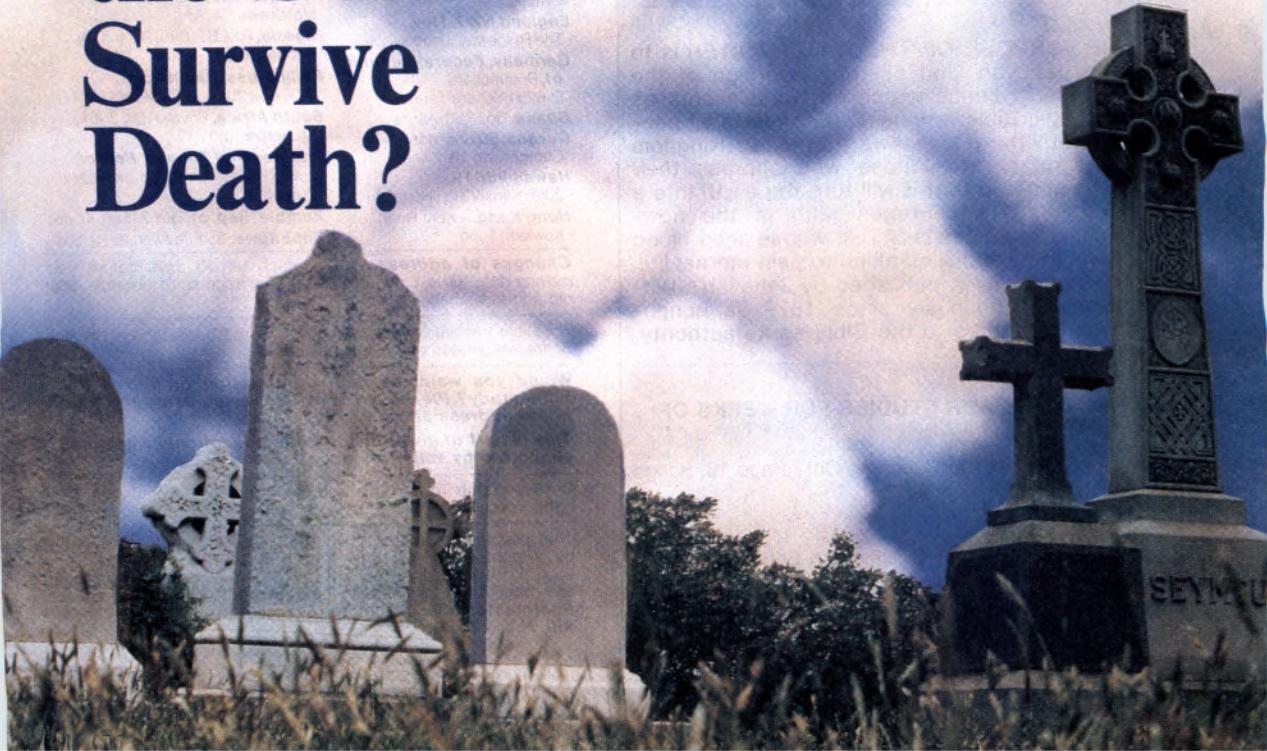


The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

September 1, 1990

Does the Soul Survive Death?



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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in the now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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LIFE AFTER DEATH

THE UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

I“F AN able-bodied man dies can he live again?” (Job 14:14) This question, posed centuries ago by the patriarch Job, has been pondered by people in every society over the ages, and there has been no shortage of proposed answers.

The ancient Greeks claimed that the souls of the dead lived on. These were ferried across the river Styx to a vast underground realm called the netherworld. There judges sentenced the souls either to torment in a high-walled prison or to bliss in the Elysian fields. Other ancient peoples thought that souls became stars or comets. Still others held that souls were luminous and were drawn up to the moon; every month as the moon became full, they were transferred to the sun.

Today, theories regarding an afterlife continue to abound. Hindus and Buddhists believe in reincarnation. Muslims teach that the soul survives the death of the body and at the last judgment will go either to paradise or to hell. Most Protestants are taught that souls live on after death to experience heavenly bliss or torment in the flames of hell. To this scenario Catholicism adds Limbo and purgatory.

In some lands, beliefs regarding supposed souls of the dead are a curious blend of local tradition and nominal Christiani-

ty. For example, it is customary among many Catholics and Protestants in West Africa to cover mirrors when someone dies so that no one might look and see the dead person's spirit. Forty days after the death of a loved one, family and friends will feast to celebrate the soul's ascension to heaven. Thereafter, usually at Christmas or on New Year's Day, relatives will visit the cemetery and pour alcoholic drink on the grave. They will even speak to the dead, requesting favors and relating family news.

Obviously, there is little agreement among the world's religions as to exactly what happens after death. Yet, there is almost universal agreement on one fundamental assertion: the immortality of the human soul. Most teachings about life after death are simply variations of this basic theme.

Nevertheless, several nagging questions present themselves: Just where does the idea that the soul is immortal come from? Is it taught in Scripture? If so, why do even non-Christian faiths teach it? These are not questions that should be ignored. Whatever your religious persuasion, death is a fact that has to be faced. The issues thus involve you in a profoundly personal way. We therefore invite you to look into these matters with an open mind.



DOES THE SOUL SURVIVE DEATH?

SOUL: The spiritual part of man regarded as surviving after death and as susceptible of happiness or misery in a future state." (*The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*) Most religions more or less agree with this definition. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* says: "The doctrine that the human soul is immortal and will continue to exist after man's death . . . is one of the cornerstones of Christian philosophy and theology."

Perhaps it would surprise you, then, to know that this cornerstone belief is derived from pagan philosophy. Long before the birth of Jesus, it was believed that the soul was something intangible that could exist apart from the body. It could thus survive the death of the body, living on in the form of a ghost, or spirit.

The Greeks articulated this belief in philosophical terms. Socrates, the famous Greek philosopher, has been quoted as saying: "The soul, . . . if it departs pure, dragging with it nothing of the body, . . . goes away into that which is like itself, into the invisible, divine, immortal, and wise, and when it arrives there it is happy, freed from error and folly and fear . . . and all the other human ills, and . . . lives in truth through all after time with the gods."—*Phaedo*, 80, D, E; 81, A.

Not a Bible Teaching

How, then, did this pagan belief in the immortality of the soul come to be taught in Christendom and Judaism?

The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* understates matters when it says: "The notion of the soul surviving after death is not readily discernible in the Bible." It would be more accurate to say that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is not found at all in the Bible! That encyclopedia admits: "The concept of the human soul itself is not the same in the O[ld] T[estament] as it is in Greek and modern philosophy."

In the so-called Old Testament, the Hebrew word *ne'phesh*, commonly translated "soul," occurs 754 times. In the so-called New Testament, the Greek word *psy-khe'*, also commonly translated "soul," appears 102 times. When we examine how these words are used in the Bible, a surprising picture emerges.

At Genesis 2:7 we read that God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, and Adam "came to be a living soul [Hebrew, *ne'phesh*]." Notice: Adam was not given a living soul; he became one. In other words, the newly created Adam was a soul! Little wonder that the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* concludes: "The soul in the O[ld] T[estament] means not a part of man, but the whole man—man as a living being."

Other scriptures confirm this. Leviticus 7:20, for example, refers to "the soul who eats the flesh of the communion sacrifice." Leviticus 23:30 says: "As for any soul that will do any sort of work." Proverbs 25:25 says: "As cold water upon a tired soul, so is a good report from a distant land." And Psalm 105:18 tells us: "With fetters they afflicted his feet; into irons his soul came." Now, what is it that can eat meat, do work, be refreshed with water, and be put in irons? Is it a separate, spiritual part of man, or is it man himself? The answer is obvious.

Interestingly, being a soul is not unique to man. Genesis 1:20 tells us that in one creative epoch, God said: "Let the waters swarm forth a swarm of living souls." Yes, even fish are souls! In another creative epoch, God indicated that the "domestic animal and moving animal and wild beast" are souls!—Genesis 1:24; compare Leviticus 11:10, 46; 24:18; Numbers 31:28; Job 41:21; Ezekiel 47:9.

"Soul" in the Bible, therefore, does not refer to some shadowy spirit entity that leaves the body after death. It means a person or an animal, or the life that a person or an animal enjoys.

What Happens After Death?

Clearly, then, the Bible is at odds with the pagan notion that man possesses an immortal soul. Who, do you think, taught the truth in this regard? Pagan Greek philosophers or God's own covenant people? Surely, it was God's people, to whom he gave his inspired Word.

Still, the question remains, What does happen to the soul after death? Since the soul is the person, clearly, the soul dies when the person dies. In other words, a dead person is a dead soul. Scores of scriptures confirm this. "The soul that is sinning—it itself will die," says Ezekiel 18:4. At Judges 16:30 we read: "And Samson

proceeded to say: 'Let my soul die with the Philistines.'" Other scriptures show that souls can be cut off (Genesis 17:14), slain by the sword (Joshua 10:37), suffocated (Job 7:15), and drowned (Jonah 2:5). A deceased soul, or a dead soul, is a dead person.—Leviticus 19:28; 21:1, 11.

What, then, is the condition of dead souls? Simply stated, death is the opposite of life. All our senses are linked to our physical bodies. Our ability to see, hear, and think depends on the proper functioning of our eyes, ears, and brain. Without eyes we cannot see. Without ears we cannot hear. Without a brain we cannot do anything. When a person dies, all these physical organs cease to function. We cease to exist.

In harmony with this, Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10 says: "As for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all . . . There is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol [the grave], the place to which you are going." Similarly, Psalm 146:3, 4 states: "Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs. His spirit [life force] goes out, he goes back to his ground; in that day his thoughts do perish." So when people (souls) die, they simply cease to exist.

From Pagan Teaching to Church Doctrine

'But does not the New Testament teach the immortality of the soul?' some may ask. Not at all. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* admits: "The N[ew] T[estament] remains faithful to this [Old Testament] understanding of death." In other words, the "New Testament" teaches that the soul dies. Jesus Christ demonstrated that he did not believe that the soul was immortal. He asked: "Is it lawful on the sabbath to do a good deed or to do a bad deed, to save or to kill a soul?" (Mark 3:4) The Christian apostle Paul likewise

endorsed the "Old Testament" view of the soul by quoting Genesis 2:7: "It is even so written: 'The first man Adam became a living soul.'"—1 Corinthians 15:45.

How, then, did Platonic thinking become church doctrine? The *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, by James Hastings, explains: "When the Christian gospel passed out through the gate of the Jewish synagogue into the arena of the Roman Empire, an idea of the soul fundamentally Hebrew was transferred into an environment of Greek thought, with no slight consequences in the process of adaptation." Church teachers endeavored to make their message "intelligible to a Greek-thinking world" by using "the established terms and conceptions of Greek psychology." Jewish theologians likewise began to demonstrate "strong influences of Platonism" in their writings.—*Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

The Biblical teaching about the soul was thus discarded and replaced with a doctrine that was unmistakably pagan. This can in no way be justified on the grounds that doing so made Christianity more appealing to the masses. When preaching in Athens, the very heart of Greek culture, the apostle Paul did not teach the Platonic doctrine of the soul. On the contrary, he preached the Christian doctrine of the resurrection even though many of his Greek listeners found it hard to accept what he said.—Acts 17:22-32.

Indeed, the apostle Paul warned against any combining of Bible-based truth and paganism when he said: "What sharing does light have with darkness? Further, what harmony is there between Christ and Belial?" (2 Corinthians 6:14, 15) There can be no question that in allowing a pagan teaching to become one of the cornerstones of her philosophy and theology, Christendom has brought dishonor on God himself!

Hope for the Dead

People are free to believe what they choose. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is unscriptural. Do humans, then, have no hope of life after death?

After Job asked the question, "Can [man] live again?" he went on to give the inspired answer. He said: "You [Jehovah] will call, and I myself shall answer you. For the work of your hands you will have a yearning." (Job 14:14, 15) Yes, the Bible holds out the hope of a resurrection for all those in God's memory. He yearns to restore faithful servants of his, like Job, to life! Christ Jesus confirmed the reality of this hope, saying: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life, those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment."—John 5:28, 29.

When the time comes for that prophecy to be fulfilled, Isaiah 25:8 promises, God "will actually swallow up death forever." This means a world in which, as Revelation 21:4 puts it, "death will be no more." Would you like to live in a world with no funerals or funeral parlors, no grave-stones or graveyards, no more tears of grief but only tears of joy?

True, you may have been raised to believe in the doctrine of the immortal soul. But by studying the Bible, you can develop faith in the Bible's liberating promises.* You can also learn what you must do to inherit the Bible's promise, not of surviving as an immortal soul, but of receiving "everlasting life" in Paradise on earth!—John 17:3; Luke 23:43.

* If you would like to do this, please feel free to write the publishers of this magazine or contact the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.

'MANY BODIES OF THE HOLY ONES WERE RAISED UP'

"THE earth quaked, and the rock-masses were split. And the memorial tombs were opened and many bodies of the holy ones that had fallen asleep were raised up, (and persons, coming out from among the memorial tombs after his being raised up, entered into the holy city,) and they became visible to many people." (Matthew 27:51-53) Catholic scholar Karl Staab calls this event that occurred at Jesus' death "most mysterious." What happened?

Epiphanius and other early Church Fathers taught that the holy ones literally came to life and went with the resurrected Jesus to heaven. Augustine, Theophylactus, and Zigabenus believed that these dead ones received a temporary resurrection but later returned to their tombs. The latter opinion, however, "did not gain wide recognition," comments scholar Erich Fascher. When rendering Matthew 27:52, 53, many modern Bible translations give the impression that a resurrection took place. Not so the *New World Translation*, which points to the effects of an earthquake. Why?

First, whoever "the holy ones" were, Matthew did not say *they* were raised up. He said their bodies, or corpses, were. Second, he did not say these bodies came to life. He said they were raised up, and the Greek verb *e-gei'ro*, meaning to "raise up," does not always refer to a resurrection. It can, among other things, also mean to "lift out" from a pit or to "get up" from the ground. (Matthew 12:11; 17:7; Luke 1:69) The upheaval at Jesus' death opened tombs, tossing lifeless bodies into the open. Such

occurrences during earthquakes were reported in the second century C.E. by Greek writer Aelius Aristides and more recently, in 1962, in Colombia.

This view of the event harmonizes with Bible teachings. In 1 Corinthians chapter 15, the apostle Paul gives convincing proof of the resurrection, but he completely ignores Matthew 27:52, 53. So do all other Bible writers. (Acts 2:32, 34) The corpses raised up at Jesus' death could not have come to life in the way Epiphanius thought, for on the third day thereafter, Jesus became "the firstborn from the dead." (Colossians 1:18) Anointed Christians, also called "holy ones," were promised a share in the first resurrection during Christ's presence, not in the first century.—1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:14-17.

Most Bible commentators have difficulty explaining verse 53, although several of them suggest that verse 52 describes the opening of tombs by the earthquake and the exposing of newly buried corpses. For example, German scholar Theobald Daechsel gives the following translation: "And tombs opened up, and many corpses of saints laying at rest were lifted up."

Who were those that "entered into the holy city" a considerable time later, namely after Jesus had been resurrected? As seen above, the exposed bodies remained lifeless, so Matthew must refer to persons who visited the tombs and brought news of the event into Jerusalem. Thus, the rendering of the *New World Translation* deepens Bible understanding and does not confuse readers concerning the resurrection.

Further Departing Admonition

JESUS and the apostles are poised to leave the upper room. "I have spoken these things to you that you may not be stumbled," he continues. Then he gives the solemn warning: "Men will expel you from the synagogue. In fact, the hour is coming when everyone that kills you will imagine he has rendered a sacred service to God."

The apostles are evidently deeply disturbed by this warning. Although Jesus earlier had said that the world would hate them, he had not revealed so directly that they would be killed. "I did not tell you [this] at first," Jesus explains, "because I was with you." Yet, how fine it is to forearm them with this information before he departs!

"But now," Jesus continues, "I am going to him that sent me, and yet not one of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'" Earlier in the evening, they had inquired about where he was going, but now they are so shaken by what he has told them that they fail to ask further about this. As Jesus says: "Because I have spoken these things to you grief has filled your hearts." The apostles are grieved not only because they have learned that they will suffer terrible persecution and be killed but because their Master is leaving them.

So Jesus explains: "It is for your benefit I am going away. For if I do not go away, the helper will by no means come to you; but if I do go my way, I will send him to you." Jesus can only be in one place at a time, but when he is in heaven, he can send the helper, God's holy spirit, to his followers wherever they may be on

earth. So Jesus' leaving will be beneficial.

The holy spirit, Jesus says, "will give the world convincing evidence concerning sin and concerning righteousness and concerning judgment." The world's sin, its failure to exercise faith in God's Son, will be exposed. In addition, convincing evidence of the righteousness of Jesus will be demonstrated by his ascension to the Father. And the failure of Satan and his wicked world to break Jesus' integrity is convincing evidence that the ruler of the world has been adversely judged.

"I have many things yet to say to you," Jesus continues, "but you are not able to bear them at present." Therefore Jesus promises that when he pours out the holy spirit, which is God's active force, it will guide them into an understanding of these things in accordance with their ability to grasp them.

The apostles fail particularly to understand that Jesus will die and then appear to them after he is resurrected. So they ask one another: "What does this mean that he says to us, 'In a little while you will not behold me, and, again, in a little while you will see me,' and, 'because I am going to the Father'?"

Jesus realizes that they want to question him, so he explains: "Most truly I say to you, You will weep and wail, but the world will rejoice; you will be grieved, but your grief will be turned into joy." The next afternoon, when Jesus is killed, the worldly religious leaders rejoice, but the disciples grieve. Their grief is changed to joy, however, when Jesus is resurrected! And their joy continues when he empow-

ers them at Pentecost to be his witnesses by pouring out upon them God's holy spirit!

Comparing the apostles' situation to that of a woman during her birth pangs, Jesus says: "A woman, when she is giving birth, has grief, because her hour has arrived." But just as she no longer remembers her tribulation once her child is born, Jesus observes: "You also, therefore, are now, indeed, having grief; but I shall see you again [when I am resurrected] and your hearts will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you."

Up to this time, the apostles have never made requests in Jesus' name. But he now says: "If you ask the Father for anything he will give it to you in my name. . . . For the Father himself has affection for you, because you have had affection for me and have believed that I came out as the Father's representative. I came out from the Father and have come into the world. Further, I am leaving the world and am going my way to the Father."

Jesus' words are a great encouragement to the apostles. "By this we be-

lieve that you came out from God," they say.

"Do you believe at present?" Jesus asks. "Look! The hour is coming, indeed, it has come, when you will be scattered each one to his own house and you will leave me alone." Unbelievable as it may seem, this occurs before the night is finished!

"I have said these things to you that by means of me you may have peace," Jesus concludes. "In the world you are having tribulation, but take courage! I have conquered the world." Jesus conquered the world by faithfully accomplishing God's will despite everything that Satan and his world tried to do to break Jesus' integrity.

John 16:1-33; 13:36.

- What warning of Jesus disturbs his apostles?
- Why have the apostles failed to question Jesus about where he was going?
- What do the apostles particularly fail to understand?
- How does Jesus illustrate that the situation of the apostles will change from grief to joy?
- What does Jesus say the apostles will soon do?
- How does Jesus conquer the world?





TRUSTING IN JEHOVAH BRINGS HAPPINESS

AS TOLD BY JACK HALLIDAY NATHAN

You have perhaps heard the expression,
"Born with a silver spoon in his mouth."

Well, when I was born back in 1897, that was
almost literally true in my case.

IT WAS the 60th year of Queen Victoria's reign, her diamond jubilee. Children born that year in England were presented with a silver spoon. The British Empire was in its glory, reaping the benefits of the Industrial Revolution at home and the prosperous trade from thriving colonies abroad.

My grandfather was a Jew, and my father became a Hebrew scholar, well-versed in the Hebrew Scriptures. But my

grandmother was the daughter of an Anglican bishop, and because of her influence, my father accepted Jesus Christ as the Messiah. The writings of Charles Taze Russell influenced both my parents, so we never believed in the Trinity or the hellfire doctrine.

During my childhood, horses were still the main means of transportation in England, and there were few horseless carriages, or automobiles. In 1913, because of

my love of horses, I joined a horse-transport unit of the territorial army (militia). With the outbreak of World War I, I was transferred to the regular army and shipped to the Greek front, where I contracted malaria. Later, I was sent to the western front in France as a machine gunner and was eventually taken prisoner in 1917 by the Germans.

Finding a Purpose in Life in India

After the war ended in 1918, there was no work available in England, so I rejoined the army and went off to India as part of the peacetime garrison. In May 1920 the malaria flared up again, and I was sent up into the hills to recuperate. There I read all the books I could get my hands on, including the Bible. Reading the Scriptures intensified my interest in the Lord's return.

Months later, down in Kanpur, I started a Bible study group, hoping to learn more about the Lord's return. It was there that I met Fredrick James, a former British soldier who was now a zealous Bible Student. He explained to me that Jesus had been present since 1914, invisible to man. This was the most thrilling news I had ever heard. My first urge was to get out of the army. The bloodshed and death of the European war had disgusted me. I wanted to be a peaceful missionary and preach this good news about Christ's presence.

The army did not agree to release me, however. Instead, they sent me to western India, now Pakistan. While there, I read *Studies in the Scriptures*, by Charles Taze Russell, and became more convinced than ever that I should respond to the call to preach. I began to have nightmares that left me depressed. In desperation I wrote to Brother James, who invited me to his home in Kanpur. The day I arrived was the Memorial of the Lord's death. That

day had a great impact on my life—I resolved both to remain single and to make the full-time ministry my goal in life.

Back in England

In late 1921, I was transferred back to England, and in the spring of 1922, I was discharged from the army. That summer J. F. Rutherford, the second president of the Watch Tower Society, came to England, and I went with my parents to hear his talk at the Royal Albert Hall, London. Afterward, I was moved to offer my services at Bethel, as the branch offices of the Watch Tower Society are called, but I was kindly encouraged to do some colporteur work (full-time preaching) first. So I quit my job and accepted a territory assignment in the south of England. With no experience, a crown (50 cents, U.S.) in my pocket, and trust in Jehovah, I started my career as a full-time minister. About March 1924, I was invited to Bethel.

The following year, though, I was asked to leave Bethel, and I was devastated, feeling that I was being disciplined for something that I was not responsible for. In that short time, Bethel had become my life. But by putting the problem before Jehovah in prayer and trusting that his will would be done, I was able to carry on joyfully in the pioneer assignment I was given. In May 1926, I was invited back to Bethel, where I remained for the next 11 years.

Brother Rutherford visited England again in 1936 and invited me to go to Canada to share in the Kingdom work there. However, because of a misunderstanding, I incurred Brother Rutherford's disapproval by revealing some confidential information. I still remember his exact words: "Jack, I can't trust you. Tear up your tickets!" What a crushing experience!

Would you not prefer being a pilot? I was a senior in college at that time. I had no desire to become a pilot, but my father insisted.

Snowplanes traveled cross-country at speeds of up to 50 miles per hour



But it was discipline sorely needed, and afterward, with another brother, I was assigned as a pioneer for the next eight months. This privilege of service lifted me out of my despondency, and I learned from the discipline.

Expanded Ministry in Canada

About a year later, during his next visit to England, Brother Rutherford once again brought up the subject of Canada. I was eager for the opportunity and with alacrity accepted an assignment there. After serving a few months at the Canadian Bethel, I was assigned as a traveling representative of the Society in southwestern Ontario. Most of the congregations there were small and needed much encouragement. But what a joy those early years were, despite physical hardships from severe weather conditions and uncertain transportation!

I'll never forget the warmth and spiritual appreciation of one small native Indian congregation near Brantford. It was

wintertime, and the snows were deep, making it hard for my Model T Ford to get through. Nobody was expecting me, and when I arrived, I found that the brothers had gone into the woods for firewood. So off I went to find them, waist-deep in snow. When I finally came upon them, they were surprised, yet happy, to see me. They dropped everything, came home, and arranged a meeting that very evening.

At nearby Beamsville, faithful brothers and I struggled for many months with elective elders and apostates. What a privilege it was to see how Jehovah's spirit operated to clear up the situation! Trust in Jehovah and loyalty to his organization resulted in many blessings for the congregations during those early years. Many children from those congregations grew up to enter the pioneer ranks, go to Bethel, enjoy missionary assignments, and become traveling overseers. I have never forgotten the joys of staying with loyal Christian families that produced such fine young people. These families became my

family, and their children became my children.

Years Under Ban

During the war hysteria of 1940, the work of Jehovah's Witnesses was put un-



During winter, a horse-drawn caboose was used in witnessing on the prairies of Canada

der ban. What a shock! Government-sponsored radio announcements ordered us to hand over to the police our literature, our congregation records, and our Kingdom Hall keys. Realizing the urgency of the situation, I went around to the congregations and urged them to hide their literature and records. The brothers were encouraged to meet in private homes, at a different home each week. In time the congregations reinstated the door-to-door ministry, using only the Bible. This proved to be a blessing, as all of us learned to use our Bibles better.

Later that year we received a large supply of the booklet *End of Nazism* from the United States. Getting this banned literature into Canada required great ingenuity. Some brothers picked up hitchhiking soldiers, who sat on the cartons, unwittingly providing cover for the banned

booklet. Then one morning in November, between three and six o'clock, the whole country was blitzed by Witnesses who left a copy of this booklet on the doorstep of most homes in Canada.

During those years of the ban, I continued in the pioneer ministry in Canada's western province of British Columbia. Before the ban, the brothers used a boat when calling on the people in villages in isolated inlets from Vancouver all the way to Alaska. When the ban went into effect, a great deal of literature was on board, so the Witnesses dropped it off with friendly people en route to the port where the boat was to be taken into custody. Later, I took a fishing boat to locate this literature, and then, during the salmon-fishing season, I arranged for the brothers to pick it up from these interested people. In time the literature was brought to Vancouver for wider distribution, camouflaged in the holds of fishing boats.

In late 1943, we received news that the ban on Jehovah's Witnesses had been lifted. However, it was not lifted from the Watch Tower Society. So we carried on as before, using only the Bible in our house-to-house ministry. But now we could openly identify ourselves as Jehovah's Witnesses. When the ban started, we had

In Our Next Issue

■ You Can Find Riches
Worth More Than Gold!

■ Jehovah Deserves
Eternal Praise

■ Control Your Spirit!

about 6,700 Witnesses; when it was lifted, we were 11,000 strong!

Life as a Traveling Overseer

As a traveling representative of the Society, I covered countless miles during the next few years, working with and encouraging the congregations. In the winter, I accompanied the brothers in a unique vehicle called a caboose. This was a horse-drawn, covered sleigh, complete with an airtight wood stove and smokestack. Often, starting out before daybreak with as many as six aboard, we traveled through deep snow for 20 miles or more, calling at farms along the way. The driver had to be alert because snowdrifts could tip the caboose on its side, spilling out the occupants along with the hot embers from the wood stove.

In 1947, I was appointed to oversee the country's first district, which took in the entire country. I had a circuit assembly to serve almost every week. Assemblies were held in ice rinks, football fields, racetracks, union halls, and community halls. Arrangements for these gatherings required much attention before the program could begin. In 1950, Frank Franske was appointed as the second district overseer in Canada, and later five more of these traveling overseers were added.

Through the years, I have traveled by light aircraft, by fishing boats, by large snowmobiles with track and skis called bombardiers, by snowplanes (vehicles with a propeller behind and skis up front for steering), and by more conventional means—train, bus, and car. Sometimes, in a plane we would skim the peaks of the majestic Rocky Mountains, then plunge headlong into deep hidden valleys to reach isolated groups of brothers.

I have crisscrossed Canada many times. I have stayed in log cabins so cold we could see our breath in the morning and in

farmhouses with no modern conveniences. Yet, through it all, I had a great sense of satisfaction, knowing I was doing Jehovah's work, encouraging Jehovah's people.

Additional Privileges of Service

For the past 33 years, I have had the privilege of being a member of the Canadian Bethel family, as well as serving as a convention speaker in England, Europe, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and the Far East. In Australia, I met the daughter of Brother James, who had been so encouraging to me in India. Brother James was never a missionary, but he passed a fine spiritual heritage on to his family.

Today I am surrounded by hundreds of young men and women in the Canadian Bethel. The way they use their youthful vigor in Jehovah's service is encouraging and stimulating. My eyes are dim, but these younger ones read to me. My legs are weak, but they take me along with them into the field ministry. Some ask how I cope with health problems associated with advancing age. Well, for one thing, I study God's Word every day. This keeps my mind and heart on spiritual things.

Truly, it has been a great privilege to walk and talk with my heavenly Father, Jehovah, for 69 years of dedicated life, 67 of which have been spent in full-time service. I have always found Jehovah to be a loving, compassionate God, forgiving human frailties and giving power and strength to those trusting in him. My hope is to maintain my integrity and loyalty to Jehovah and his organization to the finish, trusting in the promise that in due time I will be united with my dear Lord, Jesus Christ, and with many of my faithful brothers and sisters in heavenly glory.—Psalm 84:12.

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

From Depression to Happiness

JEHOVAH is a happy God. (1 Timothy 1:11) He wants those serving him to be happy also. Hence, if one of his servants is depressed, Jehovah will help him to endure the pain and sometimes even to regain a happy spirit. The following experience from Uruguay illustrates this.

A sister was waiting in a clinic in Montevideo for the result of an X-ray examination. A lady sitting next to her was very much afraid of what the doctor might tell her as a result of the examination that she had undergone. The sister told her that ever since she had been a Witness for Jehovah, she had not been afraid of anything. The lady, however, said that she did not like the Witnesses because

they expected too high a standard from people.

The sister then told her how a knowledge of Bible truth had helped her. She had lost an 18-year-old daughter in death and had gone into a state of deep depression for eight years. Neither psychiatrists nor costly medications helped her to overcome this depression. Several times, she said, she was hospitalized, but no improvement resulted. Her household was taken care of by servants because she herself was not able to take care of anything. She tried to commit suicide because she had lost interest in life. Nothing seemed to help.

Then, she told the lady, one day Jehovah's Witnesses called

and left her some Bible literature. That sparked her interest in God's Word, and she began to read the Bible all the way through. Something started to change within her. She began to get up in the morning and take an interest in her household. She finally decided to take care of the house by herself and found she was able to do so. It was as though she had never been sick! This made her feel very happy.

She did not return to the psychiatrist. Her will to live was stimulated by her knowledge of God's Word, and this proved to be the best medicine. She looked for Jehovah's Witnesses, and they started a regular study with her. She also began to attend meetings, and very soon she got baptized. No longer bothered with depression, she now finds joy in serving Jehovah.

The lady in the waiting room listened attentively. Then she said to the sister: "For some time, Jehovah's Witnesses have been crossing my path; but if sometime in the future, I actually become one of Jehovah's Witnesses myself, it will be because of what you just told me. Listening to you is like starting to see light in a dark place."

Many people the world over are seeing the futility of trying to solve life's problems on their own, and they are turning to Jehovah God. How happy they are to learn of God's coming new world where everyone will be happy, and depression will be a thing of the past!—Proverbs 16:20.



Scenes From the Promised Land

WILL YOU LEARN FROM THE SEASONS?



Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

JEHOVAH once said: 'All the days the earth continues, seed sowing and harvest, summer and winter, will never cease.' (Genesis 8:22) He thus stressed the agricultural seasons.

What do you know of the seasons and their relation to farming? Even if you live in a city or do no farming, you should learn of Israel's seasons and agricultural activities. Why? Because the more you know about these, the better you will understand God's Word.

Farmers plow the ground, sow seed, and then harvest and thresh their crops. But to grasp more clearly what the Bible says, we should know more, including *when* those activities occurred. Take as an example plowing, such as we see being done above on terraced land in what was ancient Judea.* In what month do you think this picture was taken? Knowing when plowing is done in your land may mislead you. The time for plowing is not the same in the Northern Hemisphere as in the Southern Hemisphere; it differs also at various altitudes and according to the time of the rainy season.

* See also the 1990 Calendar of Jehovah's Witnesses.

This may affect how you view Bible events. You may read of Elijah's appointing of his successor: "He . . . found Elisha the son of Shaphat while he was plowing with twelve spans before him." (1 Kings 19:19) In what month do you think that occurred, and how would the land have looked? And at John 4:35, Jesus said: "Do you not say that there are yet four months before the harvest comes? . . . Lift up your eyes and view the fields, that they are white for harvesting." Though he specified a time, do you understand when?

The chart provides an excellent summary of seasons and agricultural activities in the Promised Land. The outer ring gives the months of the Jewish sacred calendar.* Comparing these with our months, you note the overlap, such as Nisan (or, Abib) overlapping late March and early April. The next portion toward the center shows when crops ripened, which helps you to realize when certain farming activities, such as harvesting and threshing, took place. The center of the chart lets you compare the weather changes during the year.

Use the chart to deepen your understanding and appreciation of Biblical accounts, such as the two examples already mentioned.

Elisha was taking part in a major plowing operation when he was called as a prophet. That likely places the time in Tishri (September-October), when the extreme heat of the summer was past. The early rains had begun to soften the soil, making it possible to do plowing, followed by sowing.

And when did Jesus say the words at John 4:35? The harvest was four months away. Note that the barley

* An extra, or intercalary, month (Veadar) was added seven times during a cycle of 19 years.



Garo Nalbandian

harvest began in Nisan (March-April), about Passover time. Count back four months. That brings you to Chislev (November-December). The rains were increasing, with stronger rains and colder weather ahead. So Jesus clearly meant a

CHISLEV

25 Festival of Dedication

ADAR

14, 15 Purim

SHEBAT

FEBRUARY

Almond Blossoms

TEBETH

DECEMBER

Flocks Wintered

Olives



TISHRI
(BUL)

OCTOBER

SEPTEMBER

ELUL

Dates, Grapes, Figs



AUGUST

APRIL

Wheat

Early Figs

First Grapes

JUNE

SIVAN

July

TAMMUZ

AB

MARCH

Barley

NISAN

14 Passover
15-21 Unfermented
Cakes
16 Offering of
firstfruits

IYYAR

14 Late Passover
(Numbers 9:10-13)

SIVAN

6 Festival of Weeks
(Pentecost)



Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

TISHRI

1 Trumpet blast
10 Day of Atonement
15-21 Festival of Booths
22 Solemn assembly

figurative harvesting when he said: "Lift up your eyes and view the fields, that they *are* white for harvesting."

Following are other questions for your personal study or for use in a pleasant study period with your family:

- The flax harvest around Jericho was in the month of Adar; hence, how do the details at Joshua 2:6 and 3:15 confirm the accuracy of the Bible?—Joshua 4:19; 5:11.
- Threshing followed the grain harvest, so how does the promise at Leviticus 26:5 depict abundant prosperity?
- How does 2 Samuel 21:10 suggest that Rizpah may have kept an extended vigil over her two sons, who were allowed to be slain to remove bloodguilt from God's people?
- Why were the thunders and the rain mentioned at 1 Samuel 12:17 taken as a divine response?—Proverbs 26:1.
- What reason did Ruth have to conclude that Boaz' treatment of her was not just a momentary reaction?—Ruth 1:22; 2:23.

Why not keep this chart handy when doing Bible reading?

ARE YOU REACHING OUT?

"If any man is reaching out for an office of overseer, he is desirous of a fine work."

—1 TIMOTHY 3:1.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES have proper objectives that are directed and carried out in a godly way. This is not surprising, since their God has noble objectives and always accomplishes his purposes. (Isaiah 55:8-11) Jehovah's servants should not be like those people who lack a fine objective and pass heedlessly through life doing little to benefit anyone apart from themselves. Of prime importance to God's Witnesses is the fulfilling of the noble objective of proclaiming the Kingdom message and sharing with others the life-giving knowledge of God's Word.—Psalm 119:105; Mark 13:10; John 17:3.

² In Jehovah's organization, there are also other noble objectives. The apostle Paul cited one of these when he wrote: "That statement is faithful. If any man is reaching out for an office of overseer, he is desirous of a fine work." Such a man wants to accomplish something for the good of others. He desires "a fine work," not a life of ease and glory. Another translation says: "It is quite true to say that a man who sets his heart on leadership has laudable ambition."—1 Timothy 3:1, *Philipps*.

Dangers for Elders

³ In what way does a man who sets his heart on being a Christian overseer have

1. The fulfilling of what objective is of prime importance among Jehovah's Witnesses?
2. What objective for Christian men was mentioned by Paul at 1 Timothy 3:1?
3. 4. Why should a man reaching out to become an overseer guard his heart?

a "laudable ambition"? Well, ambition is an ardent desire to achieve a particular objective. True, there are noble and ignoble ambitions. But if a man humbly reaches out for an office of overseer because he wants to serve others, his service is rendered with upright motives and can result in spiritual blessings. But he needs to guard his heart.—Proverbs 4:23.

⁴ Some ambitious people seek glory. Others want to rule fellow humans. Greed for prominence or power is like a rotten root that can cause even a healthy-looking tree to come crashing down. A Christian too could succumb to such wrongly motivated ambition. (Proverbs 16:18) "I wrote something to the congregation," said the apostle John, "but Diotrephes, who likes to have the first place among them [‘who wants to be head of everything,’ *Phillips*], does not receive anything from us with respect. That is why, if I come, I will call to remembrance his works which he goes on doing, chattering about us with wicked words. Also, not being content with these things, neither does he himself receive the brothers with respect, and those who are wanting to receive them he tries to hinder and to throw out of the congregation." (3 John 9, 10) The ambition of Diotrephes was unchristian. Arrogance and the ambitious pursuit of power over others have no place among Jesus' true followers.—Proverbs 21:4.

⁵ A Christian overseer who cares for his

5. With what attitude should overseers care for their duties?

duties with the right motive will not pursue selfish ambitions. He will consider this fine work of Christian oversight a God-given privilege and will shepherd God's flock "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 [an example] to the flock." (1 Peter 5:2, 3) Yes, overseers should guard against developing pride and seeking to wield power abusively.

⁶ An elder should not lord it over other Christians, for he is their fellow worker, not 'a master over their faith.' (2 Corinthians 1:24) When certain apostles sought prominence, Jesus said: "You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them and the great men wield authority over them. This is not the way among you; but whoever wants to become great among you must be your minister, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. Just as the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." (Matthew 20:20-28) An elder is not the Chief Shepherd but only an undershepherd. If he lords it over the flock, he manifests a spirit of pride. Especially would harm result if he enticed others to help him further his proud ambitions. Says a proverb: "Everyone that is proud in heart is something detestable to Jehovah. Hand may join to hand, yet one will not be free from punishment."—Proverbs 16:5.

⁷ Christian elders should therefore 'humble themselves under the mighty hand of

6. Why must an elder not lord it over God's people?

7, 8. (a) Why is it necessary for Christian elders to be humble? (b) Give an example of a humble elder.

God.' Pride stands in the way of spiritual usefulness, for only the humble are in the proper condition of heart and mind to do the divine will. "God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones." (1 Peter 5:5, 6) Yes, Jehovah blesses the humble-minded. It is from among these that qualified men are appointed to serve as Christian elders.⁸

⁸ The modern-day history of Jehovah's Witnesses is filled with accounts of humble service rendered by godly individuals. For instance, consider mild-mannered W. J. Thorn, once a pilgrim, or traveling overseer, and a longtime Bethel worker. Concerning him, one Christian said: "I will never, never forget a statement that Brother Thorn made that has helped me to this day. He said, and I quote, 'Whenever I get to thinking a great deal of myself, I take myself into the corner, so to speak, and say: "You little speck of dust. What



W. J. Thorn set a fine example as a humble elder

have you got to be proud of?"'" What a commendable quality for elders and others to display! Remember, "the result of humility and the fear of Jehovah is riches and glory and life."—Proverbs 22:4.

The God-Given Desire to Serve

⁹ Is the desire to serve as an overseer God-given? Yes, for Jehovah's spirit supplies motivation, courage, and strength to render sacred service to him. For example, what happened when Jesus' persecuted followers prayed for boldness to preach? "The place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were one and all filled with the holy spirit and were speaking the word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:27-31) Since the holy spirit produced such results, it can also move a person to reach out.

¹⁰ Why might a mature Christian not be reaching out? He may be a spiritual man but feel inadequate. (1 Corinthians 2:14, 15) Of course, we should have a modest view of ourselves, being aware of our limitations. (Micah 6:8) Rather than presumptuously thinking we are the most qualified for a certain responsibility, it is good to remember that "wisdom is with the modest ones." (Proverbs 11:2) But we should also realize that if God grants us a privilege of service, he will also supply the strength needed to carry it out. As Paul said: "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me."—Philippians 4:13.

¹¹ A Christian may not reach out because he feels that he lacks sufficient wis-

9. Why can it be said that the desire to serve as an overseer is God-given?

10. (a) What is one reason why a Christian man might not be reaching out? (b) If God grants us a service privilege, of what can we be sure?

11. What can be done by a Christian who is not reaching out because he feels that he lacks sufficient wisdom to give counsel?

dom to give counsel. Well, perhaps he can gain wisdom by being a more diligent student of God's Word, and certainly he should pray for wisdom. James wrote: "If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him. But let him keep on asking in faith, not doubting at all, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and blown about. In fact, let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from Jehovah; he is an indecisive man, unsteady in all his ways." (James 1:5-8) In answer to prayer, God gave Solomon "a wise and understanding heart" that enabled him to discern between good and bad when judging. (1 Kings 3:9-14) Solomon's case was special, but with diligent study and God's help, men entrusted with congregation responsibility can counsel others righteously. "Jehovah himself gives wisdom; out of his mouth there are knowledge and discernment."—Proverbs 2:6.

¹² A measure of anxiety may hold a man back from reaching out. He may think that he would be unable to shoulder the weighty responsibility of being an elder. Even Paul admitted: "There is what rushes in on me from day to day, the anxiety for all the congregations." (2 Corinthians 11:28) But the apostle knew what to do when experiencing anxiety, for he wrote: "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6, 7) Yes, prayer and trust in God can help to allay anxiety.

12. If because of anxiety a man is not reaching out, what can help him?

¹³ If some anxiety persists, a man uneasy about reaching out might pray as did David: "Search through me, O God, and know my heart. Examine me, and know my disquieting thoughts, and see whether there is in me any painful way, and lead me in the way of time indefinite." (Psalm 139: 23, 24) Whatever may be the nature of our "disquieting" or "anxious" thoughts, God can help us to cope with them so

that we can make spiritual progress. (See *The New International Version*.) It is well put in another psalm: "When I said: 'My foot will certainly move unsteadily,' your own loving-kindness, O Jehovah, kept sustaining me. When my disquieting thoughts became many inside of me, your own consolations began to fondle my soul."—Psalm 94:18, 19.

Gladly Serve as Jehovah Wills

¹⁴ If because of anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, or a lack of motivation a Christian man fails to reach out, it would certainly be fitting to pray for God's spirit. Said Jesus: "If you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!" (Luke 11:13) Since peace and self-control are among the fruits of the



Like Jesus, are you willing to do everything possible in Jehovah's service?

spirit, this spirit can help us to cope with anxiety or feelings of inadequacy.—Galatians 5:22, 23.

¹⁵ What about a lack of motivation? As baptized Christians, we need to pray that God will make us do what pleases him. David begged: "Make me know your own ways, O Jehovah . . . Make me walk in your truth and teach me." (Psalm

25:4, 5) Prayers such as this will help us to avoid a wrong path, and we can pray in a similar way if we lack motivation to reach out. We can ask Jehovah to make us want to accept privileges of service. In fact, if we pray for God's spirit and yield to its direction, we will doubtless make ourselves available if service privileges are offered to us. After all, in no way would God's servants want to resist his spirit.—Ephesians 4:30.

¹⁶ Having "the mind of Christ," we find delight in doing the divine will. (1 Corinthians 2:16) Jesus had the same attitude as the psalmist, who said: "To do your will, O my God, I have delighted, and your law is within my inward parts." (Psalm 40:8) Christ said: "Look! I am come to do your will," and that went as far as death on the torture stake. (Hebrews 10:9, 10) A

15. Prayers of what kind can help those who lack motivation to make themselves available for service privileges?

16. What attitude provides strong motivation to reach out for congregation responsibility?

13. How might a man pray if he is uneasy about reaching out?

14. Why should a man who is not reaching out pray for God's holy spirit?

desire to do everything possible in Jehovah's service provides strong motivation to reach out for congregation responsibility.

Look to the Future

¹⁷ Because of health problems or for other reasons, some who once cared for important congregation duties do not presently have such privileges. These should not be discouraged. We know that many faithful men no longer able to serve as fully as they once did are still standing firm as integrity keepers. (Psalm 25:21) Indeed, humble longtime elders can continue to make their experience available by remaining on the body of elders. Though handicapped by age or disabilities, they need not step down. Meanwhile, let each Witness of Jehovah cherish the finest privilege of all, that of 'talking about the glory of God's kingship' as upholders of his holy name.—Psalm 145:10-13.

¹⁸ If you at one time were an elder or a ministerial servant but do not now serve in that capacity, be sure that God still cares for you, and perhaps he will grant you some unexpected privileges in the future. (1 Peter 5:6, 7) If you need to make some adjustments, be willing to admit a fault and work on it with God's help. Some who have been deleted as elders have adopted an unchristian attitude, and a few have become inactive or have fallen away from the truth. But how wise it is to be like those who have manifested a fine spirit! For instance, when an elder who had served for years in Central America was deleted, he said: "It hurts me very much to have lost the privilege that I have

17. (a) Why should men who are not now serving as fully as they once did not be discouraged? (b) What is the greatest privilege of all?

18. (a) If an elder or a ministerial servant has been deleted, what may be needed? (b) What fine attitude did one deleted elder display?

treasured for so long. But I am going to work hard in whatever way the brothers want to use me and work to recover my privileges of service." In time, this brother was privileged to serve as an elder again.

¹⁹ If you were deleted as an elder or as a ministerial servant, then, maintain a humble spirit. Avoid a bitter attitude that would disqualify you for future privileges. A godly spirit wins respect. Instead of becoming discouraged, reflect on how Jehovah is blessing your ministry or your household. Build your family up spiritually, visit the sick, and encourage the weak. Above all, cherish your privilege of praising God and proclaiming the good news as one of Jehovah's Witnesses.—Psalm 145:1, 2; Isaiah 43:10-12.

²⁰ A body of elders should realize that deletion may cause stress for a former overseer or ministerial servant, even if he voluntarily gives up the privilege. If he is not disfellowshipped, but the elders see that the brother is depressed, they ought to provide loving spiritual assistance. (1 Thessalonians 5:14) They should help

19. What appropriate advice is given to a brother who has been deleted as an elder or a ministerial servant?

20. How may a body of elders be able to help a former overseer or ministerial servant?

How Would You Reply?

- Against what dangers should Christian elders be on guard?
- What can help those who because of anxiety or feelings of inadequacy are not reaching out?
- What can motivate a person to make himself available for congregation responsibility?
- With what attitude should former elders and ministerial servants look to the future?

him to realize that he is needed in the congregation. Even if counsel has been required, it may not be such a long time before a humble and grateful man again receives added privileges of service in the congregation.

²¹ If you are reaching out, you may have to wait a while before receiving further service privileges. Do not be impatient. Moses waited for 40 years before God used him when freeing the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. (Acts 7:23-36) Before being appointed as Moses' successor, Joshua long served as his attendant. (Exodus 33:11; Numbers 27:15-23) David

21. Who waited for service privileges, and what is suggested to those waiting for them today?

waited for some time before being placed on Israel's throne. (2 Samuel 2:7; 5:3) Peter and John Mark apparently underwent periods of refinement. (Matthew 26: 69-75; John 21:15-19; Acts 13:13; 15: 36-41; Colossians 4:10) So if you do not now have congregation duties, Jehovah may be allowing you to be molded by gaining more experience. In any case, seek God's help as you reach out, and he may bless you with additional privileges of service. Meanwhile, work diligently to qualify for congregation responsibility and manifest the spirit of David, who declared: "The praise of Jehovah my mouth will speak; and let all flesh bless his holy name to time indefinite, even forever."—Psalm 145:21.

ARE YOU QUALIFIED TO SERVE?

"Our being adequately qualified issues from God."—2 CORINTHIANS 3:5.

JEHOVAH GOD and Jesus Christ are workers. Said Jesus: "My Father has kept working until now, and I keep working." (John 5:17) God does not approve of people who refuse to work; neither does his approval rest upon those seeking responsibility so as to gain power over others. The Christian congregation has no room for slackers or for the selfishly ambitious.—Matthew 20:25-27; 2 Thessalonians 3:10.

² Jehovah's Witnesses have 'plenty to do

1. The Christian congregation has no room for people of what kind?
2. Why is there now a great need for men to shoulder responsibility in the Christian congregation?

in the Lord's work,' especially now that so many people are streaming to "the mountain" of true worship. (1 Corinthians 15: 58; Isaiah 2:2-4) There is a great need for spiritually qualified men to shoulder responsibility in the congregation. Not driven by selfish ambition, such men exalt Jehovah, not themselves. (Proverbs 8:13) They know that God helps them to qualify for congregation duties, even as he 'adequately qualifies ministers of the new covenant.'—2 Corinthians 3:4-6.

³ Today, as among early Christians, men are appointed by holy spirit and through

3. Basically, what are the responsibilities of elders and ministerial servants?

Jehovah's organizational arrangement to serve as elders and ministerial servants. (Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:5) Elders shepherd God's flock spiritually, providing protective supervision. They are assisted by ministerial servants, whose duties do not directly involve spiritual oversight. (1 Peter 5:2; compare Acts 6:1-6.) Like God's Son, who came to minister, such appointees desire to serve fellow believers. (Mark 10:45) If you are a Christian man, do you have that spirit?

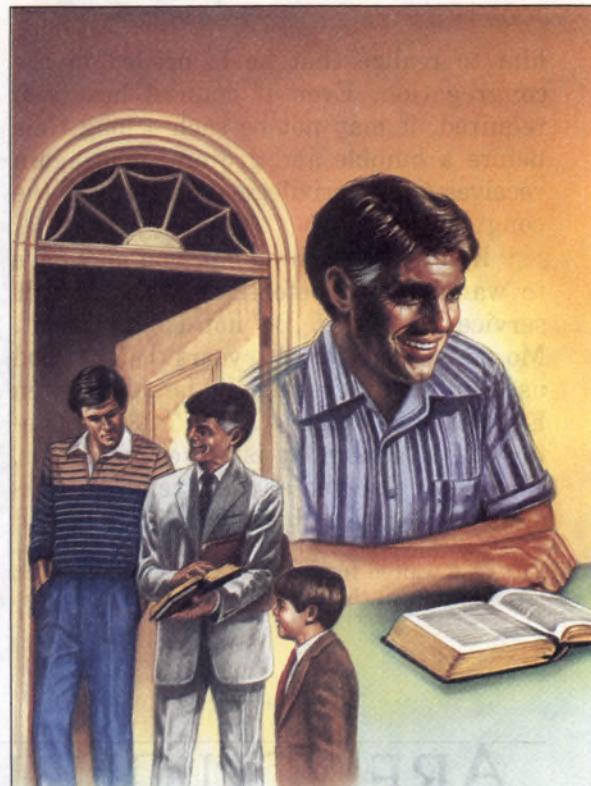
Qualifications Held in Common

⁴ Particularly are the requirements for those entrusted with congregation responsibility set out by the apostle Paul at 1 Timothy 3:1-10, 12, 13 and Titus 1:5-9. As we consider these qualifications, some of which apply to both elders and ministerial servants, we should not view them according to worldly standards. Rather, we should see them in their first-century setting and as applicable among Jehovah's people. Meeting these requirements does not demand perfection, for then no human would qualify. (1 John 1:8) But if you are a Christian man, whether you now have congregation duties or not, why not analyze your personal qualifications?

⁵ *Irreprehensible; having fine testimony from people outside; free from accusation.* (1 Timothy 3:2, 7, 8, 10; Titus 1:6, 7) When appointed and while serving, ministerial servants and elders must be irreprehensible, that is, free of blame and of any need to be reproved for a *just* accusation of wrong conduct or teaching. *Untrue* charges made by "false brothers" or others do not make a man reprehensible. To disqualify a man from serving in the congregation, a charge must not be frivolous, and it must be proved in harmony with Scriptural stan-

4. Where particularly do we find lists of qualifications for those entrusted with congregation responsibility?

5. What does it mean to be irreprehensible?



dards. (2 Corinthians 11:26; 1 Timothy 5:19) One appointed in the congregation "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." If a man committed some serious sin in the past, he could be appointed only if he had lived down any reproach and made a good name for himself.

⁶ *Husband of one wife.* (1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6) This does not mean that only married men can be ministerial servants and elders. If married, though, a man must have only one living wife and be faithful to her. (Hebrews 13:4) Unlike many non-Christian men in the first century, he cannot be a polygamist.*

* See also *The Watchtower*, March 15, 1983, page 29, under the subheading "Scriptural Divorce."

6. Being the husband of one wife means what?



Elders and ministerial servants should preside over their households according to Bible principles

they are progressing toward dedication to God or they are already baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses. A man unable to build faith in his children is unlikely to do so in others.

⁸ Before a family man can be an elder capable of providing spiritual oversight in a congregation, he must learn how to direct his own household. 'If any man does not know how to preside over his own household, how will he take care of God's congregation?' (1 Timothy 3:5) True, a man may be opposed by an unbelieving wife. (Matthew 10:36; Luke 12:52) Or one of his children may become guilty of serious sin, though the others are doing well spiritually. Still, if the man has done all that can be expected, and especially if he has had spiritual success with others in his household, rejection of his fine direction by one family member would not necessarily disqualify him from being a ministerial servant or an elder.

⁹ Not a drunken brawler or given to a lot of wine. (1 Timothy 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7) A ministerial servant or an elder must not overindulge in alcoholic beverages. Addiction to them can result in losing control of thoughts and emotions, leading to drunken brawls or fights. He should not be 'given to a lot of wine' or have the reputation of being a habitual or heavy drinker. (Proverbs 23:20, 21, 29-35) How tragic if a shepherding visit were to be marred by intemperance! If a brother drinks at all, he should not do so when sharing in meetings, the ministry, or other sacred service. —Leviticus 10:8-11; Ezekiel 44:21.

⁷ Presiding over his household in a fine manner, with children in subjection. (1 Timothy 3:4, 5, 12; Titus 1:6) Some may feel that elders must be at least 30 years old, but the Bible does not set a minimum age. Yet, the person must act as an older man in a spiritual sense. Ministerial servants and elders should be old enough to have children. If married, a man does not qualify if he acts in a godly way elsewhere but is a tyrant at home. He must have earned respect for presiding over his household according to Bible principles, and his objective should be to have spiritual success with every family member. As a general rule, an elder who is a father should have well-behaved minor children who are "believing." Either

7. (a) Is it physical age that qualifies a man to be an elder? (b) What is involved in presiding over a household in a fine manner?

8. Before a family man can become an elder, what must he learn to do?
9. What care must an elder or a ministerial servant exercise regarding alcoholic beverages?

¹⁰ Not a lover of money or greedy of dishonest gain. (1 Timothy 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7) Money lovers are in spiritual peril, and "greedy persons" will not inherit God's Kingdom. Hence, such men do not qualify to be elders or ministerial servants. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10) The root word in Greek rendered "dishonest" basically means "disgraceful," and that translated "gain" refers to any kind of profit or advantage. (Philippians 1:21; 3:4-8) Of course, a man whose disposition indicates that he would treat God's "sheep" dishonestly is not qualified for congregation responsibility. (Ezekiel 34:7-10; Acts 20:33-35; Jude 16) The need for caution in making recommendations is heightened when we realize that a man, once appointed, might be entrusted with funds and be tempted to steal some of the money.—John 12:4-6.

¹¹ Not newly converted; tested as to fitness. (1 Timothy 3:6, 10) A newly baptized person has not had time to prove that he will faithfully care for assigned duties. He may lack sympathy for the afflicted or needed wisdom to help fellow worshipers and may even look down on others. Before being recommended as a ministerial servant and especially as an elder, therefore, a man should be "tested as to fitness" and should give evidence of good judgment and reliability. No set time is given for this testing, and individuals vary in rate of spiritual growth. But elders should not quickly recommend a new man "for fear that he might get puffed up with pride and fall into the judgment passed upon the Devil." Let the man first manifest Christ-like humility.—Philippians 2:5-8.

10. Why are money lovers and those greedy of dishonest gain not qualified to be elders or ministerial servants?

11. Why should "a newly converted man" not be recommended for congregation responsibility?

Spotlight on Ministerial Servants

¹² Some requirements are listed for ministerial servants. Yet, if such requirements were not also met by elders, they would not be qualified to serve. As a Christian man, do you qualify in these respects?

¹³ Serious. (1 Timothy 3:8) A man qualifying to serve as a ministerial servant should not take responsibility lightly. He ought to deport himself in a dignified manner that wins respect. Though occasional humor is acceptable, he would not qualify if he was constantly acting in a frivolous way.

¹⁴ Not double-tongued; having a clean conscience. (1 Timothy 3:8, 9) Ministerial servants (and elders) must be truthful, not gossipy or devious. Since they are not to be double-tongued, they must not hypocritically say one thing to one person and the very opposite to another. (Proverbs 3:32; James 3:17) These men must also be staunch supporters of revealed truth, "holding the sacred secret of the faith with a clean conscience." Before God, such a man's conscience should bear witness that he is upright and does not practice anything underhanded or defiling. (Romans 9:1; 2 Corinthians 1:12; 4:2; 7:1) Nobody qualifies to serve God's flock unless he clings to the truth and to godly principles.

Focus on Elders' Qualifications

¹⁵ Certain qualifications apply particularly to elders and deal largely with their work as shepherds and teachers. As a Christian man, do you meet these requirements?

12. Are requirements listed for ministerial servants to be met only by them?
13. What does it mean to be serious?
14. (a) Not being double-tongued has what meaning? (b) Having a clean conscience calls for what?
15. Whose qualifications are now examined, and what especially do these involve?

¹⁶ *Moderate in habits; self-controlled.* (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8) An elder should be temperate, not enslaved to bad habits. When he faces trials, God will help him to maintain balance if he prays as did the psalmist: “Distresses of my heart have multiplied; from the stresses upon me O bring me out.” (Psalm 25:17) An overseer should also pray for God’s spirit and display its fruitage, including self-control. (Luke 11:13; Galatians 5:22, 23) Keeping thoughts, speech, and actions in check enables an elder to avoid extremes as he provides spiritual guidance for the congregation.

¹⁷ *Sound in mind.* (1 Timothy 3:2) An elder must be sensible, discreet, and prudent. He should be purposeful and rational in speech and actions. His humble, balanced thinking is based on godly wisdom and on the healthful teachings of Jehovah’s Word, of which he ought to be a diligent student.—Romans 12:3; Titus 2:1.

¹⁸ *Orderly.* (1 Timothy 3:2) The Greek word used here is translated “well-arranged” at 1 Timothy 2:9. So an elder should have a decent, well-arranged pattern of life. For instance, he should be punctual. First-century Christians apparently did not make a major point of record-keeping, and an overseer today need not be an expert accountant or clerk. Ministerial servants might care for things required in these respects. But the Greek term for “orderly” can denote good behavior, and a man surely would not qualify to be an elder if he was unruly or disorderly.—1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12; Titus 1:10.

¹⁹ *Hospitable.* (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)

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16. (a) What is required to be moderate in habits? (b) How can an elder maintain self-control?
 17. What is involved in being sound in mind?
 18. Being orderly requires what of an elder?
 19. Because he is hospitable, what does an elder do?

An elder ‘follows the course of hospitality.’ (Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2) The Greek word for “hospitable” literally means “fond of strangers.” Thus, the hospitable elder welcomes new ones to Christian meetings, showing the same interest in the poor as he does in the materially prosperous. He is hospitable to those traveling in the interests of Christianity and sends them on their way “in a manner worthy of God.” (3 John 5-8) Indeed, an elder shows hospitality especially to fellow believers according to their needs and as his circumstances permit.—James 2:14-17.

²⁰ *Qualified to teach.* (1 Timothy 3:2) An elder’s ability as a spiritual teacher does not result from mental aptitude or worldly wisdom. (1 Corinthians 2:1-5, 13) It comes about because he is “holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art [or, manner] of teaching, that he may be able both to exhort by the teaching that is healthful and to reprove those who contradict.” (Titus 1:9; compare Acts 20:18-21, 26, 27.) He must be able to ‘instruct with mildness those not favorably disposed.’ (2 Timothy 2:23-26) Even if an elder is not the best public speaker in the congregation, he should be such a fine student of God’s Word that he is skillful enough to instruct and counsel believers, who also study the Bible. (2 Corinthians 11:6) He must qualify to impart “healthful teaching” that helps families and individuals to pursue godly lives.—Titus 2:1-10.

²¹ *Not a smiter, but reasonable, not belligerent.* (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7) Being peaceable, an elder does not strike people physically or browbeat them by making abusive or cutting remarks. (Compare

20. In what ways must an elder be qualified to teach?
21. (a) Why can it be said that an elder is not a smiter? (b) What does it mean to be reasonable? (c) Not being belligerent means what?

2 Corinthians 11:20.) (The preceding comment that he is “not a drunken brawler” shows that he avoids alcohol abuse that so often leads to strife.) Being “reasonable” (or, “yielding”), not authoritarian and hard to please, he does not make issues of minor matters. (1 Corinthians 9:12; Philippians 4:5; 1 Peter 2:18) Since an elder is not belligerent, or contentious, he avoids quarrels and is “not prone to wrath.”—Titus 3:2; James 1:19, 20.

²² *Not self-willed.* (Titus 1:7) Literally, this means “not self-pleasing.” (Compare 2 Peter 2:10.) An elder must not be dogmatic but should take a humble view of his abilities. Not thinking he handles things better than anyone else, he humbly shares responsibility with others and values a multitude of counselors.—Numbers 11:26-29; Proverbs 11:14; Romans 12:3, 16.

²³ *A lover of goodness; righteous.* (Titus 1:8) To qualify as an elder, a man must love goodness and be righteous. A lover of goodness loves what is good in Jehovah’s sight, performs kind and helpful deeds, and shows appreciation for the goodness of others. (Luke 6:35; compare Acts 9:36, 39; 1 Timothy 5:9, 10.) Being righteous means conforming to God’s laws and standards. Among other things, such a man is impartial and keeps righteous, chaste, and virtuous things in mind. (Luke 1:6; Philippians 4:8, 9; James 2:1-9) Since goodness differs from righteousness in that it goes beyond what justice requires, a lover of goodness does more for others than what is required of him.

—Matthew 20:4, 13-15; Romans 5:7.

²⁴ *Loyal.* (Titus 1:8) A man qualified to be an elder maintains unbreakable devotion to God and adheres to divine law, no

22. What is indicated by the fact that an elder must not be self-willed?
23. (a) How would you define “a lover of goodness”? (b) Being righteous means what?
24. Being loyal calls for what?

matter how his integrity is tested. He does what Jehovah expects of him, and this includes serving as a faithful Kingdom proclaimer.—Matthew 24:14; Luke 1:74, 75; Acts 5:29; 1 Thessalonians 2:10.

Meeting the Qualifications

²⁵ Most of the qualifications just discussed involve things required of every Witness of Jehovah and are attainable through God’s blessing on each one’s study, effort, good association, and prayer. Individuals may be stronger in some qualifications than in others. But to a reasonable degree, ministerial servants and elders must meet all requirements for their particular privilege.

²⁶ All of Jehovah’s Witnesses should want to do everything possible in God’s service. This spirit moves Christian men to make themselves available for congregation responsibility. Are you a dedicated, baptized man? If so, reach out and make every effort to qualify to serve!

25. The qualifications just discussed are required of whom, and how can such qualifications be attained?

26. Why do Christian men make themselves available for congregation responsibility?

How Would You Reply?

- Why is there now a great need for baptized men to accept congregation responsibility?
- What are some qualifications that must be met by ministerial servants?
- What are some of the requirements that elders must meet?
- Why must an elder know how to preside well over his household?
- What motivates Christian men to make themselves available for congregation duties?



WILL YOU KEEP ON WALKING IN THE TRUTH?

NO GREATER cause for thankfulness do I have than these things, that . . . my children go on walking in the truth." (3 John 4) So said the apostle John toward the end of his long life. The continued endurance of 'his children,' those he had introduced to "the truth," brought him great joy. Jehovah too rejoices when his worshipers remain in the truth. How delighted he must be today to see a large organization, numbering into the millions, following that wise course! —Proverbs 27:11.

However, while God's people as a whole are immovably attached to the truth, some individual Christians slow down or even abandon pure worship. This is not unexpected, since the same thing happened in

the first century. (2 Timothy 4:10; Hebrews 2:1) Nevertheless, the fact that some do slow down emphasizes the need for all to keep an eye on their own spirituality. Paul encouraged all Christians: "Keep proving what you yourselves are." (2 Corinthians 13:5) Each Christian should ask himself the question: 'How can I be sure that I will keep walking in the truth?'

Some have slowed down or even ceased walking in the truth because they were discouraged—perhaps by health problems or personality conflicts. Others have slowed down because they got distracted. They want to enjoy some of the fruits of this system of things while it lasts. How can we avoid slowing down? To answer, let us consider the example that Jesus left us.

Follow Jesus' Example

Jesus was faced with many difficult situations. He had to handle personality conflicts among his followers, as well as endure the hatred and mockery of his enemies. He also had to resist the temptations of this world. Indeed, he was offered wealth and prominence on a scale that few have ever known. (Matthew 4:8-11; John 6:14, 15) Yet, Jesus persisted in walking in the truth. What helped him to do this?

The apostle Paul tells us when he writes: "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, as we look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus. For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1, 2) In Jesus' case, keeping in mind "the joy that was set before him," the high rewards awaiting him, helped him to keep walking in the truth. This "joy that was set before him" outweighed by far the temporary discouragements or distractions that he had to face.

Keeping in mind the reward can help us to endure, just as it did Jesus. (Revelation 22:12) To illustrate, think of a traveler walking along a difficult mountain path. He becomes weary and discouraged. Each step is an effort, and the path seems endless. Then he comes to the top of a rise and sees in the distance the town he is heading for. Suddenly the going seems a little easier. A clear view of his destination helps him to forget his tiredness. A Christian will similarly find it easier to keep walking in the truth if he keeps his destination clearly in mind.

Imitate the Apostle Paul

Another who endured much that could have discouraged him was the apostle Paul. He had to handle divisions and personality conflicts among the brothers, as well as put

up with a severe health problem, persecution, physical hardships, and problems and even opposition within the congregations. (1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 10:7-12; 11:21-29; 12:7-10) Why did Paul not get discouraged to the point of giving up? He explains: "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me." (Philippians 4:13) He did not try to carry his burdens alone. Rather, Paul looked to Jehovah to sustain him.—Psalm 55:22.

The divine source of strength that Paul called on to help him endure is also available today. The Bible says: "[Jehovah] is giving to the tired one power; and to the one without dynamic energy he makes full might abound. Boys will both tire out and grow weary, and young men themselves will without fail stumble, but those who are hoping in Jehovah will regain power. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not tire out." (Isaiah 40:29-31) If we look to Jehovah to give us strength through personal study, meeting attendance, zealous Christian activity, and—especially—prayer, we will be able to endure temptations and discouragements that may arise from time to time.—Psalm 1:1-3; Romans 10:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:16, 17; Hebrews 10:23-25.

Millions Prepare to Live in Paradise

Satan is the god of this system of things, where Christians are really just foreigners, alien residents. (2 Corinthians 4:4) Hence, we should not be surprised if we sometimes face discouragements or distractions. Paul wrote in the book of Hebrews: "We do not have here a city that continues, but we are earnestly seeking the one to come." (Hebrews 13:14) Remembering that our hope is not in this old world but in that which is to come also helps us not to slow down.

In some ways, Christians are like emigrants who leave their native land in search

of a better life elsewhere. As a general rule, this is a difficult step to take. It involves packing up or disposing of all his possessions and saying good-bye to a familiar home, as well as to friends and relatives. It also involves going to a strange land, living among people who may not welcome him, and learning a new language and an unaccustomed way of life. Yet, many make such a move merely in hopes of improving their material situation in this world.

Those who emigrate, as it were, from this old system of things and become part of God's people face similar challenges. They make cultural adjustments to live according to the clean standards of God's Word, and they learn the "pure language" of truth. (Zephaniah 3:9; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11) They work hard, also, to serve the great King of God's Kingdom, Jesus Christ. Moreover, in many cases their relatives and former friends cut them off, so that, in effect, they have to say good-bye to them.

But Christians have much more to gain than those who emigrate for economic reasons. For one thing, they come into a community that loves and cares for them. (Luke 18:29, 30) More important, they come into a close relationship with Jehovah, the God

of the universe. They gain peace of mind and confidence about the future as they look forward to the fulfillment of God's marvelous promises. (Philippians 4:8, 9) Those with a proper appreciation of these facts will not allow distractions or discouragements to slow them down permanently. They will not be turned from the narrow road that leads to life.—Matthew 7:13, 14; 1 John 2:15-17.

Care for Your Spiritual Health

If we care for our physical health on a regular basis, we have a better chance of resisting disease. And if we do fall sick, we recover more quickly. Similarly, if we take care of our spiritual health, keeping a clear vision of the blessings we enjoy now and those that await us, and if we learn to rely on Jehovah's strength rather than our own, we will be in a better position to handle problems that arise. We cannot completely avoid distractions or discouraging circumstances. But if we have properly cared for our spiritual health ahead of time, such things will not overwhelm us.

Remember, Jehovah rejoices when his worshipers endure. So let us bring joy to his heart by continuing to walk in the truth.

ANNUAL MEETING—OCTOBER 6, 1990

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania will be held on October 6, 1990, at the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Boulevard, Jersey City, New Jersey. A preliminary meeting of the members only will convene at 9:30 a.m., followed by the general annual meeting at 10:00 a.m.

The members of the Corporation should inform the Secretary's Office now of any change in their mailing addresses during the past year so that the regular letters of notice and proxies can reach them shortly after August 15.

The proxies, which will be sent to the members along with the notice of the annual meeting, are to be returned so as to reach the Office

of the Secretary of the Society not later than September 1. Each member should complete and return his proxy promptly, stating whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not. The information given on each proxy should be definite on this point, since it will be relied upon in determining who will be personally present.

It is expected that the entire session, including the formal business meeting and reports, will be concluded by 1:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter. There will be no afternoon session. Because of limited space, admission will be by ticket only. No arrangements will be made for tying in the annual meeting by telephone lines to other locations.

Used in Teaching Class

The book *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* was used in a California school. An 11-year-old explains how. "I was looking through the *Creation* book," she writes, "and I noticed that there were a few chapters on the universe and the stars. At the time my teacher had been teaching us astronomy.

"So I wrote down on a piece of paper the chapters he might enjoy reading, and I gave it to him along with the book. He didn't say anything for a couple of months. Then he started teaching us about the big bang theory. He said that he had been studying a certain book. He went to his desk and pulled out *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* I was so surprised!

"He said that it was the best book he ever read. Then he opened the book and showed the class the pictures. I noticed that he had every single question in the book answered and highlighted. When he was teaching us, he would open the book, read the paragraph, and then explain it. When it came time for the test, the questions were right out of the book. So it was easy for me to study for the test. . . . I got an A."

NASA photo