their religious doctrines.’

“The severe sentence of twenty years was imposed upon each of the defendants except DeCecca. His was ten years. My principal purpose was to make an example, as a warning to others, and I believed that the President would relieve them after the war was over. As I said in my telegram, they did much damage and it may well be claimed they ought not to be set at liberty so soon, but as they cannot do any more harm now, I am in favor of being as lenient as I was severe in imposing sentence. I believe most of them were sincere, if not all, and I am not in favor of keeping such persons in confinement after their opportunity for making trouble is past. Their case has not yet been heard in the Circuit Court of Appeals.

“Respectfully,

(signed) HARLAND B. HOWE,



*United States District Judge."*

On March 21, 1919, United States Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis ordered bail for the eight imprisoned brothers and directed that they should be given the right to an appeal on April 14 of that year. They were released promptly and on Tuesday, March 25, they left Atlanta penitentiary by train. Back in Brooklyn on March 26, 1919, federal authorities released the brothers on bail of \$10,000 each, pending further trial.

**HAPPY HOMECOMING!**

"There was great joy among the brothers on being notified of their release and they were present to welcome them home," recalls Louise Paasch, adding: "They quickly arranged for a big banquet at the Bethel home in Brooklyn. I remember my father went to Brooklyn to help get the rooms ready and share their joy in welcoming the brothers back."

What a happy time that was! Mabel Haslett writes: "I remember making a hundred doughnuts, which the brothers seemed to enjoy . . . I can still see Brother Rutherford reaching out for them. It was an unforgettable occasion as he and the others related their experiences. I also remember short-statured Brother DeCecca standing on a chair so that all could see and hear him." Giusto Battaino remarks: "A chicken dinner was prepared and there were so many of us that we had to stand up to eat. Then what a thrill to hear the experiences of the brothers! . . . One of the things Brother DeCecca said was, 'Brothers, the greater the trouble, the greater the blessing.' And truly I could see Jehovah's rich blessing upon His people."

On the evening of April 1, 1919, another banquet was held for the released brothers by the Watch Tower office force at Hotel Chatham in Pittsburgh. T. J. Sullivan observed: "The joy that came to Jehovah's people with the release of our brothers from the Atlanta Federal Prison on Tuesday, March 25, 1919, knew no bounds . . . Their further devotion to Jehovah was shown in the fact that they immediately set to work to herald forth to the people of God everywhere the knowledge of Jehovah's deliverance, by means of the 1919 Cedar Point convention."

## COMPLETE EXONERATION

The case of the eight Bible Students was due to be heard on appeal on April 14, 1919. They then had a hearing before the Federal Second Circuit Court of Appeals at New York city. On May 14, 1919, their erroneous convictions were reversed. Then presiding were Judges Ward, Rogers and Manton. Judge Ward said in the opinion when remanding the case for retrial: "The defendants in this case did not have the temperate and impartial trial to which they were entitled, and for that reason the judgment is reversed."

Judge Martin T. Manton dissented. On July 1, 1918, this Catholic judge, without assigning a reason, had refused bail to Rutherford and his fellow defendants, resulting in a nine-month unjust imprisonment while their appeal was pending. Incidentally, Pope Pius XI later made Judge Manton a "knight of the order of St. Gregory the Great." Ultimately, however, Manton's disregard for justice was revealed. On June 3, 1939, he was sentenced to the maximum penalty of two years' imprisonment plus a fine of \$10,000 for shamefully misusing his high federal judgeship by accepting bribes in the amount of \$186,000 for six decisions.

Reversal of the eight Bible Students' erroneous convictions on May 14, 1919, meant that they were free unless the government chose to re prosecute. But the war was over and the authorities realized that on the basis of the facts it would be impossible to get a conviction. Hence, in open court at Brooklyn, on May 5, 1920, the government's lawyer announced withdrawal of the prosecution. The indictments were dismissed by action of *nolle prosequi*. So it was that all eight of these Christian men were cleared completely of an illegal judgment.

Reversal of the decision and dismissal of the indictments meant that J. F. Rutherford and his seven associates were totally exonerated. Some have spoken of Judge Rutherford as an "ex-convict," but absolutely without basis. The court action of May 14, 1919, definitely established that he and his associates had been imprisoned on an illegal conviction. That Brother Rutherford was not considered an ex-convict is decisively proved by the fact that he later practiced as a lawyer before the Supreme Court of the United States, an impossibility for an ex-convict. Twenty years after his unjust imprisonment, or in the autumn of 1939, the nine justices of the Supreme Court listened to the argument presented by Rutherford in the case of *Schneider v. New Jersey*. The court ruled eight-to-one in

favor of Rutherford's client, Clara Schneider, a Christian witness of Jehovah.

During the climactic years of 1918 and 1919 Jehovah's people faced great hardships. But with God's aid they endured. ([Rom. 5:3-5](#)) Satan, through various means, had failed to still the lips of those praising God. How very fitting was the yeartext of the Bible Students for 1919! It was: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper . . . This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD."—[Isa. 54:17](#), *King James Version*.

## A NEW OUTLOOK

After their trialsome period of 1917-1919, Jehovah's people subjected themselves to scrutiny. Realizing that they had acted in ways that did not meet with God's approval, they sought forgiveness in prayer repenting of their former course. This led to Jehovah's forgiveness and blessing.—[Prov. 28:13](#).

One compromise had been the cutting of pages from *The Finished Mystery*, this to please those who had assumed the position of censor. Another occurred when *The Watch Tower* of June 1, 1918, stated: "In accordance with the resolution of Congress of April 2nd, and with the proclamation of the President of the United States of May 11, it is suggested that the Lord's people everywhere make May 30th a day of prayer and supplication." Subsequent comments lauded the United States and did not harmonize with the Christian position of neutrality.—[John 15:19](#); [Jas. 4:4](#).

During World War I questions arose among the Bible Students as to the position they should take regarding military service. Some refused to participate in any way, whereas others accepted noncombatant service. Related questions arose about whether to buy war bonds and stamps. Failure to do so sometimes resulted in persecution, even brutal treatment. When Jehovah's servants of today consider any program or activity of the nations, they act in harmony with such Scriptural principles as that set forth at [Isaiah 2:2-4](#), which concludes with the words: "And they will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore."

A new outlook. That is what Jehovah's people had as they entered the 1920's. They had gone through difficult years, but Christ's anointed followers, the symbolic

“two witnesses,” were alive again spiritually and ready for action. What led up to this? What took place in the months immediately following the release of Brother Rutherford and his seven associates from prison?

## **A SUCCESSFUL TEST**

When Rutherford was released from prison, there was a big question in his mind: Just how much interest is there in the Kingdom message? He was an ailing man, who might reasonably be expected to be concerned primarily with his health, but he just had to have an answer to that important question.

As it is, during the months of their incarceration in the Atlanta penitentiary, Brothers Rutherford and Van Amburgh had shared a cell having no air circulation due to a fan malfunction. Being unable to get sufficient oxygen, their systems had been filled with poisons. While Rutherford was imprisoned, in fact, a lung condition had developed that stayed with him for the rest of his earthly life. Shortly after his release he contracted pneumonia. Brother Rutherford became so ill that his survival was in question. Because of his physical condition and owing to the fact that his family was in California, he went there.

Trying to determine just how much interest there actually was in the Kingdom message, Brother Rutherford arranged for a public meeting at Clune's Auditorium in Los Angeles on Sunday, May 4, 1919. Through extensive newspaper advertising, he promised to explain in this discourse just why the Watch Tower Society's officers had been convicted illegally.

The local clergy thought the Bible Students and the Society were finished, that no one would show up for the advertised talk “The Hope for Distressed Humanity.” But they were wrong. Three thousand five hundred were present, and about six hundred had to be turned away for lack of space. Rutherford promised to speak to them on Monday evening. Though he had been sick all day, he delivered that talk to an audience of 1,500. He was so ill, however, that after about an hour he had to be replaced by an associate. Yet, the test in Los Angeles had been a success. There was notable interest in the Kingdom message.

## **“WILL THE BETHEL HOME BE RESTORED?”**

That was another big question. The Brooklyn Tabernacle had been sold. Though

Bethel still belonged to the Society, it was practically unfurnished and headquarters operations had been transferred to Pittsburgh. There the brothers had little money and their Federal Street quarters were far from adequate for expansion. Printing facilities were lacking, and even many of the plates from which the Society's literature was printed had been destroyed. Prospects were bleak.

During J. F. Rutherford's stay in California, however, an interesting thing happened at the Society's Pittsburgh headquarters. One morning a Christian, George Butterfield, a person of considerable means, walked into the office.

A. H. Macmillan spoke with him in the parlor, informed him that Brother Rutherford was in California, and then this is what happened, according to Macmillan's own report:

"He said, 'Have you got a private room here?'

"'Well, we'll lock this door, this is private. What do you want to do, George?'

"He began to take his shirt off as I talked to him. I thought he had gone crazy. He looked a little dirty and travel-worn, whereas ordinarily he was a tidy and well-kept man. When he got down to his undershirt he wanted a knife. Then he cut out a little patch he had on there and took out a bundle of money. It was about \$10,000 in bills.

"He put it down and said, 'That'll help you to get this work started. I wouldn't send a check because I didn't know who was here. I didn't travel in a sleeper because I didn't want anybody to come and take this away from me if they suspected I had it, so I sat up all night. I didn't know who was in charge of the work, but now that I see you brothers here whom I know and I trust, I am glad that I came!' . . . It was a pleasant surprise and certainly an encouragement."

Upon Brother Rutherford's return to the Society's Pittsburgh offices, he instructed the Society's vice-president, C. A. Wise, to go to Brooklyn and see about reopening Bethel and renting premises where the Society could begin printing operations. The conversation went like this:

"Go and see whether it is the Lord's will for us to return back to Brooklyn."

"How will I determine as to whether it is the Lord's will for us to go back or not?"

"It was a failure to get coal supplies in 1918 that drove us from Brooklyn back to Pittsburgh. Let's make coal the test. You go and order some coal." [In New York coal was still being rationed at the end of the war.]

"How many tons do you think I should order to make the test?"

"Well, make it a good test; order five hundred tons."

That is just what Brother Wise did. And upon making application to the authorities, he was granted a certificate to get five hundred tons of coal. Immediately he wired J. F. Rutherford. That much coal would ensure operations for a number of years. But where could they put it all? Large sections of the Bethel home's basement were converted into coal storage space. This successful test was taken as an unmistakable indication that it was God's will that the move to Brooklyn be made. So it was, as of October 1, 1919.

## **JOYOUS REUNION**

Not long before Bethel reopened, Jehovah's people in general had a joyous reunion, a truly outstanding event. Shortly after Brother Rutherford's successful public meetings at Los Angeles in May of 1919, he decided to hold a large convention. Ultimately the site chosen was Cedar Point, Ohio. This assembly of September 1-8, 1919, proved to be one of unusual spiritual benefit.

Hotels at Cedar Point could house some three thousand, and the Bible Students had arranged to take over all their facilities by noon of the convention's opening day, Monday, September 1. There was a little disappointment when only a thousand persons showed up for the opening session. But people kept coming, on special trains and by other means. Soon long lines of elated delegates were awaiting accommodations. And who were busy behind the counter handing out room assignments? Why, none other than two former inmates of Atlanta penitentiary—A. H. Macmillan and R. J. Martin! Now look there. Brother Rutherford and many others are having a great time as bellhops, toting suitcases and helping fellow conventioners to their rooms. Things kept humming till after midnight.

Happy delegates kept right on coming. From about 3,000 on hand by evening of the first day, attendance climbed to 6,000 on Friday. And for the Sunday public lecture about 7,000 were present. At this joyous assembly over 200 symbolized



their dedication to God by submitting to water baptism.

Concerning the public discourse “The Hope for Distressed Humanity,” Arden Pate writes: “They arranged to have the public talk outside and Brother Rutherford spoke. . . . With that small number it wasn’t too hard to hear.”

### THOSE PUZZLING LETTERS “GA”

As soon as conventioners arrived in Cedar Point they noted something very intriguing. Ursula C. Serenco recalls: “We observed a large banner across the hall above the speaker’s platform with two capital letters, ‘GA.’ We all were in expectation all week, guessing the meaning of those two initials. Brother Macmillan came on the stage and in his usual way told the audience that he too had been puzzling all week as to the meaning of those two letters, ‘GA.’ He had come to one conclusion: ‘Friends, I have concluded that it means “Guess Again.”’ Well, the audience responded in laughter.”

For relief from nagging curiosity, the assembly delegates had to wait till Friday, September 5—“Colaborers’ Day.” Imagine yourself among those happy throngs as J. F. Rutherford gave the address “Announcing the Kingdom.” In it he announced the publication of a new magazine, *The Golden Age*.

The mystery was over. Those letters “GA” stood for *Golden Age*. Brother Rutherford was followed on the program by R. J. Martin, who outlined methods for a new work of obtaining subscriptions for *The Golden Age*. Published every other week, this thirty-two-page magazine would carry much religious matter explaining present-day events in the light of divine prophecy. Its first issue, dated October 1, 1919, contained material on such topics as labor and economics, manufacturing and mining, finance, commerce and transportation, agriculture and husbandry, science and invention and religion, including a Scripturally based article entitled “Talking with the Dead?”

As its editor *The Golden Age* had one of the brothers who had been imprisoned with Brother Rutherford. He was Clayton J. Woodworth. His son, C. James Woodworth, fills in these interesting details: “My father reestablished a home for us in Scranton [Pennsylvania], and when, in 1919, *The Golden Age* was begun as a companion magazine to *The Watch Tower*, the Society appointed him its editor. It

was necessary for him to spend a large part of his time actually in Brooklyn, so the Society kindly made an arrangement whereby he worked for two weeks in Brooklyn and two weeks at home—an arrangement that went on for quite a few years. I well remember my dad's typewriter going busily at five o'clock many mornings—as he wrote or edited material for *The Golden Age* and sent it to Brooklyn by early mail.”

Clayton J. Woodworth faithfully served as editor of *The Golden Age* and its successor *Consolation* (published from October 6, 1937, through July 31, 1946, inclusive). Because of advancing years, he was relieved of this work when the new journal *Awake!* replaced *Consolation*, with the issue of August 22, 1946. However, Brother Woodworth remained faithful at other duties in God's service until death, on December 18, 1951, at eighty-one years of age.

### **“WE WERE GOING TO WORK”**

The 1919 Cedar Point convention brought about a greater awareness of the worldwide scope of the preaching work that was to be done by Jehovah's people. As A. H. Macmillan put it: “So the idea began to take hold, ‘Now we have something to do.’ We were not going to stand around any more and wait to go to heaven; we were going to work.”

God's people certainly “were going to work.” Positive action was taken in connection with advancing true worship. For instance, the year 1919 saw the revival of the colporteur work. In the spring of that year 150 were active in this branch of God's service, but by autumn, 507.

The pilgrim service also was revived. Full-time traveling representatives of the Society rose to the number of eighty-six and were sent to congregations to gather together those who had been scattered during the wartime persecution. They also stimulated interest through this close contact with the headquarters of Jehovah's earthly organization. Here again the interests of true worship were making advancement.

### **TO THE FIELD!**

*The Watch Tower* of August 1 and 15, 1919, carried the two-part article “Blessed Are the Fearless.” Plainly it showed the need for faithful and fearless action in God's

service. The response to this call to fearless action on the part of Jehovah's people was enthusiastic and courageous. They zealously undertook the Kingdom publicity work that was now set before them. They became spiritually alive again in Jehovah's active service as his ambassadors. Thus was fulfilled the prophetic picture of the resurrection of God's "two witnesses" as described in [Revelation 11:11, 12](#).

In 1920 personal responsibility for preaching was more keenly felt as participants in the witness work turned in a weekly report of activity. Prior to 1918 only colporteurs made field service reports. Also, to facilitate the preaching activity, congregations were given specific territory assignments. What were the effects? In 1920 there were 8,052 "class workers" and 350 colporteurs. By 1922, of more than 1,200 congregations in the United States, 980 had been fully reorganized to engage in the field service. These had 8,801 workers who placed Bible literature with householders on a contribution. The *weekly* average was 2,250.

When work with *The Golden Age* was starting, it was outlined in this way: "THE GOLDEN AGE work is a house-to-house canvass with the kingdom message, proclaiming the day of vengeance of our God and comforting them that mourn. In addition to the canvass, a copy of THE GOLDEN AGE is to be left at each home, whether a subscription is taken or not. Samples will be supplied gratis. . . . Class workers will procure their samples from the Director." Congregations wishing to participate registered with the Watch Tower Society as service organizations. In turn, the Society appointed one in the local congregation to serve as the "Director." Being an appointee, he was not subject to local yearly election, as were the elders at that time.

Suppose we join briefly in the *Golden Age* work. Elva Fischer tells us this about it: "In 1919 we received our first consignment of the new magazine *The Golden Age*. . . . None of us owned automobiles at this time, so my husband and his fleshly brother, Audie Bradshaw, loaded our little one-seated buggy with the magazines and off they went to preach the good news from a horse and buggy. My sister-in-law stayed home to care for the livestock and our children, as we all lived on farms. The boys spent two whole days placing these magazines, as they were to place a *Golden Age* in each home. We were all very happy for this opportunity to have a part in the preaching work."

“Volunteers were called to obtain subscriptions for the magazine,” remarks Fred Anderson, adding: “I responded and felt the first real joy of doing active witnessing. Since then I have obtained many subscriptions and placed hundreds of copies of the magazine, now called *Awake!* It has been a powerful instrument to awaken persons to the critical times and has given them a marvelous hope of life and peace in a cleansed earth.”

## THE “ZG” WORK

On June 21, 1920, a paper edition of *The Finished Mystery* was released for distribution. It was commonly called the “ZG.” (“Z” stood for *Zion’s Watch Tower*, the original name of *The Watchtower*, and “G,” the seventh letter of the English alphabet, designated this seventh volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*.) This special edition of *The Watch Tower* (March 1, 1918) was stored while the book was banned and could now be placed with the people for twenty cents a copy.

Recalling her work with the “ZG,” Beulah E. Covey says: “There was a full-page picture inside of a church with . . . two preachers, each going down an aisle with a gun in one hand and a collection plate in the other. All we had to do to place this ‘ZG’ was to show this picture, and it was very common to place forty or fifty a day in the field.”

Work with this magazine edition of *The Finished Mystery* was fruitful. For example, Annie Poggensee writes: “I called on a lady who took the ‘ZG’ and closed the door. Little did I realize then the results that this placement would bring. A few weeks later a handbill was left at her door. She recognized this as being the same thing, so she attended the talk advertised on the handbill. She continued coming to the meetings, and finally her husband and two daughters began attending. Soon the whole Andreson family was in the truth.”

## “GA” NO. 27

In time *Golden Age* No. 27 made its appearance. “It was the September 29, 1920, issue, detailing the persecution and abuse of the brothers and sisters during the period of oppression,” writes Roy E. Hendrix, who had part in distributing it. Amelia and Elizabeth Losch add: “It exposed the ungodly persecution heaped upon the International Bible Students during World War I by the religious

clergymen of Christendom and their allies, political and military. . . . Nine in the congregation refused to participate in this work and signed a petition not to do so. They lacked faith in the 'faithful and discreet slave.' As a result, we, along with three others, maintaining faith, distributed 25,000 copies in only two weeks. The end of the campaign saw us tired but happy, knowing we were faithfully walking in the light of God's Word."

Four million copies of *Golden Age* No. 27 were printed. These were given away free or were placed on a voluntary contribution of ten cents a copy. Principally, distribution was from house to house.

## THE WORK ABROAD

Increasing demands for Bible literature arose. This was true in Canada, for example, where the censorship that had been imposed on Watch Tower publications was removed on January 1, 1920. Persecution in that country seemed to stir God's people to greater zeal in preaching and advancing true worship.

On August 12, 1920, J. F. Rutherford and a few associates set sail for Europe. Assemblies were held in London, Glasgow and other British cities. With some others, Rutherford journeyed to Egypt and Palestine. Various offices and Bible classes were visited and strengthened spiritually. A branch office of the Society was established in Ramallah. In a year-end report, Brother Rutherford disclosed that the Society was setting up a Central European Office to supervise the preaching work in Switzerland, France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Austria and Italy.

## THE "MILLIONS CAMPAIGN"

Contributing to disciple-making work in those days was a new preaching activity—the "Millions Campaign." It featured distribution of the 128-page book *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, placed with the people on a contribution of 25c a copy. The book was used in conjunction with a public-speaking program that began on September 25, 1920, and that centered around a lecture (originally entitled "The World Has Ended—Millions Now Living May Never Die") given by J. F. Rutherford in Los Angeles on February 24, 1918, and published in the new book in 1920.

In retrospect, Lester L. Roper says: "Then came my time for a public talk on the

subject 'Lift Up a Standard for the People, Millions Now Living That Will Never Die.' I was accustomed to dealing with the public, but that was different. I felt the floor would come up and hit me in the face any time. And I guess it did take intestinal fortitude, as then we had only a very small number in the truth in all the world—and to tell them 'Millions now living would never die'!"

*Millions Now Living Will Never Die* eventually was translated and published in various languages. Unlike the "pastoral work," which had consisted of lending books to the people, copies of the "Millions" book were placed with them on a contribution, and interested persons could later obtain volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*. The "Millions Campaign" lasted for some time, and a great witness was given by this means. Newspaper notices and billboards with the words "Millions Now Living Will Never Die" were used to bring it to public attention. So extensive was the campaign that the slogan has been remembered through the years.

Recalling the effect of the "Millions Campaign," Rufus Chappell writes: "We had offered the publication *Millions Now Living Will Never Die* in and around Zion [Illinois] and the results were of interest. I remember a large, flashing electric sign over the Waukegan Dry Cleaners building on North Sheridan Road about five miles from Zion, which said, 'We Dye for the Millions Now Living Who Will Never Die.' This was a very popular subject at that time, and many people had questioned the phrase and learned the truth from this publication."

## A NEW BOOK PROMOTES PROGRESS

For years volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures* had been read and widely distributed by the Bible Students. In 1921, however, a new book was published—*The Harp of God*, written by J. F. Rutherford. Eventually it had a circulation of 5,819,037 copies in 22 languages. "When *The Harp of God* came out, that was really a blessing, an answer to our prayers," says Carrie Green, continuing: "It simplified the truth, the whole truth, all the different subjects being illustrated as the 'strings of the harp.'"

This publication outlined the purpose of Jehovah as "ten strings of the Harp of God, the Bible." The book's 'ten strings' or headings were: Creation, Justice Manifested, The Abrahamic Promise, The Birth of Jesus, The Ransom, Resurrection, Mystery Revealed, Our Lord's Return, Glorification of the Church, and Restoration. A beginner's book, it contained questions for individual and class



study. When working from house to house, the Bible Students offered with this publication a complete correspondence course. The twelve questionnaire cards making up the course were mailed, one card a week. The average congregation might have as many as 400 to 500 cards to handle weekly in connection with this course. This work was carried on for a number of years and was highly beneficial. Hazel Burford says: "Studies were also held in the homes of interested persons, similar to our home Bible study work of today, except a whole group of publishers would attend, as in our congregation book studies."

## **FACILITIES TO FURTHER THE PREACHING WORK**

In the year following World War I the Watch Tower Society wanted to buy a large rotary press in order to do some printing. There were only a few in the country and all of them were busy. Apparently, there was no chance of getting one for many months. But Jehovah's hand is not short, and an installed large rotary press went into operation by workers at headquarters in 1920. Fondly called the "old battleship," through the years it produced millions of magazines, booklets and other publications.

Upon acquiring the "old battleship," the Society rented factory space at 35 Myrtle Avenue in Brooklyn. Upon arriving at Bethel on January 22, 1920, W. L. Pelle and W. W. Kessler were assigned to work in that building. Brother Pelle tells us: "Our first job was washing walls on the first floor at 35 Myrtle Avenue. It was the dirtiest job I had ever had, but it was different. We were happy. It was the Lord's work and that made it worth while. It took us about three days to get all the cleaning done and then it was ready for the mailing department to be set up. Downstairs in the basement the rotary press (the 'battleship') was being assembled and upstairs on the second floor the flatbed press, the folder and the stitcher were being made ready."

Soon the equipment was in operation. Brother Pelle continues: "Two brothers, experienced machinists and pressmen, operated the flatbed press, Brother Kessler the folder, and I the stitcher. Then came the very first copy of *The Watch Tower* off our own press—February 1, 1920—a thrilling moment, a very happy occasion! Not too long thereafter came *The Golden Age* No. 27 from the 'battleship' press in the basement. A small start, but it has never stopped growing!"

The preaching work was on the increase. By 1922 there was a much greater demand for literature. So, as of March 1, 1922, the Society moved its factory into a six-story building at 18 Concord Street in Brooklyn. First it occupied four floors and eventually all six. There the Society first undertook the printing of its own bound volumes. The Myrtle Avenue building was used for paper and literature storage.

One sizable task involved in making the transfer from Myrtle Avenue to Concord Street was moving the “old battleship.” Here is how that was handled, according to an account once given by Lloyd Burtch:

“On March 1, 1922, we moved our printing equipment from Myrtle Avenue to larger quarters at 18 Concord Street in Brooklyn. With a small truck we moved most of the heavy things. When we came to the big cylinders of the ‘battleship’ press, we found them to be too heavy for the truck to carry. We were stumped. We did not know how we would be able to get them to the new quarters, but when we awoke the next morning our problem was solved.

“Two inches of snow fell unexpectedly during the night, and it solved our problem. We made a skid and rolled the cylinders onto it. Hooking the truck to the skid, we dragged it to the new location, with the skid sliding smoothly on the snow. The cylinders were then lowered through the basement window at the place on Concord Street. For years thereafter, the plant manager, R. J. Martin, found pleasure in telling the brothers at conventions about this unexpected snowfall that solved our moving problem.”

Soon the “old battleship” was rolling again, in the Concord Street factory. And how it made that old structure shake! Why, it is said that plant manager Martin would remark, ‘The angles are holding up this building.’

## **ONLY WITH JEHOVAH’S HELP**

“The successful printing of books and Bibles on rotary presses by persons of little or no previous experience is evidence of Jehovah’s oversight and the direction of his spirit,” remarks Charles J. Fekel. He has been in Bethel service since 1921. Brother Fekel has shared in the developments at the Society’s headquarters for half a century and assures us: “Persons to perform each task were always found without any duplication or wasteful effort. Vast tasks planned ahead of time were

completed as required in spite of Satan's opposition."

When the Society moved its factory to 18 Concord Street, Brooklyn, back in 1922, a complete outfit of typesetting, electroplating, printing and binding machinery, most of it new, was obtained. The president of one important printing concern that had been doing much of the Society's work saw the equipment and said: "Here you are with a first-class printing establishment on your hands, and nobody around the place that knows a thing about what to do with it. In six months the whole thing will be a lot of junk; and you will find out that the people to do your printing are those that have always done it, and make it their business."

True, there were formidable problems. But with divine aid the brothers made wonderful progress. Note this example: Not many years ago it took an expert mechanic from Germany and several helpers *two months* to erect a large press obtained by the Society. Within the next two years another press of the same size and make was erected at headquarters by one brother and assistants at Bethel in only *three weeks*.

The brothers at the Society's headquarters applied themselves. They learned, and before long they were making good books. At first they could bind only 2,000 a day. By 1927, however, they were producing 10,000 to 12,000 books daily.

## RETURN TO CEDAR POINT

The Society had not been operating its Concord Street printing plant in Brooklyn, New York, very long when God's people gathered for an international assembly on September 5-13, 1922. The place? Cedar Point, Ohio, location of the Bible Students' general convention in 1919. There had been growth in the intervening three years. Delegates to the 1922 assembly came from the United States, Canada and Europe. The average daily attendance was 10,000, with between 18,000 and 20,000 present on Sunday. Those baptized numbered 361. English and foreign-language meetings were held simultaneously, as many as eleven being in progress at one time.

Imagine yourself at Cedar Point for that spiritually rewarding assembly. Notice the large banners, the little wooden signs on the trees and the white cards on posts and elsewhere. All of them bear the letters "A D V." What do they mean? Some say

they stand for “After Death Victory,” as the anointed remnant still are very concerned about ‘going home’ to heaven. Others think these letters mean “Advise the Devil to Vacate.”

The suspense lasted until Friday, September 8, known as “The Day.” Judge Rutherford then spoke on “The Kingdom.” T. J. Sullivan remarked: “Those who were privileged to attend that meeting can even yet visualize Brother Rutherford’s earnestness when he told the few restless people that were walking around because of the intense heat to ‘SIT DOWN’ and ‘LISTEN’ to the talk at any cost.” Among other things, Brother Rutherford spoke about the end of the Gentile Times in 1914 and cited the blasphemous statement by the Federal Council of Churches hailing the League of Nations as the “*political* expression of the kingdom of God on earth.” Imagine yourself in that audience as Rutherford works toward the dramatic conclusion of his discourse. You listen intently as he says:

“ . . . Since 1914 the King of glory has taken his power and reigns. He has cleansed the lips of the temple class and sends them forth with the message. The importance of the message of the kingdom cannot be overstated. It is the message of all messages. It is the message of the hour. It is incumbent upon those who are the Lord’s to declare it. The kingdom of heaven is at hand; the King reigns; Satan’s empire is falling; millions now living will never die.

“Do you believe it? . . .

“Then back to the field, O ye sons of the most high God! Gird on your armor! Be sober, be vigilant, be active, be brave. Be faithful and true witnesses for the Lord. Go forward in the fight until every vestige of Babylon lies desolate. Herald the message far and wide. The world must know that Jehovah is God and that Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. This is the day of all days. Behold, the King reigns! You are his publicity agents. Therefore advertise, advertise, advertise, the King and his kingdom.”

At that very moment a three-colored, thirty-six-foot-long banner is unfurled above the speaker’s stand. On it appear a large center picture of Christ and the words “Advertise the King and Kingdom.” Now it is clear. The enigmatic letters “A D V” mean “ADVERTISE.” Advertise what? Why, “Advertise the King and Kingdom”! “You can imagine the enthusiasm,” exclaims George D. Gangas, “the joy and the

excitement of the brothers. Never had anything like that happened in their lives. . . . It was something that was written indelibly in my mind and heart, that will never be forgotten as long as I live." C. James Woodworth, then a sixteen-year-old lad in the assembly orchestra, recalls: "That was a dramatic moment. How the audience applauded! Old Brother Pfannebecker waved his violin above his head and, turning to me, said loudly: 'Ach, Ya! Und now ve do it, no?'"

## **MOTIVATED TO ADVERTISE THE KINGDOM**

And they did it! In fact, God's servants have been doing it ever since. Boldly they have been advertising the King and Kingdom. When the Bible Students left Cedar Point they were aglow with the spirit, burning with enthusiasm for the preaching work ahead of them. "Words cannot describe the feeling of moving ahead, to go home and advertise," declares Ora Hetzel. Sister James W. Bennecoff adds: "We were aroused to 'advertise, advertise, advertise the King and his kingdom'—Yes, with more zeal and love in our hearts than ever before."

For that matter, conventioners were afforded opportunity to advertise the Kingdom before they ever left Cedar Point. Monday, September 11, 1922, was "Service Day." Several hundred automobiles were used, each carrying five or more passengers and a good supply of Bible literature, all ready to advertise the King and Kingdom in the field service. "My card of 'Instruction to Workers' was No. 144," says Dwight T. Kenyon. "My card read: 'Autos will line up along lake front (Cedar Point) according to number on radiator at 6:30 a.m. prompt. Your Auto No. is 215, Worker No. is 5, . . .' I was in a group of seven. We went by housecar, operated by two colporteurs. Our assignment was Milan, Ohio, some miles away. I recall that Brother Rutherford was at that rendezvous at that early hour to see us off."

Yes, J. F. Rutherford was there to 'see them off.' But there was more to it than that. "Brother Rutherford was in the first automobile that started that morning," remarks Sara C. Kaelin. John Fenton Mickey adds: "Brother Rutherford's car was the first one. He had invited my wife and me, her sister, Clara Myers, and Richard Johnson and his wife. I was unable to go, as our little girl had become ill . . . Well, the territory for the first car was the road between Cedar Point and Sandusky, Ohio. Brother Rutherford took the first house, Clara Myers the next, and so on till service was completed and they returned to the convention."

## RESPONDING TO CALLS FOR GREATER KINGDOM SERVICE

Jehovah's servants had done some house-to-house preaching for years. Now, however, this work was accelerated. After October 1922 the door-to-door preaching was greatly facilitated through information appearing in the monthly service instruction sheet, the *Bulletin*.

Meetings of the Bible Students continued to supply rich spiritual food. Group studies of *The Watch Tower* were first organized in 1922. Questions were printed as an aid to study. Christian meetings also kept pace with increasing emphasis on the field service. Especially, affected was the mid-week Prayer, Praise and Testimony Meeting. Long had it been an occasion for singing songs, giving testimonies and engaging in prayer. But in the early 1920's a change came about that was linked with house-to-house Kingdom proclamation. Regarding this, James Gardner writes: "An important advancement began on May 1, 1923. The first Tuesday of each month was set aside as Service Day, to enable class workers to engage in the field service with the 'Director' appointed by the Society. As a stimulus to this work and to further encourage the brothers, it was arranged that from this time forward congregational prayer meetings held every Wednesday night were to devote one half of the program to relating testimonies of experiences in the field work." T. H. Siebenlist adds: "The Wednesday night meeting later on included a consideration of the Society's printed field service sheet, the *Bulletin*. So when field service began to be stressed, the Shattuck, Oklahoma, company [congregation] got busy with the preaching work and memorized the canvasses [testimonies] as they came out in the *Bulletin*."

Also in 1923 the Society began setting aside several Sundays a year for a "world-wide witness." This involved a united effort in holding simultaneous public meetings throughout the earth. All the Bible Students were encouraged to advertise such lectures as "Satan's Empire Falling—Millions Now Living Will Never Die."

During early 1927 in the United States the work of distributing books and booklets from house to house for a contribution began to be carried on every Sunday. "Some were wondering how it would go, knowing the world was against us," comments James Gardner, adding: "It did set off a wave of persecution in some places. But it was a call from the 'faithful and discreet slave,' so why hesitate? How



gladly we went forth, and while some were complaining about 'coming around on Sundays with books,' and so forth, it soon was seen that Jehovah was directing his people throughout the world. Even to this day Sunday is a good day to go forth, and we do so constantly."

## AT THE DOORS

Would you like to join some Kingdom publicity agents in their house-to-house preaching work of the past? Explaining the activity, Myrtle Strain says: "We mostly explained what the books contained and we used quite a bit of salesmanship too. Often, however, we were invited into the homes and then when the householder showed interest, we would give the whole outline of God's purpose, beginning with Adam's fall and going on to man's restitution. Sometimes we would take an hour or so at a house."

"Those early days in association with Jehovah's people are filled with many never-to-be-forgotten memories," remarks Martha Holmes. "I recall our little group of five working the outlying towns in the Des Moines, Iowa, area. At times we would leave before daylight and stay until after dark. In those days our auto had no hard top, no power brakes, no power steering, no air conditioner, nor a heater. Most of the time we had to drive on unpaved roads. We would get stuck in the mud and would have to shove boards under the wheels to get going again. Our car had button-on side curtains that were used when it rained or snowed. We took box lunches and ate in the cold car. One day, after spending several hours in the work at Newton, Iowa, about thirty miles from Des Moines, a severe windstorm came up. It was difficult to keep the car on the road, as the winds were of gale force. Additionally, the canvas top had blown back and kept flopping in the wind. We finally made it back into Des Moines, all of us drenched through to the skin. I'm quite sure that onlookers thought, 'What a crazy bunch of people!'"

Often their efforts were rewarded with fine results, however. For instance, Julia Wilcox has not forgotten one day back in the 1920's when she was a new Kingdom publicity agent working alone from house to house in Washington, North Carolina. She met a woman who manifested great interest in the Society's booklet *Talking with the Dead* and accepted some literature. Sister Wilcox says:

"Not wanting to detain her, I started to leave, but she wouldn't let me go. This is

her story:

“I know the Lord sent you here today. You are the answer to our prayers. My mother and I have been praying that God would lead us to the light. We have been members of the Methodist Church all our lives, but recently we have stopped going to church because we are not getting anything there. All we hear is money, money and more money. The other day my mother saw an ad in a magazine telling about a book on “spiritism” and how one could talk directly to God. She told me to order the book and see what we could learn from that. Well, I have the letter written ordering the book, but for some reason I forgot to mail it. [That letter never was mailed.] Now I’ll read these books I got from you first, and when mother comes to stay with me again she will read them too. Will you please promise to come back to see us again soon?”

“Of course, I promised. That was to be my first back-call [return visit]. The back-call work was not encouraged then. Covering territory and leaving literature was stressed. At any rate, I went back as I had promised, when her mother was there. They had ‘devoured’ the literature I left on the first call and wanted more. From that time on they accepted every piece of literature published by the Society. . . . It affords me great joy to be able to report that Sister [Sophia] Carty, my first back-call, was faithful in service and in meeting attendance until her death in 1963.”

## SEVEN ANGELS SOUND THEIR TRUMPETS

Back in the 1920’s, Jehovah’s servants were busy advertising the King and Kingdom, with fine results. Moreover, though God’s people did not realize it at the time, they then became involved in the thrilling fulfillment of apocalyptic prophecies. As seven angelic trumpeters blew their horns, true Christians played a part in dramatic events on earth and they continue to share in them right down to the present.—[Rev. 8:1–9:21; 11:15-19](#).

From the time that the *first angel blew his trumpet*, Christendom has been pelted by a figurative devastating hail, heavy exposés based on Bible truth. ([Rev. 8:7](#)) It all began during the Bible Students’ Cedar Point convention in September 1922. There God’s people enthusiastically adopted a resolution entitled “A Challenge.” Boldly it exposed the clergy’s disloyalty to God by participating in the war and thereafter repudiating His Messianic kingdom by holding that the League of

Nations was the political expression of that kingdom. That October in 1922 45,000,000 copies of the resolution and supporting material began to be distributed earth wide. From that time onward, Christendom (her Catholic and Protestant clergy and her church members) has been laid bare as false in her claim to being real followers of Jesus Christ.

Under the direction of the *second angelic trumpeter*, the Bible Students held a regional convention in Los Angeles, California, on August 18-26, 1923. There they overwhelmingly approved the historic resolution entitled "A Warning." It exposed the failure of Christendom's clergy to aid in proclaiming the Kingdom message and appealed to sheeplike persons to turn, not to the clergy-supported League of Nations, but to God's kingdom as the "only remedy for national and individual ills." The failure of the clergy in this regard has been a major factor in the rise of radical, revolutionary elements, pictured by the restless "sea." But those radical elements cannot give life to mankind either, no more than blood poured out from the human body can give life. In December 1923 printing began on the tract "Proclamation—A Warning to All Christians," which contained the convention resolution. Besides the millions of copies published abroad, 13,478,400 were printed in the United States. Mass distribution of that Proclamation was only the beginning. To this day, Jesus' anointed followers have made many proclamations advocating God's kingdom.—[Rev. 8:8, 9](#).

When the *third angel blew his trumpet*, a third of the waters were turned to wormwood. ([Rev. 8:10, 11](#)) Significantly, at the Bible Students' convention of July 20-27, 1924, in Columbus, Ohio, God's people enthusiastically adopted a resolution termed "Indictment." It exposed the false and God-defaming doctrines taught by Christendom's apostate clergy and showed the deadliness of the religious course in which they and their political associates were leading the people. Indeed, the clergymen were making the people drink something bitter as wormwood that would result in their spiritual death and eventual destruction. The convention resolution was incorporated in the tract entitled "Ecclesiastics Indicted," 13,545,000 copies of which were printed in the United States. Millions more in foreign languages were published abroad. In time, 50,000,000 copies were distributed. The Indictment also was published in *The Watch Tower*. Again, that was just the beginning. By radio, books, booklets, magazines and verbal testimonies Jehovah's servants have continued to point out that the teachings of

Christendom's clergy are not waters of life, but lead to death.

Came the year 1925 and the *fourth angelic trumpeter* stood poised for action. His trumpet was blown and a third of the sun, moon and stars were smitten and darkened. ([Rev. 8:12](#)) During a regional convention at Indianapolis, Indiana, on August 24-31, 1925, God's servants heartily endorsed a resolution under the title "Message of Hope." It made loving expressions, but also showed that the people had fallen into darkness in Christendom, which claims to be the world's spiritual light. Besides the resolution's publication in *The Watch Tower* and *The Golden Age*, ultimately many millions of copies of it in tract form were circulated in various languages. Thus the people were informed that Christendom was not enjoying the light of heavenly truth and divine favor.

The attack of symbolic locusts was heralded when the *fifth angel sounded his trumpet* in the spring of 1926. ([Rev. 9:1-11](#)) On May 25-31 of that year the Bible Students held an international convention in London, England. There they wholeheartedly adopted a resolution entitled "A Testimony to the Rulers of the World." It and the supporting public address "Why World Powers Are Tottering—The Remedy," delivered on Sunday, May 30, by Brother Rutherford to a vast audience in Royal Albert Hall, exposed the Satanic origin of the League of Nations and pointed out the clergy's failure to support God's Messianic kingdom. Similar information appeared in the newly released book *Deliverance* and in the booklet *The Standard for the People*. On Monday morning, *The Daily News* of London devoted a full page to the resolution and a synopsis of Sunday's public lecture, along with an advertisement of Rutherford's Monday night speech. The newspaper space had been purchased for a considerable sum, and a million or more copies of this edition reached the public.

In time, some 50,000,000 copies of the resolution "A Testimony" were distributed throughout the earth in tract form in many languages. This exposure of human schemes devised against God's kingdom in the name of religion stung like the sting from a scorpion's tail, and it continues to do so.

When the *sixth angel blew his trumpet*, four symbolic angels were untied and 200,000,000 symbolic horses went forth "to kill a third of the men." Those "horses" picture the means of publicizing a terrifying judgment message, particularly by the printed page. The action began with a notable event of 1927—an international

convention of the Bible Students in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. ([Rev. 9:13-19](#)) There, in the Coliseum on Sunday, July 24, about 15,000 persons heard J. F. Rutherford read a resolution addressed “To the Peoples of Christendom,” which makes up approximately a third of mankind. It urged sincere persons to abandon Christendom so as not to be destroyed with it. The peoples were urged to give their heart’s devotion and allegiance wholly to Jehovah God and to his King and kingdom. At the conclusion of Rutherford’s supporting speech “Freedom for the Peoples,” a thunder of ayes burst forth from those present, as they stood and shouted their approval of the resolution. Millions of persons heard the proceedings by radio over an international chain of fifty-three stations, the largest network to that time. “Giant radio chain hears Rutherford,” declared the *New York World* of Monday, July 25, 1927. “Greatest hook-up spreads to all parts of the world speech condemning organized clergy.”

How supporters of Christendom must have agonized under the fiery heat of certain statements in that stirring resolution! It and the accompanying public discourse were published in the booklet *Freedom for the Peoples*. In time millions of copies were placed in the hands of the common people and the rulers. Thus millions of symbolic horses began making an assault against Christendom, doing so under the control of the anointed remnant, the “four angels.” Through the years, such Christian publications have been produced by the hundreds of millions, and thousands of persons have responded favorably, abandoning Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion.—[Rev. 9:13-19; 18:2, 4, 5](#).

Dramatic events took place when the *seventh angel blew his trumpet*. “Loud voices occurred in heaven, saying: ‘The kingdom of the world did become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will rule as king forever and ever.’” Although the kingdom of the world of mankind rightly belongs to God, from 607 B.C.E. onward he permitted kingship by an anointed descendant of King David to lapse or be interrupted for “seven times,” or 2,520 years. That period ran out around October 4/5, 1914 C.E. The people needed to know that through the Messianic kingdom then established Jehovah was ruling as king, that he would soon “bring to ruin those ruining the earth” and that persons fearing his name would be colaborers with him in making the earth a paradise.—[Rev. 11:15-18](#).

When would such things be heralded world wide as by the pealing of the ‘seventh

angel's' trumpet? That globe-encircling announcement began in 1928, when the Bible Students gathered in convention at Detroit, Michigan, July 30-August 6. Especially noteworthy was Sunday, August 5, for then the delegates heard the stirring resolution "Declaration Against Satan and for Jehovah," as well as J. F. Rutherford's supporting public talk "Ruler for the People." Among other things, that resolution declared that because Satan will not surrender his wicked rule over the nations and peoples, Jehovah, with his executive officer Jesus Christ, will act against the Devil and his forces of evil, resulting in Satan's full restraint and the complete overthrow of his organization. Furthermore, it pointed out that God by Christ will establish righteousness in the earth, will emancipate mankind from evil and bring everlasting blessings to all the nations of the earth. "Therefore," the resolution concluded, "the due time has come for all who love righteousness to take their stand on the side of Jehovah and obey and serve him with a pure heart, that they may receive the boundless blessings which the Almighty God has in reservation for them."

Reports of that "Declaration Against Satan and for Jehovah" and the supporting public discourse were published in *The Golden Age* and *The Watch Tower*. Furthermore, the resolution and speech also were circulated in a number of languages by the millions in the booklet *The Peoples Friend*. Thus a message supporting God's kingdom by Jesus Christ and in defiance of world rule by Satan and his instrumentalities was trumpeted forth more than four decades ago. But, by printed page and public discourse, it has been sounded throughout the whole earth since then with increasing volume as Jehovah's servants continually carry the message of God's kingdom to the peoples of earth.

## **A RADIO PIONEER LIFTS UP ITS VOICE**

"Radio Tells the World Millennium Is Coming," declared the Philadelphia *Record* of April 17, 1922, continuing: "Judge Rutherford's Lecture Broadcasted from Metropolitan Opera House. Talks into Transmitter. Message is Carried Over Miles of Bell Telephone Wires to Howlett's Station." So began a newspaper report of J. F. Rutherford's first radio address, given on Sunday, April 16, 1922, at the Metropolitan Opera House in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The subject? "Millions Now Living Will Never Die." His visible audience was a mere handful compared with an estimated 50,000 residents of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware who



heard the speech on primitive radios in their homes.

Those were the early days of radio communication. In the United States it was not until 1920 that regular commercial radio broadcasts were made from Pittsburgh's station KDKA and WWJ of Detroit, Michigan. A person could then buy a factory-built crystal set with earphones, but not until the 1930's were radios with built-in loudspeakers and aerials produced.

Jehovah's servants of the early 1920's were relatively few in number. By 1924 in the United States there were, on the average, only 1,064 Bible Students preaching from house to house weekly. So, during that period God's people recognized the far-reaching effects of radio and considered it a fine means of reaching the masses with the Kingdom message.

In 1922 J. F. Rutherford and a few advisers first took claim to some twenty-four acres on Staten Island in New York city's Borough of Richmond. Taking us back to that interesting time, Lloyd Burtch once stated: "One Saturday afternoon the president of the Society, Brother Rutherford, took some of us with him to Staten Island. Upon arriving at the property that had been purchased, he pointed to a spot in the heart of the woods on the land and said: 'All right, boys. Here is where we start digging. We are going to build a radio station on our land.' And did we dig! Every weekend during that summer we were at it." Throughout the winter and on into the summer of 1923 construction went on apace, many young men from the Society's headquarters in Brooklyn assisting on weekends.

In 1923 Ralph H. Leffler was teaching radio theory at the Alliance, Ohio, high school. One day he received a letter from the president's office of the Watch Tower Society. It asked: "Noting that you are a teacher of radio . . . would you consider devoting all your time in the Lord's service in this behalf?" Brother Leffler clearly saw Jehovah's hand in this and could not refuse to accept this opportunity. By mid-October he arrived at Bethel and was put to work washing dishes! "Had I not had enough of washing dishes in the army? thought I," he later wrote. "Then I remembered the scripture: 'The LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.' ([Deut. 13:3](#), AV) Yes, this is another test, I concluded." But a month later he got started on radio work. "A 500-watt composite radio transmitter was located in the city and purchased for the station," Brother Leffler recalls. This he quickly installed and all

was ready for the first broadcast.

“Emotions were running high,” admits Brother Leffler. “Would the first broadcast be a success? Would anyone be able to hear us? License from the government to broadcast had been obtained. And the call letters assigned were WBBR. All was now ready for the first broadcast. That occurred on Sunday evening, February 24, 1924. It was my privilege to throw the power switch on for that first broadcast and away we went, hoping for the best.”

That first program over WBBR continued for two hours, from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m. There were piano solos, singing, and in between was the feature of the program, the lecture by the Society's president, J. F. Rutherford, on the subject “Radio and Divine Prophecy.” Each evening thereafter, from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m., and on Sundays, from 3 to 5 p.m., programs with good music and educational talks were radiocast.

Opportunities for dramatic work over WBBR presented themselves. Maxwell G. Friend shared in this. He had undergone intense dramatic training at the renowned City Theater in Zurich, Switzerland. Years later Jehovah favored Brother Friend with the unexpected privilege of producing and directing Biblical dramas and realistic reproductions of court trials of Jehovah's Christian witnesses by clergy-influenced, prejudiced judges and prosecutors in America. These dramas exposed them to public shame and exonerated God's servants. The trained performers and musicians who worked in these presentations made up “The King's Theater.”

In 1928 at South Amboy, New Jersey, some of Jehovah's servants were arrested for preaching the good news on Sunday. That marked the beginning of the decade-long “Battle of New Jersey.” “The King's Theater” played a part in this. During court trials of true Christians, often local judges were Catholics who manifested prejudice in the courtroom, using uncouth language and even betraying ecclesiastical allies who sought to remain in the background. Courtroom exchanges were recorded in shorthand. Trained performers attended the trials and studied the voice and intonations of the judge, the prosecuting attorney, and so forth. A few days later “The King's Theater” duplicated the courtroom scenes with astounding realism. Thus the air waves were used to expose the foe, and eventually the judges became so frightened that the spotlight had been turned on

them, as well as upon misguided policemen and prosecutors, that many became more astute in handling cases involving Jehovah's people.

For some thirty-three years WBBR brought glory to Jehovah and spread Bible truth far and wide. It began broadcasting with a 500-watt transmitter. Three years later, a new 1,000-watt transmitter was purchased. In 1947 the Federal Communications Commission granted WBBR permission to increase its power to 5,000 watts, providing this would not interfere with other stations operating on the same frequency in widely scattered parts of the United States. Installation of a three-tower directional antenna system solved that problem and this array increased the 5,000-watt power to more than 25,000 watts in the northeasterly direction where the population was the greatest. WBBR was heard in the area of metropolitan New York and the adjoining states of New Jersey and Connecticut. However, letters concerning its programs were received from England, Alaska, California and other distant places.

The Society sold the station on April 15, 1957. Why? Well, when the station began to operate in 1924, there was only one congregation of about 200 Bible Students covering all five boroughs of New York city, as well as Long Island and even parts of New Jersey. By 1957, however, there were 62 congregations within New York city and a peak of 7,256 proclaimers of the Kingdom, besides 322 full-time publishers of the good news. So a good witness was being given. Also, it is much more effective to speak to the people in their homes, where they can ask questions and receive further instruction from the Word of God. The money spent in connection with radio operations could be used in some other way to advance the interests of God's kingdom.

There was more to the radio work of the Society, however. One day J. F. Rutherford came into Ralph Leffler's room, laid a map of the United States on the table, and, pointing with his finger, he said: "I have in mind locating broadcasting stations here and here and here. Would you be willing to engineer the construction of these stations?" "I'd be happy to do so," was the reply. So, when November 1924 arrived, Brother Leffler was on his way to the Chicago area to work on the construction of another Society-owned radio station, this one with the call letters WORD. Brother Leffler also installed transmitters for other stations, not directly owned by the Society but managed by its representatives.

## MAKING RADIO HISTORY

During the 1920's Jehovah's people not only pioneered in establishing one of the early radio stations, WBBR. As already noted, radio history was made by Jehovah's servants on Sunday, July 24, 1927, when J. F. Rutherford spoke over a network of fifty-three stations from Toronto, Ontario, Canada—the largest radio chain forged up to that time.

What led to this unprecedented network broadcast? A series of events. An agreement had been made between WBBR and the owner of New York city station WJZ to share time, but the agreement was not kept. Later, WBBR was assigned to broadcast on another wavelength, and still later reassigned to one less favorable. Under the Radio Act of 1927 the Society's station began a proceeding before the Federal Radio Commission to be assigned a more desirable wavelength. At the hearing (June 14, 15, 1927) President Merlin Hall Aylesworth of the National Broadcasting Company testified to the great service rendered by New York radio stations WEAJ and WJZ, apparently to show that it would not be right to permit WBBR to occupy part of the time, although both WJZ and WEAJ had separate wavelengths. During cross-examination by J. F. Rutherford, this question was propounded to Mr. Aylesworth: "Your purpose is to give to the people by radio the message of the greatest financiers, the most prominent statesmen, and the most renowned clergymen in the world?" The reply was affirmative.

"If you were convinced that the great God of the universe will shortly put in operation his plan for the blessing of all the families and nations of the earth with peace, prosperity, life, liberty and happiness, would you arrange to broadcast it?" It would have been quite difficult to say No, and so the answer was Yes. Then Mr. Aylesworth voluntarily said that he would be pleased to broadcast a lecture by the president of the International Bible Students Association. Naturally, J. F. Rutherford accepted the offer.

So it was that as Brother Rutherford spoke to a convention audience of some 15,000 at Toronto, Ontario, Canada, on Sunday, July 24, 1927, millions more heard him by means of a hitherto unparalleled radio network. In a letter received by the Society from the National Broadcasting Company, it was stated: "I imagine that Judge Rutherford had as large an audience yesterday afternoon as any man living has had over the radio."

The Bible Students were involved in another notable radio event in 1928. In Detroit, Michigan, on Sunday, August 5, when J. F. Rutherford delivered the public lecture "Ruler for the People" to an audience of 12,000, it was carried by a radio network that linked 107 stations, required 33,500 miles of telephone lines and 91,400 miles of telegraph lines, and it was rebroadcast by short wave to Australia and New Zealand.

The Watchtower or "White" network was organized in 1928, especially to serve that Detroit convention. It was so successful that the Watch Tower Society decided to operate a weekly network of radio stations throughout the United States and Canada. A one-hour program was arranged and it emanated from WBBR. These were live broadcasts, featuring a lecture by Brother Rutherford, with introductory and concluding music furnished by an orchestra maintained by the Society. Every Sunday from November 18, 1928, through the year 1930 radio listeners thus could tune in to "The Watch Tower Hour."

Radio programs occupied much of Brother Rutherford's time. A fine witness was given, but he was unable to travel or organize conventions in various parts of the earth. So in 1931 the Society decided to present transcribed programs. Two hundred and fifty stations were organized to present these fifteen-minute transcriptions, made by Rutherford at his convenience and played by the radio stations at times they chose. In 1932 this radio service (called the Wax Chain) was expanded to 340 stations. By 1933, the peak year, 408 stations were being used to carry the message to six continents, and 23,783 separate Bible talks were broadcast, most of them being these fifteen-minute electrical transcriptions. In those days, one might spin the radio dial and tune in Watch Tower broadcasts emanating from widely scattered stations at the same time. Often the air waves were filled with words of truth that glorified God.

## **A FACTORY TO CALL THEIR OWN**

More and more Jehovah's people were attracting public attention. Their historic radio hookups of the late 1920's could not be ignored. Nor could the people disregard these Kingdom proclaimers, for their house-to-house preaching work was increasing in tempo. Greater demands were being made for Bible literature and the Society's publishing facilities had to keep pace. Looking back to the latter half of the 1920's, C.W. Barber remarks: "The factory building at 18 Concord Street

[Brooklyn, New York] had now become too small and inconvenient for our needs.”

It was clear. The Bible Students needed another factory. They decided to build. Since sufficient money for the factory's construction was not available without crippling the work in other parts of the earth, the Society decided to raise funds by mortgaging and bonding its real estate to an amount not exceeding one half of its actual value. Bonds were issued in denominations of \$100, \$500 and \$1,000, and they bore five-percent interest, payable annually. Through a supplement in *The Watch Tower* the Bible Students were afforded opportunity to subscribe for these bonds, rather than their being sold in the public market.

Back in 1926 and 1927, members of the Brooklyn Bethel family were delighted to see the factory at 117 Adams Street begin to take shape. Before long, all eight floors of this excellent reinforced-concrete structure, with numerous windows, stood ready for use. A modern fireproof building, it had more than 70,000 square feet of floor space. By February 1927 it was time to move from 18 Concord Street. “I remember Brother R. J. Martin [the factory manager] dancing for joy with the boys as the machinery was moved,” says Harry Petros. Brother Martin's enthusiasm over the new plant was evident in his report to the Society's president as published in the 1928 *Year Book to the International Bible Students Association*. Therein he remarked that even the factory's critics now admitted it to be “one of the finest printshops in the center of the world's printing business, namely, New York City.” The report included this description of plant operations:

“The general plan of the building is perfect for our work. The work all moves downward from floor to floor by gravity, and in the natural order: Offices on the top floor, where they belong; typesetting on the next floor, where it logically follows; the plates go down to the next floor, the sixth, where the printing is done; mailing and booklets take up the fifth; binding comes on the fourth; storage, on the third; shipping, on the second; paper stock, garage and power-plant, on the first. Nothing could improve on it.”

As the headquarters staff was nearing 200, expansion of the Bethel home got under way. During December 1926 the Society purchased the lot next to its property at 124 Columbia Heights in Brooklyn. Early in January 1927 the three buildings numbered 122, 124 and 126 were removed and construction began on a nine-story structure containing some eighty rooms. It was tied in with the Society's



building completed in 1911 to the rear and fronting on Furman Street.

### **“TAUGHT BY JEHOVAH”**

Jehovah certainly blessed his people back in the 1920's and provided the things they needed to advance the interests of the Kingdom. He also proved himself to be a God of progressive revelation. The Bible Students, in turn, found it necessary to adjust their thinking to some extent. But they were grateful for God's guidance and were eager to be “taught by Jehovah.”—[John 6:45](#); [Isa. 54:13](#).

God's people had to adjust their thinking about 1925, for instance. Expectations of restoration and blessing were attached to it because they felt that that year would mark the end of seventy jubilees of fifty years each since the Israelites had entered Canaan. ([Lev. 25:1-12](#)) A. D. Schroeder states: “It was thought that then the remnant of Christ's anointed followers would go to heaven to be part of the Kingdom and that the faithful men of old, such as Abraham, David and others, would be resurrected as princes to take over the government of the earth as part of God's kingdom.”

The year 1925 came and went. Jesus' anointed followers were still on earth as a class. The faithful men of old times—Abraham, David and others—had not been resurrected to become princes in the earth. ([Ps. 45:16](#)) So, as Anna MacDonald recalls: “1925 was a sad year for many brothers. Some of them were stumbled; their hopes were dashed. They had hoped to see some of the ‘ancient worthies’ [men of old like Abraham] resurrected. Instead of its being considered a ‘probability,’ they read into it that it was a ‘certainty,’ and some prepared for their own loved ones with expectancy of their resurrection. I personally received a letter from the sister who brought me the truth. She advised me that she had done wrong in what she had told me. . . . [But] I was appreciative of my liberation from Babylon. Where else could one go? I had learned to know and love Jehovah.”

God's faithful servants had not dedicated themselves to him only until a certain year. They were determined to serve him forever. To such persons the unfulfilled expectations concerning 1925 did not pose a great problem or affect their faith adversely. “For the faithful ones,” remarks James Poulos, “1925 was a wonderful year. Jehovah through his ‘faithful and discreet slave’ brought to our attention the meaning of [the twelfth chapter of Revelation](#). We learned about the ‘woman,’

God's universal organization; the war in heaven and the defeat and expulsion from the heavenly courts of Satan and his demons, by Jesus Christ and his holy angels; the birth of the kingdom of God." Evidently, Brother Poulos has in mind the very noteworthy article "Birth of the Nation," appearing in *The Watch Tower* of March 1, 1925. Through it, God's people clearly discerned how these two great opposing organizations—Jehovah's and Satan's—were symbolized. They then learned, too, that the Devil has had to confine his operations to the earth since his ouster from heaven as a result of the 'war in heaven' beginning in 1914.

## CELEBRATIONS AND HOLIDAYS

"At our early conventions, between sessions as the friends were chatting together," writes Anna E. Zimmerman, "you might have seen some friends hand you their 'Manna' book [*Daily Heavenly Manna for the Household of Faith*], asking you to please write your name and address in their 'Manna.' You would write it on the blank page opposite the date of your birthday, and when your birthday came along and they read their text that morning for the day they might decide to write you a card or letter, wishing you a happy birthday."

Yes, in those earlier days, dedicated Christians commemorated birthdays. Well, then, why not celebrate the supposed birthday of Jesus? This they also did for many years. In Pastor Russell's day, Christmas was celebrated at the old Bible House in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. Ora Sullivan Wakefield recalls that Brother Russell gave members of the Bible House family five- or ten-dollar gold pieces at Christmas. Mabel P. M. Philbrick remarks: "A custom that certainly would not be carried on today was the celebration of Christmas with a Christmas tree in the Bethel dining room. Brother Russell's usual 'Good morning, all' was changed to 'Merry Christmas, all.'"

What caused the Bible Students to stop celebrating Christmas? Richard H. Barber gave this answer: "I was asked to give an hour talk over a [radio] hookup on the subject of Christmas. It was given December 12, 1928, and published in *The Golden Age* #241 and again a year later in #268. That talk pointed out the pagan origin of Christmas. After that, the brothers at Bethel never celebrated Christmas again."

"Did we mind putting those pagan things away?" asks Charles John Brandlein. "Absolutely not. This was just complying with new things learned, and we had

never known before they were pagan. It was just like taking a soiled garment off and throwing it away." Next, birthday celebrations and Mother's Day were discarded—more creature worship. Sister Lilian Kammerud recalls: "How readily the brothers all dropped these holidays and admitted they were glad to be free. New truths always make us happy and . . . we felt we were privileged to know things that others were ignorant about."

## OTHER CHANGES IN VIEWPOINT

Advancement in understanding God's Word brought about some other adjustments in Christian thinking. According to Grant Suiter, the late 1920's were noteworthy along these lines. He says: "Modification of viewpoints respecting scriptures and matters of procedure seemed to be constant during these years. For example, it was in 1927 that *The Watch Tower* pointed out that the sleeping faithful members of the body of Christ were not resurrected in 1878 [as once thought], that life is in the blood and that the matter of somber dress would properly be modified." (See *The Watch Tower* for 1927, pages 150-152, 166-169, 254, 255, 371, 372.) For that matter, the year before, during the London, England, convention of May 25-31, 1926, Brother Rutherford spoke from the platform while attired in a business suit, instead of the formal black frock coat that had long been worn by public speakers among Jehovah's Christian witnesses.

Another change in viewpoint involved the "cross and crown" symbol, which appeared on the *Watch Tower* cover beginning with the issue of January 1891. In fact, for years many Bible Students wore a pin of this kind. By way of description, C. W. Barber writes: "It was a badge really, with a wreath of laurel leaves as the border and within the wreath was a crown with a cross running through it on an angle. It looked quite attractive and was our idea at that time of what it meant to take up our 'cross' and follow Christ Jesus in order to be able to wear the crown of victory in due time."

Concerning the wearing of "cross and crown pins," Lily R. Parnell comments: "This to Brother Rutherford's mind was Babylonish and should be discontinued. He told us that when we went to the people's homes and began to talk, *that* was the witness in itself." Accordingly, reflecting on the 1928 Bible Students convention in Detroit, Michigan, Brother Suiter writes: "At the assembly the cross and crown emblems were shown to be not only unnecessary but objectionable. So we

discarded these items of jewelry." Some three years thereafter, beginning with its issue of October 15, 1931, *The Watchtower* no longer bore the cross and crown symbol on its cover.

A few years later Jehovah's people first learned that Jesus Christ did not die on a T-shaped cross. On January 31, 1936, Brother Rutherford released to the Brooklyn Bethel family the new book *Riches*. Scripturally, it said, in part, on page 27: "Jesus was crucified, not on a cross of wood, such as is exhibited in many images and pictures, and which images are made and exhibited by men; Jesus was crucified by nailing his body to a tree."

### **"YE ARE MY WITNESSES, SAITH JEHOVAH"**

For the world a shock came on "Black Tuesday," October 29, 1929. The stock market had collapsed. In the *New York Times*, news of this appeared under the headline "Stock Prices Slump \$14,000,000,000 in Nation-Wide Stampede to Unload; Bankers to Support Market Today." So began the Great Depression that ran through the 1930's. Yet, during this time of grave economic distress, Jehovah furnished rich spiritual provisions for his people. And he also made them very much aware of the deep significance underlying the words, "Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and I am God."—[Isa. 43:12](#), AS.

Increasing emphasis was being placed on the divine name. For instance, consider the principal articles in the January 1st issues of *The Watch Tower* for several years. They were: "Who Will Honor Jehovah?" (1926) "Jehovah and His Works" (1927), "Honor His Name" (1928), "I Will Praise My God" (1929) and "Sing Unto Jehovah" (1930).

In exalting Jehovah's name, however, the convention of God's people at Columbus, Ohio, July 24-30, 1931, was a milestone. It was unique in that extension conventions were scheduled for 165 other places throughout the earth. But that was not the most important factor. There was something much more significant. It was linked with the enigmatic letters "JW" appearing on the printed assembly program and the title page of *The Messenger*, the convention newspaper—in fact, seen in many places. "When we got near the assembly grounds," remarks Burnice E. Williams, Sr., "we saw 'JW' all over the place. But not knowing what it stood for, we were all wondering, 'What is this JW for?'" Sister Herschel Nelson recalls:

“Speculations were made as to what JW stood for—Just Wait, Just Watch, and the correct one . . .”

The meaning of “JW” was revealed on Sunday, July 26, 1931, when thrilled conventioners heartily adopted a resolution presented by J. F. Rutherford and entitled “A New Name.” It said, in part:

“NOW, THEREFORE, in order that our true position may be made known, and believing that this is in harmony with the will of God, as expressed in his Word, BE IT RESOLVED, as follows, to wit:

“THAT we have great love for Brother Charles T. Russell, for his work’s sake, and that we gladly acknowledge that the Lord used him and greatly blessed his work, yet we cannot consistently with the Word of God consent to be called by the name ‘Russellites’; that the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society and the International Bible Students Association and the Peoples Pulpit Association are merely names of corporations which as a company of Christian people we hold, control and use to carry on our work in obedience to God’s commandments, yet none of these names properly attach to or apply to us as a body of Christians who follow in the footsteps of our Lord and Master, Christ Jesus; that we are students of the Bible, but, as a body of Christians forming an association, we decline to assume or be called by the name ‘Bible Students’ or similar names as a means of identification of our proper position before the Lord; we refuse to bear or to be called by the name of any man;

“THAT, having been bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ our Lord and Redeemer, justified and begotten by Jehovah God and called to his kingdom, we unhesitatingly declare our entire allegiance and devotion to Jehovah God and his kingdom; that we are servants of Jehovah God commissioned to do a work in his name, and, in obedience to his commandment, to deliver the testimony of Jesus Christ, and to make known to the people that Jehovah is the true and Almighty God; therefore we joyfully embrace and take the name which the mouth of the Lord God has named, and we desire to be known as and called by the name, to wit, *Jehovah’s witnesses*.”

It was obvious now. Those puzzling letters “JW” stood for *Jehovah’s Witnesses*. “I will never forget the tremendous shout and applause that vibrated through that

meeting place when the information was finally made known,” declares Arthur A. Worsley. Herbert H. Boehk adds: “All over the city of Columbus the signs in store windows—‘Welcome I.B.S.A.’—came down and they now read, ‘Welcome, Jehovah’s Witnesses.’”

It was a thrill to receive the name Jehovah’s witnesses. Not only was that resolution entitled “A New Name” joyously adopted by the thousands of Christ’s anointed followers assembled in Columbus. The individual congregations later adopted the same resolution. Jehovah’s witnesses had a name no one else in the world wanted. But God’s servants were deeply grateful for it.—[Isa. 43:12](#).

When he was eighty-eight years old A. H. Macmillan attended the “Fruitage of the Spirit” Assembly of Jehovah’s Witnesses in the same city. There, on August 1, 1964, Brother Macmillan made these interesting comments on how the adopting of that name came about:

“It was my privilege to be here in Columbus in 1931 when we received . . . the new title or name . . . I was amongst the five that were to make a comment on what we thought about the idea of accepting that name, and I told them this briefly: I thought that it was a splendid idea because that title there told the world what we were doing and what our business was. Prior to this we were called Bible Students. Why? Because that’s what we were. And then when other nations began to study with us, we were called International Bible Students. But now we are witnesses for Jehovah God, and that title there tells the public just what we are and what we’re doing. . . .

“In fact, it was God Almighty, I believe, that led to that, for Brother Rutherford told me himself that he woke up one night when he was preparing for that convention and he said, ‘What in the world did I suggest an international convention for when I have no special speech or message for them? Why bring them all here?’ And then he began to think about it, and [Isaiah 43](#) came to his mind. He got up at two o’clock in the morning and wrote in shorthand, at his own desk, an outline of the discourse he was going to give about the Kingdom, the hope of the world, and about the new name. And all that was uttered by him at that time was prepared that night, or that morning at two o’clock. And [there is] no doubt in my mind—not then nor now—that the Lord guided him in that, and that is the name Jehovah wants us to bear and we’re very happy and very glad to have it.”



## **“THE KINGDOM, THE HOPE OF THE WORLD”**

During the Columbus convention—on Sunday, July 26, 1931, at noon—J. F. Rutherford began his highly significant public discourse “The Kingdom, the Hope of the World.” Both the National Broadcasting Company and the Columbia Broadcasting System had denied the use of their radio facilities. However, Jehovah’s worshipers built up a radio chain to send the message from Columbus, and the American Telephone and Telegraph Company said, in a nutshell: “This particular network is the largest individual network that has ever been on the air.” The message went out over 163 radio stations in the United States, Canada, Cuba and Mexico.

Immediately after the radio-chain address “The Kingdom, the Hope of the World,” and as part of that broadcast, Brother Rutherford read a resolution styled “Warning from Jehovah—To the Rulers and to the People.” Among other things, it plainly declared: “*The hope of the world is God’s kingdom, and there is no other hope.*” It urged the people to take their stand on the side of God’s kingdom. When Brother Rutherford called upon his audience, seen and unseen, to adopt the resolution, the conventioners rose en masse and shouted “Aye.” Telegrams from all parts of the land showed that many of the radio audience likewise rose and endorsed the resolution.

Leaders of the world, including the clergy, were going to receive the information in Brother Rutherford’s convention address “The Kingdom, the Hope of the World,” and they would be in position to know the contents of the resolution “Warning from Jehovah.” Furthermore, they needed to be informed that God’s true servants had adopted the resolution entitled “A New Name” and would henceforth be known as “Jehovah’s witnesses.” Distribution of the booklet *The Kingdom, the Hope to the World* made all this possible. Besides calling on the general public, Jehovah’s witnesses visited clergymen, politicians, financiers and military men, distributing this publication. Within two and a half months, more than five million had been circulated and still work with the booklet was not nearly completed.

Reflecting on that booklet campaign, Fred Anderson writes: “I called upon the bishop at La Crosse. He invited me into his parlor very cordially. Then I told him why I had called. I presented the booklet to him. He looked at it and said nothing. I thanked him and took my leave. He became furious. As I passed through the

doorway he threw it at me. It fell on the floor. He picked it up and threw it again just as I closed the screen door. The door closed right on the booklet. I only hope that he read it, since he couldn't get rid of it." Sister C. E. Bartow tells us: "One minister, when he realized what I had given him, screamed at me and said: 'You little know-nothing! You come here to tell me, an eight-year theologian!' How happy I was to serve the true God!"

## **A BARTERING SYSTEM AT WORK**

During the 1930's great hardship was brought about by the Depression. Factories closed their doors. By 1932 over 10,000,000 residents of the United States were without employment. Farmers, city dwellers—the populace in general—felt the effects of the Great Depression.

Money was scarce, but honest-hearted ones needed the joyous message of Scriptural truth. If individuals were unable to contribute for Bible literature, Jehovah's witnesses often left it with them free. But this could not always be done. What was an alternative? Margaret M. Bridgett recalls: "We traded for produce such as eggs, butter, fresh and canned fruits, chickens, maple syrup; and I traded for needlework—quilt tops, cushion tops, tatting and homemade rugs. Sometimes I could trade some of these things for my room rent. . . . [Years later] I attended a Gilead [missionary school] graduation and a sister was there who had gotten a set of books from me by trading quilt tops. She got the truth and was then a pioneer [full-time preacher] and her son was interested."

Arden Pate and John C. Booth recall having small coops on the back of their cars so that they could carry the chickens they traded for literature placed with individuals lacking money. Of course, bartering publications for chickens was not always a simple matter. Lula Glover writes: "We covered lots of territory in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, North and South Carolina, and some in Tennessee and Mississippi. Can you visualize Sister Green and myself chasing chickens over those big farmyards?"

Trading literature for produce and other things was not done for selfish reasons. The people needed the good news and this was a way to receive it in printed form. "We always thanked Jehovah for sustaining us," says Maxwell L. Lewis, "and we *always* had what we needed in the way of food, shelter and clothing."

## DIVISIONAL CAMPAIGNS

This also was an era of considerable opposition to the Kingdom-preaching work. By 1928 Jehovah's people were witnessing from house to house on Sundays, and immediate opposition arose. As arrests rose in number during the 1930's, Jehovah's witnesses were charged falsely with such things as selling without a license, disturbing the peace and violating Sunday sabbath laws. The Watch Tower Society established a legal department to render counsel, and an "Order of Trial" was issued to help Kingdom proclaimers defend themselves in court. Adverse decisions were appealed.

But something else also was done. In 1933, 12,600 Witnesses in the United States volunteered to respond on short notice for house-to-house preaching on special missions in areas of civic opposition. They were organized into seventy-eight divisions, each division supplied with a number of cars, five workers to a car, and from 10 to 200 cars were sent to a trouble spot. When some Christians were arrested in the field service, this was reported to the Society. A call went out and on a Sunday soon thereafter all car groups in a division met at a prearranged rendezvous point, generally in the country, received instructions and territory assignments and then "besieged" the town like "locusts," giving the whole community a witness, sometimes within as little as thirty to sixty minutes. ([Rev. 9:7-9](#)) In the meantime, a committee of brothers called on the police and gave them a list of all the Witnesses preaching there that day. Any Kingdom publisher arrested during the campaign was to call a certain telephone number upon arrival at the police station. Attorneys were on hand with bail money to come to his rescue.

One campaign first got under way by sending ten cars of Witnesses to the territory, according to Burnice E. Williams, Sr., who continues: "After a little while those that went into the territory would be calling back saying they had been arrested. Then ten more cars were sent in until the jail was filled up. Then, after the jail was full, we would swarm in. You see, they wouldn't have any place to lock us up. . . . after they saw we were determined to work the territory, they would just give up so that we could go in and work it whenever we wanted. We would always win out."

Nicholas Kovalak, Jr., says that the Witnesses expected to be arrested. "When the

police would arrest us and take away our 'valuables,' every Witness would have a *toothbrush!*" he recalls. "The policeman would ask, 'Why does everyone have a toothbrush?' All of us would say, 'We expected to be arrested and put in jail, so we came prepared!' They would throw up their hands and say, 'What's the use?' They knew they couldn't intimidate the Witnesses or stop their preaching."

Though decades have passed since those campaigns in 1933 to 1935, they are recalled fondly by their participants of times gone by. "Indeed," says John Dulchinos, "those were thrilling years and their memories are precious. Jehovah's spirit made us fearless."

## **BATTLE OF THE AIR WAVES**

Despite mounting opposition, Jehovah's witnesses of the early 1930's boldly declared the Kingdom message from house to house. But the good news also found its way into millions of homes through the medium of radio, much to the consternation of the clergy. Internationally, the Watch Tower Society then was using 408 radio stations. In the spring of 1933, United States Catholics launched a nationwide campaign led by cardinals, bishops and priests. Its objective? To "drive Rutherford off the air."

Pope Pius XI proclaimed a "holy year" in 1933. On April 23, 1933, Brother Rutherford broadcast over fifty-five radio stations the historic lecture "Effect of Holy Year on Peace and Prosperity." In it the vain hopes set out for the people by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy were branded a counterfeit of the peace and security promised through God's kingdom. The same lecture was scheduled for rebroadcast over 158 stations on June 25, 1933. In preparation for that broadcast, five million leaflets were distributed from house to house. The Hierarchy's reaction was bitter and intense. Catholic intimidation increased, and some radio managers refused to carry any more Watch Tower programs.

In late 1933 and early 1934, Jehovah's people circulated a nationwide petition protesting these Catholic acts. Addressed to Congress, it finally bore 2,416,141 signatures. On October 4, 1934, J. F. Rutherford appeared before the Federal Communications Commission. He cited specific instances and statistics showing that Catholic pressure had seriously impaired the freedom of worship of Jehovah's witnesses and the use of the radio in public interests. Despite the facts, after

receiving the testimony, the Federal Communications Commission did little. Hence, Jehovah's servants circulated another petition throughout the United States. Also addressed to Congress, it was presented in January 1935 with 2,284,128 signatures. The second petition went unheeded. Subsequent developments ultimately led to the circulating of a third national petition. Its 2,630,000 signers protested actions of intimidation and boycott and requested a public debate between a high official of the Roman Catholic Church and Judge Rutherford. In working with this petition, Leonard U. Brown, Sr., says he "found many Catholics who said they would be happy to hear this debate." The petition was filed with the Federal Communications Commission on November 2, 1936, but it also went unheeded.

Though no Catholic official would debate with Rutherford, in 1937 the Society published the booklet entitled "Uncovered." It presented basic Bible doctrines, particularly in refutation of false Catholic teachings. While the householder followed along in the publication, a Witness would play on a portable phonograph Brother Rutherford's record series "Exposed." With the aid of the question booklet *Model Study No. 1*, a Bible study could be held. Regarding this, Melvin P. Sargent writes: "I was invited to bring this series into one man's home and he invited three other couples of his relatives in for the studies. It took several weeks to cover this and other subjects, such as 'Religion and Christianity.' Of the eight people attending, six made their dedication to Jehovah."

After October 31, 1937, Jehovah's people voluntarily withdrew from commercial broadcasting. On later occasions the Society's president delivered public lectures over a network of radio stations, and, of course, WBBR continued operating to God's glory. But from late 1937 onward into the 1940's, increased use was made of the portable phonograph and recordings of Bible talks to carry the Kingdom message to the homes of millions.

## WHO MAKE UP THE "GREAT MULTITUDE"?

That had been a burning question among Jehovah's people for years. Long had they viewed the "great multitude" ("great crowd," *NW*) as a secondary spiritual class who would be associated with the 144,000 anointed ones in heaven, like bridesmaids or "companions" of this Bride of Christ. ([Ps. 45:14, 15](#); [Rev. 7:4-15](#); [21:2, 9](#)) In addition to this, as early as 1923 the "sheep" of Jesus' parable of the

sheep and the goats were identified as a present-day earthly class who would survive Armageddon into God's promised new order. ([Matt. 25:31-46](#); [Rev. 16:14, 16](#)) The 1931 volume *Vindication* (Book One) identified the persons marked on the forehead for preservation ([Ezek. chap. 9](#)) as the "sheep" of Christ's parable. In 1932 it was concluded that this present-day class of "sheep" had been prefigured by Jehu's associate Jonadab. First in 1934 was it made clear that these "Jonadabs" with earthly hopes should "consecrate," or enter a dedicated relationship with Jehovah, and be baptized. But the identity of the "great multitude" referred to in [Revelation chapter 7](#) was still understood the same as previously held.

Uncertainties about the "great multitude" were removed when Brother Rutherford discussed that subject during the assembly of Jehovah's witnesses on May 30 to June 3, 1935, in Washington, D.C. In that discourse it was shown Scripturally that the "great multitude" was synonymous with the "other sheep" of the time of the end. Webster L. Roe recalls that at a climactic moment J. F. Rutherford asked: "Will all those who have the hope of living forever on the earth please stand?" According to Brother Roe, "over half of the audience stood," and the speaker then said: "BEHOLD! THE GREAT MULTITUDE!" "There was at first a hush," recalls Mildred H. Cobb, "then a gladsome cry and the cheering was loud and long."

Soon the convention was over, but it had started something—a search. "With enthusiasm running high and renewed spirituality, we went back to our territories to search for these sheeplike people who were yet to be gathered," says Sadie Carpenter.

After the 1935 convention, some who previously partook of the emblematic bread and wine at observances of the Lord's Evening Meal ceased partaking. Why? Not due to unfaithfulness, but because they now realized that their hopes were earthly, not heavenly. And whereas the Society's publications of former years had been designed primarily for Jesus' anointed followers, from 1935 onward *The Watchtower* and other Christian literature provided spiritual food to benefit both the anointed class and their companions having earthly prospects.

## LET TRUTH RING OUT!

During the 1930's Kingdom proclaimers used transcription machines in their



search for sheeplike ones. Henry Cantwell tells us this about them: "In 1933, as the Society began to expand the preaching work, arrangements were made to have recordings of lectures by Brother J. F. Rutherford presented in all parts of the country. To do this the Society produced what were called electrical transcription machines. These were large spring-wound phonographs with an electrical pick-up or tone arm and amplifier and loudspeaker that operated from batteries. . . . We had a variety of these recordings. Some were complete within themselves; others took two or four records to complete a lecture. So we had talks for 15 minutes, 30 minutes and one hour. In this way we were able to hold public meetings in the various territories we worked."

Explaining this work further, Julia Wilcox writes: "We would first locate a home, or at times a public building, an old barn or even a church, where we could put on an hour talk. Then most of the day would be spent going from house to house advertising the talk, arranging to go back and get those who had no transportation."

During one series of twelve transcription meetings, the same territory was covered three times with Bible literature and four times with announcements. Placards in store windows and signs for the Witnesses' cars also advertised the meetings. Fine results were attained, with many coming together in permanent studies and even joining in the preaching work.

"The Society used hundreds of these 33 1/3-rpm transcription records to broadcast the Kingdom message," according to Ralph H. Leffler, who also remarks: "Many were used by sound cars and trucks. . . . The words 'Kingdom Message' were seen on the side of many a horn and, of course, that was the theme. Up and down the streets and over the countryside the message was heard. . . . Sometimes on a quiet evening with the sound car stationed on the top of a hill overlooking a small city in the valley below the sound could be heard miles away."

Giving his recollections, Henry A. Cantwell states: "We would go into an area, play some musical recordings to attract attention, make a brief announcement through the microphone and then play one of the talks. Then we would announce that individuals would be calling at the doors to present further information to those who desired it." There were sound boats, too, and their operations were similar.

The sound service performed by Jehovah's witnesses was not without its opposers, however. For instance, Lennart Johnson writes:

"At one location in the 11th Street suburbs south of Rockford [Illinois] one person did not enjoy the sound-car work nor the Kingdom message. Overwhelmed with uncontrollable emotion, this woman drew up in her car beside the sound car and, as if to drown out the words of the speaker, kept her own loud car horn blasting wide open for three or four minutes. The only result was to run down her own battery, evidenced by her car horn getting weaker and weaker."

On the other hand, some sound-car experiences were on the humorous side. "At first some people got frightened," remarks Julia Wilcox, adding: "They might be out in the field at work, far away from the sound car, and they said it sounded like a voice coming out of the heavens talking about God. We even heard of some families leaving the farm work and going to their homes, thinking judgment day had come."

## **WIND UP THE PHONOGRAPH!**

For years the portable phonograph played an important part in Kingdom-preaching. In the development of this work the general convention of Jehovah's witnesses, September 15-20, 1937, at Columbus, Ohio, was significant. Elwood Lunstrum gives us this comment on that gathering:

"At this assembly the work using the portable phonograph on the doorstep was introduced. Formerly we had been carrying the phonograph with us in the service, but we had only played it when invited inside. . . .

"An organization of 'Special Pioneers' was outlined at the Columbus convention to spearhead the use of the doorstep setup with the phonograph and the follow-up work with interested persons (first then called 'back-calls') and Bible studies with an arrangement called 'model study.'"

Shortly after that assembly about 200 specially chosen pioneers throughout the United States were sent into the large cities where there already were congregations of God's people. Equipped with portable phonographs, these full-time publishers went to work. Soon Jehovah's witnesses in general became "phonograph-minded" and more than 20,000 of these machines had to be

manufactured at the Society's Brooklyn plant in just two years. Even then, demand exceeded supply as thousands of Kingdom proclaimers wound up the phonograph and let truth ring out for all to hear!

The phonographs used by Kingdom publishers themselves underwent change with the passing of time. About 1934 there was a strong, compact model, with a spring-wound motor and carrying space for several discs. With 6 discs, it weighed twenty-one pounds. The publishers got some exercise with that one. About two years later the Society had one of lighter weight. Then, at conventions in 1940, a new vertical-type phonograph was introduced. Designed and built by brothers at the Society's headquarters, the phonograph played in an upright position. It even had a cubbyhole for literature, and perhaps a little lunch. This model greatly facilitated the house-to-house preaching work.

Now imagine yourself in the field service as a Kingdom proclaimer some three decades ago. "When the householder opened the door, we would say, 'I have a message for you.' Down the needle went and Brother Rutherford's voice boomed out," recalls L. E. Reusch. "At the end of the message," remarks Angelo C. Manera, Jr., "the speaker would mention the book we were featuring and how much it cost. Then we would present the book and place it, if there was interest." "We were never rude," comments George L. McKee, "but we were sure that everyone needed to hear the good news of the Kingdom."

The phonograph work was not carried on without opposition. Ernest Jansma tells us: "There were cases of some having their phonographs literally and viciously smashed right before their eyes. Others had them ruthlessly thrown off porches. One brother in the Middle West stood by and watched an angry farmer blow his machine into oblivion with a shotgun, then heard pellets whine past his auto as he left the scene. They were vicious and religiously fanatical in those days." Amelia and Elizabeth Losch tell of an occasion when the recording "Enemies" was played for a crowd on the porch of a certain home. After the talk ended, one woman took the record off the machine and broke it, saying, "You can't talk about my pope like that!"

Despite opposition, the phonograph work went on. Gradually, use of this instrument in the field service dropped off in the 1940's. After 1944 this decade-long preaching campaign with the phonograph began to be replaced by oral

witnessing at the doors.

Among witnessing devices employed in past years was the testimony card, introduced late in 1933 and used well into the 1940's. John and Helen Groh explain: "Publishers of the good news were not so numerous as they are today and not so well trained. To assist us in our work and for better coverage of the territory, we used what was known as a testimony card. These were short printed sermons, which people were asked to read. Where people refused to read it, or became annoyed because of not having their glasses handy, we would relate to them the equivalent of what was on the card."

## **ANOTHER WAY TO ADVERTISE THE KINGDOM**

A significant work that brought Jehovah's people to public notice, while advertising the King and Kingdom, had its start at a convention in Newark, New Jersey, during 1936. Further development of it came at an assembly in London, England, in 1938. Years later, this work was given the dignity that it deserved by being called information marching. Thinking back to the Newark convention in 1936, Rosa May Dreyer remarks: "'Sandwich signs' or placards hung from one's shoulders, front and back, were used to advertise the main talk. [The publisher was "sandwiched" between the placards.] Handbills were also distributed."

During the 1938 London convention, at J. F. Rutherford's suggestion, some information marchers carried very thought-provoking signs mounted on sticks. In part, A. D. Schroeder (who then had oversight of the Society's branch office in England) tells us:

". . . The next night Brother Knorr and I led the first spectacular parade that came to be about six miles long, with nearly a thousand brothers marching through the central business section of London. Every other marcher would carry the 'Face the Facts' placard [advertising the public talk to be given at Royal Albert Hall], while the next would carry the sign 'RELIGION IS A SNARE AND A RACKET.' My, what a spectacle that was that night!

"The next morning Brother Rutherford called me to his office for a report as to what happened. I reported that we aroused much attention, that many called out after us, 'Communists.' So he thought for a few minutes, doodling again with his

pen. Another sheet was peeled off and given to me, reading: 'SERVE GOD AND CHRIST THE KING.' He asked me whether I thought putting such a slogan on a third sign might not neutralize that catcall reaction of the previous night. I said, 'Yes.' So, he instructed that this slogan be printed and used for the next parade two nights later. That we did, with fine results. Accordingly, in this way with the three signs alternated we conducted several remarkable parades before the dates of the assembly, September 9-11. Since the British government for years had denied us the use of the radio for our educational programs and announcements, this parade method proved most effective for notifying the public."

For Gladys Bolton, information marching was "the hardest work of all." She also says: "Each placard read differently, but the one that stands out in my mind is 'Religion is a Snare and a Racket!' My, how the clergy 'loved' that!" Concerning the sign "Religion is a Snare and a Racket," Ursula Serenco observes: "This was the time when we did not designate 'true religion' and 'false religion'; all religion in totality was bad. The *true* we referred to as 'worship,' while the *false* was 'religion.'"

At times there was open hostility to information marching. "In some towns like Pittston [Pennsylvania] we were not received hospitably," says John H. Sovyrda. "Many people would spit on us, call us all kinds of dirty names and say we were Communists. They would throw things at us, and some would actually strike us with their fists."

Why, then, did Jehovah's witnesses engage in information marches? "Mostly because we felt it important for the people to know the facts pertaining to false worship and the opposition it was showing toward our Christian work," remarks Charles C. Eberle. Angelo C. Manera, Jr., comments: "We looked at each new feature of service that would be outlined for us to do as another way to serve Jehovah, another way to prove our loyalty to him, as another test of our integrity, and we were anxious to prove ourselves willing to serve him in any way he asked."

Grant Suiter reminds us that, by *Watchtower* announcement, information marching was discontinued after October 1939, but he adds: "This unusual and successful means of directing the attention of many persons to the ministry of Jehovah's witnesses was unique in its time. Its termination, as well as its use, shows Jehovah's direction in the matter. At this late date [the 1970's], public demonstrations of all kinds are carried on, but we are not participating therein in

any way, nor can anything that we are doing be confused with such demonstrations.”

## **SPREADING “TRUE WISDOM” THROUGH MAGAZINES**

Kingdom publishers had excellent opportunities to help gather the “great crowd” and spread true wisdom by offering subscriptions for *The Watchtower* and *Consolation* in their house-to-house preaching. During the first *Consolation* subscription campaign, in April, May and June 1938, 73,006 new subscriptions were obtained in the United States. The first annual *Watchtower* subscription campaign took place from January through May of 1939, when Jehovah’s witnesses in the United States alone obtained over 93,000 new subscriptions.

But *The Watchtower* and *Consolation* were yet to come to public attention in a special way. “True wisdom” would virtually ‘cry aloud in the streets.’ ([Prov. 1:20](#)) How? Through magazine street work, which had its start in February 1940. In this activity, Jehovah’s servants took positions on busy street corners, wearing over their shoulders specially designed and lettered magazine bags that identified the two journals and indicated the suggested contribution—five cents a copy. Holding *Consolation* aloft, the Kingdom proclaimer might call out, “Publishes facts no other magazine dares to print.” Other slogans included “Exposes the religious racket” and “*The Watchtower* explains the Theocratic Government.” Magazine publishers were urged to be moderate in speech on the street, pursuing a dignified course. Needless to say, passersby were attracted and many responded favorably.

Would you like to know how the idea of magazine street work developed? S. E. Johnston recalls that in 1939 the Society wrote to all zone servants (predecessors of today’s circuit overseers) asking them to try different ways of getting *The Watchtower* and *Consolation* into the hands of the people. Brother Johnston thought about newsboys with bags over their shoulders. “Why not try something like that?” he reasoned. Dave and Emma Reusch agreed to make magazine bags and their daughter, Vera Coates, put colorful silkscreen inscriptions on them—“*Watchtower* on one side, *Consolation* on the other.” When Brother Johnston visited the little congregation in Concord, California, a group joined him in street witnessing. He writes: “The following week the Reusches made us more magazine bags, and this time we tried it on the business streets of Oakland. Some brothers were a little timid at first, but the street work caught on and we started



getting orders from other companies [congregations] for magazine bags. At this point, I made my report to the Society, sending them a sample bag . . . The Society wrote me, thanking me and all of us for the experiment, and saying that they would make announcement in the *Informant* soon. They did."

The Society made arrangements to provide magazine bags. Nicholas Kovalak, Jr., tells us: "The publishers of the Passaic, New Jersey, congregation had the privilege of making the magazine bags for the Society. We cut the cloth and sewed it into magazine bags. On Saturday and Sunday all who qualified and volunteered would assemble at Brother Frank Catanzaro's pants factory and have the privilege of sewing the magazine bags for our brothers throughout the country. . . . the Society would do the printing. So every time we saw a magazine bag, we felt we had had a little share in advertising Jehovah's kingdom."

What was it like to make one's first appearance on the street corner with *The Watchtower* and *Consolation* back in February 1940? Peter D'Mura answers: "How well I recall February 1, 1940! . . . How were we going to be received? What would be the reaction of our neighbors and townspeople? We were excited. We were going to do this for two hours. . . . Were we surprised! As we called out the proper slogans and approached people we had success. We each placed many magazines."

Recalling public reaction, Grace A. Estep states: "At first there was a kind of stunned surprise mingled with amusement and sometimes anger, and then a great deal of embarrassment as people scuttled from one side of the street to the other in an effort to dodge the neighbors to whom they didn't want to speak and yet were ashamed to ignore. After the first few weeks, however, they just gave up and were conveniently engrossed in conversation or window-shopping as they ran the gauntlet of street publishers."

At times mob violence erupted while Jehovah's servants engaged in magazine street work in those earlier days. For instance, H. S. Robbins recalls an angry mob that assaulted him and other Kingdom publishers while they were doing magazine street work in San Antonio, Texas, some years ago. As things turned out, the Witnesses were not injured, but they, not the mobsters, were arrested. Brother Robbins adds:

“When we were released we went back to the Kingdom Hall to reorganize and see what we would do next. . . . We reorganized and went right back.

“By the time we got back downtown there was an ‘extra’ newspaper out and the cry of the newsboys was: ‘Jehovah’s witnesses are run out of town,’ and here we were all over the streets again. . . . We were certainly not run out of town and were not about to go.”

## “ELECTIVE ELDERS”

In Scripture, God’s people are characterized as sheep having Jehovah as their heavenly Shepherd. (Ps. 28:8, 9; 80:1; Ezek. 34:11-16) In addition to his tender care, they enjoy the aid and direction of the Fine Shepherd, Jesus Christ, as well as the assistance of other shepherds within the Christian congregation. (Matt. 25:31-46; Luke 12:32; John 10:14-16; 1 Pet. 5:1-4) Among God’s people from the 1870’s down into 1932, men who had been voted into the office of elder congregationally supervised congregational Bible studies and lectures. Men who were voted into the office of deacon congregationally assisted them. According to C. W. Barber, elders “would lead in spiritual matters, conducting meetings, giving talks and taking the general oversight,” whereas deacons “would be used as ushers, taking care of the seating arrangements and helping out in material ways.”

The elders and deacons were elected congregationally each year by a showing of hands on the part of persons associated with each congregation. “As to voting,” explains Herbert H. Abbott, “then it was thought that at Acts 14:23 the Greek word rendered ‘ordained’ [*King James Version*; “appointed,” *New World Translation*] related to stretching forth the hand and meant to be a voter at those elections of class leaders. [See Acts 14:23, *Rotherham*.] We did not then know that it came to be used in the sense of appoint or designate by the apostles or governing body.”

“What determined the spiritual caliber of those selected for congregational oversight?” asks Henry A. Rheb. In part, he answers: “Well, for one thing, no novice was selected, and that certainly was Scriptural. Prior to the business meeting, the qualifications for office were read from 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9.” “When the list of nominees was completed,” says Edith R. Brenisen, “we were earnestly admonished to consider carefully and prayerfully the qualifications and capabilities of each one nominated, according to the Bible, asking for the

guidance of the holy spirit in making our decisions. . . . we met again at the appointed time to elect those who had been nominated.”

In some places, problems arose in electing elders. “Electioneering and rivalry” are remembered by Sister Avery Bristow, who says: “This caused division and factions among the brothers and sisters in some congregations and some would not even speak to others of another group.” James Rettos remarks: “Some would even become very angry if they were not voted in.”

Problems sometimes arose in connection with field service. Ursula C. Serenco writes: “All went along well until the announcement came of *all* taking part in house-to-house witnessing with literature and particularly the Sunday house-to-house work—this in 1927. Our elective elders opposed and tried to discourage the whole class from taking up or engaging in any part of such work. The class began to take sides and division began to manifest itself.” The attitude of some of the elders toward the house-to-house preaching work was of vital concern. So a specific point might be made of that in the yearly voting. For instance, according to H. Robert Dawson, back in 1929 candidates for elder and deacon in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, had to answer this question: “Are you willing to participate in service work?”

Certain elders had a feeling of superiority and wanted only to give talks, according to Sister J. M. Norris. She adds: “Others were critical of the articles in *The Watchtower*, not wanting to accept it as still God’s channel of truth, always trying to influence others in their way of thinking.”

It should never be concluded, however, that all elected elders had the wrong attitude or spirit. Many faithfully discharged their responsibilities as Christian shepherds of God’s people. (1 Pet. 5:1-4) “Only a few were always throwing stumbling blocks in the way of the preaching work,” says James A. Barton. According to Roy E. Hendrix, “many of them were truly dedicated Bible Students, really witnesses of Jehovah.” Clarence S. Huzzey observes: “Many of these elders were fine mature Christian brothers concerned with the welfare of the congregation.” Jehovah was shepherding his people, and he was pleased to use such men for the benefit of his dedicated worshipers.

“Elective elders” supervised congregational activities for many years. With the

coming of 1932, however, a 'temporary change took place. Older members of the Brooklyn Bethel family still recall the meeting held on Wednesday evening, October 5, 1932, at Apollo Hall in Brooklyn. Some 300 members of the New York congregation then passed a resolution ending the electing of elders in New York city. (See *The Watchtower* of September 1, 1932, pages 265 and 266, as well as the issue of October 15, 1932, page 319.) Nearly all other congregations promptly stopped electing elders, passing similar resolutions. Thus the year 1932 witnessed the replacement of "elective elders" with a group of mature Christian men called a "service committee," elected by the congregation to assist the local service director who had been appointed by the Watch Tower Society.

Instituting the new arrangement in 1932 led to some problems, and certain individuals left the organization. However, the vast majority of the congregations and those associated with them accepted the organizational adjustment gratefully.

## **OTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

For many years only brothers who were anointed followers of Jesus Christ filled positions of responsibility in the Christian congregation. But in 1937 there was a change. Writes Grant Suiter: "Organizationally we were assisted by the counsel of *The Watchtower* of May 1, 1937, to the effect that those who were of the Jonadab class [having earthly prospects] might be appointed to positions of service in the congregations. . . . The August 15 issue of *The Watchtower* pointed out that Jonadabs could serve on service committees and in other similar capacities in the companies [congregations]." According to *The Watchtower*, "Jonadabs" could become "company servants," or presiding overseers, if qualified members of the anointed remnant were not available to serve. "We see how Jehovah was paving the way in preparation for the great increase that was yet to come in," said Norman Larson, adding: "It certainly opened new horizons for those, like myself, who were of the earthly class."

In 1938 there was another significant organizational development. The *Watchtower* articles "Unity in Action" (May 15) and "Organization" (June 1 and 15) showed that authority to appoint overseers and their assistants did not rest with individual congregations. It was suggested that congregations throughout the world consider a resolution presented in *The Watchtower*, requesting that "The Society"

organize the congregation for service and “appoint the various servants thereof,” that is, all those who would fill the positions of responsibility locally. (See *The Watchtower* for 1938, pages 169, 182, 183.) Most congregations adopted this resolution, and the few that did not soon lost their spiritual vision and the privileges they had in connection with Kingdom service.

## THE “KINGDOM HALL”

Jehovah, the heavenly Shepherd, makes rich spiritual provisions for his people. A great part in feeding them is played by Christian meetings. ([Heb. 10:24, 25](#)) Often God's modern-day servants have met in private homes and rented public buildings. But the heavenly kingdom was born in 1914 C.E. So, in time God's people began calling their principal meeting places the “Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.”

According to Domenico Finelli, the first Kingdom Hall was built at Roseto, Pennsylvania, in 1927, and he says that it “was inaugurated with a public talk by Brother Giovanni DeCecca.” However, the general use of the name “Kingdom Hall” came into vogue from 1935 onward. During that year, the Watch Tower Society's president, J. F. Rutherford, visited the Hawaiian Islands and initiated the establishment of a branch office in Honolulu. Arrangements were made for an assembly hall in connection with the branch building. This auditorium was designated “Kingdom Hall.”

From 1935 onward, Jehovah's witnesses in various places have rented buildings, fitted them for assembly and used them as Kingdom Halls. Often congregations have purchased property, renovated buildings or erected new structures to serve as places to meet for Bible study and worship of God. W. L. Pelle fittingly remarked not long ago:

“The Kingdom Halls are attractive on the outside, cozy and practical on the inside. Besides, since they are attractive in appearance, they give a silent witness as well as make persons of new interest feel ‘at home’ when they enter. By far the greater amount of labor in building has been contributed by our own brothers and those deeply interested. We have not had to resort to ‘building and loan’ organizations (of the Devil's world). The capital and assets remain within the use of Jehovah's people. The same was true with respect to the Israelites’ ‘tent in the wilderness’

many years ago. [Acts 7:44] I was asked not long ago, 'Why do you people call your building a "Kingdom Hall"?' I replied that the very first meaning given in my dictionary is: 'Hall: an edifice devoted to public business.' Our Kingdom Halls are devoted exclusively to the business of the Almighty God and his kingdom. So, there could not be a more appropriate name."

## **ZONE SERVICE STRENGTHENS JEHOVAH'S PEOPLE**

As increasing numbers of the "great crowd" streamed into Kingdom Halls back in the 1930's, an activity began that was designed to strengthen the congregations of God's people. (Rev. 7:9) It was the zone work, counterpart of circuit work today. About twenty congregations in a particular area of the country formed one zone. The Society appointed a zone servant to visit each congregation and generally spend one week with it. His purpose was to strengthen the congregation organizationally and also to aid it in the preaching work. From time to time, the congregations in a zone gathered for a zone assembly, there to receive Biblical instruction and spiritual aid. Special servants were sent out from the Society's headquarters to serve at these assemblies. The zone work got under way as of October 1, 1938, and continued through November of 1941.

Edgar C. Kennedy shows how Christians responded to the zone work, saying: "Their spirit was strong and their appreciation for our visits was lovingly expressed. All of the companies [congregations] were small, but you could see a stirring among them. Because of their willing acceptance of the theocratic instructions, their love for the truth, their response to group service and their work with the model studies, signs of growth were beginning to appear. Several new companies began to be formed."

## **"SALVATION BELONGS TO JEHOVAH"**

A strong Christian organization certainly was needed in those days because Jehovah's witnesses were the objects of intense persecution. Much of this had its start in 1935. How so? Well, at the Washington, D.C., convention, on Monday, June 3, Brother Rutherford responded to a query on the flag salute by children in school. He told the convention audience that to salute an earthly emblem, ascribing salvation to it, was unfaithfulness to God. Rutherford said that he would not do it.



H. L. Philbrick remarked that Rutherford's answer "must have been heard by some young people, for when the schools opened that fall suddenly headlines appeared in the Boston newspapers about a young boy in Lynn, Massachusetts, who refused to salute the flag in school at the beginning of the school term. His name was Carleton Nichols. A young girl, Barbara Meredith, took the same stand at her school in Sudbury, Massachusetts, the same day." But her situation did not reach the press, as she had a teacher who was tolerant and did not make an issue out of it.

It was on September 20, 1935, that young Carleton B. Nichols, Jr., declined to salute the flag. The incident was publicized throughout the country. As president of the Watch Tower Society, J. F. Rutherford was approached by the Associated Press and asked for an official statement regarding the view of Jehovah's witnesses on this matter. The statement was furnished, but the press declined to publish it. So, during a nationwide radio broadcast on October 6, 1935, Rutherford spoke on the subject "Saluting a Flag." This discourse was published in the 32-page booklet *Loyalty*, distributed by the millions. In this reply to the press, Rutherford showed that while Jehovah's witnesses respect the flag, their Biblical obligations and relationship to God strictly forbid them to salute any image. To Jehovah's servants this would be an act of worship contrary to the principles set forth in the Ten Commandments. (Ex. 20:4-6) The reply also showed that Christian parents primarily are responsible for teaching their children and that the children must be taught the truth according to their parents' understanding and appreciation of the Holy Scriptures.

While many school officials and teachers were broad minded, others acted arbitrarily and expelled children of Jehovah's witnesses from school for refusal to salute the flag. For instance, on November 6, 1935, two Witness children were expelled for this reason from a public school at Minersville, Pennsylvania. Their father, Walter Gobitis, instituted a suit against the board of education, Minersville School District. The suit was begun in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and was decided in favor of Jehovah's witnesses. When this decision was contested, the Witnesses also won a favorable decision in the Circuit Court of Appeals. But the case next went to the Supreme Court of the United States. There, in June 1940, by a decision of eight to one, the Court reversed the favorable judgment, with disastrous consequences.

In one place after another Christians were persecuted because of their Biblical position on flag saluting. For instance, a mob joined by some policemen attacked Jehovah's witnesses during a Bible meeting in Rockville, Maryland, on June 20, 1940. Having gained entrance to the Kingdom Hall, the mob leader held up a flag and said, "I will give you people two minutes American time to salute this flag or there will be bloodshed here." Sotir K. Vassil reports: "There was silence for about a minute, when all of a sudden one man who had come to the meeting for the first time became very frightened, jumped up, saluted the flag and went out . . . No one else saluted the flag. When the two minutes were up, the leader knocked everything out of my hands and gave orders to the mob to 'break up everything,' chairs, and so forth, and articles began to fly. The two policemen with their pistols on their hips were inside with them and I went over to them and asked if they couldn't do something. They did not even open their mouths or begin to take any action to stop the mob." The situation became worse. "They began acting like a pack of demons," says Brother Vassil, "pushing and shoving us out of the hall. They kept crying out: 'Kill them! Kill them! They are Nazis.' Some of the children in the hall began to cry and some in the mob called out to 'throw those brats out of the window.' They literally booted us out of the building and into the street and were now yelling: 'Run them out of town! Run them out of town!'"

Later, having escaped the mob, Brother Vassil contacted the zone servant, Charles Eberle, who immediately reported the incident to the Attorney General of the United States. The Federal Bureau of Investigation began looking into the matter the next day. Eventually, there was a court case, and Brother Vassil tells us: "After the trial, which was decided in our favor and to Jehovah's glory, Rockville Township placed a policeman to guard our Kingdom Hall each time we held a meeting so that another such incident could not occur. This time Satan's instrument to destroy our newly formed congregation and Kingdom Hall had failed.—[Isa. 54:17](#)."

This account is merely an example. There were many other incidents. For instance, in Connersville, Indiana, a lawyer of the Witnesses was beaten and driven from town. God's servants were enduring such violent persecution because they were adhering strictly to the Holy Scriptures and courageously maintained that their salvation and deliverance from foes and perils comes, not from any nation, but from God. Indeed, "salvation belongs to Jehovah."—[Ps. 3:8](#); compare *American Standard Version*.

## KINGDOM SCHOOLS

Compulsory flag salute in schools resulted in the expulsion of many students who were Jehovah's witnesses. However, the Watchtower Society aided true Christians to provide education for their children. As early as 1935 this was done by opening private "Kingdom Schools." At these, qualified teachers from among Jehovah's witnesses devoted their time and energy, instructing Witness children who had been expelled from public schools. God's people organized and financed these private schools in various places.

One of the Kingdom Schools was located in Lakewood, New Jersey. According to a former student there, C. W. Erlenmeyer, the Lakewood congregation's Kingdom Hall was on the first floor, as well as the school classroom, a kitchen and the dining area. Bedrooms for the girls were on the second floor, and those of the boys on the third. "Of course," says Brother Erlenmeyer, "most of us boarded right there and only went home on weekends, at the most. Those who lived farther away went home every second weekend, and the last year of school, because of wartime gas rationing, we went home every third weekend."

With plenty of work to be done, a cook and a housekeeper were on hand. But the children had their assignments too—helping in the kitchen, washing and drying dishes, taking out the garbage, and so forth. There was a discussion of the daily Bible text at the breakfast table, and every school day began with a half-hour Bible study. So the children were fed spiritually. Furthermore, they had opportunities to use what they learned, in the field service on Saturdays and Sundays.

Another Kingdom School was established at Gates, Pennsylvania. Instructing there was Grace A. Estep, a public school teacher who had been dismissed because she would not conduct the pledge of allegiance and flag salute in her classroom. Sister Estep recalls the school's first year as a "tumultuous one," with every sort of "official" trying to find some reason to close it. She also states: "The schoolroom was often invaded by some official, school or otherwise, for the purpose of finding fault or adding further harassment. Additionally, patriotic fervor was not missing among many of the populace. A crowd gathered at one time with the purpose of bombing or burning the school, angrily remonstrating with the owner for having rented to us. But since the owner was a leading citizen of the town, and since they couldn't figure out how to bomb the school without bombing the barber shop [in

the same building], they gave up the idea.” Eventually, the student body increased, calling for kindergarten, eight grades of elementary school and four of high school.

How did Kingdom School students fare as far as their education was concerned? Lloyd Owen, who taught at the one in Saugus, Massachusetts, reports: “We used to give the achievement test to see how well we had been doing. Most of the time the students rated one half to a whole grade better than the grade they were supposed to be in. . . . We tested the students at least twice a year, and they persisted in having this very high rating.”

A fine spirit prevailed among those involved with Kingdom Schools. “The friends were so very wonderful, always offering help in so many ways,” says Sister Estep. “It was all a sort of community thing, the ‘community’ being everyone involved in any way with the Kingdom Schools. My heart swells with love and appreciation when I review all the marvelous things the dear friends did in those days, their love for Jehovah knowing no bounds. And though there was little money, they supplied the needed things to the limit of their time and strength.”

## **SUPREME COURT REVERSES ITSELF**

On June 8, 1942, by a vote of five to four, the United States Supreme Court ruled against Jehovah’s witnesses in the license tax case *Jones v. Opelika*. Interestingly, however, besides their dissenting opinion, Justices Black, Douglas and Murphy recanted their votes in the 1940 *Gobitis* flag salute case. With that the Watchtower Society’s lawyer filed an injunction suit in the United States District Court for the Southern District of West Virginia against the West Virginia State Board of Education. Why? To restrain the enforcement of the compulsory flag salute statute. A three-judge court unanimously decided in favor of Jehovah’s witnesses, but the West Virginia State Board of Education appealed. On Flag Day, June 14, 1943, the Supreme Court of the United States reversed its position in the *Gobitis* case by holding (in *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*) that the school board did not have the right to expel from school and thus deny education to children of Jehovah’s witnesses who would not salute the flag.

That decision reversed the holding of the Supreme Court in the *Gobitis* case. Though this did not end all problems associated with the Christian stand

regarding the flag salute, Kingdom Schools no longer were necessary. Hence, for the first time in about eight years children of Jehovah's witnesses could return to the public schools.

## **'DEFENDING AND LEGALLY ESTABLISHING THE GOOD NEWS'**

Jehovah's Christian witnesses, whether young or old, expect to be persecuted. After all, Jesus told his disciples: "You will be objects of hatred by all people on account of my name." ([Matt. 10:22](#)) "In fact," wrote Paul, "all those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted." ([2 Tim. 3:12](#)) At times persecution has led to arrests of Christians on false charges—perhaps selling without a license or disturbing the peace. Statistics were not kept at first, but, in 1933, there were 268 arrests reported throughout the United States. By 1936 the number had risen to 1,149. Improperly, Jehovah's witnesses were classed as solicitors or itinerant merchants, rather than as proclaimers of the gospel.

Jehovah's witnesses did not suffer arrest, trial and imprisonment without a fight, however. They adopted a policy of appealing adverse decisions rendered in the courts. With Jehovah's aid they were able to 'defend and legally establish the good news.'—[Phil. 1:7](#).

It would be impossible, in but a few pages, to restage the thrilling drama, to recreate the many scenes of valiant theocratic warfare as Jehovah's servants fought for liberty to preach. But we do well to begin with the raging "battle of New Jersey." The 'opening gun' was fired in 1928, when some of God's servants were arrested in South Amboy, New Jersey. But Plainfield became the center of the Catholic battlefield against the Witnesses in that state.

## **THE PLAINFIELD INCIDENT**

In view of Plainfield's prominence in connection with the persecution of Jehovah's people, J. F. Rutherford decided to hold a public meeting there on the subject "Why is Religious Intolerance Practiced in This Country Today?" For this special program on July 30, 1933, some fifty uninvited, unwanted and unneeded policemen moved in, supposedly to guard the theater. Doubtless they were there at the instance of the Catholic hierarchy, which was looking for a way to prevent the meeting and

perhaps do away with the speaker.

Arriving at the theater, Brother Rutherford notes that behind the drapes the police have two machine guns, trained on him and the audience. He protests, but this does not budge the policemen or their weapons. They say they have been 'tipped off' that there is going to be a riot and they are present to maintain order. George Gangas says that during the entire talk the atmosphere was tense. Especially was he stirred by these statements, near the conclusion of Rutherford's talk:

"But shame upon the priests and clergymen who have connived at and caused the persecution of Jehovah's witnesses in order that they might keep the people in ignorance of the truth and thus shield themselves from exposure; shame upon those public officers who have been ready and willing to class Jehovah's witnesses as selfish peddlers and hawkers in order that they might serve their own selfish ends; shame upon the lawyers who practice upon the bench and before the bar, who because of fear of losing some personal advantage have side-stepped the issue and failed and refused to decide squarely the question as to whether or not men can be prevented from preaching the gospel of God's kingdom by the enactment and enforcement of municipal ordinances leveled against peddlers and hawkers."

Brother Gangas admits: "I was saying to myself: 'Now they will shoot him! Now they will arrest him!' But, as it is stated in the introduction of the booklet *Intolerance*, 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.'" (Ps. 34:7) Despite the trying situation, Brother Rutherford's discourse was delivered without incident. It was received enthusiastically. So was the booklet *Intolerance*, published later and distributed widely.

## A DICTATOR HEARS FROM THE WITNESSES

Not only in the United States were Jehovah's witnesses having a battle for freedom of speech and worship. In June of the so-called "Holy Year" of 1933 Adolf Hitler's regime seized the Watch Tower Society's property in Magdeburg and banned the activities of Jehovah's people in Germany as regards meetings and literature distribution, though the property was returned that October. On October 7, 1934, the Witnesses in Germany met in groups and, after solemn prayer, they dispatched a protest by telegram to officials of Hitler's government. However,



God's servants in other lands did not stand by idly.

"At the service meeting one night in the year of 1934, we were asked to be at the meeting place at 9:00 a.m. Sunday for something special," recalls Gladys Bolton. "Everyone was excited! What could it be? Sunday morning the house was full. The speaker announced that congregations of Jehovah's witnesses world wide were meeting today in order to send cablegrams to Hitler, all at the same time, asking him to refrain from persecuting Jehovah's witnesses in Germany." After praying to Jehovah, each group sent the following cablegram: "Hitler Government, Berlin, Germany. Your ill-treatment of Jehovah's witnesses shocks all good people of earth and dishonors God's name. Refrain from further persecuting Jehovah's witnesses; otherwise God will destroy you and your national party." The message was signed "JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES" and the city or town where the congregation was assembled was cited.

Those cablegrams caused quite a stir, even at some telegraph offices in the United States. "In Keysville, Virginia, as well as other places, says Melvin Winchester, "the telegraph operator almost fainted when the friends came in with the cable message."

How did the Nazi regime respond? Persecution of Jehovah's witnesses was intensified. But God's people in Germany and elsewhere had been prepared for the opposition and hardships ahead of them. At the right time, Jehovah saw to it that they received needed Scriptural counsel and encouragement. It had come late in the year 1933 by means of the *Watchtower* article "Fear Them Not." The enmity of the Roman Catholic Church was exposed, and the article warned that opposition might lead to the death of some faithful servants of God. But it urged God's people to continue bearing testimony to his name with boldness and joy, that they might have a part in the vindication of that holy name.

## **AIDS IN THEIR DEFENSE**

For Christians those were faith-testing times. Of course, not every incident of overt opposition, or even every arrest, led to a court trial. But many times Jehovah's servants did find themselves in need of aid so that they might make a successful defense in the courts of the United States. To help Kingdom proclaimers, the Watchtower Society established a legal department at its headquarters in

Brooklyn, New York.

Looking back, Robert E. Morgan recalls: "At our weekly service meetings we studied *Order of Trial* prepared by the Society, and endeavored to equip ourselves to deal with the police and judges who were constantly harassing us in the field service. Our service meetings would teach us how to respond when accosted by the police, what our rights as citizens were, and what procedures we must not fail to follow in order to establish a sound basis for legal action in defense of the good news in the event convictions would require our going to the appellate courts."

"Demonstrations in service meetings enacted procedure from time of arrest to the conclusion of trial and disposition of the case," recalls Ray C. Bopp, adding: "Servants in the congregation would act as prosecution and defense attorneys, and some 'trials' would last for weeks."

## **ARRESTED AND OFF TO JAIL**

Legal aids provided by the Society and fine training at service meetings helped God's servants greatly. But for the rigors of life behind bars only Jehovah himself could strengthen his people. As Paul said, "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me."—[Phil. 4:13](#).

Jehovah's Christian witnesses by the hundreds were arrested and jailed during the turbulent years of the 1930's and 1940's. Homer L. Rogers says this regarding legal problems encountered by Jehovah's people in one area: "The city of La Grange [Georgia] had framed an ordinance that forbade anyone calling at a home in La Grange to offer the householder any piece of printed matter. This was aimed at Jehovah's witnesses and was only enforced against Jehovah's witnesses." How could he be sure of this? The city's residents testified that all other printed matter was distributed freely in La Grange without hindrance from the authorities.

On May 17, 1936, 176 Witnesses were arrested for preaching in La Grange and were jailed. The next day the women were released, but 76 men were detained for fourteen days in the Troup County Prison and Stockade, four miles outside the city. The regular inmates there were chain-gang prisoners, who actually were shackled while working on roads from sunup to sundown. When the Witnesses were tried, they were pronounced guilty and fined one dollar each or thirty days in

jail, according to C. E. Sillaway. Because the city attorney ordered the city clerk not to sign the bond on appeal by certiorari, the brothers lost their appeal rights and 57 returned to complete the thirty-day sentence in the stockade on May 28, 1937. Despite their innocence, these Witnesses now wore prison garb, two persons had to share one blanket during the cold nights, and they did hard labor on streets and elsewhere.

Many were the sufferings of these imprisoned ones. Yet, they also had opportunity to do good spiritually. Brother C. E. Sillaway writes: "Near the end of our thirty days my group and another, twelve in all, were assigned a colored cemetery, almost rural for isolation. Near midmorning a funeral procession came in the main gate and stopped while the undertaker approached us. It seemed that this family was too poor to pay the preacher his going fee for a funeral and they had had no sermon or prayer. Would one of us ministers say a few words? It was a privilege to tell the handful of people the true condition of the dead and the hope of a resurrection. They didn't mind the jail clothes."

Theresa Drake says that her first taste of intolerance against God's people was in the early 1930's when she was first arrested in Bergenfield, New Jersey. She continues: "I was first fingerprinted in Plainfield, New Jersey. It was in Plainfield where I was held overnight with 28 other sisters. We were held in a small cell and, with 29 of us there, this made it impossible to lie down to sleep. Finally, they took us to the gym in the same building and there they had mats for us to lie on. I remember one policeman opening the door and looking in at us and saying, 'Like sheep led to the slaughter.'"

Citing another case, Sister Drake writes: "In Perth Amboy we were arrested and held from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. It was at this time that I met Brother Rutherford. He came to bail out 150 of us that were arrested. We were held in one big room at the courthouse. Outside, the people were taking our books and literature from our cars and throwing them all over the courthouse lawn. There were a half-dozen men that were in the rear of the courtroom that were waiting to get Brother Rutherford. They threatened him, but they never got the chance, for as we left the courthouse he was surrounded by us and then went quickly to a waiting car, not his usual one."

Of Ohio and West Virginia towns, Edna Bauer says: "Many of the friends would be

arrested and taken to jail on fire trucks with sirens blowing, loudly calling attention to arrests being made.” Often many would be jailed at once, and no consideration might be shown for age. For instance, Sister James W. Bennecoff recalls an incident in Columbia, South Carolina, “when 200 of us were put in jail, the youngest being six weeks old.”

Conditions in jail could be quite distressing. Earl R. Dale remembers his unjust confinement as a Christian at Somersworth, New Hampshire, and writes: “I slept that night, or tried to. The prison was not too clean. At night there were some little creatures crawling over us and I did not like them, but they liked me.” For preaching the good news at Caruthersville, Missouri, in 1941, Brother and Sister R. J. Adair were jailed for seventy-eight days. Sister Adair describes the place of her confinement as a “dungeon.” Sister Adair’s health was impaired during that incarceration. “It was not a pleasant thing to sleep on a concrete floor with a blanket and pillow for seventy-eight days,” she admits. “But to stay faithful to Jehovah was the important thing.”

Though Jehovah’s witnesses in the United States were jailed often for preaching the Kingdom message, that did not still their lips. As prisoners they kept right on declaring the good news. For example, Dora Wadams had various opportunities to preach while in jail. Once, when news of the Witnesses’ release circulated in a Newark, New Jersey, jail, this is her recollection of what happened: “One night when we were locked in our cells we heard prisoners around us saying: ‘The Bible people are going to leave us tomorrow. This place will never be the same. They are just like angels sent to us.’”

## THEIR DAY IN COURT

Jehovah’s servants were ready to defend themselves and their God-given work if their arrests led to court trials. Sometimes they were not even represented by lawyers. For instance, back in 1938 Roland E. Collier, associated with the Orange, Massachusetts, congregation, obtained a permit to use a sound car in nearby Athol. He and another brother were in the sound car playing the record “Enemies” while other Kingdom publishers were preaching from door to door. Brother Collier was arrested and charged with going from house to house, although he had not done so on that occasion. He tells us: “With interest we waited and prepared for the trial. I studied carefully the *Order of Trial* published by the Society for

preparation for court trials. The day of the trial some brothers came into the courtroom to give me courage. I followed the proper court procedure outlined by the Society, even to the point of cross-examining the chief of police. When all the evidence was in after a complete court trial I was found not guilty and the newspaper carried a headline reading 'ORANGE MAN PREACHES WAY OUT OF JAIL.'"

Some lawyers who were not Jehovah's witnesses worked hard to defend God's people. Often, however, Witness lawyers represented their fellow believers in court. Among them was Victor Schmidt. His wife Mildred says, in part: "After the adverse decision by the United States Supreme Court in the flag case, there was what seemed like an avalanche of mobs and arrests that descended upon our brothers in so many places outside Cincinnati [Ohio]. It became necessary for me to drive my husband to these various places, as he did not drive. For a while there was a different place to go to almost daily. Therefore, I had to give up working with the pioneers. . . . Victor had great faith in Jehovah and this strengthened me to have like faith. As we would near these towns where he was to represent our brothers in court, he would have me pull off the road and he would pray to Jehovah to open the way for him to bring some help to our brothers, and also, if it was Jehovah's will, to kindly give us protection and to help us never to yield to the fear of men. Many are the times that we saw the evidence of the mighty power of Jehovah's angelic forces working in our behalf."

## ON TO UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT

Various legal cases involving Jehovah's witnesses eventually reached the Supreme Court of the United States. One of these was *Lovell v. City of Griffin*. Though God's people often had been arrested for preaching the good news in Griffin, Georgia, on one occasion a number of them were placed under arrest for alleged violation of a city ordinance that forbade "the practice of distributing . . . literature of any kind, . . . without first obtaining written permission from the City Manager of the City of Griffin." Brother G. E. Fiske comments: "There were several brothers over six feet tall and the officials asked if they would be willing to let them pick one to represent the group, and our overseers were willing. So they picked a small, slim sister because they thought she would be easy prey. But she [Alma Lovell] had studied the *Order of Trial* . . . Not one of the men had prepared as this little sister

had, and when the case came up for trial, she spoke to the court for over an hour, giving a wonderful witness. However, the judge was not even interested and he had his feet up on the desk. When she sat down, the judge took his feet down and said, 'Are you through?' She said, 'Yes, Your Honor.' Then he pronounced them all guilty. The Society's lawyer immediately appealed the case." On March 28, 1938, the Supreme Court unanimously held that the ordinance in question was invalid on its face.

While engaging in the Kingdom-preaching work on April 26, 1938, Christian witness Newton Cantwell was arrested with his two minor sons while playing the phonograph record "Enemies" and distributing the book of the same name. The case was carried into Connecticut courts on the complaint of two Roman Catholics. Involved were an alleged breach of the peace and also supposed violation of a Connecticut statute prohibiting the solicitation of donations to charities or a religious cause without approval of the secretary of the state's public welfare council. Convictions followed in Connecticut courts, and R. D. Cantwell writes: "The case was appealed by the Society and went to the United States Supreme Court . . . the conviction was reversed and the Connecticut statute requiring a permit to offer religious literature for sale, or accepting donations for a religious cause, was found to be unconstitutional as applied to Jehovah's witnesses. Another victory for Jehovah's people!"

But Jehovah's witnesses lost an important case in the United States Supreme Court by a five-to-four decision on June 8, 1942. It was *Jones v. City of Opelika*. This case involved magazine street work and raised the question of whether Rosco Jones was properly found guilty of violating an Opelika, Alabama, ordinance for "selling books" without having obtained a license and paying the required tax.

## **A "FIELD DAY" FOR GOD'S PEOPLE**

Then came May 3, 1943. It could well be called a "field day" for Jehovah's witnesses. Why? Because twelve out of thirteen cases were then decided in their favor. Outstanding was *Murdock v. Pennsylvania*, a license tax case. This decision of the United States Supreme Court reversed its own position in the case of *Jones v. City of Opelika*. In the *Murdock* decision the Court held: "It is contended, however, that the fact that the license tax can suppress or control this activity is unimportant if it does not do so. But that is to disregard the nature of this tax. It is



a license tax—a flat tax imposed on the exercise of a privilege granted by the Bill of Rights. A state may not impose a charge for the enjoyment of a right granted by the federal constitution.” Concerning the *Jones* case, it was said: “The judgment in *Jones v. Opelika* has this day been vacated. Freed from that controlling precedent, we can restore to their high, constitutional position the liberties of itinerant evangelists who disseminate their religious beliefs and the tenets of their faith through distribution of literature.” The favorable *Murdock* decision did away with the flood in regard to license tax cases involving Jehovah’s people.

Their efforts have had an effect on the law. Fittingly, it has been said: “It is plain that present constitutional guaranties of personal liberty, as authoritatively interpreted by the United States Supreme Court, are far broader than they were before the spring of 1938; and that most of this enlargement is to be found in the thirty-one Jehovah’s Witnesses cases (sixteen deciding opinions) of which *Lovell v. City of Griffin* was the first. If ‘the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church,’ what is the debt of Constitutional Law to the militant persistency—or perhaps I should say devotion—of this strange group?”—*Minnesota Law Review*, Vol. 28, No. 4, Mar., 1944, p. 246.

## **VIOLENT MOBS FAIL TO SILENCE PRAISERS OF JEHOVAH**

While Jehovah’s witnesses were waging legal battles for freedom of worship and their right to preach the good news, in the field they sometimes came face to face with violent mobs. This was not without parallel, however, for Jesus Christ himself had experiences of that kind. ([Luke 4:28-30](#); [John 8:59](#); [10:31-39](#)) Faithful Stephen suffered martyrdom at the hands of an angry crowd.—[Acts 6:8-12](#); [7:54-8:1](#).

The worldwide Christian convention held on June 23-25, 1939, was viewed by hoodlums as an opportunity to harass God’s people. Direct wire connections linked New York city, the key city, with other assembly locations in the United States, Canada, the British Isles, Australia and Hawaii. While J. F. Rutherford’s discourse “Government and Peace” was being advertised, Jehovah’s servants learned that Catholic Action groups planned to prevent the public meeting on June 25. So, God’s people were ready for trouble. Bosco Muscariello tells us: “Like Nehemiah raising the wall of Jerusalem and supplying his men with both instruments to build and instruments to fight ([Neh. 4:15-22](#)), we were so armed. . . . Some of us young men received special instructions as ushers. Each was

supplied with a sturdy cane to be used in the event of any interference during the main talk." But R. D. Cantwell adds: "We were instructed not to use it unless it was a matter of being cornered in final defense."

Though it was not known generally, Brother Rutherford was in poor health when he ascended the platform at Madison Square Garden in New York city that Sunday afternoon, June 25, 1939. Soon the talk was under way. Among the latecomers were about 500 followers of Roman Catholic cleric Charles E. Coughlin, renowned "radio priest" of the 1930's, to whose regular broadcasts millions listened. Since the lower level of the auditorium had been reserved and filled with the Witnesses, Coughlin's followers, including priests, had to occupy a top section of the balcony behind the speaker.

"There was no smoking elsewhere in the auditorium," wrote a *Consolation* correspondent, "but eighteen minutes after the discourse began one man to the left front in this crowd lit a cigarette, and then another to the right front lit one; then the electric lights in this section only were blinked, and then in this one section only there were booings, screams and catcalls." "I sat tense," says Sister Edward Broad, "waiting for the confusion to spread all over the Garden. But as a few moments passed I saw that the trouble was confined to a group directly behind the speaker. 'What will he do?' I wondered. It seemed impossible for anyone to keep on speaking with things being thrown down on the platform and not knowing at any moment when the microphone might be taken away." Esther Allen recalls that "wild howling and expressions of 'Heil Hitler!' 'Viva Franco!' and 'Kill that damn Rutherford!' filled the air."

Would ailing Brother Rutherford yield to those violent foes? "The louder they yelled to drown out the speaker's voice, the stronger Judge Rutherford's voice became," says Sister A. F. Laupert. Aleck Bangle remarks: "The Society's president did not become afraid but courageously said: 'Note today the Nazis and Catholics would like to break up this meeting, but by God's grace cannot do it.'" "That was the opportunity we needed to break into heartfelt applause, giving the speaker our enthusiastic support," writes Roger Morgan, adding: "Brother Rutherford held his ground to the end of the hour. We later thrilled every time we played recordings of that lecture in the homes of the people."

C. H. Lyon tells us: "The attendants did their work well. A couple of the more

obstreperous Coughlinites were rapped on the head with a cane, and all of them were unceremoniously hurled down the ramps and out of the auditorium. One of the Coughlinites rated some publicity in a daily tabloid the next morning, as they printed a picture of him with his head wrapped, as with a turban."

Three Witness ushers were arrested and charged with "assault." They were tried before three judges (two Roman Catholics and a Jew) of the Special Sessions Court of the City of New York on October 23 and 24, 1939. In court it was shown that the attendants had gone into the section of Madison Square Garden where the disturbance broke out in order to remove the disturbers. When the rioters attacked the ushers, they resisted and dealt firmly with some of the radical group. Witnesses for the prosecution made many contradictory statements. Not only did the court acquit the three ushers. It also found that the Witness attendants had acted within their rights.

## **WORLD WAR FANS THE FLAMES OF VIOLENCE**

Mob violence had erupted at the 1939 assembly of Jehovah's witnesses. But the flames of violence against them were yet to be fanned to greater intensity as the world went to war. It would be late in 1941 before the United States would declare war on Germany, Italy and Japan, but the spirit of nationalism was strong throughout the country long before that.

During these early months of World War II, Jehovah God made an outstanding provision for his people. In its issue of November 1, 1939, the English *Watchtower* carried an article entitled "Neutrality." For a caption text it had these words of Jesus Christ concerning his disciples: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." ([John 17:16](#), *King James Version*) That Scriptural study of Christian neutrality, coming when it did, prepared Jehovah's witnesses in advance for the hard times ahead.

## **THREAT OF ARSON AT KINGDOM FARM**

Kingdom Farm, near South Lansing, New York, served well in furnishing members of the Society's headquarters staff with fruit, vegetables, meat, milk and cheese. David Abbuhl was working at Kingdom Farm when its peace and serenity were disrupted back in 1940. "On the eve of Flag Day, June 14, 1940," says Brother

Abbuhl, "we were put wise by an old fellow who would daily pass by on his way to buy his whiskey at the tavern in South Lansing to a plan by the townspeople and those of the American Legion to burn down all our buildings and wreck our machinery." The sheriff was notified.

Finally the enemy was on the scene. John Bogard, who was then the farm servant, once gave this graphic account of the trouble: "About six o'clock in the evening the gangs started to gather, one car after another, until there were thirty or forty carloads. The sheriff and his men arrived and began stopping the car drivers and examining their licenses and warning them against any move against Kingdom Farm. They kept driving back and forth along the highway fronting our property till late into the night, but the presence of the police kept them on the highway and frustrated their plan to destroy the farm. It was a most exciting night for all of us there on the farm, but we were reminded vividly of Jesus' assurance to his followers: 'You will be objects of hatred by all people because of my name. And yet not a hair of your heads will by any means perish.'—[Luke 21:17, 18.](#)"

So it was that this threatened attack and premeditated arson were averted. An estimated 1,000 cars, carrying possibly 4,000 men, had come from all sectors of western New York state to destroy the Society's Kingdom Farm property—but to no avail. Says Kathryn Bogard: "Their purpose failed, and some of the very people who made up the mob are now Witnesses themselves, yes, even in the full-time ministry!"




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## 1975 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses

## Part 3—United States of America



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## Part 3—United States of America

## VIOLENCE ERUPTS AT LITCHFIELD

About the same time that Kingdom Farm had been the object of threatened assault and arson, trouble flared up against Jehovah's witnesses in Litchfield, Illinois. "In some way the troublemakers in Litchfield got wind of our plans so that when we did go in to work the town they were ready for us," recalls Clarence S. Huzzey. "The local priest rang the church bells as a signal and they began rounding up the brothers—taking them to the local jail. Some of the brothers were badly beaten and the mob even threatened to burn down the jail. Some of the mobsters located the cars of the brothers and began demolishing them—reducing them to rubble."

Walter R. Wissman says: "After being beaten by the mob the brothers were herded into the local jail by the state highway patrol for their own protection. One brother, Charles Cervenka, was knocked to the ground when he refused to salute the flag, the flag was pushed into his face, and he was severely kicked and beaten about his head and body. He was the most severely injured of the brothers and he never quite recovered from the beating. He died a few years later. He said later that as he was being beaten he thought to himself that he was so glad this happened to

him and not to one of the newer brothers because he knew that he could take it, while perhaps a newer one would have weakened and compromised."

"The town of Litchfield was very proud of its accomplishment," Brother Wissman recalls. "In fact, a number of years later, along in the 1950's, Litchfield had a centennial celebration with floats depicting the outstanding events in the city's hundred-year history. One of these floats was in commemoration of the mobbing of Jehovah's witnesses in 1940. The town officials considered that this was a memorable event in their history. May Jehovah reward them!"

## UNHEEDED PLEAS

So serious and numerous were the violent attacks upon Jehovah's witnesses that United States Solicitor General Francis Biddle and Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt (wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt) made public appeals for the discontinuance of such actions. In fact, on June 16, 1940, the very day of the Litchfield incident, during a coast-to-coast radio broadcast over the network of the National Broadcasting Company, Biddle stated:

*"Jehovah's witnesses have been repeatedly set upon and beaten. They had committed no crime; but the mob adjudged they had, and meted out mob punishment. The Attorney General has ordered an immediate investigation to these outrages.*

"The people must be alert and watchful, and above all cool and sane. Since mob violence will make the government's task infinitely more difficult, it will not be tolerated. We shall not defeat the Nazi evil by emulating its methods."

But such pleas did not stem the tide of hostility against Jehovah's witnesses.

## CHRISTIAN GATHERINGS DISRUPTED

During those turbulent years, Christians in the United States sometimes were assaulted while gathered peacefully for Bible instruction. That happened, for example, in Saco, Maine, during 1940. While Jehovah's witnesses were in their second-floor Kingdom Hall there preparing to present a recorded Bible lecture on one occasion, a mob of 1,500 to 1,700 formed, according to Harold B. Duncan. He clearly recalls that a priest was with them, sitting in a car in front of the hall. "The fellow in the [adjacent] radio repair shop turned on every radio he could to full



volume so as to drown out the talk," says Brother Duncan, adding: "Then the mob started stoning the windows. The police in plain clothes with flashlights pointed the light beams on the windows to stone out. The police station was only a block and a half away. I went there twice and informed them of what was happening. They said, 'When you people salute the American flag, we'll give you help!' The mob stoned 70 [small windowpanes] out of the hall and a stone as large as my fist just missed Sister Gertrude Bob's head and took a corner of the plastered wall out."

Mob violence also erupted during the 1942 assembly in Klamath Falls, Oregon. According to Don Milford, mobsters cut the telephone wires bringing a discourse from another convention city, but a brother having a copy of the talk immediately took over and the program went on. Finally, the mob broke into the hall. The Witnesses defended themselves and when the door was closed again, one attacker—"a large powerful man"—lay unconscious inside the building. He was a police officer and his picture was taken with his badge alongside his face. "We called the Red Cross," says Brother Milford, "and they sent in two women with a stretcher and took him out. He was later heard to say, 'I didn't think they would fight.'" The police refused to aid the Witnesses, and it was over four hours before the mob was dispersed by the state militia.

## **ASSAULTS DURING MAGAZINE STREET WORK**

While policemen in some localities failed to protect Jehovah's witnesses, that certainly was not invariably true. For instance, as he did magazine street work in Tulsa, Oklahoma, years ago, L. I. Payne noticed that a policeman always was within sight. "So," says Brother Payne, "one day I asked him why he was always so close by. His remark was to the effect that even though he had a large territory to cover, he would be in that vicinity because he was not going to let anyone run me off or beat me up. He had read how the little towns were treating the Witnesses and could not see why anyone would want to hinder this work."

As it is, Jehovah's servants often were assaulted by violent mobs as they engaged in witnessing on the streets with *The Watchtower* and *Consolation*. For example, George L. McKee says that week after week in one Oklahoma community mobs ranging from 100 to well over 1,000 infuriated men assailed Witnesses engaged in magazine street work. The mayor, chief of police and other officials would provide

no protection. According to Brother McKee, generally the mobsters were led by a prominent physician and leader of the American Legion, a cousin of Belle Starr, notorious woman bandit. First, drunken henchmen started a disturbance. Then came the mob, armed with pool sticks, clubs, knives, meat cleavers and guns. Their object? To run the Witnesses out of town. But each Saturday, Kingdom proclaimers determined in advance how long they were going to engage in street work and, though the mob would gather quickly, they were successful in completing the allotted time. Many magazines were placed with shoppers.

One Saturday about fifteen Witnesses were accosted. "We realized we would have to rely upon Jehovah God and good judgment to escape with our very lives," says Brother McKee, continuing: "Without as much as a warning, they began to attack three of us brothers with their knives and clubs. . . . With our broken arms, cracked skulls and other injuries, we went to four different doctors in the community, but all refused to give the treatment we needed. We had to travel to a community fifty miles away for the services of a sympathetic doctor. Bruises and feelings soon healed and we were back on the street corner on the following Saturday with the good news of the Kingdom. This spirit prevailed throughout all the troublesome times we had in the heat of persecution."

## **FURY AT CONNERSVILLE**

Notable among acts of mob violence were incidents that occurred in 1940 at Connersville, Indiana. Certain Christian women on trial there were falsely charged with "riotous conspiracy." As Brother Rainbow, a zone servant, and Victor and Mildred Schmidt left the courthouse on the trial's first day, about twenty men lunged at their car, threatened them with death and tried to overturn the vehicle.

On the trial's final day, the prosecuting attorney used his arguing time more for inciting to riot, sometimes speaking directly to armed men in the building. About 9:00 p.m. the verdict came—"Guilty." Then a storm of violence broke loose. Sister Schmidt says that she and her husband Victor, who was one of the lawyers handling the case, along with two other brothers, were cut off from the other Witnesses and were accosted by a mob of from two to three hundred. She tells us:

"Almost immediately, a barrage of all kinds of fruit, vegetables and eggs began bombarding us. We were told later that the mobsters had unloaded a whole

truckload of these items on us.

"We tried to run to our car, but were headed off and pushed to the highway leading out of the city. Then the mob rushed at us, striking the brothers and hitting me in the back, causing a whiplash effect. By now, a storm had broken in all its fury. The rain was coming in torrents and the wind was lashing furiously. However, the fury of the elements was insignificant in comparison with the fury of this demon-crazed mob. Because of the storm, many took to their cars and drove alongside of us, yelling and cursing us and always including Jehovah's name in their cursings. Oh, how that pierced our hearts!

"But in spite of the storm, it seemed as though there were at least a hundred men on foot pressing down on us. Once a carload of friends driven by Sister Jacoby (now Sister Crain) from Springfield, Ohio, tried to rescue us, but the mob nearly upset the car and kicked it and tore at its doors. This brought more blows upon us as the mobsters pulled us away from the car. The friends were forced to drive on without us. As we were driven on and the storm continued unabated, the mobsters kept yelling and chanting: 'Throw them in the river! Throw them in the river!' This unceasing chant struck terror into my heart and as we approached the bridge to cross the river the chant suddenly stopped. Soon we were actually across the bridge. It was as though Jehovah's angels had blinded the mob as to where we were! I thought, 'Oh, Jehovah, thank you!'

"Then the big burly mobsters began striking the brothers again. How hard it was to see someone you love being struck! Each time they struck Victor, he staggered, but never fell. These blows were blows of horror to me . . .

"Time after time they approached me from the back and would give me that quick whiplashing push. Finally, we were separated from the two brothers and as we walked locked arm in arm, Victor said: 'We haven't suffered as much as Paul. We haven't resisted unto the shedding of blood.' [Compare [Hebrews 12:4](#).]

"It was very dark and getting late (I learned later, about 11:00 p.m.). We were beyond the city limits and near exhaustion when suddenly a car stopped very close to us. A familiar voice said: 'Quick! Get in!' Oh, here was that fine young pioneer lad, Ray Franz, rescuing us from this violent mob! . . .

“Here again, we all felt that Jehovah’s angels had blinded the enemy from seeing us enter the car. Here in the car safe from the mob were dear Brother Rainbow and his wife and three others. Somehow, that little car made room for all eight of us. We all felt that Jehovah’s angels had prevented the enemy from seeing us enter the car. The mob was still violently incensed against us, with no indication of releasing us. It seemed as though Jehovah with his loving arms had reached down and rescued us! We later learned that after the two brothers were cut off from us they had found refuge in a haystack until some brothers found them early in the morning. One of the brothers had been severely hurt by an object thrown at him.

“We arrived home about 2:00 a.m. drenched and cold, as the storm had ended a heat wave and ushered in cold air. Our brothers and sisters ministered unto us, even closing five open wounds on Victor’s face. How thankful we were to be in the loving care of our dear brothers!”

Despite such severe experiences, however, Jehovah upholds and strengthens his servants. “So,” remarks Sister Schmidt, “here we had undergone another kind of trial which Jehovah had mercifully helped us to bear and to ‘let endurance have its work complete.’”—[Jas. 1:4](#).

## **OTHER ACTS OF MOB BRUTALITY**

Many were the acts of mob violence having Jehovah’s witnesses as their targets. In December 1942 at Winnsboro, Texas, a number of Jehovah’s witnesses were accosted by a mob while doing magazine street work. Among the Witnesses was O. L. Pillars, servant to the brethren (circuit overseer). As the mobsters approached, the Witnesses concluded that street work could not be done under such circumstances. So they began walking toward their car. “In the middle of the main street, in his sound car, was the Baptist preacher, C. C. Phillips,” recalls Brother Pillars. “He had been preaching about Christ and his being crucified, but as soon as he saw us he changed his sermon. He started ranting and raving about how Jehovah’s witnesses would not salute the flag. He told how he would be happy to die for Old Glory and that anyone not saluting the flag should be run out of town. As we passed his truck, we looked ahead to see another mob coming toward us. Soon they closed in on us and held us until the city marshal appeared and arrested us.”

Later, the mob entered the office of the marshal, who made no attempt to protect the Witnesses. They were seized by the mobsters. In the street, Brother Pillars, for one, was being pummeled with fists. "At this time," says Brother Pillars, "I experienced the most unusual help. I was taking a terrible beating. Blood was gushing from my nose, face and mouth, but I felt little or no pain. Even at that time I marveled at this fact and felt it to be a manifestation of angelic help. . . . To me it explained how our German brothers had faithfully endured the heat of Nazi persecution without wavering."

Brother Pillars was repeatedly beaten into unconsciousness, then revived and beaten again. Finally, unable to bring him to, the mobsters soaked him with cold water and tried to make him salute a two- by four-inch flag, according to him, "the only flag these great 'patriots' could find." As they held it up, they would also hold up his arm, but he let his hand droop down, showing he would not salute. Soon they had a rope around his neck, jerked him to the ground and dragged him to the jail. Dimly he heard them say: "Let's go ahead and hang him. Then we'll be rid of those Witnesses forever." Not long thereafter, they tried just that. Brother Pillars writes: "They put the new one-half-inch hemp rope around my neck, tying the hangman's noose behind the ear, and dragged me into the street. Next the rope was thrown over a pipe that extended from the building. Four or five mobsters began pulling on the rope. As I was lifted off the ground, the rope tightened and I lost consciousness."

The next thing Brother Pillars knew, he was back in the unheated jail. A doctor examined him and said: "If you want this boy to live, you had better get him to the hospital, as he has lost a lot of blood and his eyes have dilated." To this the marshal retorted: "He's the most stubborn devil I have ever seen." "How those words encouraged me," remarks Brother Pillars, "for they assured me I had not compromised!"

After the doctor left, the mobsters filed through the cold, unlit jail. They struck matches to see Brother Pillars' face, and he heard them ask: "Is he dead yet?" Someone replied: "No, but he's going to die." Chilled to the bone and soaking wet, Brother Pillars tried to keep from shivering, hoping they would think he had died. Finally, they left and all was quiet. Eventually the door opened, the Texas State Police entered and Brother Pillars was taken by ambulance to the Pittsburg, Texas,

hospital. He had been at the mob's mercy for six hours. But what had happened when they hung him? Why was he still alive? "I found out those answers late the next day," remarks Brother Pillars, adding:

"Into my prison ward at the Pittsburg hospital where I was recuperating came Brother Tom Williams. He was a local attorney from Sulphur Springs and a real fighter for righteousness. He had endeavored to locate me with no success until he threatened to sue the town. Then they revealed I was in the hospital. How very good it was to see a brother's face! He then told me that it was all over town—I had been hung but the rope broke!

"Later, when the F.B.I. made an official investigation and this led to a grand jury inquiry, a group of Pentecostal men were willing to testify. They said: 'Today it is Jehovah's witnesses. Tomorrow it will be us!' When they described the hanging, they said: 'We saw him dangling on the rope. Then it broke. When we saw the rope break, we knew it was the Lord that broke it.'"

The marshal and other officials fled across the state line. Hence, they never were put on trial. Brother Pillars recuperated and returned to his work as servant to the brethren in that area.

## ENDURING BRUTAL PERSECUTION

"I could never endure such brutal persecution!" you may exclaim. No, not in your own strength. But Jehovah can make you strong if you avail yourself of his provisions for spiritual upbuilding now. The paramount reason for the persecution is connected with the issue of universal sovereignty. In effect, Satan challenged God, claiming that no human would remain faithful to Jehovah under test by the Devil. What a privilege it is to maintain integrity to God, thus proving Satan a liar and supporting Jehovah's side of the issue!—[Job 1:1-2:10](#); [Prov. 27:11](#).

In the years since those turbulent days of many mob attacks upon Jehovah's witnesses in the United States, God's people have become increasingly aware of their need to depend fully upon Jehovah. While they will defend themselves and their loved ones in harmony with Christian principles, they do not arm themselves with deadly weapons in anticipation of attack. ([Matt. 26:51, 52](#); [2 Tim. 2:24](#)) Rather, they recognize that 'the weapons of their warfare are not fleshly.'—[2 Cor. 10:4](#); see



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## THEOCRATIC ASSEMBLY IN SAINT LOUIS

Humanity was in the throes of World War II and persecution was raging against God's people. But 'Jehovah of armies was with them.' (Ps. 46:1, 7) He saw to it that they were amply provided with good things in a spiritual way. Very noteworthy along these lines was the Theocratic Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses at Saint Louis, Missouri, August 6-10, 1941.

Jehovah's servants were eager to be present for that assembly. So, many of them were on the road, bound for Saint Louis. "We soon learned," says Sister A. L. McCreery, "that all the Witnesses put a magazine [*The Watchtower* or *Consolation*] in the car window to identify themselves; so we did too. The whole trip was one of waving to total strangers that passed us by, but we knew they were our brothers by their smiles and waves."

Despite pressure from Catholic Action and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the management of The Arena refused to cancel the contract for its use by Jehovah's witnesses. However, the Catholic churches circulated propaganda that caused many householders to cancel rooms they were going to rent to God's people. "Nuns went from door to door telling people not to rent their rooms to Jehovah's witnesses," says Robert E. Rainer. Hence, upon arrival in Saint Louis, "so many Witnesses were without rooming accommodations that it was necessary to have mattresses made and stuffed so they could sleep there on the Arena grounds," according to Margaret J. Rogers.

Concerning the problem of rooming accommodations, Brother and Sister G. J. Janssen state: "During the convention a picture appeared in the newspaper of a Witness mother and her child sleeping at night on the lawn at the convention grounds. That did it. The local residents, more soft-hearted than their false teachers, began to call the rooming department to say that their extra rooms were available to the Witnesses." Before long, rooms were being offered by telegrams, telephone calls, letters, personal calls and other means. Kingdom publishers were even stopped on the streets by people who offered them accommodations.

Some Witnesses, on arriving, headed for the Theocratic Trailer City. It grew until

the site was teeming with 677 trailers, 1,824 tents, 100 cars with sleepers, 99 trucks and 3 buses—and a population of 15,526. “It was immense,” remarks Edna Gorra, who also says: “Streets were named and there were washing facilities, proper bathroom facilities, and so forth. It was a wonderful sight to behold—people from different states living in their trailers, tents and buses, all in one accord.”

## **SOME PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

Spiritually rewarding indeed was the convention program. For instance, Hazel Burford, now a missionary in Panama, remarks: “There we thrilled to have clarified for us the issue of the universal domination of Jehovah as Supreme Sovereign and how that involved the integrity of Jehovah’s servants. . . . We realized more clearly than ever before why Jehovah was permitting such intense persecution of his people world wide.” In his talk entitled “Integrity,” Brother Rutherford pointed out that the question Satan raised in Job’s day was, “Can Jehovah put men on earth who, under the most severe test, will prove faithful and true to God?” Yet, it was shown, the primary issue was that of universal domination. Among other things, the speaker urged his listeners to be wholly and unreservedly devoted to The Theocratic Government by Christ Jesus, knowing that it shall vindicate Jehovah’s name and bring deliverance to all who love righteousness and serve Jehovah.

There was a convention feature that especially touched the hearts of assembly delegates. Sunday, August 10, 1941, was “Children’s Day” at the Saint Louis convention. Early that morning a baptismal discourse was given and 3,903 persons were immersed, among them 1,357 children. But for children—and adults too—that day was very special. “All children of consecrated parents between the ages of 5 and 18 and having reserved seat tickets will assemble in the main arena directly in front of platform,” said the printed program. Brother Rutherford’s discourse “Children of the King” was scheduled for 11:00 a.m.

By then the convention audience had become a tremendous throng of 115,000. Directly in front of the speaker’s platform and in the box seats all around it was an extraordinary audience—all children between five and eighteen years of age. As Brother Rutherford stepped on the platform, the youngsters cheered and clapped. He waved his handkerchief and thousands of young hands waved back. Soon he strode to the front of the platform, literally beaming at the sight.

J. F. Rutherford had much to say to all those youngsters and the thousands of others in that vast audience. For instance, Dorothy Wilkes states: "The hope of paradise conditions on the earth became very real to us as Brother Rutherford remarked, in effect, that 'the estates you saw along the way to the assembly were nothing compared to what you are going to have!'" And Neal L. Callaway, who was one of the youngsters in the audience that day, once wrote: ". . . after concluding his talk, the Society's president said: 'I have a question to propound to each of you. All of you who have agreed to do the will of God and have taken your stand on the side of the Theocratic Government Christ Jesus, and who have agreed to obey God and His King, please STAND UP!'"

"We arose as one body. 'Behold,' exclaimed the Society's president, 'more than 15,000 new witnesses to the Kingdom!' After long applause he said: 'All of you who will do what you can to tell others about God's kingdom and its attending blessings please say Aye!' Then came a thunder of 'Aye' from 15,000 children on their feet.

"And then the Society's president said: 'If you had an instrument in your hands that you could use to the honor of Jehovah's name, would you be diligent to use it?' We answered 'Yes!' 'Then be seated, and I will tell you about that instrument. The Lord has made possible the preparation of this book as a message for you. The title of this book is "Children.'" What tremendous applause followed!" A free copy of the new book *Children*, written by Brother Rutherford, was given to each child seated in the special sections of The Arena and the trailer camp.

Many who were present for that grand occasion as mere children continued to progress, observes George D. Caron. "They became pioneers, entered Gilead School and took up missionary assignments, went to Bethel, and otherwise advanced with the organization. Today they are the backbone and strength in many congregations throughout the world."

On Sunday afternoon, August 10, 1941, ailing J. F. Rutherford spoke to the convention audience for the last time. He did so extemporaneously, without notes, for about forty-five minutes.

He made some very significant remarks about leadership of Jehovah's people, saying: "I want to let any strangers here know what you think about a man being

your leader, so they won't be forgetting. Every time something rises up and starts to grow, they say there is some man, a leader who has a great following. If there is any person in this audience who thinks that I, this man standing here, is the leader of Jehovah's witnesses, say Yes. [Unanimous NO]

"If you who are here believe that I am just one of the servants of the Lord, and we are working shoulder to shoulder in unity, serving God and serving Christ, say Yes. [Unanimous YES]

"Well, you don't have to have me as an earthly leader to get a crowd like that to work; that kind of a class of people would fight the Devil with a Missouri elm club, and they are fighting with the sword of the spirit, which is more effective."

Repeatedly during this final talk, Brother Rutherford urged his listeners to carry forward the work of preaching the Kingdom message.

## **CLOSING DAYS AT BETH-SARIM**

By November Brother Rutherford's critical illness had gained ground and he was compelled to have an operation at Elkhart, Indiana. Thereafter he expressed a desire to go to California. So he was taken to a San Diego residence known as "Beth-Sarim." For some time it was apparent to his associates and the best medical experts that he could not recover.

Briefly it may be said that Brother Rutherford had a severe case of pneumonia after his release from unjust imprisonment during 1918-1919 because of his faithfulness to Jehovah. Thereafter he had only one good lung. It was virtually impossible for him to remain in Brooklyn, New York, during the winter and still carry out his duties as the Society's president. In the 1920's he went to San Diego under a doctor's treatment. The climate there was exceptionally good and the doctor urged him to spend as much time as possible in San Diego. That is what Rutherford did ultimately.

In time, a direct contribution was made for the purpose of constructing a house in San Diego for Brother Rutherford's use. It was not built at the expense of the Watch Tower Society. Concerning this property, the 1939 book *Salvation* stated: "At San Diego, California, there is a small piece of land, on which, in the year 1929, there was built a house, which is called and known as Beth-Sarim."

Sister Hazel Burford was one of the nurses who cared for Brother Rutherford during his final illness at Beth-Sarim, where he was taken in November 1941. She tells us: "We had the interesting times, for he got to where he would sleep all day and then all night long he was busy with the Society's business and kept us on the move." One morning about the middle of December three brothers, including Brother Knorr, arrived from Brooklyn. Sister Burford recalls: "They spent several days with him going over the annual report for the *Yearbook* and other organizational matters. After their departure, Brother Rutherford continued to weaken and, about three weeks later, on Thursday, January 8, 1942, he faithfully finished his earthly course and graduated into fuller service privileges in the courts of his heavenly Father." Later that day the news was sent to the Brooklyn headquarters by long-distance telephone at 5:15 p.m.

How was news of J. F. Rutherford's death received at Brooklyn Bethel? "I will never forget the day we learned of Brother Rutherford's passing," comments William A. Elrod. "The announcement was brief. There were no speeches."

## **A SMOOTH TRANSITION**

Thursday, January 8, 1942, marked the end of the earthly life of seventy-two-year-old Joseph Franklin Rutherford. For twenty-five years he had been president of the Watch Tower Society. When the Society's first president, Charles Taze Russell, died in 1916, the Bible Students were shocked and many wondered how they could carry on in God's service. Furthermore, selfish men sought control of the Society and this posed problems for some time, though their opposition and schemes were completely overcome through divine aid. The death of J. F. Rutherford did not have such effects, however. Of course, foes of God's people thought that the work of Jehovah's witnesses would grind to a stop, but they were mistaken. "The theocratic organization proceeded without a halt or a stumble," remarks Grant Suiter.

On January 13, 1942, all board members of the Pennsylvania and New York corporations used by God's people met jointly at Brooklyn Bethel. Several days earlier, the Society's vice-president, Nathan H. Knorr, had asked that they earnestly seek divine wisdom by prayer and meditation, and this they did. Their joint meeting was opened by prayer for Jehovah's guidance, and after careful consideration Brother Knorr was nominated and unanimously elected president of

the Society. "No one that I knew about even questioned the appointment of Brother Knorr," says C. W. Barber, "and everyone was determined to stand shoulder to shoulder supporting him and proving our devotion to Jehovah's organization. There was complete unity also among all the directors of the Society." Many telegrams and letters were received showing that Jehovah's servants world wide were unified and determined to carry on with the preaching work.

Nathan Homer Knorr was born at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in 1905, of American-born parents. When he was sixteen years old, he became associated with the Allentown congregation of Bible Students, and in 1922 attended the Cedar Point convention, where he made up his mind to resign from membership in the Reformed Church. An opportunity to be immersed in water to symbolize the dedication of his life to Jehovah God came on July 4, 1923, while Frederick W. Franz, from Brooklyn Bethel, was visiting the Allentown congregation. Brother Fred Franz delivered the baptismal discourse, and eighteen-year-old Nathan H. Knorr was among the individuals baptized that day in the Little Lehigh River. This has always been a joyful day to remember, and what a pleasure it has been for Brother Knorr to be privileged to work side by side with Brother Fred Franz for over fifty-one years now!

About two months later, on September 6, 1923, Brother Knorr became a member of the Brooklyn Bethel family. C. W. Barber recalls: "The noontime that he arrived, upon coming home for lunch, we saw a young brother busy putting his clothes and things into one of the dressers in room A-9. Not knowing that a change had been made and that he was taking the place of a brother that had been moved to WBBR on Staten Island, a few words of remonstrance followed. 'What are you doing here?' 'We've got enough in this room already and it's too crowded.' We figured one more in the room was too much, but things calmed down, and the young brother turned out to be none other than Brother N. H. Knorr. Not exactly a suitable welcome, but we often enjoyed talking about this situation years later and laughed heartily. Right from the start it was evident that he had not come to Bethel to do anything else but apply himself to the work at hand. He applied himself vigorously in the shipping department and made rapid progress in handling responsibilities and doing whatever he was asked to do."



Later he served on the dispatch desk at the Society's printing plant and on February 8, 1928, he was appointed by Brother Rutherford to be a copartner in the publishing of the *Golden Age* magazine. Clayton J. Woodworth was editor; Robert J. Martin, business manager, and Nathan H. Knorr, secretary and treasurer. When factory manager Robert J. Martin died on September 23, 1932, J. F. Rutherford appointed N. H. Knorr to serve in that capacity. On January 11, 1934, Brother Knorr was elected as a director of the Peoples Pulpit Association (now Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.). He was made the Association's vice-president on January 10, 1935, following the death of E. J. Coward. On June 10, 1940, Brother Knorr became a director and was chosen as vice-president of the Pennsylvania corporation, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. His election to the presidency of both societies came about on January 13, 1942. He was also made president of the International Bible Students Association. As to Brother Knorr's attitude toward the work, J. L. Cantwell recalls: "In 1940, when there was so much persecution going on, branches were being closed down and mob action was taking place. One night we were working overtime at the factory. A 'fire drill' was called and, among other things, Brother Knorr, who presided at the resulting meeting, said: 'I know that things look bad for the work. But something all of us here will want to remember is: If Armageddon comes tomorrow, we want to have run the factory all night tonight.'"

## **EDUCATING PEOPLE FOR LIFE**

Jehovah's people had been using the testimony card and the phonograph in their field service. However, they should have the ability to express themselves Scripturally. They should be able to give reasons for their hope. That was the view of the Society's new president, N. H. Knorr. As C. James Woodworth reflects on the past, he says: "Whereas in Brother Rutherford's day the emphasis was on 'Religion Is a Snare and a Racket,' now the era of global expansion was dawning, and education—Biblical and organizational—commenced on a scale heretofore not known by Jehovah's people."

In succeeding years the emphasis on Bible education was to become even more pronounced. Jehovah's witnesses had indeed entered an era of education for life.

## **COURSE IN THEOCRATIC MINISTRY**

"Just a few days more than one month after Brother Knorr became president of the Society," says Henry A. Cantwell, "arrangements were made for what was then called an Advanced Course in Theocratic Ministry." And, what was that? A school, inaugurated at Brooklyn Bethel in February 1942.

C. W. Barber explains: "All the male members of the Brooklyn Bethel family were invited to enroll . . . The course consisted first of a lecture delivered to the entire school. The sisters were invited to attend, but they were not at that time enrolled in the school. After the lecture we adjourned to smaller rooms where all enrolled would present student talks under the tutorship of trained counselors."

L. E. Reusch adds: "Each month we had a review prepared by our school instructor, Brother T. J. Sullivan."

Does that sound familiar? If you are one of Jehovah's witnesses, you know what started over three decades ago at Brooklyn Bethel—the Theocratic Ministry School. Soon other praisers of Jehovah were benefiting from this education too. At their "Call to Action" Assembly, held in 247 cities throughout the United States on April 17 and 18, 1943, the "Course in Theocratic Ministry" was announced and demonstrated. A surprise printed release bearing the same name was a 96-page booklet that told how to conduct the new school in each congregation and also furnished information for weekly instruction talks. The appointed school instructor was to act as chairman and offer constructive counsel on six-minute student talks, delivered on various Biblical topics by male enrollees.

If you are enrolled in today's Theocratic Ministry School, likely you were apprehensive about your first student talk. But suppose the entire school was new, as it was back in the early 1940's. Then what? A brother's first talk in the school could be quite an experience. "My knees were knocking together, my hands were shaking and my teeth were chattering," admits Julio S. Ramu. "I did not last six minutes because I gave the entire talk in three minutes. That was my first experience in platform speaking, but I did not quit." "The King of Eternity" was the title of Angelo Catanzaro's first student talk. "I'll never forget that," he says. "My mother said that I gave that talk every night for several nights in my sleep." But prayer and reliance upon Jehovah played a vital part. "They were willing and tried," comments Louisa A. Warrington, "and it was marvelous to see how Jehovah's spirit aided them . . . to become proficient and confident speakers."

From the start of 1959, sisters in the congregations of God's people were privileged to enroll in the Theocratic Ministry School. Demonstrating how to give six-minute sermons to people at their homes presented quite a challenge for them. Now it was their turn to get nervous! Grace A. Estep had a sermon on the first evening that sisters gave presentations in the congregational Theocratic Ministry School. "Oh, was I scared!" she admits. "But it was an easy subject and very familiar, and somehow I got through it. Although it was such a difficult thing to do, how pleased I was afterward for this added blessing from Jehovah!" Is that how you feel?

Yes, it all started at Brooklyn Bethel back in February 1942. Today, however, the Theocratic Ministry School is a regular feature of Christian training provided in the 34,576 congregations of Jehovah's people earth-wide. Since its inception, the Theocratic Ministry School has done much for Jehovah's people. Fine, improved speaking ability became noticeable at an early date. Thus, after 1944, the decade-long use of the phonograph was replaced by oral witnessing by theocratic preachers at the doors and in the homes of the people.

A noteworthy feature of the Theocratic Ministry School is the reading of God's Word. This has been a regular part of the program. One of the early publications designed for use in the Theocratic Ministry School was "*Equipped for Every Good Work*," published in 1946. Mabel P. M. Philbrick will tell you that this book "made it possible to have a better understanding of the writing and preservation of the Bible, as well as how the addition of the Apocrypha came to be. I learned for the first time what the Talmud was, the Masoretic text and many other features. Best of all was the analysis of every book of the Bible."

Various publications of succeeding years were prepared with the Theocratic Ministry School in mind. Among these was the *Watchtower*-size book "*All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial*," of 1963. Doubtless expressing the thoughts of many others, Alice Babcock appropriately calls it "a veritable storehouse of spiritual treasures." Here was another publication that thoroughly discussed each of the sixty-six books of the Bible, with special emphasis on the ways in which each Bible book is beneficial for Christians today.

Currently used in the Theocratic Ministry School, and for personal research, is a work that represents six years of research. Some two hundred and fifty brothers in

more than ninety lands contributed to it, and then a special staff worked on the material at the Society's headquarters in Brooklyn. The result was a 1700-page volume covering Scriptural topics from "Aaron" to "Zuzim." Its title? *Aid to Bible Understanding*, completed in 1970. Truly it has been a provision from Jehovah.

## **A PUBLIC SPEAKING CAMPAIGN**

Back in the 1940's the Theocratic Ministry School soon produced many qualified brothers who could give public talks. Thus in January 1945 a worldwide public speaking campaign was inaugurated. Each speaker prepared his own discourse, but the Watch Tower Society ensured uniformity of presentation by selecting the subjects and furnishing one-page outlines for these hour talks. This public meeting campaign began with a series of eight talks, the first entitled "Will Man Succeed as a World-Builder?"

Besides the speaker, other Kingdom proclaimers had part in the campaign. How? By advertising the discourse through handbill distribution on the streets and from house to house. At times distribution of printed invitations was coupled with the wearing of placards advertising the talk. Frequently the discourse was delivered at the Kingdom Hall, but a lecture series might be scheduled in rented facilities or elsewhere in some outlying area of the congregation's territory. If you attend Christian meetings regularly, then you are benefiting from such public meetings to this very day.

In those earlier days, of course, delivering a public talk was quite a challenge. It was something new. Says W. L. Pelle: "For many, many years, on the night before I was scheduled to give a public talk I would kneel down at my bedside and pray to Jehovah to give me the ability and strength to deliver the discourse in a way pleasing to him. I advise young brothers in the Theocratic Ministry School to do likewise because Jehovah has always heard my petition and he will hear theirs also."—[Ps. 65:2](#).

## **JEHOVAH PROVIDES FOR A WORLDWIDE WITNESS**

Some three decades ago mankind was in the throes of World War II. To some it may have seemed impractical then to plan for international expansion of Kingdom-preaching activities. But Jehovah's spirit strengthened his servants to

move forward. Providing education for life was vitally important.

In September of 1942, Brother Knorr and the other directors of the Watch Tower Society unanimously approved the establishment of a school designed to train missionaries for ministerial activity in countries throughout the earth. Where would it function? On the Society's property in the Finger Lakes area of upper New York state—Kingdom Farm, near South Lansing.

Situated there was a large three-story brick building completed by the Watchtower Society in 1941. It had been constructed as a refuge for members of the Brooklyn Bethel family, should intense persecution require their transfer to that location. But it had never served that purpose. It seems that Jehovah perhaps directed matters all along, with a unique purpose for this structure. Now plans were made for a new theocratic educational institution. The school itself would be named the Watchtower Bible College of Gilead. Later it was called the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead.

There was a flurry of activity. Beginning in October of 1942, A. D. Schroeder, Maxwell G. Friend and Eduardo F. Keller prepared the courses outlined by the governing body, working up lectures, acquiring textbooks and gathering a library. At the same time, adjustments were made in the existing buildings at Kingdom Farm in order to provide a library, an auditorium, classrooms, sleeping quarters and other facilities. Those were thrilling months!

Imagine the surprise of certain pioneers when they received applications for the new school. The greater thrill came when those applications were accepted. "We felt extremely inadequate, but grateful for the privilege," remarked Brother and Sister Charles Eisenhower. "Our applications were accepted. We sold our car and trailer and headed for school. That was Gilead's first class. The school was new, the classes were new, the instructors and students were new."

The keenly anticipated opening day arrived—Monday, February 1, 1943. Snow covered the fields of Kingdom Farm. It was a cold and wintry day. Yet, inside the administration building forty-nine men and fifty-one women—some married, some single—gathered with great delight. Joining them for the school's dedication exercises were directors of the Society, members of the faculty, friends and relatives—161 persons in all.

Talks were given by F. W. Franz and W. E. Van Amburgh, as well as others. Brother Knorr himself delivered the address of welcome and dedication. Doubtless all those present agreed fully with his comments: "Jehovah God has provided this land and building named 'Gilead' for His purpose. To Him we give all thanks and praise." No question about it! This school's establishment was a major theocratic development.

Bible Research, Theocratic Field Ministry, Public Bible Speaking, Supreme Law, Bible Themes—these were some of the subjects to which industrious students gave their attention during the five-month course. Included was instruction in a foreign language—Spanish for the first class. Truly, there were many things to learn. But Gilead students also spent some time each school day performing certain farm and domestic duties. For one thing, this helped to relieve nervous tension. Weekday evenings were for personal study. Weekends provided fine occasions for the lifesaving work of Kingdom-preaching. Students and instructors alike engaged in the field service.

World War II was still raging when the earliest classes of Gilead School graduated. Since it then was virtually impossible to send missionaries to Europe and westward to the islands of the sea, as well as Asia, they were sent first to Cuba, Mexico, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, Canada and Alaska. Since then they have gone to the very ends of the earth to declare the good news of the Kingdom "for a witness."—[Matt. 24:14](#).

Graduation of Gilead School's thirty-fifth class took place at Kingdom Farm on July 24, 1960. The thirty-sixth class opened in facilities of the Watch Tower Society at 107 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York, on Monday, February 6, 1961. How beneficial it is to have this school at the Society's headquarters! Students are now privileged to hear discourses by more brothers associated with the Society's staff, including members of the governing body of Jehovah's witnesses.

Three decades have passed since the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead had its start. To date more than 5,500 students have attended this institution of theocratic education. Of this number, over 2,500 are still active in full-time service, preaching the good news of the Kingdom around the world.

## **KINGDOM MINISTRY SCHOOL**



The emphasis on theocratic education for life has continued through the years. In 1958 work began on a course of study for a new school. This one was for overseers. Called the Kingdom Ministry School, originally its course consisted of twenty-four school days, ninety-six classroom sessions and twenty instruction talks or lectures. Subjects included Kingdom Teachings, Field Ministry, Speaking and Overseers. The first group to attend the Kingdom Ministry School consisted of twenty-five students, United States circuit servants (overseers) and their wives who were not graduates of Gilead School. That first course ran from March 9 to April 3, 1959, in the Society's facilities near South Lansing, New York. The school was transferred to the headquarters in Brooklyn on April 9, 1967.

With the passing of time, there have been adjustments in the Kingdom Ministry School, such as implementation of a two-week study course. Kingdom Ministry Schools have been held in many countries throughout the earth, to the great benefit of Jehovah's people. In a number of lands the instructors travel from place to place, using local Kingdom Halls so that more elders can benefit from having the school at a location more convenient to them. How thankful Jehovah's people can be that this fine training has been provided! The Kingdom Ministry School has done much to equip Christian overseers for their responsibilities and privileges.

There is an interesting side of theocratic education for life that is not to be ignored. Through the years some who have sought Scriptural knowledge have been illiterate, but their problem has not been pushed aside. In many lands the organization of God's people has provided for literacy classes; some have been highly commended by government officials. Men and women have learned to read and write and many among them have gone on to enjoy rich privileges of service to Jehovah's honor and glory.

### **A "GO AHEAD" SIGNAL IS SOUNDED**

Back in 1942 Brother Knorr and his administrative associates realized that there was much work ahead. In fact, at the New World Theocratic Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses on September 18-20, 1942, a "Go ahead" signal was sounded. Cleveland, Ohio, was the key city, with fifty-one others tied in throughout the United States.

The convention's keynote speech was delivered by F. W. Franz on Friday evening,

September 18, 1942. Entitled "The Only Light," it was based on [Isaiah, chapters 49 and 60](#). In that discourse, the "Go ahead" signal rang clearly. Julia Wilcox writes: "At the conclusion of the keynote speech, 'The Only Light,' I don't think anyone in the audience thought the time had come to slack the hand and relax. No, it was time to 'arise and shine,' so that God's people might continue to reflect the only light in the darkness of this old world."

Brother Knorr followed F. W. Franz on the program, speaking on the subject "Presenting 'the Sword of the Spirit.'" He opened his discourse with the significant words: "There is further work to be done; much work!"

Further indicating that there was work ahead were statements made during the public discourse on Sunday afternoon, September 20. The subject? A strange one, indeed, since the nations were then enmeshed in World War II. The topic was "Peace—Can It Last?"

That would be a very important speech, Brother Knorr realized. With Jehovah's aid he was determined to give it 'all he had.' "Months before," says L. E. Reusch, "I could hear him practicing out loud, going over his public talk 'Peace—Can it Last?' literally dozens of times. My Bethel room was on the floor directly under the president's quarters. So, I know personally how long and hard he practiced on delivery."

During that fast-moving hour-long talk, the League of Nations was boldly identified with the scarlet-colored political creature of [Revelation chapter 17](#). It was pointed out that the League, then in the abyss of inaction, 'was not,' but it would not remain in the pit. ([Rev. 17:8](#)) It would rise again. "But mark this," Knorr declared, "the prophecy shows that when the 'beast' comes out of the abyss at the end of this total war it comes out with the woman 'Babylon' on its back, or she climbs upon its back as soon as it gets out." Yet, neither the man-made peace nor the scarlet-colored beast would last. Soon the beast itself would be utterly destroyed.

Recalling that discourse, Marie Gibbard comments: "How accurately the prophecy of [Revelation 17](#) has unfolded, as it was shown that the League would come out of the abyss to an uneasy peace that would not last! What a marvelous protection for us not to be swayed by the world events to follow—the jubilation that came to this

country when V-E and V-J Days arrived and then, in 1945, when the United Nations was hailed as the answer to future peace! This talk really made lasting impressions for practical application." The inference also was clear. Jehovah's servants had work to do and there would be some time remaining in which to do it.

## **VISITING SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK**

At that 1942 assembly it was announced that representatives of the Watch Tower Society would regularly visit congregations of God's people. (Zone servants had previously done such work, but their activities, and those of regional servants, as well as the holding of zone assemblies, had been discontinued as of December 1, 1941.) The sending out of the Society's traveling representatives was to be resumed on October 1, 1942. These brothers were known as "servants to the brethren," comparable to circuit overseers of today. "They would examine records of the congregations and assist the brothers in advancing the Kingdom interests," says Sister J. Norris. "All of this made us conscious of Jehovah's care for his people through his organization."

From October 15, 1946, onward some new features were to be introduced in connection with this work. The field would be divided into circuits, each of about twenty companies (congregations). These would be served for one week by the traveling overseers, primarily concerned with assisting the Witnesses in their house-to-house preaching. Twice a year all the congregations in a circuit would assemble at one point for a three-day circuit assembly, over which a "district servant" would preside. In succeeding years there have been adjustments in this arrangement, and you are benefiting from it now if you are one of Jehovah's witnesses. Yet, what was it like some years ago?

Let us take the district work of the 1940's as an example of the efforts put forth by these willing shepherds of God's flock. Look back to the late 1940's, for instance, when Nicholas Kovalak, Jr., was one of the few brothers engaging in the district work in the United States. Referring to October 1949, he says, "I traveled 4,020 miles by car that month!" He also says: "I had five circuit assemblies on the weekends, besides serving several congregations in between. So I traveled, talked, witnessed, checked the records, ate, studied, read and had a little time for sleep!" One week he traveled close to 2,000 miles serving two congregations and, on the weekend, a circuit assembly. Of course, not all his trips by automobile were that

long. "Now with more congregations it makes it easier," Brother Kovalak admits. "Jehovah is good to us and sustains us."

Circuit and district overseers of today are keenly interested in their fellow worshipers of Jehovah. They seek to aid them in the field service and to upbuild them spiritually. Circuit assemblies also play a vital role in advancing Kingdom interests. Did you know that during the past service year, twenty circuit assemblies, on the average, were held each week in the United States, with an average attendance of 1,605? Summing that all up for the entire year, there were 1,064 circuit assemblies, with 1,708,143 in attendance.

## **CHRISTIAN NEUTRALS TAKE THEIR STAND**

As the Watch Tower Society's new administration got under way in the early 1940's, World War II was in progress and a number of Christian men were undergoing a test of their integrity to Jehovah. In the year 1940 the Selective Training and Service Act went into effect in the United States, which was still at peace. It authorized the conscription for military service of young men over eighteen years of age, but provided for the exemption of "regular or duly ordained ministers of religion," in class IV-D. In the majority of cases, Jehovah's witnesses were denied classification as ministers. They were neither seditious, nor would they interfere with military or other pursuits of human governments. However, the Witnesses themselves were determined to maintain strict neutrality as Christians. [\(John 17:16\)](#) Furthermore, they had 'beaten their swords into plowshares.'—[Isa. 2:2-4](#).

In thousands of cases, the government's attorneys argued that the Witnesses had to go into the armed forces before they could seek relief in the federal courts. So from the federal district courts integrity-keepers were sent to prison, a number receiving the maximum sentence of five years' incarceration and a fine of ten thousand dollars. Interestingly, when Eugene R. Brandt and six other Witnesses were sentenced, the judge pointed to a flag hanging on the wall behind his bench and said, as Brother Brandt recalls: "Do you see that flag? Well, I can see the face of my god in that flag and so I have no objection to worshiping it, and you should feel the same way."

## **MAKING GOOD USE OF TIME IN PRISON**

That first night behind bars was quite an experience. Pioneer Daniel Sydlik (who now serves at Brooklyn Bethel) was jailed because of his Christian neutrality in 1944. He remembers lying atop his bunk and listening as the steel gates, “like rumbling thunder, rolled to a close.” One by one the sound of those gates came closer until his cell gate quivered, then rolled slowly shut. He says: “Suddenly, an overwhelmingly sickening sensation swept over me, which made me feel trapped, without a way out. Then just as quickly followed another sensation equally overwhelming, which made me feel great peace and joy, the kind of peace that the Bible speaks about—‘the peace of God that excels all thought.’”—[Phil. 4:7](#).

Brother Sydlik, like so many others, eventually found himself in a federal prison. What did Christian neutrals do there? They made good use of their time. When not busy at prison duties, they often were allowed to hold meetings for study of the Bible and publications of the Watch Tower Society. Also, they improved their general education, as by studying foreign languages such as Spanish and Greek. Concerning Christians imprisoned at Mill Point, West Virginia, Rudolph J. Sunal says: “We had our congregation book study . . . Each dormitory group of brothers had its Service Meeting and Theocratic Ministry School. . . . Sunday we had our *Watchtower* study in the library. . . . Another provision that we were able to arrange for was the privilege of miniature assemblies. . . . One summer we used the ball field and had the piano and other instruments for music and a most instructive program.”

Recalling the Christian educational program in prison during those days, F. Jerry Molohan remarks: “Our study meetings of all kinds were exceptionally well attended and it was so educational we humorously called the Leavenworth Prison Honor Farm ‘Stonewall College.’”

The Watch Tower Society was concerned about the spiritual welfare of these young men. Hence, arrangements were made for certain brothers, such as A. H. Macmillan and T. J. Sullivan, to visit them regularly. Why? To provide Scriptural counsel and encouragement.

Whether free or imprisoned, Jehovah’s witnesses seek ways of carrying out their commission to make disciples. ([Matt. 28:19, 20](#)) True, the opportunities open to these Christian neutrals were now limited. But that did not still their lips entirely. Brother Molohan comments: “I made the most of one opportunity, a good-hearted

man serving a life term, Frank Ryden, becoming my first 'letter of recommendation' and being baptized in the mule trough."—2 Cor. 3:1-3.

## PETITION FOR PARDON

On August 10, 1946, a significant resolution was unanimously adopted by upward of 60,000 delegates at the Glad Nations Theocratic Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses in Cleveland, Ohio. It petitioned the president of the United States to grant full pardon to over 4,000 wrongfully convicted and imprisoned Witnesses. Such clemency would restore the civil rights of these Christian neutrals who illegally were denied their rights by draft boards and federal courts from 1940 to 1946.

"To my surprise," says Edgar C. Kennedy, "the chairman announced that the resolution, asking for full pardon for all these men, would be personally presented to the president of the United States by a representative from the Society. Since Harry Truman, the former army officer with whom I served during World War I, was the president, I thought it would be well for me to mention this fact to the chairman's office, which I did." As matters turned out, at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, September 6, 1946, the Society's general counsel, another lawyer and Brother Kennedy, a pioneer, met with the president for some forty minutes. According to Brother Kennedy, Truman listened intently as the Society's lawyer developed the features of the resolution to the point where executive clemency was requested. Then, he recalls, "Truman broke in with a flare of emotion and said: 'I don't have any use for a S—O—B that won't fight for his country. Besides, I don't like the disrespect you people show for the flag.'" Brother Kennedy continues:

"Now I knew that it was my turn to speak. I identified myself as a former fellow army officer and said that I had been responsible for supplying his battery with all the ammunition that it had fired during the war. I took a picture of the regimental officers from my briefcase and laid it on his desk. He looked at it and said that he had the same picture hanging over his desk in his library. I then told him that it is harder fighting for Christian principles than it was fighting in the war. I briefly explained the reason why Jehovah's witnesses do not salute the flag. He listened and then said, 'I see I was mistaken.'"

According to Brother Kennedy, the president thereafter gave his attention to the



Society's attorney "as he concluded the request for the release of Jehovah's witnesses being held in prison under the Selective Service Act. Truman then said that he would discuss it with the Attorney General."

In time, President Truman appointed his Amnesty Board. They reviewed thousands of court records and draft board files, recommending some pardons. But on December 23, 1947, Truman pardoned only 136 Witnesses, whereas 1,523 pardons were granted. Other religious groups, having only 1,000 men imprisoned all together, compared with 4,300 Witnesses, got the lion's share. Consequently, the vast majority of these Christian neutrals were discriminated against only because they had been resolute in their determination to maintain integrity to Jehovah God.

## THE LEGAL FIGHT CONTINUES

In the *Smith* and *Estep* cases, the United States Supreme Court ruled, on February 4, 1946, that the lower federal courts had been wrong in denying the Witnesses the right to a fair hearing and in maintaining that they had to enter the armed forces before they could defend themselves in court. On December 23, 1946, in the *Gibson* and *Dodez* cases, the Court extended the law so as to permit defense in court by Jehovah's witnesses who had been charged with failing to report to a conscientious objector camp or to remain in such a camp after reporting.

The government's attorneys argued that full-time pioneers were not entitled to exemption from military service and training because they did not have fixed congregations. Furthermore, the government's lawyers contended that company servants (presiding overseers) were not entitled to exemption because they did not have congregations consisting of laymen, but presided over those made up of Jehovah's witnesses. Those arguments were defeated in the *Dickinson* case, decided in favor of Jehovah's witnesses by the United States Supreme Court on November 30, 1953. This set the precedent for all the federal courts to follow.

## FIRM IN FAITH DESPITE IMPRISONMENT

Looking back some three decades to the days when so many Christian neutrals were imprisoned for their integrity-keeping, a person may wonder what he would

do under similar circumstances. It does not really matter what excuse the enemy uses to incarcerate God's people. With Jehovah's help integrity can be maintained, even as it was by those hundreds of Christian neutrals some years ago. In 1965, after seven years in Red China's prisons, Stanley Ernest Jones spoke to over 34,700 persons at Yankee Stadium in New York city. While imprisoned, he had meditated on the Scriptures, resorted to prayer and kept himself spiritually strong with the aid of Jehovah's spirit. But one thing that he mentioned was: "We're only going to have tribulation 'ten days.' In other words, there is going to be an end to it. *Everything comes to an end in its own time.* Therefore we just endure; God will bring us through."—[Rev. 2:10](#).

A fellow missionary, Harold King, spent nearly five years in a Red Chinese prison. He, too, had remained spiritually strong. Did you know that, while imprisoned, he even composed music based on Scriptural thoughts? Yes, the songbook used by Jehovah's witnesses today—"Singing and Accompanying Yourselves with Music in Your Hearts"—contains a melody that Brother King originated in prison. It is song No. 10, entitled "From House to House." So, do not fear the future. Jehovah can uphold you as he did incarcerated Christian neutrals in the United States as well as many other integrity-keepers, including Brothers Jones and King, who had the hard experience of incarceration in a Communist Chinese prison.

## HELPING HANDS REACH OUT

September 2, 1945, brought the end of World War II. The Watch Tower Society's branch offices were soon reopened in many lands. Congregations were reestablished and spiritual food again became available in ever-increasing amounts. Yet, Christians in war-ravaged nations needed material things too. Hence, in a display of Christian love for their needy fellow believers, Jehovah's people launched what proved to be a two-and-half-year worldwide relief campaign. ([John 13:34, 35](#)) Witnesses in the United States, Canada, Switzerland, Sweden and elsewhere contributed clothing and money to buy food to help Christians in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippine Republic, Poland and Romania.

"At the close of World War II," recall Hazelle and Helen Krull, "our brothers returned from the prison camps, many sick and permanently stripped of their

material possessions, some of them separated from their families, not knowing if they were still alive in the flesh or not. But with all of this they were amazingly strong spiritually. They were welcomed back by their brothers all over the world. Their first interest was to reorganize for Kingdom work, declare the same good news for which they had been imprisoned and recoup their spiritual knowledge. Their compelling desire, following such great and extended hardships, was an inspiration to us and we were happy for the privilege of helping to supply, in a small way, their material needs. Clothing, shoes and other needs were collected and sorted at the Kingdom Halls, then picked up by trucks for shipment to our brothers. Tons and tons were thus lovingly supplied."

Total shipments of clothing amounted to 1,056,247 pounds. Food shipments totaled 718,873 pounds. Additionally, 124,110 pairs of shoes were sent to needy Christians during this relief campaign. Monetarily the value of all this came to \$1,322,406.90. And these kind gifts were appreciated. Commenting on one expression of gratitude, Esther Allen says: "The letter of thanks that came back brought tears of joy to the eyes." So it was that in one direction flowed material things, and in the other, great appreciation and an encouraging record of integrity.

Through the years, Jehovah's witnesses in the United States have had various opportunities to help their fellow believers, both at home and abroad, in material ways. Consider the 1970 earthquake in Peru. Congregations in Lima gathered together clothing, food and money and promptly took about seven tons of supplies to the stricken area. Jehovah's witnesses in New York city donated well over ten tons of clothing. This was, in fact, far more clothing than was needed. Also, the Watch Tower Society provided \$20,000 for its branch office to use in obtaining whatever was required by the brothers in the stricken area. Similarly, aid was provided when an earthquake destroyed Managua, Nicaragua, in 1972. Such displays of Christian love are reminiscent of the good-hearted liberality of first-century Christians.—[2 Cor. 9:1-14](#).

Yet, the aid given to fellow worshipers of Jehovah does not always consist of material things. Did you know that in the year 1961 Jehovah's servants in the United States and other lands wrote thousands of letters to the authorities in Spain requesting that God's people there be granted freedom of worship? And in the year 1968 they wrote to the authorities of Malawi protesting the ill treatment

of Jehovah's Christian witnesses there. They have genuine loving concern for their brothers everywhere.

## HISTORIC CONVENTIONS TRULY HONOR JEHOVAH

Large gatherings of God's people, both ancient and modern, have been occasions of great spiritual benefit. Often they have also been times of great rejoicing. ([Deut. 31:10-13](#); [Neh. 8:8, 12](#)) This was certainly true of the Glad Nations Theocratic Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses in Cleveland, Ohio, held in the first postwar year, on August 4-11, 1946. That convention was different. Multicity assemblies had been linked by radio-telephone facilities in various lands during previous years, with large combined audiences. But for the first time at the Glad Nations Theocratic Assembly, God's people had an international convention of such proportions that it brought together in *one* city delegates from all parts of the earth.

One formidable pre-convention task was the locating of rooming accommodations for the delegates. This was accomplished by extensive house-to-house work. However, many delegates were accommodated at the Witnesses' trailer camp. There, in time, a community of 20,000 lived conveniently and inexpensively. Naturally, the delegates required physical food, and significant indeed was the cafeteria arrangement at the assembly location. There, between 15,000 and 20,000 persons could be fed in an hour's time.

Spiritual food was of utmost importance, however, and it was furnished in abundance. For instance, F. W. Franz spoke on "The Harvest, The End of the World," an absorbing exposition of Jesus Christ's illustration of the wheat and the weeds or tares. ([Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43](#)) And it was at this same assembly that L. A. Swingle discussed the subject "Awake!" He described the twentieth-century world as a synthetic, atom-smashing, jet-propelled, radar-controlled, electronic world headed for the ditch of destruction for failure to be awake to the real issues confronting mankind. Brother Knorr spoke on "An Answer to the Rousing Call," urging his listeners 'to be awake, to stay awake and to read *Awake!*' Yes, the new magazine *Awake!* was to replace *Consolation*, formerly known as *The Golden Age*. Many years later Henry A. Cantwell was able to say: "Without doubt, *Awake!* has lived up to its name in helping many to awake from the sleep of lethargy and to turn to true worship."

Others will remember this thrilling assembly for the excellent primary Bible study aid there received—the book *“Let God Be True.”* More than 10,500,000 copies of the first edition were published within about six years. Revised as of April 1, 1952, the book’s distribution continued, and by early 1971 a total of 19,246,710 copies had been published in 54 languages. *“Let God Be True”* then stood in fourth place on one list of the world’s best-selling nonfiction books of the twentieth century.

Thursday, August 8, was especially notable at that 1946 assembly. Brother Knorr spoke on the subject “The Problems of Reconstruction and Expansion.” Recapturing the event, Edgar Clay of the British Isles later wrote: “I had the privilege of being behind him on the platform that evening, and as he outlined the work and then told about the plans for enlarging the Brooklyn Bethel home and factory, the applause from the vast audience surged in renewed outbursts. While one could see no distinct face from the platform, it was easy to sense their joy.”

## **A LOOK AT THE WORLD SCENE**

There must be theocratic reconstruction and expansion. That was evident. So, on February 6, 1947, about six months after the Glad Nations Theocratic Assembly, the Society’s president, N. H. Knorr, and his secretary, M. G. Henschel, embarked on a globe-encircling service tour. From personal observation during that 47,795-mile journey it was possible to determine what steps were required to strengthen and unify the worldwide organization.

That journey accomplished much. Among other things, following the tour Gilead missionaries were sent to certain Asiatic lands and islands of the Pacific. Kingdom interests were being advanced. The Theocracy was surging ahead!

## **THEOCRACY’S INCREASE**

Jehovah can ‘make the little one become a thousand and the small one a mighty nation.’ ([Isa. 60:22](#)) He did that upon restoring Israelite exiles from Babylon to their homeland centuries ago. Similarly, God has delivered spiritual Israelites from bondage to Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. Moreover, he has blessed them with increase. In 1938 there was a peak of 59,047 Kingdom proclaimers world wide. Then came years of war, persecution of Christians and thereafter organizational reconstruction among God’s people. With what result?

Why, by 1949 Jehovah's Christian witnesses numbered 317,877! Theocracy's increase was evident!

How appropriate it was, therefore, that God's people should gather for the Theocracy's Increase Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses! By automobile, bus, train, ship and plane they came in throngs to New York city's famed Yankee Stadium, for the eight-day international convention on July 30 to August 6, 1950. The influx of some 10,000 foreigners alarmed the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, which brought discriminatory indignities upon these visitors. Later, such actions were protested vigorously by the assembled convention delegates.

As at the 1946 international convention in Cleveland, Ohio, an extensive cafeteria arrangement was set up to feed the many thousands. How impressive it was! The *New York Times* quoted a Health Department inspector as saying: "I'm fascinated. I've never seen anything run as smoothly as this before."

Many delegates were accommodated in private homes and hotels. However, over 13,000 eventually camped at the Witnesses' trailer camp in New Jersey, forty miles from New York city. Marie M. Greetham recalls: "The brothers from all over New York and New Jersey worked for many weeks putting in water pipes, gas and electric power and toilet and bathing facilities. . . . This city was connected by wire to the convention in New York, so every presentation at the New York City assembly could be heard in the trailer camp."

As Wednesday, August 2, 1950, dawned, Jehovah's people in general had no idea of the marvelous blessing in store for them on that "'Preach the Word' Day." That afternoon Brother Knorr spoke on the subject "Turning to the Peoples A Pure Language." ([Zeph. 3:9](#)) Among other things, he mentioned that in 1902 the Watch Tower Society came into possession of a translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures known as *The Emphatic Diaglott*, first printed on its own presses on December 21, 1926. The Society thereafter undertook other very notable Bible-printing activities.

But that 1950 assembly session brought to light something especially thrilling. On that memorable occasion, Brother Knorr had the great pleasure of releasing the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* in English. An amazed, highly delighted audience of 82,075 at the stadium and the trailer camp received it with



the greatest of enthusiasm, sustained applause and deep appreciation. Tens of thousands of copies were eagerly obtained by convention delegates. What a thrill for all those assembled!

## THE "PRINCES" ARE HERE

For years, Jehovah's people thought that faithful men of old times, such as Abraham, Joseph and David, would be resurrected *before* the end of this wicked system of things. Those past servants of God were called "ancient worthies," "faithful men of old" and "the princes." The psalmist had declared: "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth." ([Ps. 45:16](#), *King James Version*) So, when Jehovah's people went to a convention years ago, there was a degree of expectation. Perhaps that gathering would be marked by the appearance of one or more of those resurrected princes or men of old!

With that in mind, mentally join the 82,601 conventioners as they listened intently to F. W. Franz on Saturday evening, August 5, 1950. At a climactic point in his absorbing Scriptural talk he asked: "Would this international assembly be happy to know that HERE, TONIGHT, in our midst, there are a number of prospective PRINCES OF THE NEW EARTH?"

What reactions there were to that query! Here are some vivid recollections: "I recall the gasp of amazement that swept the assembly, and we began looking around us expectantly . . . was David here, or Abraham, or Daniel, or Job? Many of us sisters had tears in our eyes!" (Grace A. Estep) "I was so excited I sat on the edge of my seat with my eyes glued on the dugout. I was certain that one or more of these men of old would emerge at any moment." (Sister Dwight T. Kenyon) "People in the corridors rushed to the stadium entrances to view the speaker's stand, perhaps expecting to see Abraham, David or maybe Moses. The audience stood up—the atmosphere was charged. I am sure that if someone with a long beard had walked to the platform there would have been no containing the crowd."—L. E. Reusch.

A profound silence next settled over the audience. Every ear seemed strained to lose none of the speaker's words. He discussed the real meaning of the Hebrew word translated 'prince.' He pointed out that today's "other sheep" have suffered

just as much for their faith as did Jehovah's witnesses of old. Hence, nothing argues against Christ's making these "other sheep" "princes in all the earth" as required. (Ps. 45:16; John 10:16) Then, concluding his discourse, Brother Franz said: "With the transporting prospects so close before us, oh! let us keep Theocratic organization and let God continue improving it as a New World society. Never may we look back to this modern Sodom, which is reserved for destruction, but we are determined to keep faces forward in full faith. Onward, then, steadily, all of us together, as a New World society!"

## **EVIDENCE OF THEOCRACY'S INCREASE**

Sunday afternoon, August 6, was a thrilling day for those conventioners. Yankee Stadium was filled with 87,195 persons. An additional 25,215 were on the sidewalks and in nearby tents. Another 11,297 were present at the trailer camp.

So it was that a total of 123,707 attended Brother Knorr's absorbing, widely advertised public talk "Can You Live Forever in Happiness on Earth?" That logical, moving discourse gave ample Scriptural proof that there are persons who *can* live forever in happiness on earth.

## **ASSEMBLING AS A NEW WORLD SOCIETY**

Another milestone in theocratic history was reached in 1953. July 19-26 were days awaited anxiously by Jehovah's people. From ninety-six lands outside the United States they came, until thousands filled New York city's Yankee Stadium. That eight-day-long New World Society Assembly furnished the world marvelous evidence of the international unity among Jehovah's Christian witnesses.

Again, rooming accommodations in private homes were obtained for thousands of convention delegates. Others stayed in hotels and another 45,000 lived at New World Society Trailer City, forty miles from the stadium, near New Market, New Jersey. Incidentally, Trailer City's market gave a local supplier a silent witness about Christian honesty. (Heb. 13:18) Since many Witnesses left for volunteer work at the stadium before opening time and returned after these facilities were closed for the day, they helped themselves to needed items and left money in payment on unguarded trays. R. D. Cantwell says: "This gentleman [the supplier] was amazed to observe this and finally stated: 'Mr. Cantwell, I can tell you this: You couldn't do

that in my church because you can't trust them.”

That convention's international aspect was highlighted by ninety colorful banners strung around the fronts of the stadium's upper tier and mezzanine. Delegates were greeted with phrases like these: “*Salaams* from Land of Cedars, Lebanon,” and “Christian *Aloha* from Hawaii.” Each day also followed a territorial theme, such as “North America Day” and “Islands of the Atlantic Day.”

In keeping with the assembly theme, on July 20 Brother Knorr gave the timely discourse “Living Now as a New World Society.” Recalling that afternoon, C. W. Barber writes: “As the scores of thousands were thus gathered together as a ‘New World society,’ the golden opportunity presented itself to obtain expression of this great crowd as to its solidarity and oneness.” How so? By adopting a resolution crystallizing the realization of Jehovah's witnesses that they constitute one united New World society. The resolution was unanimously adopted by the 125,040 present at the stadium, in the overflow tents and at Trailer City.

## **AN ALARM IS SOUNDED**

This grand assembly was sure to be remembered for a convention feature that Webster L. Roe calls “a thriller!” Concerning that particular discourse, Roger Morgan writes: “The talk that most impressed me at the 1953 assembly in Yankee Stadium was Brother Franz' lecture ‘New World Society Attacked from the Far North.’”

Truly, an alarm was sounded on that Thursday evening, July 23, 1953. The Society's vice-president, F. W. Franz, painted a graphic picture of the coming attack upon Jehovah's people by Gog of Magog and his hordes. Gog, the prophecy's principal character, was identified as Satan. And, Franz showed, the land of Magog is the location of the wicked spirit forces in a limited spiritual realm near earth's vicinity following their expulsion from heaven by 1918 (C.E.). ([Rev. 12:7-9](#)) The speaker showed that the present prosperity, unity and security of Jehovah's people would cause Gog and his forces to attack. But through all this terrific storm Jehovah would preserve the New World society. How much the 112,700 listeners appreciated this warning and the admonition to keep trusting in Jehovah and proclaiming the good news of his kingdom by Christ!

## THE ASSEMBLY'S MOVING CONCLUSION

Delegates were in for a particularly moving experience on Sunday afternoon, July 26. For N. H. Knorr's public discourse "After Armageddon—God's New World" 165,829 persons assembled inside Yankee Stadium, in overflow tents and at Trailer City. There were 91,562 persons in the stadium itself. Not long before the public talk, gates were opened and thousands filed in to sit on the grass of the playing field. Additional thousands heard the speech over the Society's radio station WBBR.

That absorbing hour passed quickly and soon the public talk was over. A cool breeze refreshed the thousands who remained for the assembly's closing session. Basing his remarks on [Psalm 145](#), Brother Knorr gave an hour-long talk stressing the need to praise Jehovah, exalt him as God, advertise him as Universal Sovereign and make known his kingship. With the lyrics the song "Sing Triumphal Praise!" and a closing prayer, the greatest Christian assembly to that time came to a happy ending.

## DIVINE WILL INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY

"When the year 1958 is mentioned even now," wrote Angelo C. Manera, Jr., "there is one big event that comes into the minds of Jehovah's witnesses—the 'great convention,' the Divine Will International Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses. What a convention!" This notable gathering brought together delegates from at least 123 countries and island groups. At a time of strain in international relations, with the threat of war looming, in the Middle East, Jehovah's people met in peace and unity at New York city's Yankee Stadium and nearby Polo Grounds on July 27 to August 3, 1958.

For nearly two weeks before the convention Brother Knorr met with over eighty of the Society's branch overseers and their assistants. They discussed the new book he had prepared on branch office procedure after personally inspecting the largest branch, in Brooklyn, the one for the United States. Other profitable meetings were held with these men, as well as missionaries, special pioneers and circuit and district overseers during the convention itself.

Something happened on Wednesday, July 30, that moved Ernest Jansma to

remark: "I am certain its magnitude will live long in the annals of theocratic history." Indeed, nothing like it had happened since Pentecost of 33 C.E., in Jerusalem, when about 3,000 new followers of Jesus Christ were baptized on one day. ([Acts 2:41](#)) Shortly after hearing the talk "Baptism According to the Divine Will," 7,136 persons (2,937 men and 4,199 women) were immersed at Orchard Beach, some miles away, thus symbolizing their dedication to Jehovah God. This was the largest mass baptism at one location in modern times.

At this grand gathering the earthly paradise, the spiritual paradise and the heavenly paradise—all three were considered in the discourse "Maintaining Our Spiritual Paradise," given by Brother Knorr. After this absorbing talk, the speaker related that missionaries in Thailand had once asked whether the Society would produce a study publication, not refuting falsehood, but setting forth just the true Biblical teaching. To meet their need and that of Christians everywhere, he said, the Society had produced the new book *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained*. Written in simple language and profusely illustrated, the *Paradise* book has been a delight to young and old alike. "A whole generation of children has grown up, fingering the *Paradise* book," says Grace A. Estep, "carrying it to meetings with them, sharing it with their little playmates, being able to relate, long before they were old enough to read, a whole series of Bible stories just from the pictures."

Saturday, August 2, was "Your Will Come to Pass" Day. That afternoon the Society's president gave the stirring discourse "Let Your Will Come to Pass," after which he thrilled his audience of 175,441 by announcing release of the new book *Your Will Be Done on Earth*. How the delegates yearned to probe its explanation of prophecies, especially those in the book of Daniel!

### **"WHAT A WITNESS TO JEHOVAH!"**

How might one describe what took place at the Divine Will International Assembly on Sunday, August 3? A printed convention report said of it: "What a witness to Jehovah!" That it was indeed. "Sunday was a day that no one who was at the assembly could ever forget," says Edgar C. Kennedy. "The gathering for the public talk at Yankee Stadium was a sight to behold. From where we sat we could see the continuous stream of people coming into the stadium, filling the stands and overflowing onto the field, being seated on the grass in orderly sections. To all watching, it was an overwhelming exhibition of the 'great crowd' coming to the

side of Jehovah's anointed remnant to join them in praising his name, doing his 'Divine Will.' We thank God that we could be a part of that crowd. As the stadium was being filled to capacity, the same thing was happening at the Polo Grounds. At 3:00 p.m. there was a hushed silence among the more than a quarter of a million people present as the chairman rose to introduce the speaker, N. H. Knorr, president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, and to announce the subject of his talk, 'God's Kingdom Rules—Is the World's End Near?'"

That vast crowd numbered 253,922! Judging from Friday's large audience, there must have been some 60,000 of the public present. During that hour multitudes heard convincing Scriptural proof that God's kingdom had been ruling since 1914 C.E. and that the world's end is near.

## MAKING GOD'S WORD AVAILABLE

To educate people for life and to advance the earthly interests of God's kingdom, it was imperative that the very Book having the Kingdom theme be made readily available to the people. For years Brother Knorr had felt that way. In fact, while working at the Society's factory he long had in his desk certain material that could be used to print a complete Bible, but circumstances had not developed in such a way as to make it possible to go ahead with this idea. After becoming the Society's president, however, Brother Knorr lost no time in making this thought a reality. Important, too, was the producing of low-cost Bibles, so that people in general could obtain and read copies of God's Word.

When N. H. Knorr spoke on the subject "Presenting 'the Sword of the Spirit,'" back in 1942 at the New World Theocratic Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses in Cleveland, Ohio, he identified the Bible as the greatest offensive weapon, the "sword of the spirit." ([Eph. 6:17](#)) In essence, he expressed the thoughts of Jehovah's servants in general: 'If we could only find the text we want, we could hold off our opponents, we could comfort those that mourn, we could make simple to others, with abundance of proof, the things so clear to us. If we only had a Bible with helps wherein we could find quickly what we need!'

There was such a provision made at this assembly—the new Watch Tower edition of the *King James Version*, the first *complete* Bible ever printed on the Society's own presses. Months of study by more than 150 collaborating servants of Jehovah had



resulted in compiling, as part of this publication, a concordance specially designed for use by God's people in their preaching work. As James W. Filson says, this Bible "filled a real need." "We needed it ourselves; we needed it also to place with the people in our territories. . . . It was fine to have a good, inexpensive Bible to place with them for only \$1.00. To this day it is the only Bible in many homes of people not in the truth."

Brother Knorr had another basic thought in mind. That was the preserving of Jehovah's name in all languages. There was a translation of the Bible that used the divine name in the Hebrew Scriptures. It was the *American Standard Version*. The Society purchased the use of plates to print this Bible, and the greatly appreciated Watch Tower edition became available to delighted conventioners at the United Announcers' Theocratic Assembly of 1944. "We used this Bible extensively on our return visits and Bible studies," remarks Edgar C. Kennedy.

## A NEW BIBLE TRANSLATION

Particularly since 1946 had the Society's president sought a modern-speech translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures that would furnish the basis for gaining yet further truth by faithfully presenting the sense of the original writings. When Brother Knorr spoke to an audience of 82,075 during the international Theocracy's Increase Assembly on August 2, 1950, he reported that at Brooklyn Bethel on September 3, 1949, there had been a joint meeting of the boards of directors of the Pennsylvania and New York corporations, only one director being absent, at which time he announced the existence of a "New World Bible Translation Committee." It had completed and turned over to the possession and control of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Pennsylvania corporation, a translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures. The factory force began working on the first of the manuscript on September 29, 1949.

That afternoon, August 2, 1950, Brother Knorr had the delight of releasing to very thrilled conventioners the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* in English. It was no revision of some earlier Bible translation. It was brand new! The New World Bible Translation Committee had used the noted master Greek text by scholars Westcott and Hort, while also consulting Greek Bible texts prepared by others. Archaic words like "thee" and "thou" had not been used. This Bible was in modern speech, readily understood by present-day English readers.

Especially noteworthy was the use of the divine name “Jehovah” 237 times in the main text of the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*. The Translation Committee’s foreword clearly presented the valid grounds for using the Name. Many were the fine features of the *New World Translation*.

In time, the *New World Translation* had profound effects upon the speech of Jehovah’s people in general. For instance, instead of “brethren,” it used “brothers,” and so God’s servants began using the modern term. ([Rom. 1:13](#)) Also, early in 1953 the word “congregation,” employed in the *New World Translation*, supplanted “company” as a word used with reference to a congregated group of God’s people. —Compare [Acts 20:17](#); [Colossians 4:15](#), *New World Translation*.

Through the years, five volumes of the *New World Translation to the Hebrew Scriptures* were prepared, then released at assemblies of God’s people. During their 1961 United Worshipers District Assemblies, Jehovah’s Christian witnesses were especially overjoyed to receive the complete one-volume edition of the *New World Translation to the Holy Scriptures*. Incidentally, by this time their numbers had risen to 965,169 Kingdom proclaimers earth wide. Surely, Jehovah had been blessing their efforts. By his holy spirit, God was making things grow.—[1 Cor. 3:6, 7](#).

## **BIBLE PRODUCTION ROLLS ON!**

The abiding desire to get the Word of God in the hands of the people has continued among Jehovah’s servants through the years. Therefore, Bibles of many types have become available. For example, the 1963 “Everlasting Good News” Assembly of Jehovah’s Witnesses was marked by the release of a pocket-sized edition of the revised 1961 English *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. Another English release was the valuable large-print original edition, bound in one volume, complete with cross-references, footnotes and an extensive appendix. But just imagine the delight of Italian, Dutch, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish conventioners as they received the newly released *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* in their native languages! “Bravo! Bravissimo!” exclaimed an Italian-speaking delegate. A German conventioner said: “What an opportunity for Jehovah’s witnesses to awaken the interest that the Germans once had in the Bible!” Later, the complete *New World Translation* became available in the aforementioned languages.

Printed releases of the "Divine Name" District Assemblies of 1971 included the 1971 large-print revised edition of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* in English. And for those desiring to make a scholarly approach to the study of the Scriptures, there is the 1,184-page volume entitled 'The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures,' published in 1969.

The continuing desire to keep Jehovah's name before the people has been the motivation behind other Bible-printing activities. Thus in 1972 the Watch Tower Society produced *The Bible in Living English*, by the late Steven T. Byington. It consistently renders the Hebrew Tetragrammaton as "Jehovah."

Since 1950 millions of copies of the *New World Translation* have been distributed throughout the earth, many of them in English. Greatly appreciated, therefore, was the *Comprehensive Concordance of the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, released in 1973, with some 14,700 word headings and about 333,200 entries. Many members of the Brooklyn Bethel family worked industriously at compiling it, proofreading it, and so forth. Certainly, with this provision much time is being saved in locating desired Bible texts.

Today, the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* is available in its entirety in seven languages, and the Christian Greek Scriptures in one other tongue. Also, work is under way on the Christian Greek Scriptures in four other languages. In English the regular edition of the *New World Translation* of the whole Bible is still available for \$1.00 a copy, and the equivalent is all that is being received in foreign currencies for this excellent translation of the Bible in other languages. Why such a low cost? So that the Holy Scriptures may reach the hands of the people, that the honest-hearted among them may read and accept it, "not as the word of men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God."—[1 Thess. 2:13](#).

More than three decades have passed since one of the Society's presses rolled off the first copy of the Watch Tower edition of the *King James Version*. During the intervening years, many dedicated hands have worked diligently to get copies of God's Word to the people in ever-increasing numbers. Why, from 1942 through the 1974 service year, 28,533,890 copies of the Scriptures, the whole or a part, have been produced at the Society's Brooklyn printing plant. And it may surprise you to know that during 1974 as many as fifteen rotary presses of the Watchtower Society in Brooklyn were being used full time to print Bibles.

Coupled with this tremendous production of Bibles has been the publishing of millions of Bible study aids. All of them—like *“All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial”* and *Aid to Bible Understanding*—have helped to make industrious Bible students and competent theocratic proclaimers of the good news out of thousands of persons from many walks of life. And, since some persons have doubted the authenticity of the Scriptures, earnest efforts have been made to prove that these are indeed of divine origin. Notable in this regard is the 192-page book *Is the Bible Really the Word of God?* with a printing of over 18,768,000 in 27 languages. This 1969 publication of the Society masterfully shows that the Bible’s truthfulness does not depend on evidence uncovered by archaeologists, as though the Scriptures were in a weak position, needing aid from worldly “authorities.” Rather, the book’s weighty points are argued from the standpoint of the Bible’s strength, based on its own powerful testimony, its reasonableness and the fact that it answers questions that otherwise remain unanswered. “It came at a time when the clergy were becoming more outspoken in their efforts to discredit the Bible,” comments Webster L. Roe, “and served to brace up the sagging faith of many to the point of making a sincere study of the Bible.”

### **‘LIVE OR DIE, WE BELONG TO JEHOVAH!’**

Jehovah’s witnesses are not peddlers of God’s Word. (2 Cor. 2:17) They sincerely advocate it and personally believe it. That is why they are firm in their adherence to God’s law on blood. In fact, they have become known the world around for their loyal compliance with God’s decree that blood should not be eaten or taken into one’s system to sustain the body’s vital forces. (Acts 15:28, 29) Even when life seems imperiled, Christians repeatedly have said, in essence, ‘live or die, we belong to Jehovah.’—Rom. 14:7, 8.

The sanctity of blood was highlighted in *The Watch Tower* of December 15, 1927. Among other things, its article “One Reason for God’s Vengeance” said: “God told Noah that every living creature should be meat unto him; but that he must not eat the blood, because the life is in the blood.” Years later, *The Watchtower* (December 1, 1944) stated: “Not only as a descendant of Noah, but now also as one bound by God’s law to Israel . . . the stranger was forbidden to eat or drink blood, whether by transfusion or by the mouth. (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:10-14)” In succeeding years, matters became even clearer.

*The Watchtower* of July 1, 1945, clarified the Christian position on blood. Among other things, it pointed out that, though blood transfusion dates back to the ancient Egyptians, the earliest reported case was a futile attempt to save the life of Pope Innocent VIII in 1492, an operation that cost the lives of three youths. More significantly, this issue of *The Watchtower* showed that God's law on blood as given to Noah is binding upon all mankind and that Christians are required to abstain from blood. ([Acts 15:28, 29](#)) Summarizing, *The Watchtower* said:

“Seeing, then, that the Most High and Holy God gave plain instructions as to the disposition of blood, in harmony with his everlasting covenant made with Noah and all his descendants; and seeing that the only use of blood that he authorized in order to furnish life to humankind was the use of it as a propitiation or atonement for sin; and seeing that it was to be done upon his holy altar or at his mercy seat, and not by taking such blood directly into the human body; therefore it behooves all worshipers of Jehovah who seek eternal life in his new world of righteousness to respect the sanctity of blood and to conform themselves to God's righteous rulings concerning this vital matter.”

The Christian's stand on blood transfusions had now been clearly defined. Samuel Muscariello was confronted with a test of his integrity on this matter. Blosco Muscariello tells us: “Shortly after getting out of prison [where he was confined for his Christian neutrality], my younger brother, Samuel, contracted the kind of strep throat that results in uremic poisoning. The doctors prescribed an operation—with blood transfusions, of course—giving him two years at the most to live without the operation and the blood. Sam walked out on them. This was in the year 1947. . . . Besides the *Watchtower* statement [one that they had particularly noted], the words of [visiting] Brother Sullivan at the prison kept ringing in our ears . . . ‘the taking of blood is wrong.’ In exactly two years, Sam was taken back to the hospital, dying. Under pressure, I went to his bedside and said, ‘Sam, they want to give you blood.’ Half drugged, half conscious, he tried to get out of bed [to avoid receiving blood, which never was administered to him] . . . our family, though saddened [by his death], was strengthened by Sam's clear thinking and integrity to Jehovah even until death.”

In the early 1950's an issue developed over the refusal of Jehovah's witnesses to accept blood transfusions. On April 18, 1951, the state went to court in Chicago,



Illinois, to take a child away from its parents so that doctors might give it a blood transfusion. Six-day-old Cheryl Labrenz was said to have a rare condition in which her red blood cells were being destroyed. According to the doctors, she would die if she did not receive a blood transfusion. As Christian witnesses of Jehovah, her parents, Darrell and Rhoda Labrenz, correctly viewed blood transfusion as a violation of God's law and thus opposed it. They were concerned about their baby's eternal welfare, for everlasting life is the prospect only of those adhering to God's laws. But by court order blood was administered to Cheryl despite her parents' protests.

The Labrenz case was but an early chapter in what has become a lengthy narrative. For more than two decades now Jehovah's witnesses have been in the spotlight because they have shown respect for God's law on blood. Marie M. Greetham remembers well what happened to her brother, Dan Morgan. A terminal cancer patient, three times he was discharged from a veteran's hospital in New York city because he staunchly refused to accept blood transfusions. When admitted a fourth time, he still refused to accept blood. Sister Greetham tells us: "This happened in August 1951 and Dan died in October 1951 at the age of fifty-four. Dan was so peaceful and happy. Just four days before he died, he explained to another sister how, very soon, he would close his eyes, but he was happy because he had been faithful and his reward was great, being one of the 'little flock' of Christ's followers."—[Luke 12:32](#); [Rev. 2:10](#).

But is death inevitable because a person rejects a blood transfusion? Certainly not! Consider the case of Gladys Bolton. She was told by her doctor that she had an aneurysm in the main artery leading to her spleen and that the spleen would have to be removed. She agreed to the operation on the condition that no blood transfusions would be administered to her. Though surprised, the doctor listened to her explanation and noted that she would not object to a 'blood substitute.' He agreed to operate without using blood and this was done on May 21, 1959. Before it was possible to remove the spleen, however, the artery ruptured and Sister Bolton lost over 70 percent of her blood. Though doctors and nurses in the operating room were calling for blood, her doctor held to his promise. She was unconscious for two weeks and in an oxygen tent for three, suffering one complication after another, but the doctor was very attentive and gradually Sister Bolton improved. She writes: "One day when we were alone, he said: 'Mrs. Bolton,



don't ever give up your God Jehovah. From all medical history and records you should be dead right now. No one has ever lost that much blood and lived!' I replied: 'Doctor Davis, I have no intentions of giving up Jehovah, but Jehovah's witnesses don't teach divine healing today. We appreciate good doctors and nurses, and all of you have worked hard to keep me alive. However, because we obeyed Jehovah's command concerning blood all of us have been blessed.' He seemed happy with my reply and thanked me." Sister Bolton was dismissed from the hospital on July 1, 1959.

Through the years, Jehovah God has graciously made bountiful provision for those who wish to adhere to his law on blood. In this constant flow of spiritual aid must be included the 64-page booklet *Blood, Medicine and the Law of God*, published in 1961. Have you used it to discuss this vital subject with your doctor?

## PROMOTING TRUE WORSHIP

Jehovah's servants know that if they are to enjoy divine favor they must engage in clean, undefiled worship. ([Jas. 1:27](#)) They need to be morally and spiritually clean. ([Isa. 52:11](#); [1 Cor. 6:9-11](#)) Properly, such points have been stressed by means of assembly talks, *Watchtower* articles, and the like, especially during relatively recent years as the world in general has sunk deeper and deeper into the morass of moral degradation.

In 1951, advocates of true worship learned something significant about the term "religion." Some of them could well recall 1938 when, at times, they carried the thought-provoking sign "Religion Is a Snare and a Racket." From their standpoint then, all "religion" was unchristian, from the Devil. But *The Watchtower* of March 15, 1951, approved of using the adjectives "true" and "false" respecting religion. Furthermore, the absorbing book *What Has Religion Done for Mankind?* (published in 1951 and released during the "Clean Worship" Assembly at Wembley Stadium, London, England) had this to say: "Taken according to the way it is used, 'religion' in its simplest definition means a system of worship, a form of worship, without regard to whether it is true or false worship. This agrees with the meaning of the Hebrew word for it, *'a·boh·dáh*, which literally means 'service', regardless of to whom it is rendered." Thereafter, the expressions "false religion" and "true religion" became common among Jehovah's witnesses.

God's people were determined to practice true religion and to remain morally and spiritually clean for Jehovah's service. Particularly was this emphasized in *The Watchtower* of March 1, 1952, containing the highly significant articles "Keeping the Organization Clean," "Propriety of Disfellowshipping" and "Sin Making Reinstatement Impossible." This journal showed that it was proper to expel an unrepentant baptized wrongdoer from the Christian congregation. (1 Cor. 5:1-13) If the sinner later repented, it was pointed out, reinstatement was possible.—2 Cor. 2:6-11.

This was not the first time *The Watchtower* had mentioned expulsion of unrepentant sinners from the congregation. From 1952 onward, however, the need to maintain the spiritual cleanliness of the Christian congregation was especially stressed. The passing of years also brought increasing awareness that merciful treatment of repentant ones was essential. (Jas. 2:13) Often, therefore, overseers have brought about spiritual restoration of erring ones before matters have deteriorated to the point that expulsion from the congregation was required.—Gal. 6:1.

Christians do not associate with disfellowshipped persons in a spirit of brotherhood. Nor do they tolerate wickedness among themselves. But what if disfellowshipped individuals forsake their wrong course? Highly pertinent to that question are the articles "Divine Mercy Points the Way Back for Erring Ones" and "Maintaining a Balanced Viewpoint Toward Disfellowshipped Ones," appearing in *The Watchtower* of August 1, 1974. These show that such disfellowshipped persons can be given real encouragement to get reestablished on the road to life.

Playing no small role in keeping the organization clean have been a number of assembly talks. For instance, L. E. Reusch especially mentions the 1964 assembly discourse "Keeping the Organization of Public Servants Pure, Chaste," as delivered by F. W. Franz. Says Brother Reusch: "He illustrated a young girl of easy virtue as being like a dirty towel in a public washroom. Frank, straight language on morals spelled things out in plain talk. . . . what marvelous timing—wise counsel in preparation for the avalanche-like decline of morals since then!"

The flow of sound Scriptural counsel has continued unabated through the years. Spiritually speaking, the publications have shown Jehovah's people the proper way in which to walk.

## EXPANDING THE KINGDOM WITNESS

During the 1950's pronounced efforts were made to expand the work of declaring the Kingdom message. In fact, a very significant step was taken in 1951. Speaking at an assembly in Washington, D.C., in October 1951, Brother Knorr disclosed that nearly 50 percent of the counties in the United States (1,469 out of 3,062) were completely unworked or were receiving only a partial witness. But this would change. Regular publishers and pioneers would be assigned to work in these territories during June, July and August of 1952. This met with an enthusiastic response. Similar work in isolated territories has been carried on up to our present time.

A further notable step in advancing the Kingdom witness marked the 1957 "Life-giving Wisdom" District Assemblies. Writes Marie Gibbard: "At this time we first heard the expression 'serve where the need is great.' Families could, in effect, do missionary-like service. This was a new concept in service that opened doors of opportunity to individuals and families who could not take advantage of Gilead School training and enter the formal missionary field."

Many Christians who have moved to places in the United States or abroad where the need for Kingdom preachers was greater than in their former congregations have been able to encourage and upbuild fellow believers, aid new ones to gain knowledge of God's truth or even share in the establishment of a congregation.

## LEARNING TO BE BETTER PREACHERS OF THE GOOD NEWS

"Everyone should be able to preach the good news from house to house," declared Brother Knorr, citing that as a primary objective among Christians. He made that remark on July 22, 1953, at the international New World Society Assembly.

Jehovah's witnesses had used phonograph recordings and testimony cards to preach the good news in years past, but that was not being done now. Yet there was a need for more training. As he spoke on the subject "Principal Work of All Servants," Brother Knorr announced a new house-to-house training program. Circuit and district servants (overseers) would have much to do with it, but all appointed servants in the congregations would render aid so that each Kingdom publisher might become a regular door-to-door proclaimer of the good news. While visiting a congregation, the circuit servant would select experienced house-

to-house preachers to work with new and inexperienced ones in the training program. This far-reaching provision for qualifying more Christian witnesses had its start on September 1, 1953, and soon was in full swing.

“The training program . . . was a very fine thing,” says James W. Filson. “Some who were timid were helped to reach out. Some who felt that they could do only one thing, such as magazine work, were helped to try to have a part in other features [of God’s service]. In trying to help others, many improved their own abilities.”

### **BOLDLY WIELDING THE “SWORD” OF THE SPIRIT**

Christians must be qualified to wield “the sword of the spirit, that is, God’s word.” ([Eph. 6:17](#)) In this, the training program was of great aid. With the passing of time, various outlines for suggested three- to eight-minute house-to-house sermons and ten- to fifteen-minute sermons for use on return visits were published by the Watchtower Society in the monthly service instruction bulletin *Informant* and its successor *Kingdom Ministry*. Some Witnesses later found it easier or more convenient to use short sermons based on one scripture, such as [Isaiah 2:4](#) or [John 17:3](#).

To Walter R. Wissman the giving of Bible sermons in house-to-house witnessing and on return visits “was a milestone in our theocratic progress.” Increasingly the public identified God’s people with the Bible. R. D. Cantwell remarks: “It wasn’t long until there was heard less and less of the old charge at the door that Jehovah’s witnesses were ‘book salesmen.’”

“What a grand improvement we have made in our house-to-house service!” exclaims Myrtle Strain. “No more is there need of a card to hand the people to read, or a need to play a record, or to go in and spend an hour telling them the whole outline of God’s purpose. Now we have all learned how to give a short sermon at the door, well prepared with a set theme, backed up by two or three pointed scriptures. We can use many short sermons, all based on important, timely scriptures. Moreover, we are anxious to draw the householder out in the conversation.” Whether accepting the message or not, people thus have been given a witness.

### **EXPOSING A FALSE LIGHT**

While Jehovah's witnesses were becoming more proficient in using the Holy Scriptures at the doors of the people, they had lost none of the fiery enthusiasm that had characterized their activities of past years. Thus, early in 1955, Jehovah's witnesses fearlessly declared a message that exposed a false spiritual light.

On Sunday, April 3, 1955, a bold proclamation of judgment was delivered against Christendom, and, in fact, the entire system of false religion. This was done by the simultaneous delivery of a public address by Christian speakers in many languages throughout the earth. That powerful lecture entitled "Christendom or Christianity—Which One Is 'the Light of the World?'" was heard by over a half million persons.

Jehovah's servants were eager to let the people know that Christendom is a false light. In time, the Watch Tower Society met the great demand for this message in booklet form by publishing 22,000,000 copies in thirty languages. Eager to share in its distribution, thousands of new publishers participated in the field service for the first time during April 1955. That month an all-time peak of 625,256 Kingdom publishers was reached throughout the world. In late July 1955, Jehovah's witnesses mailed letters and these forceful booklets to clergymen and editors.

### **"THE WORD"—WHO IS HE?**

The exposure of Christendom's false light certainly was not to the liking of many clergymen, but they had not received their last message from Jehovah's witnesses. Not by any means! Many clerics were denying the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Others claimed to advocate the Bible, but were teaching God-dishonoring doctrines. The Trinity was among these false teachings. In this regard—whether they liked it or not—clerics got a message from Jehovah's Christian witnesses late in 1962.

It came in the form of a 64-page booklet entitled "'The Word'—Who Is He? According to John." In it the Trinity doctrine was exposed as being false beyond denial. The booklet was scheduled for special distribution during November 1962. Not only did Kingdom proclaimers offer it in their house-to-house work. They mailed each Protestant and Catholic clergyman a copy, along with a covering letter prepared by the Watchtower Society. Thus a tremendous witness was given, identifying the "Word" of [John 1:1](#) as being, not God, but the Son of God, Jesus

Christ, in his prehuman existence.

## **ASSEMBLIES ON THE MOVE**

Contributing measurably to the development of needed Christian courage for the preaching work have been the regular assemblies of God's people. Some of them have been unusual in a particular respect. They have been assemblies on the move, with some delegates traveling from place to place, even around the world. What a unifying effect such gatherings have had! Christians in one land may read of the experiences and activities of their fellow believers in other countries. But to meet them and share their company—even when language barriers exist—is truly a rewarding experience. Though they may be unable to communicate in the same tongue, when God's people of different national and racial backgrounds meet together they do speak one language, the "pure language" of truth that God has graciously given to all those on earth who love him.—[Zeph. 3:9](#).

Noteworthy among conventions on the move was the "Triumphant Kingdom" Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses during 1955. In but ten weeks thirteen assemblies were held in the United States and abroad, and many delegates journeyed to the various gatherings. One publication said that this was "probably the biggest mass movement of Americans through Europe since the Allied invasion during World War II."

The Watch Tower Society had chartered forty-two planes and two steamships (the Arosa Kulm and the Arosa Star). These ships actually were floating convention halls because spiritually upbuilding programs were arranged on them daily for the benefit of the passengers.

One of the European assembly locations was the Zeppelinwiese in Nuremberg, where 107,423 persons gathered. "We in America were overjoyed," says C. James Woodworth, "to learn that in the very place that Hitler had screamed 'annihilation' for Jehovah's witnesses, these Christian people had the largest of all their 'Triumphant Kingdom' Assemblies! Where was Hitler?"

## **AROUND-THE-WORLD CONVENTION**

For Jehovah's people, something very significant began in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on June 30 and ended on September 8, 1963, in Pasadena, California. This was the



“Everlasting Good News” Assembly of Jehovah’s Witnesses—actually an around-the-world convention held in over twenty-four cities. In all, 583 delegates took a whirlwind tour around the globe. The various travelers, taking slightly different routes, assembled with throngs of fellow believers in such cities as London, Stockholm, Munich, Jerusalem, New Delhi, Rangoon, Bangkok, Singapore, Melbourne, Hong Kong, Manila, Seoul and Honolulu.

Many delegates to the London assembly visited the British Museum. There, among other things, they saw the Nabonidus Chronicle, which helps to date Babylon’s fall in 539 B.C.E. Interesting, too, was a clay liver, used for divination in Babylonian religion.—Compare [Ezekiel 21:21](#).

Conventioners who journeyed to Bible lands visited many sites of Biblical significance. When they saw the famed cedars of Lebanon, the plains of Moab, or the Valley of Hinnom, their appreciation of God’s Word was enhanced.

When traveling conventioners reached the Far East, they saw there, as elsewhere, effects of Babylon’s religious influence. At Wat Po in Bangkok, delegates saw a phallic symbol, before which barren women prayed in hopes of having children. Murals seen in Buddhist Wat Sakhet, also in that city, depicted both Nirvana and a hell of torment. The similarities between Dante’s *Inferno* and what conventioners saw depicted here made the common origin of the two religious ideas unmistakable.

Observing such features of false worship gave added meaning to the stirring assembly talk “Execution of Divine Judgment upon False Religion.” During that discourse listeners were taken back to ancient Babel (Babylon). When God confused the language of that city’s tower builders, they moved to other lands, carrying their unclean religion with them. It came to be practiced in various languages, and thus a world empire of false religion came into existence. Because of its origin in Babylon, the Bible book of Revelation terms it “Babylon the Great.” ([Rev. 18:2](#)) It was in connection with that moving discourse that assembly delegates received the new 704-page English book “*Babylon the Great Has Fallen! God’s Kingdom Rules!*” Actually two volumes in one, its first section considers ancient Babylon’s relationship with Jehovah’s people; Part Two includes a verse-by-verse analysis of [Revelation chapters 14-22](#).

## VISUAL AIDS HELP TO MAKE DISCIPLES

In the months following the assembly, a thought-provoking motion picture was completed by the Society. "Powerful!" "Inspiring!" "Revealing!" "Shocking!" These were typical reactions to this two-hour-long color motion picture "Proclaiming 'Everlasting Good News' Around the World." This film features the globe-encircling 1963 "Everlasting Good News" Assemblies, where a total of 580,509 gathered to hear the outstanding public lecture "When God Is King over All the Earth." But this movie is no mere travelogue. It shows clearly that a city now in ruins affects the lives of millions today. From that city—ancient Babylon—have sprung symbols and ceremonies that have permeated the way of life of nearly all earth's inhabitants. Underscored is the urgency of abandoning Babylon the Great. Depicted are the warmth and love of true Christians, as displayed at their assemblies around the world. Viewers can see that there is an organization with which one should associate upon getting out of Babylon the Great. Accordingly, lovers of righteousness are urged to abandon the world empire of false religion and associate with worshipers of Jehovah.—[Rev. 18:4, 5](#).

By 1963 the Watch Tower Society had been using modern-day motion pictures for a decade as visual aids in making disciples. Why, following the 1953 international assembly the Society released the engrossing movie "The New World Society in Action." It was the first motion picture produced by the Society since the "Photo-Drama," nearly forty years earlier. This hour-and-twenty-minute film proved to be a mighty instrument in acquainting viewers with the magnitude of God's earthly organization, the tremendous amount of work turned out by the Bethel family, the activity of Jehovah's witnesses in general, their large conventions and the smooth and efficient way in which the New World society was functioning. H. A. Cantwell states: "This was a wonderful means of helping newly interested persons to see just how large and extensive the organization is."

"Happiness of the New World Society" and "Divine Will International Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses" were motion pictures released by the Society following the large conventions of 1955 and 1958. Jehovah's servants also used the medium of motion pictures to counter the "God is dead" philosophy. In 1966 the Watch Tower Society produced the absorbing color movie "God Cannot Lie." This faith-building film proved that God is alive and that he is working out his purposes for earth and

man. Colorful motion pictures, interspersed with striking color illustrations, helped audiences to visualize principal Bible events and to grasp their significance for our day. "I enjoyed the movie," said one person, "particularly because it used historical events that were in fulfillment of Bible prophecies as proof that 'God Cannot Lie.' For example, the various ruins shown exist for everyone to see that God did not lie. Seeing them made me more assured that God will not lie concerning what He has said will occur now and in the future."

The motion picture "Heritage," also produced by the Watch Tower Society in 1966, dealt with the various temptations faced by young persons today. However, Angelo C. Manera, Jr., remarks that it showed "what the youth of the New World society were doing and how they were overcoming these temptations and following a Christian course of action." Unique in that it had a sound track, unlike other recent movies produced by the Society, it was shown by many television stations. So, thousands viewed it in their homes. "Heritage" also was presented at circuit assemblies and other public gatherings.

During recent years, circuit overseers have presented slide programs at public meetings while visiting congregations of God's people. The first of these began to be shown in September 1970. Entitled "Visiting the World Headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses," it was designed to acquaint persons with God's organization in a way that would motivate them to take proper action. Another of these slide presentations—"A Close Look at the Churches"—helped audiences to realize that the churches of Christendom are no place for those who love truth and righteousness. Not only would it make them want to disassociate themselves from the world empire of false religion; likely it would also motivate such individuals to share in aiding others to flee from Babylon the Great. These are but examples of slide programs presented by circuit overseers as visual aids toward imparting Scriptural instruction.

## **SOMETHING NEW AND THRILLING!**

"Listen to Daniel's Words for Our Day." Do you remember that portion of the 1966 "God's Sons of Liberty" District Assemblies? As delegates listened to it, a startling thing occurred. Different voices came over the loudspeaker, representing Daniel, the three faithful Hebrews—even angels. There was the sound of music, and the three Hebrews were given a final opportunity to bow to the image of gold set up

by Nebuchadnezzar on the Plain of Dura. Firmly, however, they maintained their integrity, refused to bow, and experienced Jehovah's deliverance.—[Dan. chap. 3](#).

Here was a new and different way to impart Bible instruction. Assembly audiences felt as though they had been transported to ancient Babylon. They received a similar thrill from the presentation entitled "See Jeremiah's Endurance, Needed in Our Day." Indeed, the delegates did "see" the endurance of Jeremiah. A Bible drama, with actors in costume depicting the life and times of that Hebrew prophet of ancient Jerusalem, took place before their very eyes. The dramatic impact was heightened by sound effects. All in attendance became much more aware of Jeremiah's ordeal and of his faithfulness—standing alone with a howling mob demanding his life. How this emphasized the trust that worshipers of Jehovah must place in their God! And how they were impressed with the need to endure in God's service, even in the face of death!

The year 1966, then, was the beginning of something—a new way to teach at assemblies of God's people. Through the years since 1966 Bible dramas have been a regular feature of large assemblies held by Jehovah's people. Often these dramatizations have been presented earlier at graduations of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, the students portraying persons of ancient and modern times.

Considering the blessings and benefits of these dramatizations, James W. Filson remarks: "I feel that the Bible dramas have been an excellent aid in bringing home to us the lessons and counsel of the Bible's record." In fact, some have been moved by assembly dramas to confess wrongdoing and seek spiritual assistance.—[Prov. 28:13](#); [Jas. 5:13-20](#).

## **ADVOCATES OF GOD'S KINGDOM AND NO OTHER GOVERNMENT**

Jehovah's Christian witnesses give their allegiance to God's kingdom. Repeatedly through the years they have demonstrated this. For instance, go back almost a quarter of a century to Tuesday, August 1, 1950—"Theocratic Devotion Day" at the Theocracy's Increase Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses. In his discourse "The Increase of His Government," Brother Knorr presented a mountain of evidence exposing as entirely false the charge made by religious adversaries that Jehovah's witnesses support Communism. Not only had various parts of the United States

government refused to place the Witnesses on the list of subversives and Communist fellow travelers, but the Watch Tower Society's own published record since 1879 definitely proved that Jehovah's servants are against Communism. Plainly, Brother Knorr showed that true Christianity does not pave the way for the rise and growth of atheistic Communism, but hypocritical Christianity does! It was after that message that the Society's president proposed a declaration and resolution against Communism, which was enthusiastically endorsed by the convention audience of 84,950.

A few years later, during 1956 and early 1957, a petition was unanimously adopted by 462,936 delegates at 199 assemblies of Jehovah's witnesses from June 1956 through February 1957. From each assembly such a petition was directed to Nikolai A. Bulganin, then premier of the U.S.S.R. The petition described the harsh treatment experienced by Jehovah's witnesses in Russia and Siberia. It asked that imprisoned Witnesses be freed and authorized to organize, and it requested that they be permitted to establish regular relations with their governing body and be allowed to publish and import Bible literature. The petition drew attention to the Kingdom-preaching work done by Jehovah's witnesses, while disclaiming any political interests or affiliations on their part. Furthermore, the petition proposed a discussion between representatives of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society and those of the Russian government. It suggested that a delegation of Witnesses be permitted to proceed to Moscow for this purpose, as well as to visit the various camps where witnesses of Jehovah were interned.

On March 1, 1957, a combined petition was signed and sent to the Russian government by the Watch Tower Society's seven directors. The Communists never replied or made any acknowledgment of its receipt. Nonetheless, Russian witnesses of Jehovah have continued to speak God's Word boldly as advocates of God's kingdom and no other government.

Not only have Jehovah's witnesses been staunch advocates of God's kingdom; they have also drawn attention to the failure of Christendom's clergy in this regard. So it was that a very significant resolution was adopted by God's people on Friday, August 1, 1958, at the Divine Will International Assembly. Convention delegates had been urged to be present for the afternoon session, and 194,418 were on hand. They listened attentively as F. W. Franz, the Watch Tower Society's vice-

president, spoke on the subject "Why This Convention Should Resolve." Brother Knorr followed him on the program, forcefully presenting a resolution that exposed Christendom's clergy as the most reprehensible class on earth today. The document also reaffirmed the theocratic principles of Jehovah's people, unashamedly proclaimed God's kingdom by Christ as the sole means of salvation and strongly set forth the determination of Jehovah's witnesses to preach about this kingdom in love, peace and unity, without letup, until Jehovah brings the witness work to a finale at Armageddon. Brother Knorr made the motion that the resolution be adopted as read, the motion was seconded, and as he put the question to the vast audience, there was a unanimous roar of Aye! in approval.

In time, 72,348,403 tracts containing this resolution were printed for worldwide distribution in fifty-three languages, most of this work being done in December 1958. Extensive circulation of this information also resulted when the resolution and its introductory talk were published in *The Watchtower* of November 1, 1958.

Was such distribution effective? Indeed it was. For example, Peter D'Mura writes: "In the spring of 1959 I met a young man who was moved by the resolution to learn the truth, become dedicated and later take up pioneering." And C. James Woodworth comments: "Some who now are actively Jehovah's dedicated, baptized witnesses right here in the congregations of Cleveland, Ohio, began their march out of Babylon the Great by reading this resolution and accepting the opportunity to study the Bible."—[Rev. 18:4](#).

Jehovah's servants had an excellent opportunity to show that they were advocates of God's kingdom and no other government in the year 1963, during the around-the-world "Everlasting Good News" Assembly. They enthusiastically adopted a resolution whereby they proclaimed their recognition of Jehovah as the Eternal Sovereign of the universe and their refusal to give idolatrous worship to the political image, the United Nations, as had the nations, which are being led by invisible wicked spirits to Armageddon. ([Rev. 13:11-18; 16:14, 16](#)) Rather, with the help of the angels under Christ and God's holy spirit and Word, Jehovah's witnesses were determined to continue declaring to all peoples the "everlasting good news" concerning God's Messianic kingdom and his judgments. ([Rev. 14:6](#)) After its adoption by 454,977 persons at the "Everlasting Good News" Assembly



around the world, this resolution was adopted at national assemblies. Also, it was published in *The Watchtower* of November 15, 1963, in sixty-six languages, giving it worldwide circulation.

With its introductory talk “Why We Should All Join in a Resolution,” this sweeping document took within its scope all seven plagues of [Revelation chapter sixteen](#). It, therefore, included the judgment messages first declared in seven successive resolutions and related material presented at conventions of God’s people from 1922 through 1928. Hence, by this one comprehensive resolution, hundreds of thousands who had taken no part in adopting those earlier resolutions publicly declared themselves as favoring and supporting the outpouring of the plagues from Jehovah that were prophetically set out in [Revelation chapter sixteen](#). Once again, Jehovah’s servants had also made it very clear that they were advocates of God’s kingdom and no other government or any political arrangement.

At the 1969 “Peace on Earth” Assemblies the sounding of the seven symbolic trumpets referred to in [Revelation chapters 8-11](#) came under consideration in the discourse “Final Woes to Enemies of Peace with God.” That talk was followed by a powerful Declaration, forcefully showing that peace with the Creator would come only by means of his Messianic kingdom. By adopting the Declaration, Jehovah’s people maintained that God’s judgments are against Christendom. They proclaimed their complete neutrality regarding all political controversy and made it abundantly clear that they trust entirely in God’s kingdom and that they will not let up in preaching about it to all the nations until the end comes.

Jehovah’s Christian witnesses again showed that they were advocates of God’s kingdom and no other government during their “Divine Victory” International Assembly, held in various places throughout the earth from late June 1973 to January 1974. Jesus’ intriguing parable of the minas was spotlighted in one of the assembly discourses—“Gaining Wealth for Earth’s New King.” ([Luke 19:11-27](#)) Following this talk, the speaker presented a Declaration and Resolution, thereafter adopted by assembly delegates with a resounding Aye! Among other things, it pointed out that the 2,520-year-long Gentile Times began with the desolation of earthly Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. and came to their complete fulfillment upon “heavenly Jerusalem,” where Jesus Christ was installed as Messianic king in 1914 C.E. ([Heb. 12:22](#)) It was noted that the world of mankind needs further

warning of the impending “great tribulation.” ([Matt. 24:21](#)) Jehovah’s Christian witnesses resolved to continue putting faith in the Divine Victory, sounding that warning and proclaiming God’s Messianic kingdom, the cure-all for distressed humanity.

It is, therefore, an established fact that Jehovah’s servants are advocates of God’s kingdom and of no other government. It is the good news of that kingdom that they preach world wide. Repeatedly, they have demonstrated their allegiance to God’s Messianic kingdom and this they continue to do throughout the earth.

## **SPIRITUAL FOOD AT THE RIGHT TIME**

How have Jehovah’s Christian witnesses been able to maintain their strong position as advocates of God’s kingdom? How have they remained “firm in the faith” when others were losing faith? ([1 Cor. 16:13](#)) This has been possible because Jehovah God graciously has provided spiritual food at the proper time through the “faithful and discreet slave” class.—[Matt. 24:45-47](#).

Consider the 1960’s as an example. Winds of religious and social change then were blowing throughout the United States. It was becoming increasingly common for many of Christendom’s clergy to view portions of the Bible as mythological. Also, to them its moral code was out of date. Furthermore, some were saying “God is dead.”

As the 1960’s wore on, social, psychological, political and economic factors fostered racial disorder, even violence, in the United States. For instance, what was termed the “long, hot summer” of 1964 witnessed the murder of three civil-rights workers in Mississippi, as well as unrest throughout the South. Northern cities were affected too. Some were rocked by riots. In the Los Angeles riots alone, of August 11-16, 1965, battles, looting and burning by mobs resulted in the death of thirty-five persons and damage estimated at \$200,000,000.

Amid such winds of religious and social turbulence, Jehovah’s witnesses in the United States and other lands kept trusting in Jehovah and adhering to his Word. He, in turn, saw that they were properly directed. For example, during the “Courageous Ministers” District Assemblies of 1962, they benefited greatly from talks on “‘Be in Subjection’—to Whom?” “Subjection to ‘Superior Authorities’ Why?”

and related topics. Later that year such vital information was published in *The Watchtower*. (See the issues of November 1 through December 1.)

It was made clear that the “superior authorities” or “higher powers” mentioned in [Romans chapter thirteen](#) are secular governmental authorities, permitted by Jehovah to hold their positions of responsibility at this time. All of God’s servants today were urged to be in relative subjection to the governmental superior authorities and not to flout the laws of earthly governments that do not conflict with God’s law.—[Rom. 13:1-7](#); [Acts 5:29](#).

“How wisely Jehovah directed us in relationship to the political rulers of the world!” exclaims L. E. Reusch, adding: ‘How could we possibly have known that 1964 would see the civil-rights issue ferment and boil over into riots in the streets and civil disobedience, violent and passive? . . . We might have found ourselves stuck with the same reasoning that the clergy have who have involved themselves in marches, protests and social issues of the day. Just right on time, in 1962, at the summer assemblies, we were fed ‘food at the proper time.’ [[Matt. 24:45](#)] . . . Clearly *relative* subjection was spelled out and has safeguarded our position before Jehovah and the political authorities he permits to exist until Christ Jesus’ Kingdom rule removes them.”

Yes, indeed, Jehovah God has supplied spiritual food in abundance. Why, just look at a shelf containing books that have been published by the Watch Tower Society in relatively recent years! There is the 1958 publication “*Your Will Be Done on Earth*,” dealing with the book of Daniel. A verse-by-verse consideration of the entire book of Revelation appears in the books “*Then is Finished the Mystery of God*” and “*Babylon the Great Has Fallen!*” *God’s Kingdom Rules!* “*The Nations Shall Know that I Am Jehovah*”—*How?* published in 1971, considers the prophecy of Ezekiel. And the fulfillment of restoration prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah is viewed from the twentieth-century vantage point in *Paradise Restored to Mankind—by Theocracy!*

Rich spiritual provisions have been made for old and young alike. Back in 1958, the book *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained* was published in simple language and profusely illustrated. In 1971 the 192-page book *Listening to the Great Teacher* further contributed to avoiding a ‘generation gap’! Here is a publication designed for parents to read with their children. And the book’s simple language and fine illustrations make youngsters feel it is ‘for them.’

## EMPHASIS ON DISCIPLE-MAKING

Some of the Christian publications available to Jehovah's people are especially designed to help them to carry out their commission to preach the good news and make disciples. ([Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20](#)) "*Let God Be True*" was such a book, originally published in 1946. It was an aid dealing with basic Bible doctrines. Then in 1950 the book "*This Means Everlasting Life*" provided information on deeper Bible subjects and Christian living. Consider also the 416-page book "*Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie*," published in 1965. As a basic Bible study aid, it has proved to be a helpful instrument in the hands of Kingdom proclaimers.

Jehovah's servants are constantly being provided with things they need for their preaching and disciple-making work. Thinking back to the 1967 district assemblies, C. W. Barber mentions something he terms an "innovation." He remarks: "Jehovah's organization is always providing new thrills and joys. This time it was a new kind of campaign book, a small clothbound book entitled 'Did Man Get Here by Evolution or by Creation?' . . . this one was to be presented for twenty-five cents. Right from its introduction, it was apparent that it would have tremendous appeal to all thinking people."

Millions of copies were placed by Kingdom proclaimers in the field service. During May 1968 special efforts were made to get it into the hands of educators, with excellent results. Marie Gibbard states: "A schoolteacher in White Plains, New York, is a baptized Witness today because a twelve-year-old student placed a copy with him and the interest was followed up."

## SOMETHING TO INFLUENCE THE WORK AHEAD!

Another noteworthy innovation came in 1968. When *The Watchtower* announced the "Good News for All Nations" District Assemblies, it stated: "On Friday something is planned that will not only delight you but also no doubt surprise you, for it will have considerable influence on the work that we will be doing during the years to come."

Jehovah's servants were curious. What could this new development be? The answer came after the powerful keynote speech "The 'Good News' of a World Without False Religion." At its conclusion a new 192-page, pocket-size Bible study

aid was released. This book, *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, was received with great delight. "Who Is God?" "Where Are the Dead?" "Why Has God Permitted Wickedness Until Our Day?" "The Last Days of This Wicked System of Things," "Building a Happy Family Life," "True Worship—a Way of Life"—these were some of the book's absorbing chapters. The new publication would involve the student at every turn.

But there was something more to the surprise that was in store for assembly delegates. The new *Truth* book was to be used in a six-month Bible study program. Because of the way this publication involved the student, generally by the time he completed it he would take some action, either for or against the truth. No longer would one of Jehovah's witnesses conduct Bible studies with an individual year after year without the student's making definite spiritual progress, acting upon the knowledge gained.

## A WELL-TIMED PROVISION

From 1960 to 1965 the annual baptism figure had been in the 60,000 bracket. In 1966, however, the number of those immersed was down to 58,904. Under the circumstances one might well have asked, Is the work slowing down? Time proved that it was not.

During the 1967 service year 74,981 persons were baptized. This was an upswing and it gave renewed reason for optimism. Then came 1968, along with the *Truth* book and the six-month Bible study program. "In the minds of many," remarks Edgar C. Kennedy, "it was closely linked with the announcement two years before of the 6,000 years [of man's existence on earth] ending in 1975." C. W. Barber similarly cites "the shortness and urgency of the times," terming 1968 as a "turning point," and states: "Everywhere the brothers aroused themselves and went at this 'easier' method of spreading the good news, with vigor. The number of publishers started to climb again all over the earth. The listeners began to become doers of the work. . . . Truly Jehovah directed the bringing forth of this small but powerful disciple-making instrument."

The book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* has had an astounding circulation. Did you know that it is now being published in ninety-one languages? Furthermore, in the six years since it was first released, 74,000,000 copies of it have come off the

press. This Bible study aid has helped hundreds of thousands of persons to gain accurate knowledge of the Scriptures and to get “a tight grip on the word of life.” (Phil. 2:16) While the *Truth* book is not the only one used by Jehovah's witnesses when studying the Bible with the people, doubtless the majority of the 1,351,404 home Bible studies currently being held by Jehovah's witnesses in the homes of the people world wide are based on the excellent Scriptural material found in this publication.

## A FLOOD TIDE OF LITERATURE ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

Today the good news of God's Messianic kingdom is being preached throughout the earth. And playing no small part in that work is a virtual flood tide of literature announcing Jehovah's kingdom. Take *The Watchtower* as an example. Once known as *Zion's Watch Tower*, its original edition (that of July 1879) consisted of only about 6,000 copies. Now, by 1975, the average printing of each issue is some 8,700,000 copies in 79 languages.

During the years since 1879 *The Watchtower* has undergone some changes in name and format. Originally it was known as *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*. Today its front cover identifies it as *The Watchtower, Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*. For years, *Watchtower* covers were printed in black and white. Then, with the issue of January 1, 1939, a new colored cover was introduced. The journal then had larger, but fewer pages than it now contains. The issue of August 15, 1950, released at the Theocracy's Increase Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses, bore a different cover design, contained colorful illustrations and was increased from sixteen to thirty-two pages. Has *The Watchtower* contributed to theocracy's increase? Indeed it has! Doubtless you will be amazed to know that from the 1942 through the 1974 service years alone 2,836,041,443 copies of *The Watchtower* have been published'.

*Awake!*, companion magazine to *The Watchtower*, is the successor of *The Golden Age* and *Consolation*. Since its first issue—that of August 22, 1946—*Awake!* has reflected sure hope for the establishment of God's righteous new order in this very generation. This journal, too, is part of that great flood tide of literature announcing the Kingdom. Why, from the 1942 through the 1974 service years 2,600,751,501 copies of *Awake!* (and *Consolation*) have been printed!



Not to be overlooked is the flood tide of bound books that have announced Jehovah's kingdom, including the 1973 volume *God's Kingdom of a Thousand Years Has Approached*. It may surprise you to know that from 1942 through the 1974 service year the Watchtower Society has printed 352,513,470 bound books at its headquarters and by means of other printeries throughout the earth.

## EXPANSION OF PRINTING FACILITIES

This ever-increasing flow of Bible literature has called for continued expansion of the Watch Tower Society's printing facilities, not only in the United States, but also in various other places throughout the earth. It was back in 1927 that the Society moved into its modern fireproof structure of reinforced concrete at 117 Adams Street in Brooklyn, New York. With 70,000 square feet of floor space, that building seemed very spacious, but the acceleration of the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work has required expansion of the Society's facilities.

A major step in this regard was disclosed by Brother Knorr on August 8, 1946, at the Glad Nations Theocratic Assembly. He informed his convention audience that there would be expansion of the Society's printing plant and the Bethel home in Brooklyn. Thus property adjacent to the original plant was purchased, evacuated and then demolished. Excavation for the new factory began on December 6, 1948, and construction commenced in January 1949. When completed, this nine-story concrete addition almost doubled the factory floor space. By 1950 the Society's printing plant at 117 Adams Street occupied an entire city block.

During 1954 the Watch Tower Society completed construction of a new building at 4100 Bigelow Boulevard, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Grant Suiter says, "This building is not only the Society's registered office, but the center of the Pennsylvania corporation's annual meetings, and therein is a Kingdom Hall," used by certain congregations of Jehovah's witnesses. One the Kingdom Ministry Schools was also conducted there for a number of years, up till May 4, 1974.

By the mid-1950's the Kingdom-preaching work was increasing greatly in tempo. Some years earlier, in 1944, the Society had printed 17,897,998 copies of *The Watchtower* and *Consolation* (now *Awake!*). During 1954, however, the total was 57,396,810 copies. Hence, expansion of the Society's facilities in Brooklyn, New York, was essential. By spring of 1955, therefore, excavation for a new factory

began and in 1956 this thirteen-story plant was completed. Situated at 77 Sands Street, "The Watchtower Building," as it was called, has 192,000 square feet of floor space, more than the factory at 117 Adams Street, to which it is linked by an over-the-street bridge. In 1958 the Society purchased a nine-story factory on an adjoining city block, and this has been used almost exclusively for storage.

The number of Kingdom proclaimers exceeded a million world wide by the mid-1960's. Again the Society's Brooklyn factory space was cramped. So in 1966, on a block adjoining its other plants, construction began on another large factory. That eleven-story structure, dedicated on January 31, 1968, added 226,000 square feet of floor space to the Watchtower factory complex. By then the Society's Brooklyn factory buildings, suitably interconnected by bridges spanning the streets, covered four city blocks.

Late in 1969 the rate of expansion increased dramatically. On November 25, 1969, the huge, ten-building complex of the Squibb pharmaceutical plant in Brooklyn was purchased by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. This acquisition added 632,792 square feet of floor space to the Society's headquarters facilities. C.W. Barber recalls watching some of the construction of the Squibb complex years ago. Though Jehovah's organization had tried to get ground in that very location, the Squibb firm succeeded in acquiring it. According to Brother Barber, "Squibb ran into a lot of trouble, too, finding a footing for their buildings, as the ground was so sandy there." He adds: "They finally erected a fine-looking group of buildings, and I used to think how good it would be if these belonged to the Society. So, lo and behold, it had come to pass!"

## **EXPANSION OF THE BETHEL HOME KEEPS PACE**

As the Watchtower Society's factory facilities in Brooklyn were expanded there was a corresponding need for expansion of the Bethel home. Hence, in 1950 a twelve-story addition to the home was completed. But the headquarters staff continued to increase. So, on December 8, 1958, there began the demolition of the old buildings on the site of a proposed Bethel annex, a building on Columbia Heights in Brooklyn. Construction on it began in 1959, and before long the twelve-story Bethel addition was completed. Its dedication took place on Monday evening, October 10, 1960, in the new building's beautiful Kingdom Hall. On hand were members of the Bethel family and brothers who had worked on the structure,

making a total of 630 persons. The headquarters staff itself had grown from 355 in 1950 to 607 in 1960.

In 1965 the locale of the Bethel home—the Brooklyn Heights area—was named New York city's first "Historic District." Though the Society had desired to erect another twelve-story residential building, it cooperated with the Landmarks Preservation Commission and limited its construction. The fronts of three old structures were allowed to remain and a seven-story home was wrapped around behind these and tied into them. This new building at 119 Columbia Heights was dedicated on May 2, 1969. Next to it is a large apartment house owned by Jehovah's witnesses, and much of it has been used to accommodate members of the headquarters staff. Incidentally, by the end of the 1970 service year the Bethel family (including regular and temporary workers in Brooklyn and at the Society's farms) had grown to 1,449 persons. Additionally, seventy students of Gilead School then lived at headquarters, bringing the total to 1,519. To help to accommodate so many people, the Society leased three floors of the nearby Towers Hotel.

## **EXPANSION CONTINUES**

Yet, expansion of facilities has not been limited to these developments. "In 1964," says Grant Suiter, "the Society took steps toward the eventual sale of a portion of the Kingdom Farm property, including the buildings previously utilized by the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead [near South Lansing, New York]." A few years later the sale was completed. So the size of the farm was reduced.

In the meantime the Board of Directors of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., had purchased farm facilities near Pine Bush, New York. The original farm of 811 acres was acquired there in 1963, becoming known as Watchtower Farm. A fine residence building was completed there in 1968, and other construction followed. In time another farm was acquired nearby. Today the two Watchtower Farms cover 1,698 acres.

On the Watchtower Farms, vegetables, fruits, meat and dairy items are produced to feed members of the Society's headquarters staff. Moreover, among the numerous structures on farm No. 1 are two factories. Factory No. 1 has four rotary presses, each capable of printing 12,500 magazines per hour. In factory No. 2

there is sufficient space for paper storage and fourteen more rotary presses besides much other equipment. Six rotary presses are already in operation there, making a total of ten presses in the two factories. When completed, these plants will provide about 400,000 square feet of floor space. By October 1974, over 460 regular and temporary workers were serving at the Watchtower Farms.

Not only has the Watch Tower Society expanded its printing facilities in the United States. Expansion has been the watchword throughout the earth. Jehovah's witnesses now have printing plants in Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Japan, Nigeria, the Philippines, South Africa, Sweden and Switzerland. In fact, Jehovah's people have thirty-seven printeries around the world. And, from 1955 until now they have increased the number of their large rotary presses earth wide from nine to sixty-four. Certainly, printing facilities are available to meet the growing demand for Bible literature.

Why has all this expansion around the globe been undertaken? It is because those shouldering responsibility for such decisions in Jehovah's organization are interested in helping people to gain knowledge of the Scriptures. Is that your objective too? Doubtless it is, if you are one of Jehovah's Christian witnesses. Members of the headquarters staff share such desires. That is why they have been working diligently to produce Bible literature. Their combined efforts during the 1974 service year made it possible to produce, in the United States alone, 268,509,382 copies of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*, as well as 13,874,957 booklets, 45,189,920 books and Bibles, and 261,387,772 tracts.

To whom must the credit go for all this theocratic expansion? This is not the result of mere human planning and earnest effort. The credit must go to Jehovah God, who makes things grow. He is the One who has prospered the efforts of his people in preaching the good news of the Kingdom.—1 Cor. 3:5-7.

## MARKING A CENTURY OF DIVINE DIRECTION

By the year 1970 a century had passed since Charles Taze Russell and a few associates began meeting for earnest, prayerful study of the Scriptures. Through all those decades, Jehovah's servants had enjoyed spiritual enlightenment and divine direction. Octogenarian Edith R. Brenisen has been associated with Jehovah's organization for a good many of those years. As she attended one of the

1970 "Men of Good Will" District Assemblies, she was deeply moved. Sister Brenisen writes: "When at the 1970 assembly in Boston, and seeing that huge crowd at Fenway Park, I recalled the first *one*-day convention I went to in 1902 at Park Square, Boston, to hear Brother Russell give a talk. That was truly a mere handful. Incidentally, that is where I first met Brother Macmillan. I cannot describe my feelings as I sat there, in Boston, sixty-eight years later and gazed upon that great crowd of Witnesses surrounding me. As in the earlier days, when so few in number, the same holy spirit, zeal and love for Jehovah filled our hearts."

At that year's assembly, the chairman's opening address was entitled "One Hundred Years of Divine Direction." Margaret Green recalls that it "made us think back on what we had read about the organization in the 1870's and its small beginning and the unbelievable growth for the past 100 years."—Compare [Zechariah 4:10](#).

## **YIELDING TO DIVINE DIRECTION**

Jehovah's servants were determined to continue yielding to divine direction. They gave clear evidence of this at their five-day "Divine Name" District Assemblies of 1971. These exalted the name Jehovah and provided education regarding obedience to the divine principles for which that name stands. Among other things, information was presented concerning further theocratic alignment of the modern-day Christian congregation.

But before we consider the organizational developments brought to the fore at the 1971 district assemblies, we do well to take a look at the past. Something very notable occurred in the late 1930's and early 1940's. First, let us go back some three decades.

## **"THE THEOCRACY IS OF AGE"**

September 30 to October 2, 1944, were highly significant days for God's people. Thousands of them met in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for Jehovah's Witnesses' Theocratic Convention and the Annual Meeting of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. Among the convention's features were the discourses "Theocratic Organization for Final Work," by T. J. Sullivan, "Theocratic Organization in Action," by F. W. Franz, and "The Theocratic Alignment Today," given by N. H. Knorr. The

theme of those discourses emphasized the importance of the business to be transacted at the annual meeting that year. Hence, thousands remained in Pittsburgh for the Society's business meeting on Monday, October 2, 1944.

"Here I met and visited with Brother Van Amburgh for the last time," says W. L. Pelle. "His first remark when he saw me was, 'Brother Pelle, the Theocracy is of age.'" But why would the Society's aging secretary-treasurer make a remark like that? Because of the developments on that occasion.

Of principal importance was the passing of six resolutions proposing changes in the Watch Tower Society's charter by amendments. The first amending resolution proposed the enlarging of the Society's purposes so as to assume properly the great worldwide work ahead. Among other things, it put the divine name "Jehovah" in the charter. The third eliminated entirely the charter's provision that fixed membership on the basis of monetary contributions made to the Society. Upon its becoming effective, membership would be limited to not more than 500 men, all chosen on the basis of their active service to God. As *The Watchtower* of November 1, 1944, put it: "This amendment will have the effect of bringing the charter as near to Theocratic arrangements as the law of the land permits." All six amendment resolutions (involving Articles 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 10) were adopted.

Though Jehovah's people did not then realize it, what they did organizationally in 1944 evidently had Biblical significance. Daniel's prophecy had foretold that for 2,300 "evenings and mornings," or days, a symbolic 'small horn' (the Anglo-American World Power) would trample Jehovah's theocratic "holy place" as represented by Jesus' anointed followers on earth. ([Dan. 8:9-14](#)) This occurred during World War II.

At the beginning of the foretold 2,300 days the two-part article "Organization" appeared in *The Watchtower* (June 1 and June 15, 1938). In the first part it was said: "Jehovah's organization is in no wise democratic. Jehovah is supreme, and his government or organization is strictly theocratic." Part two presented a resolution that congregations of Jehovah's witnesses adopted, calling for appointment theocratically of all officiating servants in all congregations, from the top down.

If counted from June 1, 1938, the 2,300 days extended to October 8, 1944. Or, if reckoned from June 15, 1938, they ended on October 22, 1944. At the end of that



period, theocratic organization again was emphasized by the organizational talks and adjustments at the convention and annual meeting of September 30 to October 2, 1944, at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and in articles on theocratic organization published in *The Watchtower* of October 15 ("Organized for Final Work") and November 1, 1944 ("Theocratic Organization in Action" and "The Theocratic Alignment Today"). Hence, at the end of the trialsome 2,300 days God's servants showed themselves stronger for Jehovah's theocratic government by Jesus Christ than they ever had been. As foretold, the "holy place" then was "restored to its rightful state."—[Dan. 8:14](#), *Revised Standard Version*; see [The Watchtower](#), December 1, 1971, pages 711-728.

## APOSTOLIC CONGREGATION STRUCTURE

Now let us return to the "Divine Name" District Assembly of 1971. Especially important were portions of the program that dealt with the governing arrangement of the early Christian congregation.

Recent studies of the Biblical, apostolic congregation structure had been undertaken by the governing body of Jehovah's witnesses. Brought to light was the need for some modern-day adjustments. Whereas in recent years one mature Christian man had served as congregation servant, or presiding overseer, and was assisted by appointed "servants," the apostolic method of governing each congregation was by means of a body of elders. ([Acts 20:17-28](#); [1 Tim. 4:14](#)) Also, during the first century C.E. there evidently had been a rotating of chairmanship within a congregation's body of elders. It was therefore deemed fitting to have a different chairman of the body of elders serve each year where there is more than one elder in a congregation.

## CHOOSING ELDERS AND MINISTERIAL SERVANTS

The governing body of Jehovah's witnesses sent each congregation an instructive letter about selecting the "body of elders," as well as ministerial servants. According to that letter of December 1, 1971, all baptized men of the congregation twenty years old and upward were considered. (See [Ezra 3:8](#).) Brothers participating in discussions concerning elders and ministerial servants prepared well, considering the articles "Theocratic Organization Amidst Democracies and Communism," "Appointed Officers in the Theocratic Organization" and "A 'Body of

Elders' with Rotating Chairmanship," appearing in *The Watchtower* of November 15, 1971. Additionally, there was careful study of the January 1, 1972, *Watchtower* articles entitled "Who Is Wise and Understanding Among You?" and "Appointed Elders to Shepherd the Flock of God." And, to the extent that time permitted, the brothers had read material in *Aid to Bible Understanding* under the headings "Older Man," "Overseer" and "Minister."

When members of the congregation committee and other qualified brothers met together, prayer was said. Among other things, they read and considered qualifications for elders and ministerial servants as set out in God's Word at [1 Timothy 3:1-10, 12, 13](#); [Titus 1:5-9](#) and [1 Peter 5:1-5](#). "Many for the first time truly faced themselves," remarks R. D. Cantwell, "and all felt keenly the obligation before Jehovah to be honest in their appraisal of self and others. A few had to disqualify themselves. This arrangement has brought out an honesty and humility that would have been impossible except for this forward step in understanding of Bible principles of organization." (Even in years prior to this, however, the Bible's requirements were the basis for determining who would be entrusted with responsibility in the congregation. See *Counsel on Theocratic Organization for Jehovah's Witnesses*, p. 19; *Preaching Together in Unity*, p. 26.)

Finally, after an analysis of qualifications possessed by brothers in the congregations, recommendations were submitted to the governing body. After August 1, 1972, the congregations began to receive letters appointing overseers and ministerial servants.

## RECOGNITION OF DIVINE RULERSHIP

While Jehovah's people anxiously awaited full implementation of this congregational arrangement, those in the United States, Canada and the British Isles attended the 1972 "Divine Rulership" District Assemblies, held between the latter part of June and late August. At these gatherings divine rulership commanded paramount attention.

One of the significant assembly releases was the new 192-page book *Organization for Kingdom-preaching and Disciple-making*. Among other things, it outlined the improvements being made in the structure of the Christian congregation. The *Organization* book and the assembly program combined well to point out the

practical aspects of such reorganization and to demonstrate how these would work out.

Recognition of divine rulership was stressed at these district assemblies, as in the public talk "Divine Rulership—the Only Hope of All Mankind." Delegates realized that to gain eternal life they must *personally* recognize Jehovah's rulership. However, the new *Organization* book and various assembly program features highlighted the importance of *congregational* recognition of divine rulership.

## GOVERNING BODY SETS THE EXAMPLE

But suppose we now turn the clock back to Monday morning, September 13, 1971. At seven o'clock members of the Watch Tower Society's headquarters staff are seated at their respective places throughout the various dining rooms of the Brooklyn Bethel home. They are ready for the usual discussion of the day's Bible text, to be followed by breakfast. It has always been customary for the Society's president to preside at these discussions when he is at headquarters. Today Brother Knorr is home at Bethel, but he is not at the head of the table. Instead, F. W. Franz, the Society's vice-president, is presiding over the morning text discussion. Why? Because the governing body of Jehovah's witnesses has instituted the arrangement of rotating its members on a weekly basis with regard to conducting the morning Bible text discussions and the Bethel family's Monday night *Watchtower* study.

At Brooklyn Bethel, then, a rotation procedure had its beginning a year before a similar arrangement was put into effect in congregations of God's people in general. But the arrangement went farther than this. According to a resolution adopted by the governing body of Jehovah's witnesses on September 6, 1971, its chairmanship was to rotate annually by alphabetical arrangement. So it was that F. W. Franz became the chairman of the governing body for one year as of October 1, 1971. Appropriately, the governing body set the example in putting into effect the new organizational arrangement.

## "THIS IS GOD'S DOING"

Reflecting on the new congregational arrangement providing for elders and ministerial servants, Roger Morgan was moved to say: "This is God's doing."

Doubtless others will agree, since they may have considered the resulting benefits. The first shifting of responsibilities began in September 1972, and by October 1 the arrangement of things in most congregations had been adjusted. In many cases, the former assistant congregation servant became the presiding overseer, the previous congregation servant became the Theocratic Ministry School overseer, and so forth. Here was proof that Christians recognize Jehovah's rulership, his way of doing things in the congregation of his people. Each year the elders in a congregation would rotate to various positions, and they would work together as a body, having in mind the spiritual welfare of the congregation and the need to cooperate with one another in shepherding the flock of God allotted to them.—1 Pet. 5:2.

Many are the benefits of the new congregational arrangement. For instance, Edgar C. Kennedy feels it "could be the means of stronger solidarity in the event a congregation was separated from the governing body for a period of time." "This is most certainly an unusual advancement in Jehovah's organization, observes Grace A. Estep, "and shows how well he is preparing his people for the time beyond this system of things." Not without good reason, in its report on the 1972 district assemblies, *The Watchtower* remarked: "Truly, Jehovah is bringing his congregated people into an organizational condition in which they will be able to ride out Armageddon into God's new order under divine rulership."

### **"DIVINE VICTORY" INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Jehovah's Christian witnesses have given abundant evidence that they yield to divine direction and willingly submit to divine rulership. From late June 1973 to January 1974 they held a globe-encircling international convention that plainly showed that they anxiously await divine victory. Generally five-day gatherings, the numerous conventions of this worldwide event took place in the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, Middle and South America, the South Pacific and Africa. Many of God's people traveled to distant lands, there to share the spiritually upbuilding assembly program with their fellow believers of other countries. Usually, only daytime sessions were held, enabling delegates to return to their lodging places early and eliminating travel after dark in areas where this might be inadvisable. Evening hours were often spent reviewing assembly highlights.

Among this assembly's many fine features was the absorbing discourse entitled

“Keep Close in Mind the Presence of the Day of Jehovah.” How forcefully it showed that Christians should not mentally push off the day of Jehovah! Deteriorating world conditions and theocratic organizational developments, with the arrangement for elders and ministerial servants, as well as the rapid influx of those who will compose the “great crowd,” indicate that Jehovah’s day is near. (2 Pet. 3:11-13; Rev. 7:9) Following this thought-provoking talk came a greatly appreciated printed release—the 192-page book *True Peace and Security—From What Source?*

The printed assembly releases included the *Comprehensive Concordance of the New World Translation the Holy Scriptures* and the 416-page book *God’s Kingdom of a Thousand Years Has Approached*. Heart-cheering, indeed, was the public address “Divine Victory—Its Meaning for Distressed Humanity.” Boldly attention was focused on the universal war of Har-Magedon, in which Jehovah will vindicate himself with divine victory. It was shown that under the driving force of unclean inspired expressions the “kings of the entire inhabited earth” are being gathered to a war against God over rulership of the earth. (Rev. 16:13-16) Hence, one must take a stand on one side of the issue or the other. Only those siding with Jesus Christ, the King of kings, will be spared. They alone will be witnesses of the divine victory and will join in the celebration that follows it.

At the nineteen “Divine Victory” International Assemblies held during June and July 1973 throughout the continental United States, 15,851 symbolized their dedication to Jehovah God by submitting to water baptism. In all, at these gatherings 665,945 met to enjoy the rich spiritual blessings provided by Jehovah for his people. World wide, 140 conventions were held, at which 81,830 persons were baptized and there was a total attendance of 2,594,305. What a cause to express gratitude to the Divine Victor!

## **SPECIAL WORK SPURS INCREASE**

There was, however, another very important feature of the “Divine Victory” International Assemblies. Months in advance *The Watchtower* had said that the program would focus considerable attention on the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work. It added: “A special work will be outlined and demonstrated. All congregations of Jehovah’s witnesses world wide will be sharing in it during specified dates following the assembly.” What was this special work?

The answer came after the convention's keynote speech, "Victory over the World Without Armed Conflict." It was followed by the release of a four-page tract, *Kingdom News* No. 16, entitled "Is Time Running Out for Mankind?" A free packet of eight tracts went to everyone in the audience above the age of twelve years who was interested in distributing them. Ten days—September 21 through 30—would be set aside for distribution of these tracts, the speaker pointed out. They would be handed to the people personally in house-to-house work, copies being left under the doors if no one was at home. The Watch Tower Society would send tracts to every congregation on the basis of 100 for each publisher. It was desired that every dwelling receive a copy; so free distribution of millions was certain. Jehovah's people were delighted with the prospects of doing this special work in proclaiming the Kingdom.

So it was that during the last ten days of September 1973 Jehovah's witnesses in the United States, as elsewhere, distributed *Kingdom News* No. 16 by the millions of copies. On December 22 through 31, 1973, they again engaged in mass distribution of *Kingdom News*. This time it was No. 17, posing and answering the question "Has Religion Betrayed God and Man?" On May 3 through 12 they went through their territories again, with *Kingdom News* No. 18, this time featuring the crucial question "Government by God—Are You for It or Against It?"

Many who know the truth of God's Word have been moved to share the good news with others by engaging in distribution of *Kingdom News*. Why, during September 1973, in the United States (except Alaska and Hawaii) 512,738 Kingdom publishers participated in this work. And reports indicate that they distributed 43,320,048 copies of *Kingdom News* No. 16. In December the amazing total of 525,007 shared in distribution of *Kingdom News* No. 17; that was 103,112 more publishers than had shared in field service just a year earlier. And in May 1974 there were 539,262 workers in the field service!

Experiences show that *Kingdom News* distribution really has spurred the work of disciple-making. For instance, two publishers left a copy with a gentleman and went their way, only to be hailed by him later. Upon returning to his home, they met his wife, who had found the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* in a trash can. She had not been able to sleep because she realized that things it said were being fulfilled. This led to a Bible study. The woman began attending Christian



meetings regularly and progressed to the point that she participated in later *Kingdom News* distribution and was planning to be baptized.

A copy of *Kingdom News* kindled the interest of two long-haired fleshly brothers who smoked, took drugs and played in a rock 'n' roll band. Soon both of them were studying the Bible with the Witness who had placed the tract. They cut their hair, stopped smoking and using narcotics and made rapid spiritual progress. Just three months after receiving a copy of *Kingdom News*, they were engaging in field service, placing the next issue with others. Both were baptized in December 1973, and shortly thereafter were enjoying temporary pioneer work.

### **GATHERING A "GREAT CROWD"**

The apostle John beheld a "great crowd" from all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues, standing before the throne of God and rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple. ([Rev. 7:9, 15](#)) These individuals with earthly hopes heartily have supported the anointed followers of Jesus Christ in their God-given work of proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom. How thrilling it has been, as a result, to observe thousands upon thousands stream to the 'mountain of Jehovah's house'!—[Isa. 2:2-4](#).

These who have gathered into the courtyards of 'Jehovah's house' have dedicated themselves to Jehovah God and symbolized this by water immersion. Not long after listening to the talk "Baptism According to the Divine Will," 7,136 of such individuals were immersed in New York city on July 30, 1958. There had been nothing like it since Pentecost of 33 C.E. ([Acts 2:41](#)) Surely that baptism in 1958 was not something the world could ignore, for H. L. Philbrick wrote not long ago: "The press carried fine pictures of the great number who were being baptized . . . All readers of the newspapers had to get the impression that Jehovah's witnesses were no longer to be viewed as a small 'sect.' The truth was on the march!"

Jehovah's people have not been interested in mere numbers. What is important is that baptismal candidates understand what they are doing. That is why there was great appreciation for a provision made in the book "*Your Word Is a Lamp to My Foot*," published in 1967. On pages 7 to 40, it contained eighty Scriptural questions, to be discussed by mature brothers with prospective baptismal candidates. "After they studied the eighty questions with the aid of the

congregation committee,” observed Brother and Sister Earl E. Newell, “they realized that their dedication and baptism was one of a lifelong course and the responsibility that went with it was not to be taken lightly.” The more recent book *Organization for Kingdom-preaching and Disciple-making* (published in 1972) makes a similar provision for discussion of Scriptural questions with those who are considering baptism. As various elders of the congregation conduct these sessions with each individual, those contemplating baptism are afforded an opportunity to express themselves on Biblical matters and weigh their relationship with Jehovah God. Such a provision has helped to make true disciples.

Consider briefly just how the making and baptizing of disciples has increased. In 1968 the number for the year was 82,842. During the years 1969 to 1973, a total of 792,019 individuals were baptized. As enthusiastic efforts to gather the “great crowd” continue, many thousands are being baptized every year. Why, during the 1974 service year alone, 297,872 persons were immersed in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah God! What a thrill it is for God’s people to share in this wonderful ingathering work to Jehovah’s praise! Today there are more than two million Christian witnesses of Jehovah preaching the good news of God’s kingdom.

### **“KEEP ON THE WATCH”**

Jesus Christ emphasized the need for his followers to remain alert and on the watch respecting his coming to execute judgment against the wicked system of things. He did so by likening the disciple to a doorkeeper whom his master commanded to watch for his return from a trip abroad. “Keep on the watch,” was Jesus’ wise admonition.—[Mark 13:32-37](#).

The “Divine Purpose” District Assembly did much to engender a sense of urgency and an attitude of heightened spiritual watchfulness on the part of Jehovah’s Christian witnesses. Throughout the United States, Canada and the British Isles upward of eighty-five such assemblies were held from June to August, 1974. These gatherings certainly helped God’s people to recognize just where they are living in the stream of time.

Three moving Bible dramas taught their forceful lessons. The need to guard against lack of faith dramatically was brought to the fore as conventioners focused their attention on the Israelites, freed from Egyptian bondage and wandering in

the wilderness. Another dramatization centered attention on [1 Kings chapter 13](#), and showed the perils linked with not listening to divine authority. And, how moving was the portrayal of the apostle Paul's life and works as a Christian! It filled viewers with renewed zeal for the worship and service of Jehovah God.

How can one be safeguarded against such things as materialism, demon influence and exploitation by false religion? The answers were there in the moving discourse "Safeguarded by Faith and Hope That Are Fixed on Jehovah." That assembly talk was followed by the release of a new 192-page book entitled "Is This Life All There Is?" it directs powerful blows against Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, while also giving readers sound reasons for believing that there is much more than this life. This book builds faith in Jehovah's promise of life in a righteous new order and the grand resurrection hope.

The anointed followers of Jesus Christ and their companions with earthly hopes want to serve the divine purpose. They know that it will not fail, and that conviction was embodied in the title and contents of another printed assembly release—the book *God's "Eternal Purpose" Now Triumphing for Man's Good*. There truly are valid reasons for putting confidence in God's purpose. Especially were these made clear at the assembly's climax, when the public talk was delivered on the subject "Human Plans Failing as God's Purpose Succeeds." This and other vital information thrilled the hearts of the 891,819 persons attending the 69 "Divine Purpose" District Assemblies in the United States.

Jehovah's witnesses in the United States, as elsewhere, know that men will make continued efforts to stabilize a tottering world. But no matter how grandiose human plans may seem to be, and how loud men's assurances that these will succeed, Jehovah's people know that only God's purpose will triumph and they thank him for their grand privilege of declaring his Word and Kingdom.

Significantly, Isaiah's prophecy says that "in the final part of the days" the mountain of Jehovah's house will be firmly established above the top of the mountains and many peoples will stream to it. ([Isa. 2:2-4](#)) We now are in "the final part of the days"! The appearance of increasing throngs of the "great crowd" should impress us with the urgency of the times. This is not the day for Jehovah's servants anywhere to be complacent, listless, or inactive. They have a work to do!

Just think where we are in the stream of time! Its importance was deeply impressed on our minds back in 1966. God's people then received the absorbing book *Life Everlasting—in Freedom of the Sons of God*. It did not take long for most of them to note the chronological chart in it that identified 1975 as the "end of 6th 1,000-year day of man's existence (in early autumn)."

This certainly raised questions. Does this mean that Babylon the Great will go down by 1975? Will Armageddon be over, with Satan bound, by then? 'It could' acknowledged F. W. Franz, the Watch Tower Society's vice-president, after posing similar questions at the "God's Sons of Liberty" District Assembly in Baltimore, Maryland. However, he added, in essence: 'But we are not saying. All things are possible with God. But we are not saying. And don't any of you be specific in saying anything that is going to happen between now and 1975. But the big point of it all is this, dear friends: Time is short. Time is running out, no question about that.' Among other things, Brother Franz urged: "Let us make the most of the time and get in all the good hard work to Jehovah while the opportunity affords."

Some years have passed since then, but this has only heightened the urgency of the preaching work. Jehovah's servants know that they have not dedicated their lives to God until a certain year. They are his dedicated people forever! Today the entire world of mankind is God's field of work, and that work is urgent. What a privilege Jehovah's people enjoy as his fellow workers in that field, making known God's purposes and provisions for salvation! With deep appreciation for Jehovah God's undeserved kindness, determinedly these dedicated Christians press on in their activities, "working together with him."—1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 5:18–6:2.

With the help of God's holy spirit, Jehovah's Christian witnesses in the United States will continue to serve their heavenly Father faithfully along with their fellow worshipers earth wide. May all of us demonstrate unwavering loyalty to Jehovah. May we remain alert, active, as the end nears. We must "keep on the watch." This is not the day for spiritual sleepyheads! It is the time for wakefulness, diligence, faithfulness, in serving the Divine One whose marvelous and incomparable purpose cannot and will not fail.



