

The **WATCHTOWER**

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

JANUARY 1, 1972

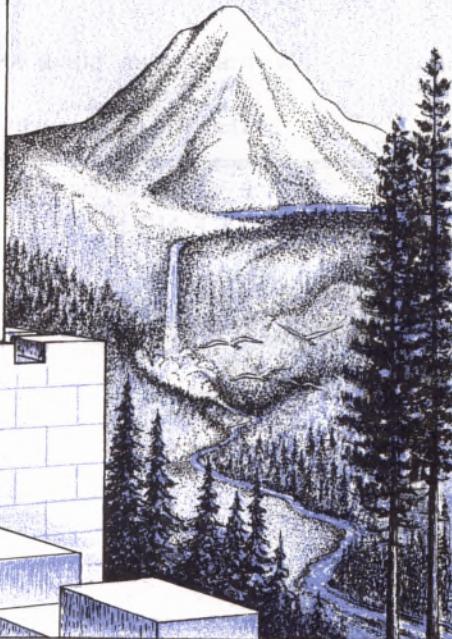
Semimonthly

APPOINTED ELDERS TO SHEPHERD
THE FLOCK OF GOD

A GREAT CHANGE NEAR
—WHAT IS IT?

DO YOU KEEP YOUR WORD?

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"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Every watchtower has its purpose. It serves as an elevated place for a wide-awake person with sharp vision. It enables him to see far ahead into the distance and tell those below for whom he is a watchman what is drawing near, whether it is a danger against which to prepare or it is something good over which to be glad with strong faith and hope.

Because of having the name "The Watchtower" this magazine justly has to render a similar useful service to the people of all nations. This is an international magazine and makes no racial distinctions, for we are all facing a common world danger; we are all hoping for a common good.

Ever since "The Watchtower" began to be published in July of 1879 it has looked ahead into the future, always striving to aid its readers to advance in knowledge and to gain a clearer picture of the glorious new order of things that is in store for righteous mankind. No, "The Watchtower" is no inspired prophet, but it follows and explains a Book of prophecy the predictions in which have proved to be unerring and unfailing till now. "The Watchtower" is therefore under safe guidance. It may be read with confidence, for its statements may be checked against that prophetic Book.

Among the many nations of today there are hundreds of differing religions. Which one does this magazine present? Not the confused religions of Christendom, but the religion of the oldest sacred Book on earth. Which Book? The Sacred Bible of the Holy Scriptures, written by inspiration in the name of the Creator of heaven and earth, the only living and true God.

The sacred, nonpolitical purpose of "The Watchtower" is accordingly to encourage and promote study of the Holy Bible and to give our many readers the needed unsectarian help to understand that Book of true religion and infallible prophecy. Thus this magazine will be helping them to prove worthy of perfect life and happiness in God's promised new order under His everlasting kingdom of righteousness.

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"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13

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Announcing
Jehovah's
Kingdom

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Number 1

THERE can be no doubt about it; some kind of major change is near. You have recently seen big changes come overnight. U.S. President Nixon's recent wage-price freeze is an example. "I'm not surprised at anything anymore," is an expression often heard.

With the churches in a state of unrest, with law and order becoming harder to maintain, you may feel that anything can happen, even in your own neighborhood. But can we know what will *actually* happen? God's greatest Prophet gave an illustration to help us to know. It is found in the Bible at Luke 21:29-31.

As this illustration shows, not just "anything" is going to happen. Instead we are comforted with the assurance that God is going to control the matter through his kingdom. What is to take place will be for our good if we seize the opportunity now to find out what to do. It is going to take place very quickly, for Jesus went on to say: "This generation [that experiences today's situation] will by no means pass away until all things occur." Then, to emphasize the truthfulness of his statement he said, in effect, that more likely would heaven and earth pass out of ex-

A GREAT CHANGE NEAR

—WHAT IS IT?

istence than that his word would fail.
—Luke 21:32, 33.

It is almost like reading the latest newspaper to read the apostle Paul's description of the

"last days." Paul wrote: "In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of them-

selves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce." This would be the situation, said Paul, among *professed Christians*, those "having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power." Consider each one of these bad traits. Then think of the times you personally have been shocked to see and read about these being displayed by so-called "Christian" people.—2 Tim. 3:1-5.

You may agree that a major change is near, and is needed. But you may hear some say, 'Of course changes are coming about, but that doesn't prove we are in the last days. No, it is just a cycle we are going through.'

The apostle Peter spoke about this very attitude, reminding his associates to "re-

member the sayings previously spoken by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord." He warned that "in the last days there will come ridiculers with their ridicule, proceeding according to their own desires and saying: 'Where is this promised presence of his? Why, from the day our forefathers fell asleep in death, all things are continuing exactly as from creation's beginning.'" (2 Pet. 3:2-4) This is a very dangerous attitude to take. Why?

GOD NOT SLOW

Well, astronauts have seen from their position out in space that man is insignificant as compared to the universe. The prophet was speaking truly when he said: "There is One who is dwelling above the circle of the earth, the dwellers in which are as grasshoppers." (Isa. 40:22) Men, especially those who oppose Him, are as insignificant to God as grasshoppers are to men. And as to God's view of time, it is also on a different scale from man's. Peter, going on to speak about this very matter, says that the scoffers, counting God slow, overlook the fact that "one day is with Jehovah as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day." (2 Pet. 3:8) We need to take these things into account.

Since the warning message has been proclaimed strongly in the world and especially in Christendom for the past fifty years, some have said, 'Oh, they've been saying we were in the last days since my father's time—before I was born!' Well, is fifty years too long to warn the nations? If God is truly concerned about mankind, would this be acting too slowly?

If a grasshopper in a field could hear and understand the farmer speak of burning over the field he too might say, 'Ah, he said that back in my father's day, and nothing's happened yet.' But this skeptical insect would be overlooking the fact that

what is two or three generations to a grasshopper is only a short time to a man. Nevertheless, in his own lifetime that grasshopper might well experience the disastrous results of such scoffing.

A CHANGE FOR MANKIND'S GOOD

The farmer would burn over his field, perhaps to get rid of grasshopper pests and for the benefit of crops to grow in the field the next season. Likewise, God purposes to destroy, not the earth, but those who practice the things that make the times critical and hard to live in and who, by their selfishness, are polluting and "ruining the earth." He is interested in persons' living in right conditions on it. He assured Israel of their return to their land, speaking of himself as "the Former of the earth and the Maker of it, He the One who firmly established it, who did not create it simply for nothing, who formed it even to be inhabited." He will see that the entire earth is inhabited under the secure, peaceful conditions of his Kingdom rule.—Rev. 11:18; Isa. 45:18.

Yes, God wants no people having merely "a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power." He desires those who have true godly devotion, who take note of his word and follow it. The apostle Peter writes: "Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial, but to reserve unrighteous people for the day of judgment to be cut off." (2 Pet. 2:9) The change that he will bring will be marvelous in the eyes of those who now read and understand his word as written in the Bible. They will be able to rejoice in the "new heavens and a new earth [not a new planet, but human society on a cleansed, beautified earth] that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell." (2 Pet. 3:13) By studying the Bible you can learn how to be among these.

"WHO IS

WISE AND UNDERSTANDING AMONG YOU?

TEEN-AGERS are often quite ready to express their opinions on any subject as to the right or wrong of the matter under discussion. When they get older, having had more experience in life, they are usually a little more hesitant to express themselves. They come to realize that there is much that can be learned if one listens and reasons things out. (Jas. 1:19) When they apply the knowledge gained, putting it to work in a beneficial way, they show that they have wisdom. But the progress one makes in acquiring such wisdom is greatly influenced by one's choice of associates. Solomon, a wise man, wrote: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly." (Prov. 13:20) Do you associate with "wise persons"?

The dictionary defines "wise" as meaning "discerning and judging soundly concerning what is true or false, proper or improper." To be able to do that, a person must have a broad knowledge of God's Word, which shows what is right and what is wrong from the viewpoint of man's Creator,

1. (a) What is wisdom, and how is it acquired? (b) How does one's choice of associates affect one's progress in acquiring wisdom?
2. (a) To act in true wisdom, what background is required? (b) With what kind of persons did the apostle Paul urge the young man Timothy to associate, and why?

ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS ARE ON PAGE 5

and he must have depth of understanding in applying it to the problems of life. (Deut. 4:5, 6) Is the kind of people with whom you associate wise? The apostle Paul wisely counseled the young man Timothy: "Flee from the desires incidental to youth, but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, along with those who call upon the Lord out of a clean heart." (2 Tim. 2:22) Heeding that advice is absolutely necessary if a person really wants to benefit himself and other people and, above all, if he wants to please God.

⁸ James, a half brother of Jesus, gave excellent counsel to Christians. He helps us to appreciate the difference between the true wisdom and the false. In his divinely inspired letter to Christians, James asks the question: "Who is wise and understanding among you?"

—Jas. 3:13.

He answers his own question, saying: "Let him show out of his fine conduct his works with a mildness that belongs to wisdom." (Jas. 3:13) Or, as *The New English Bible* puts it: "Let his right conduct give practical proof of it, with the modesty that comes of wisdom." Remember, true wisdom has to do with knowing and doing what is right, discerning between truth and error.

3. (a) How did James answer the question, "Who is wise and understanding among you?" (b) Contrast true wisdom and the false.

God's Word tells us that the "fear of Jehovah is the start of wisdom," and "the fear of Jehovah means the hating of bad." (Prov. 9:10; 8:13) Wisdom is not gained by doing bad things. A person gains true wisdom by hating that which is bad. "But if you have bitter jealousy and contentiousness in your hearts, do not be bragging and lying against the truth," James counsels. "This is *not the wisdom* that comes down from above, but is the earthly, animal, demonic. For where jealousy and contentiousness are, there disorder and every vile thing are." (Jas. 3:14-16) Which kind of wisdom do you see among your associates? If you are associated with a religious organization, what kind of wisdom does it manifest? What about you personally?—Matt. 7:15-18.

TRUE CHRISTIANS REFLECT

"THE WISDOM FROM ABOVE"

* Among the millions of people who today claim to be Christians, are there many who give evidence of being guided by heavenly wisdom? There are many nations of Christendom that claim that all the people born in their countries are Christians, whether Catholic or Protestant, and they are registered as such on their birth certificates. Do these people as they grow into adulthood show by their conduct that they are really Christians? James argues that "the wisdom from above is first of all chaste." (Jas. 3:17) The first meaning of chaste is "innocent of unlawful sexual intercourse; virtuous." It also means to be 'pure in thought and to act modestly, free from the taint of the things that defile. To be chaste strictly implies that one refrains from all acts, thoughts, etc., that are not virtuous or in keeping with one's marriage vows. It also implies avoidance of anything that would

4. What is the meaning of the statement that 'the wisdom from above is chaste'?

debase or cheapen, as in style, etc.'—Heb. 13:4.

* Most of those claiming to be Christians certainly do not fit that description, because they choose to go along with what is called a "new morality." Even the religious clergy who baptized these people into their denominations speak favorably of this "new morality," which allows for adultery, fornication and homosexuality, and which gives rise to jealousy and every vile thing among those who practice it. Can all these people be called Christians? "Do you not know that unrighteous persons will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God's kingdom." (1 Cor. 6:9, 10) That is what God's Word says, and still there is no effort being made on the part of the clergy of Christendom to cleanse their churches of people who practice these things. If the older men or elders of the congregations of Christendom's religious system cleaned out of their houses that which is bad, there would not be much of an organization left.—Matt. 23:27, 28.

* The clergy of Christendom have certainly not shown that they are governed by "the wisdom from above." Instead, they 'lie against the truth' of God's Word by saying that chasteness is not always necessary in order to please God. "Babylon the Great," the world empire of false religion, which includes Christendom, is well described by the apostle John in the Revelation. There he reports an angel of God as saying: "Come here, I will show you the sentence of the great prostitute seated

5. (a) Does Christendom manifest such "wisdom from above"? Explain. (b) What does the Bible say about those who practice such unrighteousness?

6. How does Revelation 17:1-6 describe Babylon the Great, and in what way does this involve Christendom?

on a great water, with whom the kings of the earth debauched themselves and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her unchaste embraces'; and he carried me away to a desert in the spirit. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast full of names of blasphemy, with seven heads and ten horns; and the woman was clad in purple and scarlet and jeweled with gold and precious stones and pearls, with a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and the filth of her prostitution, and written on her forehead a name with a secret meaning, 'Great Babylon, mother of the prostitutes and abominations of the earth.' And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of God's people and with the blood of Jesus's witnesses. And great was my wonder at seeing her." (Rev. 17:1-6, Byington translation) Who are wise? Are those who make up Christendom?

⁷ James takes wisdom's quality farther than chasteness and says: "The wisdom from above is . . . peaceable, reasonable." Is Christendom "peaceable"? Do its members in everyday life show that they are "reasonable"? The clergy of all of its religious denominations have taken sides in war, World Wars I and II and all the wars of the nations since then, and history is filled with details of Christendom's religious wars and crusades. The persons who claim to be members of Christendom's churches are not notably peaceable and reasonable among themselves either. All one needs to do is to read the daily paper to see the contentiousness in families, between students and teachers, and between employers and employees. Look at the cities. Are the administrators and the people peaceable? Christendom claims to believe the Bible's counsel on peace and to follow

7, 8. (a) What other qualities does "the wisdom from above" include? (b) How do the members of Christendom's churches measure up as to being peaceable and reasonable?

the "Prince of Peace." But does its record support its claims?

⁸ Paul, in writing to the Philippians, said that Christians should be doing "nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind considering that the others are superior to you, keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just your own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others." (Phil. 2:3, 4) How many rulers of the nations, how many heads of organizations, or how many people themselves, are handling matters in the way that God's Word says Christians should? Not many, are there?

⁹ Another thing James said to Christians: "The wisdom from above is . . . ready to obey." How many so-called Christians are ready to turn to the Word of God and obey what it says in regard to conduct? How many people truly hate what is bad? Do you? James goes on to say that we must be "full of mercy and good fruits, not making partial distinctions, not hypocritical." But does that description fit Christendom? If you are a church member, does it fit your church? Mercy and goodness are notably lacking in the world. Partiality and discrimination are found everywhere. Church members themselves are among the first to admit that Christendom is full of hypocrites. Is that the kind of person that you want to be? If not, it is vital for you to heed the Bible's urgent command: "'Get out from among them, and separate yourselves,' says Jehovah." (2 Cor. 6:17, 18) Concerning the action to take toward the entire world empire of false religion, God's Word urges: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins,

9. (a) What does the expression "ready to obey" mean, and how would you say Christendom is doing in this regard? (b) What other aspects are included in "the wisdom from above"? (c) If a person wants to please his Creator, what action must he take toward Christendom, and why?

and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues." (Rev. 18:4) If it is your sincere desire to be well pleasing to your Creator, you will do that without delay. If you want to enjoy the benefits that come from being a "wise and understanding" person, you must make sure that you are "walking with wise persons," those who manifest the "wisdom from above."

¹⁰ There are such true Christians. Christendom's failure has not made them give up and say: "What is the use? Why even try to be a Christian?" Because they look to God for wisdom they have a real hope. They look forward with confidence to the fulfillment of the prayer Jesus Christ taught his followers: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matt. 6:10) They know that "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." But they also know that "the Son of God has come, and he has given us intellectual capacity that we may gain the knowledge of the true one. And we are in union with the true one, by means of his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 5:19, 20) There are hundreds of thousands of people on this earth who have gained that "knowledge of the true one" and who believe that He as "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." (Dan. 2:44) They firmly believe that by means of God's kingdom this earth will soon be made a Paradise where lovers of righteousness will enjoy eternal life. Would you like to have that kind of faith and be able to "say among the nations, 'Jehovah himself has become king' "?—Ps. 96:10.

10. Despite Christendom's failure, what grand hope is there? How do you know?

WHO ARE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES?

¹¹ A million and a half men and women are doing just that world wide today. They want to do the will of Jehovah God as he has set it forth in his written Word. They call themselves Jehovah's Christian witnesses. (Isa. 43:10-12) Are they better than anyone else calling himself Christian? They all have the same first parents as anyone else, Adam and Eve. But they certainly have a different outlook on life than those in Christendom. They believe very deeply what God's Word says and they know that the Bible sets out the pattern for man to follow. They have dedicated their lives to Jehovah God and have promised to do his will as stated in his written Word. They earnestly endeavor to show out of their fine conduct their works with a mildness that belongs to wisdom.

¹² Jehovah's Christian witnesses have a theocratic organization of more than 27,150 congregations that reach out to the ends of the earth. These congregations range in size from 25 to 200 or more persons. Each dedicated Witness fully appreciates that to be a member of such a congregation he must hate that which is bad and put into application "the wisdom from above." He knows and agrees with the words of Jesus: "For he that practices vile things hates the light and does not come to the light, in order that his works may not be reproved. But he that does what is true comes to the light, in order that his works may be made manifest as having been worked in harmony with God."—John 3:20, 21.

¹³ Jehovah's witnesses are interested in other people. They believe and preach that "God loved the world so much that he

11. What accounts for the different outlook that Jehovah's witnesses have as compared with those in Christendom?

12. To be one of Jehovah's witnesses, what viewpoint must a person have toward badness and toward "the wisdom from above"?

13. To what provision for salvation do Jehovah's witnesses direct everyone, and why?

gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) They believe, too, that Jesus is the "light of the world," that he was sent forth by God to save the world of mankind. Jesus Christ died upon the torture stake and poured out his blood, gave his life for the purchase or redemption of the entire human family. The provision for you to get life has already been made. But do you accept it? Jesus himself said: "Now this is the basis for judgment, that the light has come into the world but men have loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were wicked." He that prefers to practice vile things

hates the light. Do you?—John 3:19.
14 True Christians are not afraid of the light. They carefully study the Word of God, from the first book, Genesis, to the last one, Revelation, and freely discuss it with others, so that they can be guided by its heavenly wisdom. They want to be in the light and live by the light of God's Word. Is that true of you? If so, we urge you to attend the meetings of Jehovah's witnesses regularly. As you learn God's Word, apply it. Thus show that you are truly "wise and understanding," that your conduct reflects "a mildness that belongs to wisdom."—Jas. 3:13.

14. How does a true Christian show he is not afraid of the light but is truly "wise and understanding"?

Appointed Elders

TO SHEPHERD THE FLOCK OF GOD

THE theocratic organization of Jehovah's witnesses does not have paid ministers in its congregations. From the congregation itself mature, spiritually qualified men are appointed as elders and overseers. (Titus 1:5, 7) These men are interested in the welfare of the entire flock under their care. The word "overseer" is the English translation of the Hebrew word *pa-qidh'* and the Greek word *e-pi-skopos*. The Hebrew word is drawn from a term that means "to visit, turn attention to, inspect," also "to appoint or commission." The Greek term is related to *e-pi-*

sko-pe'o (oversee), and means to "look or watch over." So, then, an overseer in a Christian congregation is one who is appointed to watch over the congregation, to visit and upbuild those associated with it. The Christian "overseers" correspond to those recognized as the "older men" of the congregations, all such appointed "older men" or elders having responsibility as overseers of the flock of God.

² When the apostle Paul, returning from one of his missionary journeys, reached Miletus, he sent a message to Ephesus and "called for the elders of the congregation."

1. (a) What kind of men are overseers in the congregations of Jehovah's witnesses? (b) What, basically, does an overseer in a congregation do?

2. When speaking to the elders of the congregation in Ephesus, what encouraging counsel did Paul give, and what was the reason for such advice?

(Acts 20:17, margin) When these elders came to see Paul, he reminded them of how he had expended himself on their behalf and he urged them to do the same for all the flock entrusted to their care. He said: "I did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you publicly and from house to house. . . . Nevertheless, I do not make my soul of any account as dear to me, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received of the Lord Jesus, to bear thorough witness to the good news of the undeserved kindness of God. And now, look! I know that all of you among whom I went preaching the kingdom will see my face no more. . . . I have not held back from telling you all the counsel of God. Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son." (Acts 20:16-28) Paul took his work very seriously and he wanted to impress his fellow elders with the seriousness of their responsibility before God as overseers of the flock.

³ Be it noted that no elder was viewed as the principal one, the head of the congregation. That position has been given by God to his own Son, Jesus Christ. (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18) The elders as a body served under Christ. They were a group of equals as far as their responsibility was concerned. Paul spoke to them as a "body of elders"; all were required to set the same excellent example for the congregation. (1 Tim. 4:14, margin) How did these men qualify to be elders in the congregation of Ephesus? Surely there must be some organization, some order, some guidance of God's flock. But why were these

3. (a) Was any particular elder from Ephesus viewed as the principal one? (b) What interesting questions are now posed?

particular men appointed to be the shepherds?

DEFINITE QUALIFICATIONS NEEDED

⁴ For details on qualifications we can turn to the first letter that Paul wrote to Timothy. In the third chapter there is a description of what an overseer or elder must be. These requirements are not to be taken lightly. God's blessing can be expected only when his Word is followed closely.—1 John 3:22.

⁵ It was a perfectly proper thing for any man in the Christian congregation of God to 'reach out for the office of overseer,' to endeavor to meet the standard required, because this showed that he was very desirous of a fine work. However, before a Christian man could be recommended for this office he would certainly have to "show out of his fine conduct his works with a mildness that belongs to wisdom," as James pointed out. (Jas. 3:13) He has to be a man who hates what is bad. Otherwise he will not have the "fear of Jehovah," which is "the start of wisdom." (Prov. 9:10; 8:13) Basically, if a man is to qualify for appointment as an elder, he must consistently adhere to the highest moral standard. As we learned in the preceding article, the wisdom from above is first of all "chaste." So the morals of an elder have to be correct and in full harmony with the Word of God. Paul, in writing to the young man Timothy in the third chapter, beginning with the second verse said: "The overseer should therefore be irreprehensible." Irreprehensible means to be free from blame or reproach. His conduct, his dealings with people and his way of life cannot be the sort that can be called into question. He must be above reproach

4. Where are details on qualifications for overseers or elders found in the Bible, and why is it important to adhere closely to them?

5. (a) To qualify for appointment as an elder, what must be true of one's morals? (b) What is the meaning of the statement that "the overseer should . . . be irreprehensible"?

as to his conduct in the congregation, in his secular employment and everywhere else. He must be a man of the highest moral standards.—2 Cor. 6:3, 4.

⁸ The overseer, if married, should be “a husband of one wife.” Local customs do not alter this requirement. He cannot be a polygamist and have two or more wives.—Matt. 19:3-9.

⁹ The man who qualifies to be an overseer should also be “moderate in habits,” not a person who goes to extremes. He should have a balanced view of his responsibilities as a Christian and carry them out in a way that wins the respect of fellow Christians.

⁸ The next qualification mentioned is that he should be “sound in mind.” His viewpoint should always be governed by God’s Word. This would enable him to be balanced in his thinking. He would know what is proper and what is improper, true or false, as based on the Scriptures. So he needs to be well versed in the Word of God.—Rom. 12:2; Ps. 19:7.

⁹ He must likewise be “orderly.” This implies that he should be punctual. The meetings he conducts should be well thought out, and he should keep good order, recognizing only one person at a time to speak if there are comments to be made by members of the congregation. (1 Cor. 14:26-33) Whatever records are to be kept should be neat and well arranged. Orderliness includes something else too. It requires that he recognize theocratic order, that he appreciate the need for submission to Christ, the head

6. What effect do local customs have on the requirement that the overseer be “a husband of one wife”? 7-9. What is included in being (a) “moderate in habits”? (b) “sound in mind”? (c) “orderly”?

of the congregation, and that he see his own position in relation to the flock, as a shepherd fully accountable to God.—1 Cor. 11:3; Jer. 23:1-4.

¹⁰ The overseer is also to be “hospitable.” He is to welcome strangers, making them feel glad that they have come. He ought to show that he is very happy to see those that he has known for a longer period of time too. With that in view, he would certainly display the fruitage of righteousness and be peaceful with all, young and old, in the congregation.—Heb. 13:1, 2.

“QUALIFIED TO TEACH”

¹¹ A particularly important qualification of elders is that they be “qualified to teach.” (1 Tim. 3:2) A man must be spiritually minded to do this among Christians. Experience and years in the truth will help here. Breadth and depth of Bible knowledge are needed, and this is acquired by regular attendance at congregation meetings and diligent personal study over a period of years. An elder certainly should be able to read, for he would want to turn to God’s Word and be able to say, ‘Thus it is written.’ More than that, he should be able to apply what he reads, and convey to others the right ideas clearly and quickly. Teaching is an art.

¹² Other men besides the appointed elders in the congregation will surely be mature Christians, zealous in the ministry and exemplary in conduct. But the elders must be qualified as teachers. This does

10. How can a person who is “reaching out for an office of overseer” show that he is “hospitable”?

11, 12. (a) Explain the factors that are included in being “qualified to teach.” (b) Why is it important that the elders be truly qualified as teachers of God’s Word?

not mean that they simply share in teaching the Bible to newly interested persons. It involves more than that. The elders are the ones that fellow Christians look to as teachers of God's Word. They should be able to get up in front of the congregation and impart instruction from the Scriptures that will upbuild those who are already believers. They must have an accurate knowledge of the truth so that, when presiding at meetings of the congregation, they will know whether the comments given by others are correct and so can help the congregation to come to a proper understanding of matters. If they qualify as elders, they should have a clear grasp of the truth so that they are able, not only to "tell" others what is right, but also to reason on it with them and help them to understand it.—Eph. 4:11, 12.

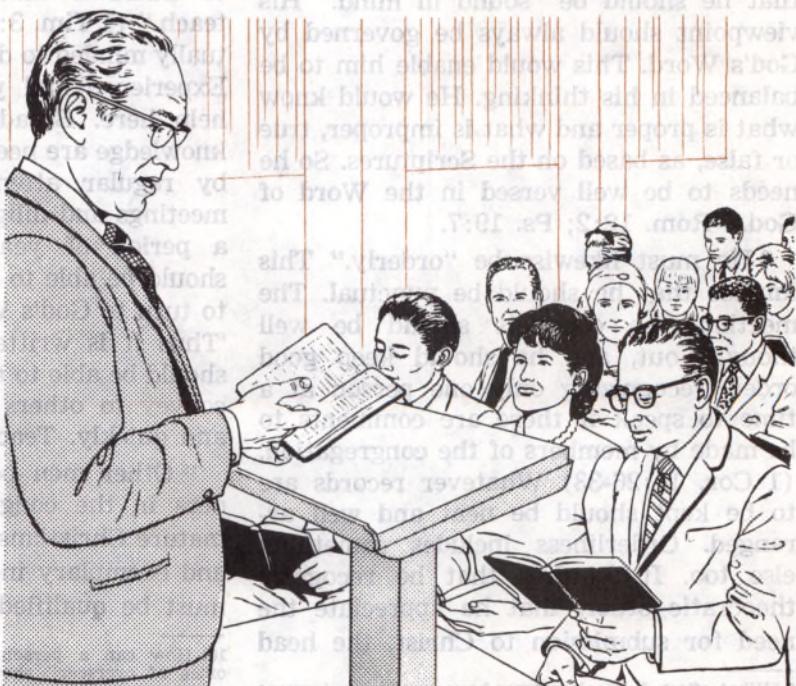
¹³ When writing to Titus regarding the appointing of "older men," Paul specified that, to qualify, a man should be "holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of teaching." (Titus 1:5, 9) He should not be one who is inclined to rely on his own opinion. As Paul advised Timothy, he should stick to God's Word when speaking to the congregation; he should "preach the word."—2 Tim. 4:2.

¹⁴ Being a teacher in the congregation

of God is a great privilege, but it is also a serious responsibility. (Jas. 3:1) Those who are 'reaching out for the office of overseer' do well to work diligently to qualify in this respect. And those who do qualify should be glad to use this "gift" for the upbuilding of the congregation, not fearfully holding back, but relying on Jehovah for his guidance and blessing. (Rom. 12:6-8) As they humbly continue to look to Jehovah for direction, they will be aided to do the work in a way that will bring glory to God and blessing to those who love him.

¹⁵ If a man is to be an effective teacher, he must conduct himself in a manner that will not close the minds and hearts of those he is trying to assist. Understandably, then, it is required of one who is

15. (a) Why would a person who drinks to excess not qualify as an elder? (b) Why would a man who is belligerent or self-willed not qualify to be an elder?



Elders must be, not only able to speak before an audience, but also "qualified to teach" fellow believers

13. To qualify to be an elder, on what must a person consistently base his teaching, and what should he avoid?

14. How should the work of being a teacher in the congregation be viewed?

appointed to be an elder that he be "not a drunken brawler, not a smiter, but reasonable, not belligerent." (1 Tim. 3:3) He should not be given to much wine. He should always have control of his senses and his powers of reason, never getting intoxicated. He must not be the kind of person who tries to settle things with his fist. Nor should he be one who constantly shouts at people, or repays unkindnesses with harsh remarks or refuses to talk to his brother who may have offended him. (Rom. 12:17, 18) On occasion, something may happen that irritates him, but, as is true of all Christians, he ought to have self-control, which is a fruit of God's spirit. He must be approachable, not self-willed, but willing to listen to others and not be taking offense when someone offers him a suggestion for improvement in the way things are being done. From experience, and from the Bible, he may know that certain suggestions are not sound, but that is no reason to be impatient with a brother who is trying to be helpful. Remember, the disciple James said that "the wisdom from above is . . . reasonable." One who is not belligerent but is reasonable helps to promote a peaceful atmosphere. And as James pointed out, "the fruit of righteousness has its seed sown under peaceful conditions for those who are making peace."—Jas. 3:18.

¹⁶ Appreciating what the Bible says about the relative value of material things, a mature Christian would not be a "lover of money." He would never engage in dishonest business practices to get money. Nor would he allow even honest secular work to push his ministry into a secondary place. Overseers among Jehovah's witnesses do not expect a salary to be paid for their services on behalf of the sheep in the congregation. The apostle Paul, himself an elder, did not expect the congrega-

16. How does a mature Christian show that he is not a "lover of money"?

gations to pay him for what he was doing. He used to make his own living by making tents. In this way he was never a burden on the congregation, but rather found pleasure in giving of himself on their behalf. (Acts 20:33, 34) He gave freely of his services and was not under obligation to anyone in this way. "Let your manner of life be free of the love of money, while you are content with the present things," wrote the apostle Paul at Hebrews 13:5.

OVERSEERS ARE "OLDER MEN"

¹⁷ An elder, if a father, should be "a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having children in subjection with all seriousness." This shows that he would be an orderly person and would have the respect of all the children living in his home and that they would listen to him and obey him. If a man cares well for his responsibilities at home he is in position to help others to learn what the Bible says about these matters. He can speak freely, and will not be inclined to water down Scriptural counsel because of a troubled conscience on his own part. (1 Tim. 3:12, 13) But, Paul adds, "if a man does not know how to control his own family how can he look after a congregation of God's people?" (1 Tim. 3:4, 5, NEB) Taking care of a congregation of God's people that may have from 25 to 200 persons in it is a very weighty responsibility. The Bible shows that the homelife of a man must be taken into consideration when one is determining whether he qualifies to be an elder.

¹⁸ If a father has children who are in subjection to him, he will not be a teenager himself. No specific age requirement is stated in the Bible, but in view of the

17. Why does a man's homelife have an important bearing on whether he qualifies to be an elder?

18. (a) Does the Bible state a specific age requirement for one to qualify as an elder? (b) What definite indications does it give on the matter of age?

requirement that their own children be in subjection with all seriousness (they being old enough to manifest such seriousness), it may be assumed that elders among the first-century Christians were not merely eighteen or nineteen years of age; they had experience in life and had demonstrated that they were "wise and understanding" men. They are referred to as "older men." Timothy himself, to whom Paul was writing, may have been in his early twenties when "he was well reported on by the brothers in Lystra and Iconium." (Acts 16:2) But Timothy may have been in his thirties when he was told: "Never lay your hands hastily upon any man; neither be a sharer in the sins of others; preserve yourself chaste." (1 Tim. 5:22) Timothy by this time was fully capable of handling these weighty responsibilities and was showing wisdom in committing to other faithful men that which he had learned so that they were adequately qualified to teach others. While youths may often think they know all of the answers, it takes time, experience, living with people, to gain wisdom.

¹⁹ As is true of those who are young in a physical sense, so too a person who has only recently become a dedicated and baptized Christian has a need to gain experience. It takes time to get sufficient knowledge and experience in applying Bible principles so that one is "qualified to teach" these things to fellow Christians. Therefore, an overseer cannot be a "newly converted man." Paul gives a very good reason why a "newly converted man" does not qualify as an elder. He says, "for fear that he might get puffed up with pride and fall into the judgment passed upon the Devil."—1 Tim. 3:6.

²⁰ If a newly baptized Christian received

19, 20. (a) Why should a newly converted man not be recommended for appointment as an elder? (b) What background does such a person need before he could become an elder?

a responsible position in the congregation, it might go to his head, as the saying is. It is much better to let the person grow steadily to maturity. A person needs to mature in his knowledge and understanding of God's Word. He must become wise and understanding and "show out of his fine conduct his works with a mildness that belongs to wisdom." Then after some time he might qualify to be a ministerial servant and, after that, strive to be an elder in the congregation.

²¹ There is another matter that deserves consideration, as Paul admonished Timothy. One would expect that a Christian would deal kindly with fellow Christians and show love toward them. But for a person to be an overseer in a congregation of God's people, "he should also have a fine testimony from people on the outside, in order that he might not fall into reproach and a snare of the Devil." Christians are bound to have association with non-Christians. That is a necessary part of their life, because they must preach the good news of the Kingdom everywhere, to all kinds of people. These people on the outside form opinions of Jehovah's witnesses, and they talk about them after these Christians visit their homes to try to help them. Interested people are also invited to the Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's witnesses and they have association there with the overseers and other members of the congregation. What is the opinion of these people concerning one who is an overseer of Jehovah's witnesses? "He must moreover have a good reputation with the non-Christian public, so that he may not be exposed to scandal and get caught in the devil's snare." (1 Tim. 3:7, NEB) He should practice in his daily life the things that he teaches others to do. The people for whom he works and with whom he

21. How does one's reputation outside the congregation influence the matter of one's being qualified to be an elder, and why?

works should see his honesty, his punctuality, his willingness to give his employer a full day's work, not being a loafer. He ought to show kindness to his neighbors, and his moral behavior must be above question. All of these things have a bearing on whether he qualifies to be an overseer in the congregation of God or not.—1 Pet. 2:12; Dan. 6:4, 5.

²² The standard to be met by those appointed to be elders is a high one, but it is not unreachable. It requires genuine love for Jehovah and a willingness to be used by him. The apostle Peter, when writing to elders in the first-century congregation, said: "Therefore, to the older men among you I give this exhortation, for I too am an older man with them and a witness of the sufferings of the Christ, a sharer even of the glory that is to be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; neither as lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock." (1 Pet. 5:1-3) One thing Peter emphasizes is, do not take on this responsibility under anyone's compulsion but do it willingly. There is no glory to the position of a shepherd; rather, it involves much time and work. Do not accept this position for the love of personal gain, but, rather, as *The New English Bible* puts it, "out of sheer devotion."—1 Pet. 5:2, 3.

ABLE BOTH TO EXHORT AND TO REPROVE

²³ In the inspired letter to Titus another important qualification of overseers is mentioned. It involves teaching, but it is a special aspect of it. The scripture says: "An overseer must be . . . holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of

22. What attitude toward responsibility should one accepting the position of overseer have?

23. On what are overseers to base their exhortation and reproof, and why must they be qualified to do this?

teaching, that he may be able both to exhort by the teaching that is healthful and to reprove those who contradict." (Titus 1:7-9) It usually is not difficult for a person who has a good knowledge of the truth to use the Bible to exhort his brothers, to encourage them to continued faithful service. But the responsibility of overseers does not stop there. When difficulties arise, they must also handle these. They must use the Scriptures "to reprove those who contradict" the truth. If you were appointed to be an elder, would you be willing to shoulder that responsibility?

²⁴ When writing his second letter to Timothy, Paul emphasized the seriousness of this obligation that Timothy had as an overseer, saying: "I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is destined to judge the living and the dead, and by his manifestation and his kingdom, preach the word, be at it urgently in favorable season, in troublesome season, reprove, reprimand, exhort, with all long-suffering and art of teaching." (2 Tim. 4:1, 2) Would you refuse or hold back from giving a reproof or reprimand when needed, or would you turn to God's Word and use it to help your brother to straighten out his thinking and bring his conduct back into line with what is written there? To be an elder you must be willing to administer needed reproof. What you do may not in every case be appreciated by the wrongdoer, but some will be grateful. "The commandment is a lamp, and a light the law is, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life." (Prov. 6:23) Even though it might at times be difficult, would you take the initiative to administer "the reproofs of discipline" in order to help someone to stay on "the way of life"? It is indeed a blessing to the congregation that there are men who are willing to accept that responsibility.—2 Tim. 2:24-26.

24. As to reproving, what questions does one seeking to qualify as an elder need to consider?

²⁵ Overseers must also have the fortitude to do something publicly when necessary. Paul admonished Timothy: "Reprove before all onlookers persons who practice sin, that the rest also may have fear." (1 Tim. 5:20) Sometimes individuals in a congregation of God will refuse reproof. Would you be afraid then that this might happen: "A man repeatedly reproved but making his neck hard will suddenly be broken, and that without healing"? (Prov. 29:1) Another translation puts it this way: "A man who is still stubborn after much reproof will suddenly be broken past mending." Could you go that far, out of concern for the spiritual condition of the congregation as a whole, or would you ignore the individual's stubbornness and close your eyes from the very beginning to his wrongdoing? An overseer must be "able both to exhort by the teaching that is healthful and to reprove those who contradict."—Titus 1:9.

²⁶ Paul was moved by the spirit of God to write in advance that there would be persons who claimed to be Christians but who wanted to serve God in their own way, not according to the Scriptures. He said: "For there will be a period of time when they will not put up with the healthful teaching, but, in accord with their own desires, they will accumulate teachers for themselves to have their ears tickled; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, whereas they will be turned aside to false stories." (2 Tim. 4:3, 4) For an overseer there is no room for compromise.

25. To what extent is it sometimes necessary to go in reproofing those who practice sin?

26. What kind of persons do not belong in the Christian congregation, so what must the elders be alert to do?



Would you be willing to give a fellow Christian needed reproof from God's Word? Elders must be able both to exhort and to reprove

If he really loves the congregation and is determined to help them, he must show fortitude and speak truth and righteousness. The congregation needs "healthful teaching." Would you as an elder, along with other elders in your congregation, be watchful enough to follow the advice of Paul wherein he writes: "As for a man that promotes a sect, reject him after a first and a second admonition; knowing that such a man has been turned out of the way and is sinning, he being self-condemned"? Paul's further words on this matter are: "But now I am writing you to quit mixing in company with anyone called a brother that is a fornicator or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man. . . . Remove the wicked man from among yourselves."—Titus 3:10; 1 Cor. 5:11, 13.

²⁷ There is no question about it, problems will arise in a congregation. All kinds of people will associate with the congregation and become Christians. But not all

27. (a) Since all kinds of people come in contact with the Christian congregation, what did Paul warn would happen? (b) Do such things occur in our day? (c) So what is it necessary for the elders to do?

of them will remain Christians, and some will even try to subvert the faith of others and entice them into bad conduct. As Paul said: "I know that after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness, and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves." That was not pleasant to think about, but Paul expected trouble to come within the congregation of God back there. It did. Why should we think it to be any different today when there is so much turmoil in the world and people from all nations and tongues, with different ideas of life, are fleeing from "Babylon the Great," the world empire of false religion, and are seeking refuge in Jehovah's theocratic organization? That is why it is so necessary to appoint elders in the congregation to shepherd the flock of God allotted to them and to keep the congregation clean. A true shepherd will protect the flock against wolfish elements.—Acts 20:29, 30.

²⁸ The one dedicated to Jehovah God realizes that he is born in sin and shaped in iniquity. Everyone is going to make mistakes sometime. So, when an overseer in the congregation tries to help any of us to correct something that we may be doing that is wrong, we ought to appreciate why he is doing it. Jehovah does not want to see any of his sheep go astray. That is why we have the admonition: "My son, do not belittle the discipline from Jehovah, neither give out when you are corrected by him; for whom Jehovah loves he disciplines; in fact, he scourges every one whom he receives as a son." (Heb. 12: 5, 6) Anyone who endures the discipline that he receives through Jehovah's organization will certainly have proof that God is dealing with him. "For what son

28. How should a person dedicated to God react to discipline, and why?

is he that a father does not discipline?" (Heb. 12:7) As was true in olden times when God dealt with the Jewish nation, so today God uses "the older men" among his people to administer discipline. (Deut. 22:18) Do you respond appreciatively to the discipline that comes from those who as elders shepherd the flock of God? —Prov. 8:33; 12:1-3; Heb. 12:11.

LOVING CONCERN FOR THE FLOCK

²⁹ Outstanding in the life of any true Christian must be love for fellow Christians. This is not merely a matter of being pleasant in greeting other people. Love is unselfish concern that moves one to put the welfare of others ahead of one's own interests, actively working for their good. The Lord Jesus said to his true followers: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." And he added: "This is my commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you." (John 13:35; 15:12) Is this quality dominant in the congregation with which you assemble for worship? Is it manifest in your own life? Elders must be exemplary in demonstrating such love for others in the congregation.

³⁰ Paul in writing to the Philippian congregation addressed the letter to "all the holy ones in union with Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, along with overseers and ministerial servants." He said to them: "This is what I continue praying, that your love may abound yet more and more with accurate knowledge and full discernment; that you may make sure of the more important things, so that you may be flawless and not be stumbling others up to the day of Christ, and may be filled with righteous fruit, which is through Jesus Christ, to

29. What kind of love should all of us manifest, and who must be exemplary in exhibiting it?

30. To whom did Paul address his letter to the Philippian congregation, and what did he say about the effect that love should have among them?

God's glory and praise." Later, in the same letter, he added: "Make my joy full in that you are of the same mind and have the same love, being joined together in soul, holding the one thought in mind, doing nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism." (Phil. 1:1, 9-11; 2:2-4) Love is the principal thing, for God is love and we must remember that we were made in his image.

³¹ Jehovah gave attention to sinful mankind because he loves his creation. "He that does not love has not come to know God, because God is love. By this the love of God was made manifest in our case, because God sent forth his only-begotten Son into the world that we might gain life through him. The love is in this respect, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent forth his Son as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins. Beloved ones, if this is how God loved us, then we are ourselves under obligation to love one another." (1 John 4:8-11) God did not stop loving mankind when sin made its appearance. And elders must not stop loving the flock when problems arise. At Galatians 6:1, 2, this counsel is given: "Brothers, even though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness, as you each keep an eye on yourself, for fear you also may be tempted. Go on carrying the burdens of one another, and thus fulfill the law of the Christ."

³² Sometimes it is the wrongdoer who himself takes the initiative to get help. He may go to an overseer to make confession of his wrong. His desire to change his ways is commendable. "He that is covering over his transgressions will not succeed, but he that is confessing and leaving

them will be shown mercy." (Prov. 28:13) An overseer having love for his flock will take the time to hear one's transgression and he will use the Bible to help the person to correct his thinking and his conduct. When anyone confesses his faults and gives them up, that is what an elder wants to see. In other words, the person is converted, he turns around from his wrongdoing and goes the right way. So, in harmony with Proverbs 28:13, the elder would be in a position to show mercy. It may be, though, that the elder will want the transgressor to see him every month so as to be sure he is making straight paths for his feet. A loving overseer will give that extra attention to those in the flock.

³³ An elder must believe God's Word. All of it! He must use it as his guide and he must show love to the brothers, the sheep allotted to him, appreciating that they are God's sheep. Even when the elders exhort, admonish, encourage, reprove and discipline they are showing love because they are trying to help their brothers to take the right course in life. Does your congregation have such elders looking after you?

³⁴ Paul certainly knew what it meant to be an overseer, an elder. He had deep love for the congregations. "Besides those things of an external kind, there is what rushes in on me from day to day, the anxiety for all the congregations," he wrote. (2 Cor. 11:28) With loving concern Paul admonished the body of elders from Ephesus: "Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son."—Acts 20:28.

31. How has Jehovah shown his love for mankind, and so what does this call upon those with spiritual qualifications to do even when problems arise?

32. How can an overseer show love when one who has sinned comes to him for help?

33. What must an elder use as his guide in all matters, and how should he view the "sheep" allotted to him?

34. How did Paul give evidence of his concern for his brothers?

³⁵ It is absolutely necessary for all the overseers to keep awake and to work hard on behalf of everyone in the congregation, and they are glad to do so. Their experience is in accord with what is stated at Acts 20:35: "By thus laboring you must assist those who are weak, and must bear in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, when he himself said, 'There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.'"

APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS

³⁶ Who is it that makes the appointment of elders? Acts chapter 14, verse 23, reports in connection with a missionary trip of Paul and Barnabas: "They appointed older men for them in [each] congregation and, offering prayer with fastings, they committed them to Jehovah in whom they had become believers." There was no election held in the congregation. The appointments were made by Paul and Barnabas, representative members of the governing body. Similarly, Timothy and Titus evidently made such appointments according to instructions from Paul. (1 Tim. 5:22; Titus 1:5) Today, when there are congregations scattered throughout the earth, it is the older men in those congregations who, after giving the matter prayerful consideration, make recommendations to the governing body at headquarters as to others who measure up to the Scriptural qualifications, sending such recommendations to the branch office of the Watch Tower Society. The governing body then makes the appointments. But this is not done according to some standard that *they* have set up. It is done in accord with what is set out in God's inspired Word, so it can truthfully be said to these elders or

35. Though Christian overseers have much work to do, how is their experience in accord with what is recorded at Acts 20:35?

36. (a) How were appointments of elders made in the first-century Christian congregation? (b) How are such appointments made today, using what as a standard?

overseers: "The holy spirit has appointed you overseers."—Acts 20:28.

³⁷ Some congregations may have more elders than others. The Bible stipulates no specific number. (Phil. 1:1) But it does go into considerable detail as to the qualifications of those who are to be appointed as elders, and it is important to adhere to this God-given standard. Year by year, about September 1, it would be proper for the elders in the congregations to consider whether any others in the congregation now fit the Bible's description of those who qualify to be elders. If any do, they may be recommended to the governing body for appointment, and, when appointed, they may begin to share with all the other elders the responsibility for shepherding the flock in that congregation. As long as they continue to measure up to the Bible's requirements, they will continue to be elders in that congregation. However, if they were to move to another congregation, they would not, as newcomers in that area and as persons virtually unknown to the congregation, be viewed as elders or overseers by the ones associated there. They would have to establish their spiritual qualifications by their Christian activity there, and, in time, the local elders would no doubt recommend such ones for appointment as elders in that congregation. Of course, if an elder were ever to engage in unchristian conduct of such a nature that he was disfellowshiped or put under restrictions, then notification would be made to the governing body and he would be removed as an elder, since he obviously would not be a good example to the flock. However, if he were simply unable to do some of the work of an overseer, because of sickness

37. (a) How many elders may a congregation have?

(b) Explain how and when recommendations will be made for additional elders in a congregation. (c) How long may one continue to serve in a congregation as an elder? If he moves to another congregation, will his appointment as an elder apply there? Why?

or old age, this would not cancel his appointment as an elder.

³⁸ The elders have certain official assignments in the congregation to fill. If there are enough elders, they should be appointed to be congregation servant, assistant congregation servant, Bible study servant, *Watchtower* study servant and Theocratic Ministry School servant. Where possible, they should also be the congregation book study conductors and the public speakers, because these are teachers. If there are only two or three elders, they would always be appointed to the first three positions listed above. One of them may be filling two positions if there are only two elders. Usually the three different elders filling these positions constitute a judicial committee in the congregation. (1 Cor. 5:12, 13; 6:1-4) However, it would also be most advantageous for those who are elders to preside at all the congregation meetings, where that is possible. Even where there is just one elder in the congregation, it would be beneficial for him to preside at the *Watchtower* study, the service meeting and the Theocratic Ministry School, as well as a congregation book study, if he is willing and able to do so. Others can be asked to assist with organizational details, preparing schedules and caring for field service arrangements, but the elder is one who is "qualified to teach," so, where there is an elder of the congregation regularly present at a meeting, it would be most beneficial to the congregation for him to be the one appointed to preside. Of course, it is understood that there may be some cases in which, due to sickness or advanced age, this is not possible.

38. (a) In what position should elders serve in the congregation if at all possible, and why? (b) To free an elder to concentrate his efforts on teaching, for the benefit of the congregation, with what work may others be asked to assist?

³⁹ The chairmanship of the body of elders rotates. So, each year on October 1, if there is more than one elder in the congregation, a new congregation servant, or chairman of the body of elders, will take up his work. Usually, that new congregation servant will be the man who was the assistant congregation servant during the preceding year. There will also be a shifting of those assigned to the other principal positions occupied by elders. In view of this, when the "older men" in a congregation recommend someone to be an elder they should have in mind that in time he will be called on to care for all these various assignments. Is he capable of doing so? Is he willing to do so?

⁴⁰ When appointments of elders are made by the governing body, the entire congregation should be notified. Everyone associated with the congregation should know who the elders are, so they can benefit fully from their services. The elders are not bosses; they are not appointed to lord it over anyone. They are to be loving shepherds, examples to the flock, willing servants to their Christian brothers. (Matt. 20:25-28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3) They need to make themselves available to those who need help, being approachable, willing to listen when problems arise and giving loving encouragement to all.

ASSISTANCE FROM MINISTERIAL SERVANTS

⁴¹ But suppose a congregation does not have a sufficient number of brothers who qualify as elders to fill all of the principal positions on the servant body in the congregation. Or, even if the elders are able to take on more than one position, they may need help in caring for some of the details of the work. What then? The Bible

39. Explain the rotation of assignments among the elders. So what should be borne in mind in recommending men for appointment as elders?

40. Who are notified when elders are appointed, and what are their functions in the congregation?

41. What provision does the Bible make for brothers to assist the elders?

provides for ministerial servants, *di·a'ko·noi*.

⁴² The qualifications to be met by such ministerial servants provide a safeguard against any legitimate accusation's being made concerning the congregation as to the men to whom it entrusts responsibility. Those qualifications, set out in 1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12, 13, are as follows: "Ministerial servants should likewise be serious, not double-tongued, not giving themselves to a lot of wine, not greedy of dishonest gain, holding the sacred secret of the faith with a clean conscience. Also, let these be tested as to fitness first, then let them serve as ministers, as they are free from accusation. Let ministerial servants be husbands of one wife, presiding in a fine manner over children and their own households. For the men who minister in a fine manner are acquiring for themselves a fine standing and great freeness of speech in the faith in connection with Christ Jesus."

⁴³ While no specific age requirement is stipulated, it is obvious that these ministerial servants were to be grown men, old enough to be married and have children. They were not to be novices in the congregation, but persons who had been "tested as to fitness." Before being appointed as ministerial servants it would be beneficial if they had been dedicated and baptized for at least some time that would allow for their fitness to be tested. It is not required that they be "qualified to teach" in the congregation. The Scriptural qualifications show that they were not meant to be assigned as shepherds and

teachers of the flock. They should certainly be zealous in the ministry, active in the work that Jesus assigned to his disciples, namely, preaching the Kingdom message and making disciples. But, in addition to this, the requirements set out in the Scriptures show that those who are ministerial servants must be exemplary in their private lives and in their relations with others. So, before anyone is recommended to the governing body for appointment as a ministerial servant careful consideration should be given to each of those Scriptural requirements; none should be ignored or treated as of little importance.

⁴⁴ As is true when anyone becomes an elder in the congregation, the ones who are already elders make recommendations to the governing body of those who qualify to be ministerial servants. Appointment is then made by the governing body. (Acts 6:3-6) There is no set number of persons who may be ministerial servants in a congregation. (Phil. 1:1) Each year, about September 1, it would be appropriate for the elders to consider whether there are any more in the congregation who ought to be recommended for such service, and such recommendation can be made to the governing body of Jehovah's witnesses. Those thus appointed will continue to serve as long as they meet the Scriptural requirements, just the same as is true of elders. However, it is a good thing for these ministerial servants to do as suggested at 1 Timothy 3:1, that is, 'reach out for the office of overseer.' And, of course, when a person is appointed to be an elder, an overseer, he is no longer a ministerial servant, though he may continue to care for some of the same work that he did previously.

42. How do the Scriptural requirements to be met by ministerial servants safeguard the congregation?

43. (a) What do the Scriptures indicate as to age and experience of those appointed as ministerial servants? (b) Are ministerial servants meant to be shepherds and teachers of the congregation, and how do we know?

(c) To what extent must one measure up to the Scriptural requirements before being recommended to the governing body for appointment as a ministerial servant?

44. (a) How many ministerial servants may a congregation have? (b) How are they appointed, and how long may they continue to serve?

1971 SERVICE YEAR REPORT OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES WORLD WIDE

The WATCHTOWER

BROOKLYN, N.Y.

Country	Population	1971 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, One Publisher to:	1971 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. over 1970	1970 Av. Pubs.	1971 No. Bptzd.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Congs.	Total Hours	Total Back-Calls	Av. Bible Studies
U. S. of America	202,112,686	416,789	485	402,893	8	371,561	40,336	25,740	5,676	75,413,326	35,659,580	310,449
Bermuda	53,000	127	417	116	6	109	2	5	2	18,350	11,995	102
Alaska	320,467	855	375	823	8	765	105	75	13	168,957	75,532	641
Argentina	23,364,431	20,750	1,126	19,972	12	17,762	2,481	1,427	361	4,215,406	2,253,005	21,177
Australia	12,794,300	23,387	547	22,721	6	21,474	1,803	1,787	470	4,968,672	2,047,947	14,060
Austria	7,390,900	10,043	736	9,690	6	9,182	716	420	177	1,621,324	848,616	5,986
Bahamas	168,838	432	391	409	7	381	70	21	8	71,430	39,163	440
Barbados	260,000	891	292	852	5	810	85	34	14	123,439	58,343	637
Bequia	6,000	25	240	23	5	22	2	3	1	6,145	3,065	14
Carriacou	8,000	30	267	27	4	26	3	1	1	7,266	3,855	31
Grenada	106,000	195	544	189	6	179	17	18	5	43,169	21,396	224
St. Lucia	112,000	190	589	180	30	138	24	26	4	50,198	26,984	297
St. Vincent	97,000	114	851	103	-1*	104	5	12	3	27,277	12,190	129
Belgium	9,629,991	14,453	666	13,878	10	12,579	1,666	640	223	2,470,003	1,188,304	7,955
Bolivia	5,062,500	1,276	3,967	1,181	23	964	271	226	32	472,127	186,249	2,126
Brazil	94,150,000	72,269	1,303	66,460	11	60,139	7,451	3,055	1,202	11,085,354	4,703,543	58,902
British Honduras	119,645	467	256	444	11	400	37	42	11	106,476	49,275	512
British Isles	54,348,800	64,361	844	62,813	5	59,705	5,177	4,369	895	11,859,342	6,145,189	43,395
Malta	323,000	48	6,729	43	23	35	3	4	1	8,642	4,104	47
Burma	27,000,000	584	46,233	570	12	510	63	124	19	252,868	105,307	753
Canada	21,101,000	49,204	429	48,100	5	45,734	3,851	2,757	790	8,476,836	3,699,877	27,289
Central Afr. Rep.	2,255,000	1,243	1,814	1,179	5	1,128	103	118	28	339,551	150,935	1,844
Tchad	2,700,000	49	55,102	48	-2*	49	5	13	2	29,165	13,219	157
Ceylon	12,600,000	315	40,190	295	6	277	39	65	9	122,795	46,510	492
Chile	10,000,000	8,231	1,215	7,810	13	6,923	1,141	476	127	1,521,649	727,356	8,567
Colombia	21,785,700	8,275	2,633	7,820	19	6,588	1,277	785	149	1,991,723	936,714	9,796
Congo (Brazzaville)	900,000	1,761	511	1,559	8	1,437	151	122	31	405,979	170,265	1,697
Gabon	600,000	251	2,390	216	-11*	242	35	6	6	29,892	11,655	186
Congo (Kinshasa)	22,000,000	14,042	1,567	12,935	-2*	13,181	1,486	1,015	229	3,413,756	1,273,943	15,508
Costa Rica	1,768,251	3,271	541	3,123	5	2,973	190	112	78	484,810	207,707	2,666
Cyprus	623,000	662	941	606	15	527	63	30	12	103,716	41,720	344
Dahomey	2,500,000	1,956	1,278	1,868	8	1,733	154	271	53	622,344	251,693	2,143
Denmark	4,932,982	13,620	362	12,822	9	11,769	947	939	214	2,247,337	1,015,194	7,001
Faroe Islands	38,528	61	632	58	29	45	8	18	3	27,198	12,084	66
Greenland	46,331	39	1,188	31	24	25	13	13	2	9,232	4,808	21
Dominican Rep.	4,011,589	4,106	977	3,893	15	3,378	464	465	73	1,125,537	595,263	6,596
Ecuador	6,384,200	3,323	1,921	3,108	14	2,717	671	330	50	906,440	445,056	4,617
El Salvador	3,533,628	2,181	1,620	1,949	26	1,545	329	199	34	548,147	243,084	3,091
Fiji	534,811	478	1,119	454	11	410	88	53	9	126,323	44,830	593
American Samoa	27,769	63	441	56	27	44	2	5	1	16,283	8,185	82
Gilbert & Ellice	55,000	14	3,929	10	25	8	2			1,129	228	8
New Caledonia	100,579	189	532	170	17	145	37	9	1	33,265	17,217	186
New Hebrides	80,000	19	4,211	15	50	10		1	1	2,206	1,426	19
Niue	5,258	15	351	13	30	10	1	1	1	1,009	556	29
Tahiti	119,168	165	722	155	8	143	17	4	2	31,170	13,987	160
Tonga	77,429	16	4,839	15		15	2		1	3,016	1,293	8
Western Samoa	148,600	109	1,363	90	8	83	17	7	1	20,672	7,056	97
Finland	4,602,254	10,836	425	10,637	4	10,250	771	731	282	1,854,899	951,276	6,684
France	50,524,000	41,203	1,226	39,026	14	34,224	4,977	1,476	636	6,917,861	3,652,690	30,863
Algeria	12,200,000	28	435,714	22	-51*	45	4		1	2,310	1,753	27
Tunisia	4,500,000	42	107,143	37	23	30		1		3,938	2,520	31
Germany, West	61,988,400	89,706	691	87,976	4	84,421	5,136	3,737	1,112	14,082,861	7,110,404	39,893
West Berlin	2,129,900	5,501	387	5,412	1	5,336	302	190	45	831,177	502,996	2,254
Ghana	8,750,654	15,822	553	14,961	11	13,482	1,700	1,053	307	3,566,301	1,661,173	16,969
Ivory Coast	4,100,000	502	8,167	455	17	389	92	66	11	160,233	93,442	983

Country	Population	1971 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, One Publisher to:	1971 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. over 1970	1970 Av. Pubs.	1971 No. Bptzd.	Av. Plo. Pubs.	No. of Congs.	Total Hours	Total Back-Calls	Av. Bible Studies
Luxembourg	400,993	591	678	569	8	528	37	47	13	129,875	64,898	464
Malagasy Rep.	7,423,864	398	18,653	365	-12*	415	41	5	11	44,525	25,071	274
Mauritius	822,191	280	2,936	257	22	211	49	33	6	75,847	29,662	426
Réunion	455,000	354	1,285	338	-2*	346	27	20	8	70,150	32,701	279
Rodrigues	24,974	17	1,469	16	7	15	4	1	1	8,043	2,875	29
Mexico	49,940,870	54,384	918	51,256	13	45,256	5,683	3,934	1,439	10,020,610	4,052,245	50,270
Morocco	15,050,000	213	70,657	200	23	162	37	21	5	57,305	26,512	212
Gibraltar	26,883	48	560	45	32	34	7	1	1	6,386	3,209	43
Netherlands	13,103,772	20,285	646	19,405	10	17,706	1,647	1,098	238	3,412,809	1,484,193	9,234
Neth. Ant. (Curaçao)	145,777	359	406	343	7	320	62	17	5	63,582	36,309	386
Aruba	60,734	185	328	171	6	161	25	5	4	27,187	15,818	147
Bonaire	8,191	18	455	16	23	13	3	3	1	5,122	2,125	21
Newfoundland	510,000	901	566	875	4	844	56	93	31	223,471	103,075	659
New Zealand	2,860,475	5,876	487	5,658	6	5,322	555	420	101	1,125,441	495,552	3,631
Cook Islands	22,022	18	1,223	12	71	7	3	1	1	5,009	1,960	23
Nicaragua	1,974,924	1,654	1,194	1,565	18	1,321	204	132	31	371,681	191,629	1,913
Nigeria	55,670,052	86,843	641	75,372	20	62,641	10,492	8,476	1,281	22,103,373	8,694,165	92,394
Cameroon	5,150,000	10,054	512	8,116	-21*	10,299	592	277	1	738,814	430,054	5,249
Equatorial Guinea	244,574	221	1,107	70	-75*	275	9	9	9	17,718	7,309	97
Niger	2,870,000	24	119,583	18	-25*	24	1	9	1	17,394	6,541	68
Norway	3,891,739	5,857	664	5,572	8	5,183	546	240	158	816,864	381,131	2,720
Okinawa	945,111	506	1,868	481	20	402	72	76	11	162,174	70,410	762
Pakistan	134,000,000	173	774,566	162	8	150	6	30	4	59,655	24,065	223
Afghanistan	14,350,000	9	1,594,444	9	50	6	1	1	1	1,664	862	5
Panama	1,478,290	2,013	734	1,918	8	1,781	164	174	45	452,978	216,685	2,381
Papua	630,616	556	1,134	505	3	490	48	48	16	120,754	44,863	611
Bougainville Is.	79,739	21	3,797	16	78	9	2	2	1	3,026	1,001	14
Manus Island	21,679	22	985	17	13	15	3	1	1	4,752	1,972	24
New Britain	161,897	90	1,799	83	2	81	7	16	1	34,351	13,110	154
New Guinea	1,493,200	412	3,624	386	20	322	33	57	11	123,146	44,233	516
New Ireland	52,635	47	1,120	42	20	35	12	9	1	21,401	7,681	73
Solomon Islands	160,998	601	268	563	13	498	54	76	13	177,627	77,287	897
Paraguay	2,386,000	901	2,648	837	16	722	121	108	21	241,118	123,758	925
Peru	14,000,000	5,384	2,600	4,953	21	4,097	974	653	90	1,604,152	702,123	7,272
Philippines	37,000,000	56,078	660	54,264	8	50,117	6,224	6,202	1,380	12,777,495	4,212,202	41,740
Portugal	9,095,800	9,086	1,001	8,373	21	6,909	1,203	351	108	1,500,745	704,955	9,604
Angola	5,300,000	487	10,883	417	61	259	91	15	6	79,984	58,444	777
Azores	336,100	98	3,430	86	9	79	11	6	3	20,028	10,774	107
Cape Verde Is.	218,000	10	21,800	9	50	6	5	1	1	1,858	1,572	14
Madeira	268,700	104	2,584	97	40	69	14	4	2	16,473	7,861	116
Portuguese Guinea	625,000	3	208,333	2	100	1				90	63	2
Puerto Rico	2,722,000	8,511	320	7,909	25	6,334	786	453	126	1,653,532	758,728	9,199
Virgin Is. (Brit.)	10,500	62	169	56	24	45	1	1	1	7,776	3,428	54
Virgin Is. (U.S.)	75,260	306	246	291	15	252	20	15	6	50,428	24,197	308
Rhodesia	5,400,000	12,456	434	11,530	7	10,747	684	793	354	2,548,534	965,023	10,613
Malawi	4,530,000	21,949	206	19,998	14	17,469	1,577	928	432	3,876,530	1,615,518	15,205
Mozambique	6,650,000	3,801	1,750	3,227	26	2,563	438	105	64	639,712	275,924	2,848
Senegal	3,900,000	207	18,841	188	19	158	41	38	3	82,347	39,680	377
Gambia	325,000	7	46,429	7	-22*	9	3	1	1	4,142	2,842	16
Mali	4,500,000	6	750,000	5	-17*	6	2	2	1	3,024	1,082	8
Mauritania	1,500,000	3	500,000	2		2				220	183	1
Sierra Leone	2,183,000	1,002	2,179	908	11	815	113	211	35	398,399	190,641	1,920
Guinea	3,608,000	204	17,686	163	31	124	9	50	5	82,846	34,325	353
Singapore	2,100,000	255	8,235	228	15	199	37	27	4	65,466	27,260	338
Malaysia	10,169,000	207	49,126	177	15	154	32	33	7	70,471	29,711	357
South Africa	19,729,671	23,527	839	22,428	9	20,588	2,163	1,488	452	4,821,617	1,795,901	19,223
Ascension Is.	1,527	2	764	2		2				87	38	1
Botswana	611,000	181	3,376	168		168	7	24	4	54,164	17,537	266

Lesotho	970,000	472	368	25	41	9	120,332	45,638	519
St. Helena	4,722	63	432	52	17	46	12	1	40
South-West Afr.	226	2,699	209	9	191	14	5	42,419	18,518
Swaziland	694	569	641	4	32	59	14	177,860	64,227
Spain	14,069	2,305	13,056	29	10,086	1,951	1,094	3,417,130	1,868,654
Andorra	23	924	20	33	15	4	2,120	1,137	18,764
Canary Islands	1,203,365	462	2,605	425	31	325	54	55	21
Surinam	385,000	586	657	551	8	511	19	59	579
Sweden	8,051,782	12,401	653	12,094	7	11,336	826	232	581
Switzerland	6,269,783	8,017	782	7,844	7	7,308	673	156	8,433
Liechtenstein	21,500	13	1,654	111	38	8	198	1,121,589	5,455
Taiwan	14,300,000	1,150	12,435	1,097	1	1,087	63	92	761
Thailand	34,152,000	423	80,738	387	9	356	29	67	422
Cambodia	6,701,000	4	1,675,250	3	20	3	10	1	3
Laos	3,000,000	28	1,071,143	24	20	6	18,637	7,610	81
Vietnam	17,800,000	68	261,763	61	27	12	32,025	14,393	166
Togo	21,100,000	1,779	1,180	1,667	18	1,418	248	222	2,684
Trinidad	905,930	2,199	412	2,142	3	2,081	221	160	2,575
Tobago	389,280	106	371	195	12	85	10	13	1,621
Uruguay	2,900,000	3,370	861	3,263	7	3,094	405	286	4,465
Falkland Is.	2,300	6	383	5	150	2	62	796,661	395,740
Venezuela	10,872,300	8,170	1,331	7,780	13	6,863	979	473	8,054
Zambia	4,540,000	56,996	80	52,369	10	47,663	3,797	490	53,710
196 Countries	1,450,607	140,188	1,376,886	9,5	1,256,841	139,775	93,493	24,094	1,166,583
All Other Countries	1,590,793	1,510,245	9,1	1,384,782	149,808	95,501	27,154	291,952,375	3,197,1970
GRAND TOTAL (207 Countries)									3,226,168
									3,453,542
									10,526
									10,384
									91,021

* Percentage of decrease
† Work banned and reports are incomplete

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE WORLD WIDE
MEMORIAL PARTAKERS WORLD WIDE

DUTIES OF MINISTERIAL SERVANTS

⁴⁵ There is much work that ministerial servants can do in a congregation. In the first century, in the Jerusalem congregation, we have an example of work such as might be done by ministerial servants. The distribution of food supplies to needy widows in the congregation, while not as important as "the ministry of the word," was classed as "necessary business." Apparently there was much to be done, because it was not all assigned to one person but to "seven certified men."

—Acts 6:1-6.

⁴⁶ In the congregations of Jehovah's witnesses today, there is likewise much "necessary business" that does not directly involve "the ministry of the word." This includes caring for literature supplies, assigning territory for preaching, and caring for congregation accounts. There is necessary work to be done in caring for the upkeep of the Kingdom Hall, cleaning it each week, arranging the chairs, caring for ventilation, operating the sound equipment in larger halls, keeping a record of attendance, welcoming newcomers and introducing them to the elders of the congregation. In some congregations there may be enough ministerial servants so that a different one can be assigned to each of these duties. Elsewhere, someone may care for several of these assignments. In some instances, it may be beneficial to have more than one person assigned to share in certain work. Some of the elders may have records that come under their supervision, but, if there are ministerial servants available, they can be assigned to help in caring for these, in order to free

- 45, 46. (a) What are some of the duties a ministerial servant may perform in a congregation?
 (b) Who assign the ministerial servants to the specific work they will do for the congregation?
 (c) May ministerial servants be moved to other assignments of work from year to year?

the elders for the more important shepherding work. The ministerial servants may also help in assigning territory to be worked when groups of publishers meet for public preaching work. While the ministerial servants are officially appointed by the governing body, the local "body of elders" may assign them the specific work that they will do on behalf of the congregation. And, just as the elders are rotated to different assignments each year, so the elders can arrange for the ministerial servants to take on different assignments of work each year, to the extent that this proves to be practical. What a fine privilege it is to be able to serve one's brothers as these ministerial servants do!

⁴⁷ The situation may arise, in locations where there is a very rapid growth in the congregations, that there just are not enough elders to do all the teaching and shepherding work that is required. In a certain locality where all are quite new in the service of God, there may not even be one elder. Yet they can certainly have regular meetings for study and share in preaching to others, and, in time, no doubt someone in their midst will qualify as an elder. In a congregation where there are some elders, there may not be enough to care for all the congregation book studies. It may be beneficial to have larger groups in some cases; elsewhere an elder may be able to preside at more than one such study, doing so at different times during the week. But, where necessary, ministerial servants may help out by caring for some of these study groups until there are elders available. Similarly, due to local circumstances, a ministerial servant may be

asked to care temporarily for one of the five principal positions held by an elder. However, his being given such an assignment by local elders does not make him an elder. And if he was a temporary assistant congregation servant or Bible study servant, he would not be viewed as one of the congregation's judicial committee. To handle such matters another elder from a nearby congregation would be invited to help out. Yet, with diligent effort, the one who is helping out with the work that would normally be done by an elder may himself in time qualify as one of the "older men" who are overseers of the flock.

⁴⁸ It is good for all Christians to be progressive in their outlook. No one wants to remain an infant, either physically or spiritually. Early Hebrew Christians were admonished: "Now that we have left the primary doctrine about the Christ, let us press on to maturity." (Heb. 6:1) Timothy was told: "Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, that your advancement may be manifest to all persons." (1 Tim. 4:15) Are you making such advancement as a Christian? Is your devotion to Jehovah growing stronger? Are you progressing in development of the fruitage of the spirit? Are you widening out in your love for your Christian brothers? Are you endeavoring to conform your own life more fully to God's Word? Because the organization of Jehovah's Christian witnesses has endeavored to adhere closely to God's Word, and to make adjustments where necessary to conform to it more closely, God's spirit has obviously been upon it. Today, on an unprecedented scale, Jehovah's witnesses in all parts of the earth are proclaiming God's kingdom as the only hope of mankind. They are helping sincere persons to learn what the

47. (a) What may be done where there are not enough elders in the congregation to care for all the congregation book studies and the other assignments normally handled by elders? (b) If a ministerial servant is appointed as a temporary assistant congregation servant, would he be viewed as one of the congregation's judicial committee?

48. What can we all do that will show we are progressive in our outlook as servants of God?

Bible teaches, to act in harmony with it, and thus to be truly "wise and understanding." If you would like assistance so that you can learn and benefit fully from the good things contained in God's Word, they will count it a pleasure to be of help to you too.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ARE PREACHING AND TEACHING

⁴⁹ Jehovah's witnesses are helping all kinds of people world wide; they are active in 207 different lands. Under the direction of ninety-three branch offices of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 1,510,245 Christian men and women arranged to go from house to house or to declare the good news of God's kingdom in some other way every month during the past year. This was 125,000 more Witnesses preaching and teaching from God's Word than in the service year of 1970. However, before the year ended, the number grew to 1,590,793.

⁵⁰ Because Jehovah's witnesses are interested in helping others to a better understanding of the Bible and its meaning for mankind today they devoted 291,952,375 hours last year to talking about God's Word. Is this not good evidence that they were truly trying to comfort people of all nations? Would not a careful study of God's written Word help people to become "wise and understanding"? To accomplish this, every week throughout the year Jehovah's witnesses conducted 1,257,904 free Bible studies in the homes of interested people. Do the members of the religious denomination to which you belong try to help people in this way? Not only do Jehovah's witnesses preach from house to house and teach in private homes, but they leave Bible study helps wherever they

can so that, if the listener does not have time to study when one of Jehovah's witnesses calls on him, the person can read about the "good news" at his own convenience. During the year Jehovah's witnesses distributed 18,168,032 bound books and Bibles, 10,590,176 booklets, 218,898-, 563 copies of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* and obtained a total of 2,702,972 new subscriptions for these magazines.

⁵¹ So that you might appreciate more fully just what has been done by Jehovah's witnesses in their ministry and where, we are reproducing herewith a chart setting out the 1971 service year report of Jehovah's witnesses world wide. See pages 22-25.

⁵² Jehovah's witnesses are not great in numbers when compared with the world's population, but they do love Jehovah God and his Word the Bible. They believe what James wrote, in the fourth chapter, the fourth verse: "Do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God." Think of that! Is it not true that all the nations of the world are in trouble? Can you not see that almost every man's hand is against his neighbor, even in Christendom? Obviously, they do not manifest the spirit of God. Are you really different from them? Do you truly love God, and do you "love your neighbor as yourself"? If that is the kind of person you want to be, then, as the Bible says, you must 'subject yourself to God, but oppose the Devil and he will flee from you. Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you.' (Jas. 4:7, 8) If you do this, you will come to enjoy the loving oversight that Jehovah provides for all the 'flock of God.'

49-51. To what extent have Jehovah's witnesses been active in the past year in preaching the good news of the Kingdom?

52. What motivates Jehovah's witnesses in their ministry, and so what benefits do they enjoy?

THE saying goes that 'a man is only as good as his word is.' The same might be said of a woman. The person known as a keeper of his word earns respect. People learn to trust one who is 'a man of his word.' Are you that kind of person?

Unfortunately, we often incline to expect more of others than of ourselves in this regard. A son or daughter would feel deeply hurt if the parents failed to fulfill some promise—perhaps to buy something for one, take one on a trip or grant one some special privilege. But does one feel just as strongly about keeping one's word to one's parents? Friendships, too, suffer when agreements are not kept, when appointments are not met. True, a person may become unexpectedly ill, accidents can happen, or some other circumstance can make it physically impossible to do something. But, on the other hand, it is easy to make excuses for ourselves; yet we feel disappointed when others fail us.

What are you like in this respect? If you tell someone you will help him to do something or offer to perform some service, do you always fulfill your word? If you make an appointment to meet someone at a certain time, do you show up, and on time? How much is your word worth?

Some may feel that youths should be freer than older persons in these matters, that not as much should be expected of them. But youth is the right time to start developing the habit of being a person of your word. Keeping or not keeping your word tells a lot about what you are like inside now; it also has a molding effect on your mind and heart. It builds up an



Do You

KEEP YOUR WORD?

attitude, a way of looking at things that can produce long-lasting personality traits.

If you are reliable now, you probably will be in later years. And the reverse is just as true. For example, if you do not live up to your word now, in later years you may make a firm agreement to take on a certain job or assignment—and then soon want to back out. Many people do that, but they are not viewed with respect by others.

That same unreliability can show up in marriage. Many violate in a short time the solemn promise they made when they took the marriage vows. Thus they ruin their lives and cause grief to other persons. Perhaps they were not keepers of their word even before they married.

It is not enough to keep your word just in 'big things,' things you consider of major importance. 'Big things' do not happen every day or every week, not often enough to build up the quality of reliability. Keeping your word needs to be a regular, daily practice.

Concern about fulfilling in smaller matters is what builds up the determination and strength to hold to your word in bigger matters. If you have gained others' trust and confidence by having a reputation of reliability in smaller matters, you

will work hard to keep that reputation and its benefits, even when bigger matters come along.

But if you prove untrustworthy in smaller matters, who will ever ask you to take on responsibility in bigger ones? Jesus showed that things just do not work that way, especially not in God's dealings with men.—Luke 16:10.

WHERE THE PROBLEM LIES

Why do people break their word? Well, for one thing keeping one's word puts limitations on a person, it obligates him. When the time arrives for keeping an appointment or some other promise, something else may seem more appealing. Then, too, many times the person may find that making good on his word means much harder work than he thought it would when he gave his word. One may think some material profit will result from an agreement, and later find it will bring loss instead.

What will you do in such cases? Will you stay by your word even though it means some hardship or loss to you? Or do you want the other person to be the one to suffer damage because you do not want to fulfill? For example, if we fail to keep an appointment, we steal someone's time, keeping him waiting for nothing. If we fail to do certain work, we can cause him other problems and slow down his reaching certain goals, perhaps hinder him from fulfilling promises he himself has made. So, we need to ask ourselves: What kind of person am I or do I want to be? Am I selfish or do I have genuine consideration for other persons?

One may say, "But I didn't know what I was getting into!" The real question here is: Whose fault was it? Was there fraud or deception on the other person's side? If not, then if you do not back out but endure whatever hardness fulfilling your word requires, you learn a valuable lesson, one you will remember. That is:

Think before you talk, before you give your word. Then, when you speak, mean what you say.—Prov. 10:19.

To say "yes" to something simply because you think it will please someone—but without first thinking out the consequences—can get you into difficulty. By contrast, if you are careful about making promises, if you think matters through and consider how they will affect your future life, then it will be much easier to keep your word once you have committed yourself. You will have prepared your heart and mind to be true to your word.

Naturally, you cannot foresee everything. Circumstances may change between the time of giving your word and the time of carrying it out, or even during the period of carrying it out. But if the other person has not proved false to his or her part, why should you prove false?

Showing God's view on this, Psalm 15 raises the question as to what kind of person God accepts as his "guest" and then answers, saying: "He who is walking faultlessly and practicing righteousness, and speaking the truth in his heart. . . . He has sworn to what is bad for himself, and yet he does not alter."—Ps. 15:2, 4.

It is not surprising that God counts as his friends only those who keep their word. Why so? Because he himself does this unfailingly. That is why Joshua could say to the nation of Israel: "You well know with all your hearts and with all your souls that not one word out of all the good words that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed. They have all come true for you. Not one word of them has failed." (Josh. 23:14) The Bible is largely a record of Jehovah's kept promises. His trueness in the past is what gives us such confidence of future blessings in fulfillment of his promises.

Do you want God's approval? Then when you find you have given your word

"to what is bad for [your]self" do not alter it by breaking your agreement. Of course, this does not mean "bad" in the sense of something that you later realize is contrary to the principles of God's Word. For if you have told God you want to serve him, then your word to him comes first. (Acts 4:19, 20; 5:29) In such case, you would be untrue to him if you carried out an agreement to do wrong.

Likewise your parents can annul certain agreements you might make, even as a father or husband in ancient Israel could cancel a vow made by his daughter or wife if he deemed it advisable as the family head.—Num. 30:3-15.

Jesus corrected persons in his day who evidently had the habit of swearing they would do this or that, using such oaths with regard to many things of little importance. (Compare Leviticus 5:4.) Jesus told them: "Do not swear at all . . . Just let your word Yes mean Yes, your No, No; for what is in excess of these is from the wicked one."—Matt. 5:33-37.

This means we should not operate under a double standard. Keeping our word should be our regular practice and it should not take some sworn oath on our part to guarantee that. Not that such sworn oath is prohibited if someone requires it of us, either because of wanting special assurance or because of doubt. But as far as we are concerned, with or without

Do You Remember?

Have you read the recent issues of *The Watchtower* carefully? If so, you should recognize these important points:

- By doing what can we fortify ourselves so as to maintain integrity?

By personally reading and studying the Bible and the Society's Bible study aids, by avoiding bad associations, by attending meetings, by sharing in the preaching of God's

out an oath our word should be reliable, trustworthy at all times. Is that true of you? Does your Yes always mean Yes? And when you say "No," do your actions always show that you mean it?

True, being imperfect, you may over-commit yourself at some time, finding that you have said you would do something that turns out to be in conflict with some other commitment already made. What then? The commitment you made first in almost every case will be the one that should stand. Personal preference should not be the basis for deciding. So, you should be humble and considerate enough to go to the person involved and explain why you cannot fulfill what you promised. Thereby you at least show you are sincerely concerned about the trustworthiness of your word.

If keeping your word with other humans is important, how much more so is keeping your word with God! If you have turned to him in true repentance, perhaps have taken the step of baptism, and have thereby asked him to let you be his servant, do not go back on your word. That would cost you your hope of everlasting life.

If we love God and sincerely seek to please him, he will help us and give us the strength to keep our word. He promises that help. And he keeps his word.

—Deut. 31:6; Ps. 27:9, 10; Heb. 13:5.

kingdom, by regular prayer.—Pp. 527-530.*

- What does it mean to be 'perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect'?

It means that one expresses love in a complete, rounded-out way, not narrowly confining it to one's friends but extending it to others, even to those showing enmity toward one.—Pp. 566, 567.

* All references are to *The Watchtower* for 1971.

- What will aid parents to keep open the lines of communication with their children?

Talk on their level; listen to their likes, dislikes and opinions; help them to find answers to their problems; reason together; confide in them and make plans together.—Pp. 588-592.

- Why is "dating" unwise for Christians who are not yet old enough to marry?

Because dating so often increases the pressure and pull of sexual desire at a time when this desire cannot find proper satisfaction. It "rushes" matters so that the young boy or girl's development in the very abilities, attitudes, knowledge and balance that would later make for a very happy marriage is hindered.—Pp. 593-595.

- Why is it that all nations will soon unavoidably collide, head on, with God?

Instead of acknowledging God's sovereignty and following his principles as set forth in the Bible, the nations insist on domination of the earth by political governments of men; they fight God's Messianic kingdom and direct the people's hope toward the composite political organization, the United Nations.—Pp. 621, 622.

- How have the clergy of Christendom demonstrated that they put their own name ahead of the name of God?

The clergy have let their lies against God stand, such as hellfire, Trinity and praying soldiers of their nation into heaven.—Pp. 646, 647, 649.

- How can we show that we respect God's name more than our own?

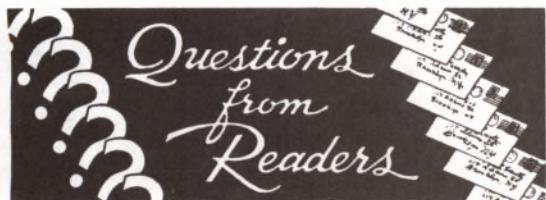
By accepting the Bible as being the Word of God; by dedicating ourselves to God through Christ; by associating with Jehovah's people and sharing with them in witnessing to God's name.—P. 658.

- What is Christian maturity?

The state of spiritual adulthood, no longer being a spiritual "babe." This maturity is attained by accepting the full range of Christian truth and sincerely endeavoring to live in harmony therewith.—Pp. 662, 665.

- What is the relationship among those who are elders in the Christian congregation?

The elders in a congregation are coequal, all sharing in the duties of watching over the spiritual condition of the congregation. They are appointed by the Christian governing body and work under its direction.—Pp. 691, 693.



- Do homosexual acts on the part of a married person constitute a Scriptural ground for divorce, freeing the innocent mate to remarry?
—U.S.A.

Homosexuality is definitely condemned in the Bible as something that will prevent individuals from gaining God's approval. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10) However, whether an innocent mate would Scripturally be able to remarry after procuring a legal divorce from a mate guilty of homosexual acts must be determined on the basis of what the Bible says respecting divorce and remarriage.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus Christ said: "Everyone divorcing his wife, except on

account of fornication, makes her a subject for adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery." (Matt. 5:32) On a later occasion he told the Pharisees: "Whoever divorces his wife, except on the ground of fornication, and marries another commits adultery." —Matt. 19:9.

Thus "fornication" is seen to be the only ground for divorce that frees the innocent mate to remarry.

The Greek word for fornication is *porneia*. It can refer to illicit sexual relations between either married or unmarried persons. The ancient Greeks, in rare instances, may have understood this term to denote acts other than illicit sexual intercourse between a man and a woman. But the sense in which Jesus used the word *porneia* at Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 must be ascertained from the context.

It should be noted that in Matthew chapters 5 and 19 "fornication" is used in the restricted sense of *marital* unfaithfulness, or illicit relations with another person not one's marriage mate. Just before bringing up the matter of

divorce in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ pointed out that "everyone [married] that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matt. 5:28) Consequently, when he afterward alluded to a woman's committing fornication, his listeners would have understood this in its relative sense, namely, as signifying a married woman's prostitution or adultery.

The context of Matthew chapter 19 confirms this conclusion. On the basis of the Hebrew Scriptures, Jesus pointed out that a man and his wife became "one flesh," and then added: "What God has yoked together let no man put apart." (Matt. 19:5, 6) Now, in homosexual acts the sex organs are used in an unnatural way, in a way for which they were never purposed. Two persons of the same sex are not complements of each other, as Adam and Eve were. They could never become "one flesh" in order to procreate. It might be added, in the case of human copulation with a beast, two different kinds of flesh are involved. Wrote

the apostle Paul: "Not all flesh is the same flesh, but there is one of mankind, and there is another flesh of cattle, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish."—1 Cor. 15:39.

While both homosexuality and bestiality are disgusting perversions, in the case of neither one is the marriage tie broken. It is broken only by acts that make an individual "one flesh" with a person of the opposite sex other than his or her legal marriage mate.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

January 30: "Who Is Wise and Understanding Among You?" ¶1-14, and Appointed Elders to Shepherd the Flock of God, ¶1-10. Page 5. Songs to Be Used: 89, 37.

February 6: Appointed Elders to Shepherd the Flock of God, ¶11-35. Page 11. Songs to Be Used: 14, 34.

February 13: Appointed Elders to Shepherd the Flock of God, ¶36-52. Page 19. Songs to Be Used: 52, 10.