

MARCH 1, 1981

# THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



## Contentment—

**What Is The Secret?**



March 1, 1981  
Vol. 102, No. 5

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In a discontented world, can you find the key to real fulfillment and a happy life? The following pages may help you to find the answer.

A WATCHTOWER provides a vantage point from which the watchman can observe and warn of approaching danger. This magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses since 1879, serves a similar purpose. It keeps watch on world events in these critical times and calls attention to God's warning of his vengeance soon to be executed on those ruining the earth. It comforts all peoples with the hope that God's kingdom by Jesus Christ is about to bring in a global paradise of peace. It encourages all to exercise faith in the ransoming power of Jesus' shed blood, and points to the joyous prospect of everlasting life on earth under the sovereignty of the true God, Jehovah. "The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom" is nonpolitical, and adheres to the Bible as authority.

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# Who Can Find Contentment?



MANY people believe that their quest for contentment would end very happily if only they could move to a remote and secure tropical island. Surely, there they could enjoy a tranquil life basking in the sun, with plenty to eat and not a worry in the world.

In the book *Rascals in Paradise*, James A. Michener and A. Grove Day tell of "a fabled occurrence in recent Pacific history." In essence, the story is that during the 1930's a certain Australian concluded that a major war was on the horizon. Desiring to avoid involvement in such a cataclysmic event, he methodically sought a place of refuge.

"Finally," we are told, "by a process of the most careful logic, he decided that his only secure refuge from the world's insanity lay on some tropical island. . . . he studied the Pacific and narrowed his choice of islands to the one that offered every advantage: remoteness, security, a good life . . . in the late summer of 1939, one week before Germany invaded Poland, this wise Australian fled to his particular

South Pacific refuge. He went to the almost unknown island of Guadalcanal." But did he find security and contentment there?

Alas, for that refugee, even the remote island of Guadalcanal became the scene of intense fighting in the years 1942 and 1943! Indeed, during much of World War II, it was anything but a carefree tropical paradise.

That all took place decades ago. But what about the present day? What is seen by the candid observer?

Strikes, protest marches, child runaways, school dropouts, illegal use of drugs, broken homes and divorces—all of these are becoming commonplace. Why? What is the common denominator in the majority of these problems? *Discontentment!*

Think, too, of the present-day threat to peace. Consider the possibility of a nuclear holocaust. Who can find contentment amid such circumstances?

Today, as during World War II, there is no remote and secure tropical isle to

which you may flee. With air travel, mass communications—yes, and atmospheric pollution—none of us can find a location that now affords complete safety and tranquillity. But does this mean that all men,

women and younger persons are doomed to lives of unhappiness and discontentment? No, indeed. And this we shall see as we consider the pressing question, Can you be contented with your lot in life?

# Can You Be Contented With Your Lot In Life?

"**I**F TWO angels were sent down from heaven, one to conduct an empire, and the other to sweep a street, they would feel no inclination to change employments." So said English cleric John Newton some two centuries ago. That was one way of looking at the matter of being contented with one's lot in life.

But what is involved in being contented? It is an inward feeling of deep and enduring satisfaction with one's circumstances and is reflected by a lack of grumbling or faultfinding. One dictionary defines the word "contented" as being "easy in mind: satisfied esp[ecially] with one's lot in life." What about you? Inwardly, do you wish you had a different job, a different home, a different mate? Do you find that your desires are becoming cravings that may tend to throw you off balance?

Being content does not rule out putting forth real effort to improve our circumstances. Contentment should not stifle initiative, leaving us barely enough to live on from day to day. But it does mean that we should not be craving something to the point that we find ourselves among the unhappy complainers.

## AN EXAMPLE OF CONTENTMENT

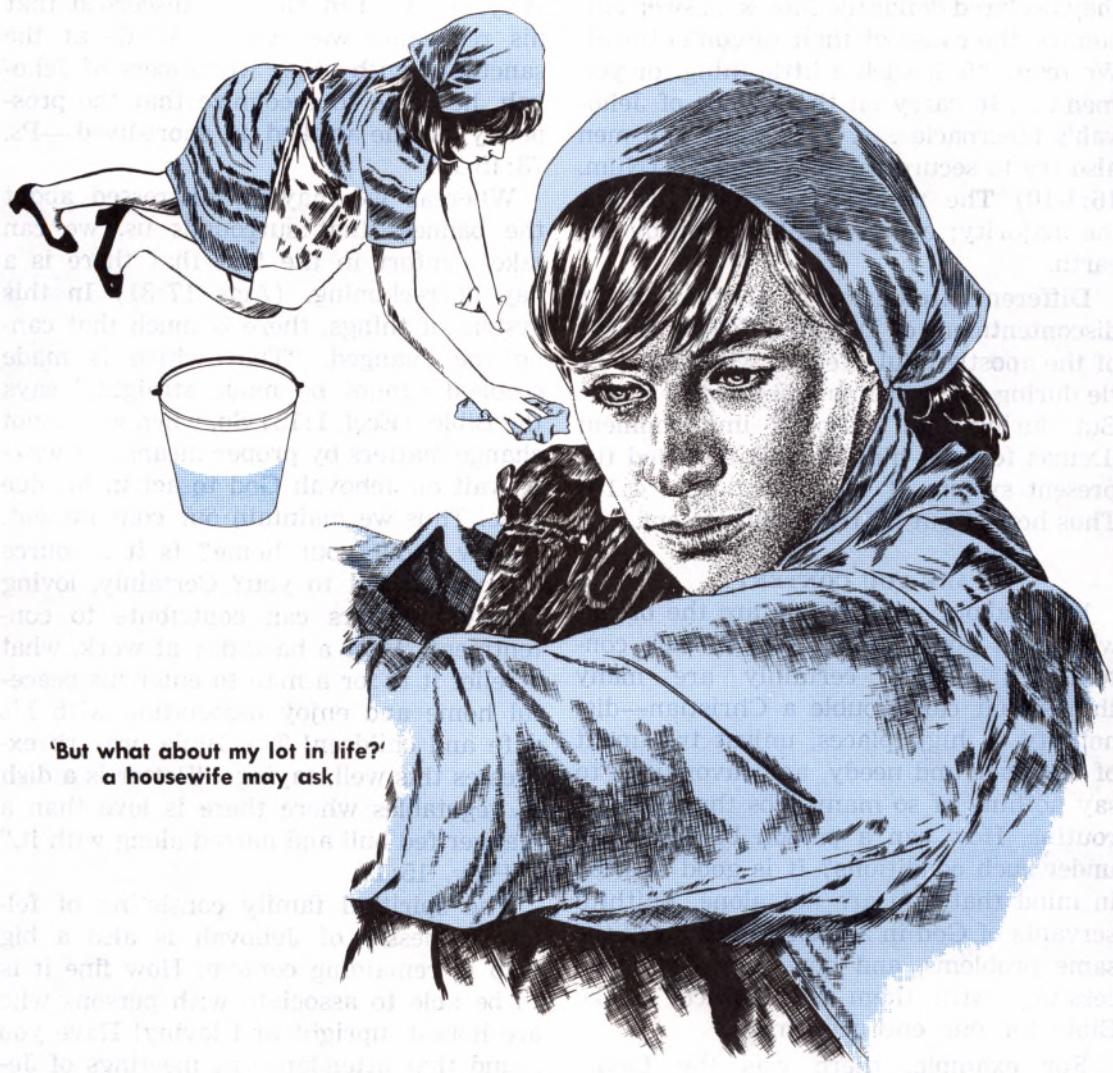
Consider the example of the Christian apostle Paul. A Roman citizen and prob-

ably from a prominent Hebrew family, he studied law at the feet of the learned Gamaliel and earned the respect of his fellow Pharisees. But what happened? He was called by Jehovah God through His Son to become a preacher of the "good news." To maintain himself and avoid becoming a burden to others in the Christian congregation, Paul worked with his hands. This enabled him to move about freely from city to city, wherever his missionary activity took him. His work as an evangelizer brought him much persecution, even beatings, stonings and lashings. But was he contented?

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul wrote: "I do indeed also consider all things to be loss on account of the excelling value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. On account of him I have taken the loss of all things and I consider them as a lot of refuse, that I may gain Christ. I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be self-sufficient ["content," "margin]." (Phil. 3:8; 4:11) Yes, the apostle Paul found true contentment in his faithful service to God.

## WARNING EXAMPLES OF DISCONTENTMENT

Others, however, became discontented, with tragic results. The first woman, Eve, had a perfect husband, an ideal home in a paradise garden, a great variety of food



in abundance, the loving care of her heavenly Father and God, and the prospects of living forever. Yet when the Tempter declared that God was withholding what was rightly hers, she believed him and became discontented with her lot. She chose a course that offered her independence and the opportunity to set her own standards as to what was good and what was bad. This choice brought only suffering and death to her. How much better

it would have been for her to remain contented, subject to her husband, and, above all, to her God!

Centuries later, when Jehovah God was leading his people through the wilderness, there were repeated outbreaks of discontentment. On one occasion, 254 chieftains of Israel became discontented with their lot and this led to open rebellion against Moses and Aaron. "That is enough of you. . . . Why, then, should you lift yourselves

up above the congregation of Jehovah?" they declared defiantly. Moses' answer pinpointed the cause of their discontentment. We read: "Is it such a little thing for you men . . . to carry on the service of Jehovah's tabernacle . . . ? So must you men also try to secure the priesthood?" (Num. 16:1-10) The result? Death by fire for the majority; others swallowed up by the earth.

Different circumstances brought on the discontentment of Demas, a fellow worker of the apostle Paul. He was with the apostle during his first imprisonment in Rome. But during Paul's second imprisonment 'Demas forsook him because he loved the present system of things.' (2 Tim. 4:10) Thus he lost out on true contentment.

#### ARE YOU CONTENT?

What about you? If you are the bread-winner in your family, do you lack contentment? There certainly are many things that can trouble a Christian—dishonesty in high places, unjust treatment of the poor and needy, and favoritism, to say nothing of so many jobs that are just routine. How can a person be contented under such conditions? It is good to keep in mind that you are not alone. Faithful servants of God in ancient times faced the same problems, and how they dealt successfully with them is recorded in the Bible for our encouragement.

For example, there was the Levite Asaph, a well-known singer and musician. He wrote: "I became envious of the boast-ers, when I would see the very peace of wicked people. They are not even in the trouble of mortal man, and they are not plagued the same as other men." Therefore, he began to say to himself: "It is in vain that I have cleansed my heart and that I wash my hands in innocence itself." —Ps. 73:3, 5, 13.

In effect, Asaph asked himself: 'What is the use of trying to do what is right?

Others are getting away with badness. Why not I?' But then he discerned that his reasoning was wrong. While at the sanctuary with other worshipers of Jehovah, he came to recognize that the prosperity of the wicked is short-lived.—Ps. 73:15-19.

Whereas we may be distressed about the badness that surrounds us, we can take comfort in the fact that there is a day of reckoning. (Acts 17:31) In this system of things, there is much that cannot be changed. "That which is made crooked cannot be made straight," says the Bible. (Eccl. 1:15) So, when we cannot change matters by proper means, we wisely wait on Jehovah God to act in his due time. Thus we maintain our contentment.

How about your home? Is it a source of contentment to you? Certainly, loving family members can contribute to contentment. After a hard day at work, what a relief it is for a man to enter his peaceful home and enjoy association with his wife and children! The Bible proverb expresses this well, saying: "Better is a dish of vegetables where there is love than a manger-fed bull and hatred along with it." —Prov. 15:17.

The spiritual family consisting of fellow witnesses of Jehovah is also a big help in remaining content. How fine it is to be able to associate with persons who are honest, upright and loving! Have you found that attendance at meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses causes you to forget the problems that tend to discourage you? 'But what about my lot?' a housewife may ask. It will require constant effort to maintain true contentment while so much is being said about "women's liberation." But are those who take the lead in this movement really contented? How can they be when they ignore the fact that the God-ordained role for a wife is that of a helper and complement, not that of a head or competitor? (Gen. 2:18) A wife can

do much to contribute to the happiness of the entire family. In these days of galloping inflation, she can keep down expenses by shopping wisely. (Prov. 31:14) By word and example, the Christian wife can build up her children spiritually, helping them to see what it means to live as disciples of Jesus Christ.

It is by filling her God-given place that a Christian woman experiences the happiness of the capable wife described in the book of Proverbs, where we read: "A capable wife who can find? Her value is far more than that of corals. In her the heart of her owner has put trust. . . . She has rewarded him with good . . . all the days of her life. . . . She is watching over the goings on of her household . . . Her sons have risen up and proceeded to pronounce her happy; her owner rises up, and he praises her. . . . The woman that fears Jehovah is the one that procures praise for herself."—Prov. 31:10-30.

What about you youths? Are you contented with your lot? Young people today face serious problems. Immorality, cheating and the misuse of drugs have risen to dizzying heights. Such things do not need to throw you off balance, cause you to lose your sense of direction and prompt you to become a school dropout. By stopping your education prematurely, you may have to content yourself with a low-paying job and circumstances at work that are even more distressing than those you faced in school. Hence, strive to do your best at school, choosing the kind of training that will enable you to support yourself well without depleting your strength. God's servants do well to prepare themselves for the kind of work that will leave them free to devote much of their time and energy to helping others spiritually. This results in experiencing the far greater happiness that comes from giving.—Acts 20:35.

If you are a worshiper of Jehovah God,

while still in school strive to make advancement as a Christian. Seize the opportunity to proclaim the "good news" at school and in association with other members of the congregation. During school vacations, give thought to enlarging your share in the public proclamation of the "good news." You may find real pleasure in serving as an auxiliary pioneer. Do not neglect the reading of the Bible and publications that are designed to help you to understand it better. Good advance preparation will enable you to participate at congregation meetings.

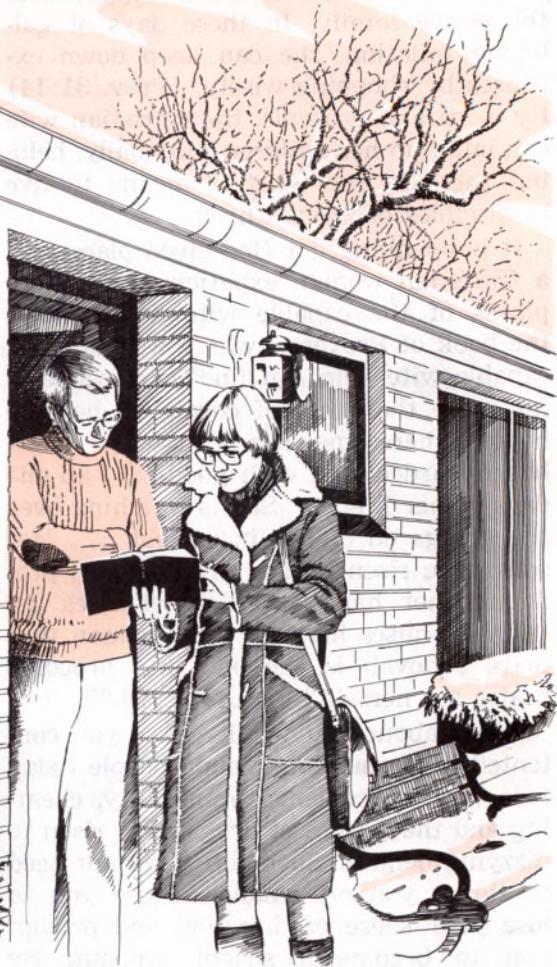
Are there any in your congregation who are sick, handicapped or elderly? Could you do shopping, repair work or cleaning for them? Is there someone with failing eyesight? Could you devote time each week in reading to this person? To be a disciple of Jesus Christ means to serve others as he did. If you learn to serve others in your youth, your joys and blessings will be abundant.

Are there any new elements in finding the key to real contentment? No, there is nothing new. Over 1,900 years ago the apostle Paul gave advice that is just as applicable now as it was then. He wrote: "To be sure, it is a means of great gain, this godly devotion along with self-sufficiency [or, "contentment"]. For we have brought nothing into the world, and neither can we carry anything out. So, having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things."—1 Tim. 6:6-8.

Take time, then, to meditate on your lot. True, it could perhaps be better, but it could also be much worse. Strive to be contented with what you have, not fretting about what you do not have. Find happiness by doing what you can to assist others spiritually and in being a source of encouragement to them. Do this, as many have, and you can be contented with your lot in life.



## FINDING SPIRITUAL CONTENTMENT IN DENMARK



**A**T THE gateway of the Baltic Sea lies Denmark. Consisting of a peninsula and some islands, this country covers an area of around 43,000 square kilometers (16,600 sq. mi.) and has a population of about 5,000,000.

Centuries ago the influence of this kingdom stretched far beyond its present borders. During the years 800 to 1000 C.E., the Vikings crossed the seas in dragon-stemmed ships, ravaging and conquering extensive areas west of Denmark. After the country had become "Christianized,"

there were times when areas to the north, east and south also came under the control of Danish monarchs. Two of these territories, the Faroe Islands and Greenland, are still under the Danish crown.

For over 100 years, Denmark has not been actively involved in warfare, although it was not exempt from the effects of the two world wars. Thanks to highly developed agriculture, the country is one of the breadbaskets of Europe. The standard of living is high, and the Danes enjoy a noteworthy measure of security on account of their social legislation.

Nevertheless, there is still some truth

in these words that English playwright William Shakespeare put into the mouth of the Danish prince Hamlet: "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark." Problems of a financial nature can be seen in the form of unemployment and balance-of-payment deficits, and the many cases of thrombosis and cancer give evidence of widespread health problems. The people have not been made happier by the freedom and prosperity that they enjoy, nor by the loose sexual morality that has gained acceptance. According to statistics, Denmark has one of the world's highest suicide rates. This emphasizes the truth of Jesus' words: "Even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses." (Luke 12:15) To be truly happy and contented with their lot in life, people must have their spiritual needs filled.—1 Tim. 6:6-8.

#### EARLY ACTIVITY OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

It was interest in this spiritual need that prompted C. T. Russell, the first president of the Watch Tower Society, to visit Denmark in 1891. He found the country to be like a field ripe for harvest. Also, the circumstances were ideal for spreading the Bible's message.

Over 40 years earlier, in 1849, the former absolute monarchy became a constitutional monarchy. Up to that time the Evangelical-Lutheran State Church practiced forced christening on the infant children of Baptist parents. But, with the start of the constitutional monarchy, the State Church became a National Church, in which membership was voluntary. Moreover, after a period of considerable indifference to the Bible, some religious revivals increased interest in spiritual matters. Also, in the middle of the 19th century, the well-known Danish theologian and philosopher Søren Kierkegaard attacked the church in very strong terms.

He accused it of watering down Jesus' words about the 'cramped road' leading to life, saying that the church had trampled it so broad that everyone could promenade on it.—Matt. 7:13, 14.

Thus, in more than one way, it was fitting that the first "Bible Student," a Danish-American, was sent to Denmark in 1894. From 1897 onward, articles from *The Watchtower* were published in a little periodical called *Tusindaars-rigets Budbærer* (Millennium Messenger), and since 1900 the *Watchtower* magazine has been published in Danish. This journal has played an important role in stimulating the spiritual appetite of many.

However, the words of Søren Kierkegaard still hold true. The general attitude is one of passiveness toward religion. This can be seen from an article in the *Danish Journal*, issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the January 1978 issue, the following remarks were made: "If it is true, as the old Danish proverb says, that it's better to sit in the tavern and think of the church than sit in the church and think of the tavern, then the Danes are doing the right thing." While more than 93 percent of the population continue as members of the church, only 2 percent go to church every Sunday. Four percent go once or twice a month, while "51 percent of the adult population say they never go to church." In recent years, increasing numbers, especially among the young, have terminated their church membership.

#### INTEREST AMONG THE YOUNG

The prosperity that followed World War II caused many of the generation that is now of middle age to work for materialistic goals. But problems like the atomic threat, pollution and unemployment have contributed to a loss of faith in such values on the part of large numbers of young people. These youths are looking elsewhere in their search for contentment.

Take the case of a young man who completed a six-month course at a religious high school without finding any solution to his problems. At 18, he started looking for an answer elsewhere—to Hinduism, occultism, astrology, spiritism, Scientology and drugs. "I thought," he said later, "that the sum of all of this was bound to give me an idea of God." Disappointed by the outcome, he was led into drug addiction and gradually came under the influence of demonic powers to such an extent that he felt his life threatened. Nevertheless, he retained some faith in a God of love and in Christ. Regarding his continuing to search, he stated: "I went to the religions professing to be Christians—the Pentecostals, Apostolics, Baptists, Christian youth groups, and Jehovah's Witnesses. I kept asking, getting contradicting answers, wondering, praying and searching in the Scriptures."

At the age of 22, the young man came to the conviction that the truth was to be found among Jehovah's Witnesses. He succeeded in breaking his drug habit after having been addicted for one and a half years. Despite great parental opposition,

he became a baptized Witness and is now zealously sharing Bible truths with others. He has found spiritual contentment.

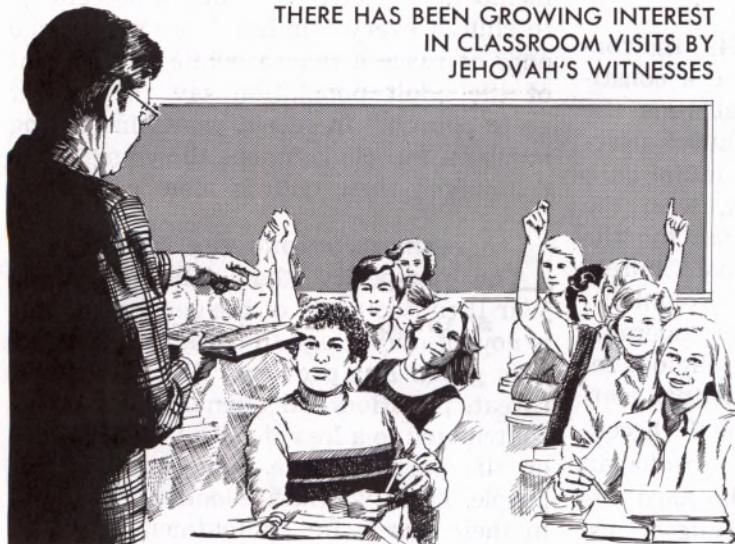
#### OPENNESS IN SCHOOLS

In the Danish schools, too, there are strong feelings of dissatisfaction with the standards of society. One positive result of this is a willingness to look into answers from other sources. For example, many teachers include information about Jehovah's Witnesses in their classes. Especially in recent years has there been growing interest in classroom visits by the Witnesses.

How are such visits handled? A young couple who have gone to schools about 60 or 70 times state: "We give an introductory talk, explaining a few basic points of our faith—for example, our preaching about God's kingdom and the coming paradise on earth, belief in creation, our view of the Bible, the commandment of neighbor love and its connection with the matter of neutrality, our history, and our form of organization compared with the early Christian congregation. The rest of the time is spent answering questions from

the class. Recently, we have noted a change in what occupies the minds of students. Two or three years ago the class discussions often centered around social problems and our political neutrality. Now there is a growing interest in matters of a human, moral or purely Biblical nature." After the Witnesses had one session with 40 students, the teacher expressed some surprise and pride because the students had been so attentive and had asked such relevant questions.

THERE HAS BEEN GROWING INTEREST  
IN CLASSROOM VISITS BY  
JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES



## **STILL A NEED TO FIGHT FOR THE FAITH**

However, in Denmark there is one area where feelings have been running high, perhaps more so than in other places. This involves the stand taken by Jehovah's Witnesses with reference to blood transfusions. This question was dramatically publicized in March 1975, when a young couple took their three-year-old son from the children's hospital in Copenhagen. They did so because the doctor, in order to administer a blood transfusion against the wishes of the parents, had legal custody taken away from them.

Knowing that they most likely would be pursued by the police, the parents sought refuge with some of their fellow believers. At the same time, they tried to find a doctor who was willing to treat the child without the use of blood. A national police hunt, with raids, ransacking and border controls, took place. This was accompanied by a veritable persecution campaign in the press, with headlines such as "Child Killers," "Religious Fanatics" and "Cynical Parents." Even bomb threats and cases of outright violence occurred. A couple of clergymen and a member of Parliament raised the question of whether the authorities should not take action against Jehovah's Witnesses. Meanwhile, the parents did find a doctor who was willing to respect their faith and to use alternate methods of treatment. Today the boy is alive and healthy.

### **STILL WORK TO DO**

In recent years Danish society has undergone great changes. This has even affected the facilities that Jehovah's Witnesses are using for meetings. In the past, the Witnesses used sports buildings for their semiannual circuit assemblies. However, rapidly rising rental costs have made it advisable for them to build their own assembly halls.

The dedication of the first assembly hall

on March 17, 1979, was indeed a joyous event. Financed by unsolicited contributions and built with voluntary labor, this hall will serve the parts of the country called Jutland and Fünen. For the eastern part of the country, with the island of Zealand and the capital city of Copenhagen, good progress is being made with plans for a similar hall. In connection with the second assembly hall, it is planned to erect a new and much larger branch office of the Watch Tower Society.

During the nearly 90 years that have passed since C. T. Russell visited Denmark, the work of helping others to gain accurate Bible knowledge has progressed steadily, with intervals of rapid growth and periods of stabilization. Next to the National Church, Jehovah's Witnesses are the largest religious body in the country—perhaps with the exception of the Catholic Church, which has not published any membership figures for a number of years. Very few countries with a population like that of Denmark have a similar ratio of Witnesses to population—1 to 387.

Today a substantial part of the work of distributing spiritual food consists of teaching and strengthening the many active Witnesses. At the same time, they keep on preparing themselves for an even greater witness about God's kingdom. As long as Jehovah wills, they will declare the "good news" to the Danish people and show them how to find spiritual contentment.

## **In Coming Issues**

- Worship God in His Way!
- Celebrating the Death of the Greatest Man Ever on Earth
- Everyone Needs Hope

# Witnesses To The Most Distant Part Of The Earth

IT WAS undoubtedly one of the most dramatic moments in the history of mankind. Never had a parting been more moving. The Son of God was about to take leave of his followers on earth, never to be visibly present with them again in the flesh. There was time for just one more question, one more answer. On what topic? That last conversation would affect Christ's followers right up until the end of the present system of things!

<sup>2</sup> The final question Jesus' disciples put to him was: "Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?" What their precise motives were in asking that question is a matter of conjecture. Whatever their expectations were, one thing is clear: they wanted to know when God's purposes concerning the Kingdom would be fulfilled. Who can blame them? They were neither the first nor the last to show impatience for final deliverance. So Jesus' comments, yes, his very last words before leaving the earth for all time, are of the utmost interest to us today.

## CHRIST'S PARTING COMMISSION

<sup>3</sup> Jesus replied: "It does not belong to you to get knowledge of the times or seasons which the Father has placed in his own jurisdiction; but you will receive power when the holy spirit arrives upon you, and you will be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth."

1. What was one of the most dramatic moments in the history of mankind?
2. What was the last question put to Jesus before he left the earth for all time, and why does his answer interest us greatly?
3. 4. (a) How did Jesus reply? (b) What twofold lesson did Jesus give his disciples?

The account adds: "And after he had said these things, while they were looking on, he was lifted up and a cloud caught him up from their vision."—Acts 1:6-9.

<sup>4</sup> The import of Jesus' parting words was twofold. He first tactfully, yet firmly, told his disciples that the timing of the outworking of Jehovah's purposes was not their concern. He thus confirmed what he had already stated in his prophecy on the conclusion of the system of things. (Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32-37) Then he went on to show them what would henceforth be their concern. They were to be Christian witnesses first in Jerusalem, where they had been told to remain for the time being (Acts 1:4), then in all Judea and Samaria and, ultimately, "to the most distant part of the earth." To that end they would receive "power" by means of the holy spirit.

<sup>5</sup> That "power" arrived upon them a week and a half later, at Pentecost. The apostles and other disciples had obediently stayed in Jerusalem, and on that festival day "they were all together at the same place." Suddenly, "they all became filled with holy spirit and started to speak with different tongues, just as the spirit was granting them to make utterance." They spoke, not some unintelligible babble, but "about the magnificent things of God."—Acts 2:1, 4, 11.

## "IN JERUSALEM"

<sup>6</sup> These newly anointed Christians immediately set about carrying out the commission that they had received from the

5. When did "power" come upon Jesus' disciples, and what did it move them to do?
6. How did these anointed Christians begin fulfilling their commission, but with what opposition?

resurrected Christ. They first preached "in Jerusalem"; not without opposition, however. The religious and civil leaders of the Jews plotted against them, saying:

*"What shall we do with these men? Because, for a fact, a noteworthy sign has occurred through them [the healing of a lame man], one manifest to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. Nevertheless, in order that it may not be spread abroad further among the people, let us tell them with threats not to speak anymore upon the basis of this name [Jesus] to any man at all."*—Acts 4:16, 17.

<sup>7</sup> Christ had said: "You will be witnesses of me." The Jewish Sanhedrin threatened the early Christians "not to speak anymore upon the basis of this name." Whom did they obey? They respectfully told their persecutors: "We cannot stop speaking about the things we have seen and heard."

7. (a) How did Christ's disciples react thereto? (b) How did a religious opposer provide proof that the early Christians were faithfully carrying out their commission?

(Acts 4:18-20) They kept right on witnessing. Although the apostles were jailed, after their miraculous release during the night "they entered into the temple at daybreak and began to teach." (Acts 5:17-21) What zeal! Again they were arrested.

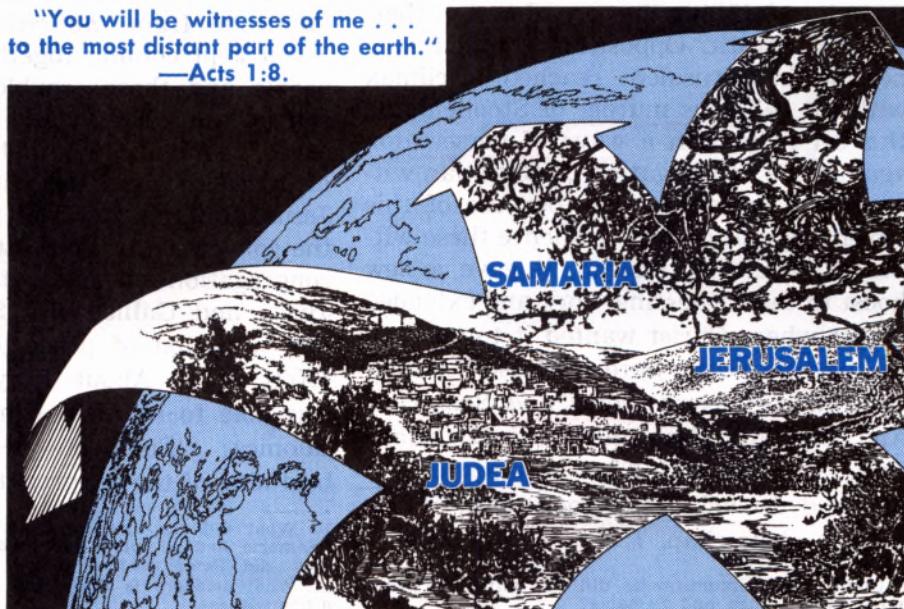
*"They brought them and stood them in the Sanhedrin hall. And the high priest questioned them and said: 'We positively ordered you not to keep teaching upon the basis of this name, and yet, look! you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching.'"* (Acts 5:27, 28)

Unwittingly, this religious dignitary testified to the fact that these early Christians were faithfully carrying out the first part of their Christ-given commission. They were being zealous witnesses of him "in Jerusalem."

<sup>8</sup> After being flogged and ordered "to stop speaking upon the basis of Jesus' name," these Christians "went their way

8. How had these Christians 'filled Jerusalem with their teaching,' and what results did they obtain?

**"You will be witnesses of me . . .  
to the most distant part of the earth."**  
—Acts 1:8.



## "Look! you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching"

from before the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name." Far from being discouraged, "every day in the temple and from house to house they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus." (Acts 5:40-42) Notice that they "continued" witnessing "from house to house." (*New World Translation; New International Version*) That is how they, although relatively few in number, had managed to 'fill Jerusalem with their teaching.' This method brought splendid results. "Consequently the word of God went on growing, and the number of the disciples kept multiplying in Jerusalem very much."—Acts 6:7.

### ON INTO SAMARIA AND JUDEA

<sup>9</sup> But the early Christians could not stop there. They were to be Christ's witnesses also "in all Judea and Samaria." Actually, it was their very zeal in carrying out the first part of their commission that led them into fulfilling the second part of their Christian work. Opposition to their witnessing in Jerusalem reached a climax with the religious murder of Stephen, and this set in motion a wave of persecution against the congregation of Christian witnesses in Jerusalem. The purpose of this violent opposition was to silence these witnesses of Christ. Instead, it gave a new boost to the witnessing work and extended it just where Christ wanted it to go. "All except the apostles were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria." And what did those dispersed Christians do in those areas? They "went through the land declaring the good news of the word."—Acts chap. 7; 8:1, 4.

9. Under what circumstances did the witnessing work move on to Judea and Samaria?

<sup>10</sup> Soon news got back to "the apostles in Jerusalem" that "Samaria had accepted the word of God." Rising to the situation, the apostles sent two of their number, Peter and John, to consolidate the good work done by these scattered Christians, including Philip the evangelizer. Using the prerogative that Christ had granted him, Peter opened up the way for the Samaritans to become spirit-begotten, anointed Christians, called to share with Christ in "the kingdom of the heavens." (Matt. 16:18, 19; Acts 8:14-17) The account in Acts continues: "When they had given the witness thoroughly and had spoken the word of Jehovah, . . . they went declaring the good news to many villages of the Samaritans." (Acts 8:25) So much for Samaria!

<sup>11</sup> As for Judea, doubtless many Judeans were present in Jerusalem at Pentecost and received the fine witness given by the newly anointed Christians, notably by Peter. (Acts 2:9, 14-36) We also know that before the wave of persecution broke out against the Christians in Jerusalem, "the multitude from the cities around Jerusalem kept coming together, bearing sick people and those troubled with unclean spirits, and they would one and all be cured." (Acts 5:16) All these inhabitants of Judea received the witness concerning Jesus. Referring to the period following the conversion of Paul, Luke wrote: "The congregation throughout the whole of Judea and Galilee and Samaria entered into a period of peace, being built up." (Acts 9:31) About 15 years later Paul was able to write to Christians in Thessalonica: "For you became imitators, brothers, of the congregations of God that

10. What did the apostles do when they heard that "Samaria had accepted the word of God," and what 'key' did Peter use?

11. What evidence is there that "all Judea" received a fine witness?

## "They went declaring the good news to . . . the Samaritans"

are in Judea." (1 Thess. 2:14) Undeniably, the early Christians zealously carried out their Christ-given commission to be his witnesses "in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria."

### "AWAY TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH"

<sup>12</sup> However, Jesus' parting commission went still farther. It stated: "You will bear witness for me in Jerusalem, and all over Judaea and Samaria, and away to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8, *The New English Bible*) There is evidence that Christ's name was witnessed to among the Jews of the Diaspora\* at an early date, even before 36 C.E.—the year Peter again used his Christ-given prerogative, this time to open up the Kingdom to the uncircumcised Gentiles. (Matt. 16:18, 19; Acts chap. 10) For one thing, the 3,000 Jews and proselytes who became baptized Christians on the day of Pentecost 33 C.E. were not inhabitants only of Jerusalem and Judea. Many of them had come from such far-flung places as Parthia, Media, Elam and Mesopotamia (modern Iran and Iraq), Asia Minor (modern Turkey), North Africa and Italy. (Acts 2:8-11) Upon returning to their homelands on the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe, these newly converted Christians undoubtedly witnessed to Christ's name, at least to other Jews and proselytes in their respective countries. Thus seeds for future expansion were sown right there at Pentecost.

<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, we read in Acts 11:19: "Those who had been scattered by the

\* The "dispersion" of the Jews after the Assyrian and Babylonian deportations.

12. How were seeds for future expansion sown on the day of Pentecost?

13. What indicates that the Christian witness was given beyond Judea and Samaria at an early date?

tribulation that arose over Stephen [some time after Pentecost, but before the conversion of Paul in 34 or 35 C.E.] went through as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and [Syrian] Antioch, but speaking the word to no one except to Jews only." This provides definite proof that even before the preaching reached out to the non-Jews, Christ was being witnessed to far beyond Judea and Samaria.

<sup>14</sup> Once Peter had used another of the "keys of the kingdom of the heavens" to unlock Kingdom opportunities to the uncircumcised, in 36 C.E., the way was open to carry the Christian witness to all peoples, yes! "away to the ends of the earth." (NE) Apparently, systematic witnessing among the uncircumcised Gentiles first got under way in Syrian Antioch, at that time the third largest city in the world, after Rome and Alexandria. It happened this way: Sometime after 36 C.E., but before 44 C.E., "there were some men [Christians] of Cyprus and Cyrene [in North Africa] that came to Antioch and began talking to the Greek-speaking people, declaring the good news of the Lord Jesus. Furthermore, the hand of Jehovah was with them, and a great number that became believers turned to the Lord." —Acts 11:20, 21.

<sup>15</sup> The zealous preaching activities of these Christians from Cyprus and Cyrene among non-Jews were blessed by Jehovah. "The congregation that was in Jerusalem" sent a special representative up north to Syria to handle this new situation. They chose Barnabas, himself a Greek-speaking Jew from Cyprus. After having encouraged

14. Where did systematic witnessing among the uncircumcised apparently begin? Explain.

15. (a) What did the Jerusalem congregation do about this new situation, and why was their choice a judicious one? (b) What had Paul been doing for the past several years? (c) Why is the case of the early congregation of Antioch of particular interest?

these new disciples of Christ, Barnabas went to Tarsus to fetch Paul, who himself had just spent several years "declaring the good news about the faith" in Syria and Cilicia, now southeastern Turkey. (Compare Acts 9:26-30 with Galatians 1:18-23.) "It thus came about that for a whole year [probably about 45 C.E.] they [Barnabas and Paul] gathered together with them in the congregation [now made up of both Jews and Gentiles] and taught quite a crowd, and it was first in Antioch that the disciples were by divine providence called Christians."—Acts 11:22-26.

<sup>16</sup> For 10 years or so Syrian Antioch became a center from which intense missionary activities were carried out, under the direction of the holy spirit. (Acts 13:1-4; 14:26; 15:35, 36; 18:22, 23) Paul, together with various fellow missionaries, undertook three extensive witnessing tours that spread Christianity throughout Asia Minor and Greece. They preached Christ to both Jews and Gentiles. On one occasion, Paul and Barnabas justified this course of action to a group of irate Jews, saying:

*"It was necessary for the word of God to be spoken first to you. Since you are thrusting it away from you and do not judge yourselves worthy of everlasting life, look! we turn to the nations. In fact, Jehovah has laid commandment upon us in these words, 'I have appointed you as a light of nations, for you to be a salvation to the extremity of the earth.'*

Luke adds: "When those of the nations heard this, they began to rejoice and to glorify the word of Jehovah, and all those who were rightly disposed for everlasting life became believers."—Acts 13:46-48.

16, 17. (a) How was the witnessing work expanded out from Syrian Antioch? (b) What prophecy did Paul and Barnabas quote to justify their activities, and to whom did this prophecy originally apply? (c) How does this shed light on Acts 1:8?

<sup>17</sup> By quoting Messianic Servant prophecies (Isa. 42:6; 49:6) and applying them to their own activity, Paul and Barnabas showed that they and their fellow Christians were actually "substituting for Christ," whom Jehovah had commissioned to bring "light" and "salvation" to "the extremity of the earth." Christ, in turn, had commissioned his followers to be his witnesses "to the most distant part of the earth."—2 Cor. 5:20; Acts 1:8; compare Isaiah 49:5-9 with Luke 2:25-32.

#### A LONG-TERM COMMISSION

<sup>18</sup> As we have seen, the book of Acts shows the zeal with which the apostles and early Christians sought to carry out their Christ-given witnessing commission in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and as far as they were able to go toward "the ends of the earth." We know, for example, that the apostle Peter was a faithful witness of Christ as far east as Babylon, and that Paul witnessed as far west as Italy and perhaps even as far as Spain.—1 Pet. 5:13; Acts chap. 28; Rom. 15:23-28.

<sup>19</sup> But it is quite evident that Christ's parting commission to be witnesses "to the most distant part of the earth" was more far-reaching than that. According to Jesus' own prophecy, it went beyond the apostolic period, reaching right down until the "conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 24:3, 14) However, it has been very strengthening and faith-inspiring to review the fine example set by the early Christians. Now the question arises: Who, today, are carrying on the good work begun by the apostles, and by what means have they been witnesses for Christ and his heavenly Father, literally "to the most distant part of the earth"? We shall see in the following article.

18. What do we know about the early Christians' efforts to be witnesses "to the most distant part of the earth"? 19. What shows, however, that Christ's parting commission to Christians would extend to the present day, and what question arises?

# GO! MAKE DISCIPLES



**B**OTH timewise and geographywise, Jesus' parting commission to be witnesses to the ends of the earth, as re-

1, 2. (a) How would the expression "the most distant part of the earth" take on new scope as time went by? (b) How did Jesus show that the Christian commission to witness would not end with the first-century Christians?

corded in Acts 1:8, did not end with the early Christians. They did a fine job telling out the "good news" as far as they could go "in all the world" or 'in all creation under heaven' in their day. (Col. 1:5, 6, 23) But as time went by those

expressions would take on new scope, as the ever-increasing population sprawled out over six continents and countless islands, literally "to the most distant part of the earth."

<sup>2</sup> Jesus was well aware of this. For the benefit of all his disciples—not only the first-century Christians but all Christians down through the years, and especially those Christians living on earth during "the conclusion of the system of things"—the resurrected Christ stated:

*"All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth. Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you. And, look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things."—Matt. 28:18-20.*

<sup>3</sup> Here is proof for any who need it that the commission Christ gave his disciples on the day of his ascension was not completely fulfilled in the first century C.E. It would go on being fulfilled right up to the "conclusion of the system of things." By whom? Interestingly, regarding Acts 1:8, Rylands Professor F. F. Bruce writes: "As Jesus Himself had been anointed at His baptism with the Holy Spirit and power, so His followers were now to be similarly anointed and enabled to carry on His work. This work would be a work of witness-bearing—a theme which is prominent in the apostolic preaching throughout Acts (cf. Chs. 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39; 13:31; 22:15, etc.). An OT [Old Testament] prophet had called Israel to be God's witnesses in the world (Isa. 43:10; 44:8); the task which Israel as a nation had not fulfilled was taken up by Jesus, as the perfect Servant of the Lord,

3. According to one scholar, what work would anointed Christians have to accomplish?

and passed on by Him to His disciples."

<sup>4</sup> Yes, the commission to be witnesses to the ends of the earth and to make disciples of people of all the nations at this "conclusion of the system of things" has been passed on to the anointed remnant of spiritual Israel, who are collectively Jehovah's "servant" and his "witnesses." (Isa. 43:10-12) They have been faithfully fulfilling this commission particularly since 1919. But how could these few thousand spirit-begotten Christians reach the billions of humans scattered "to the most distant part of the earth"? What tremendous faith it took even to envisage undertaking such a task!

<sup>5</sup> Reread the modern history of Jehovah's Witnesses\* and you will see that one of the principal means used to spread the Kingdom message far and wide has been by the distribution of magazines, namely, *The Watchtower* and its companion magazine *Awake!* (formerly *The Golden Age*, then *Consolation*). These Bible-based periodicals have been distributed literally by the billions† in over 100 languages and to the four corners of the earth.

#### **"ARMIES OF CAVALRY"**

<sup>6</sup> In Revelation, chapter 9, the anointed remnant are symbolized by "four angels," or messengers, released from captivity to Babylon the Great, "at the great river Euphrates." (Verses 14, 15) These liberated messengers have at their disposal

\* See the books *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose* and the 1975 *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, published by the Watch Tower Society.

† Between 1919 and 1980, 4,767,784,340 magazines were distributed throughout the world by Jehovah's Witnesses, not including the millions of copies sent by mail to *Watchtower* and *Awake!* subscribers. This is more than twice the number of tracts and booklets distributed over the same period.

4. Since when have the remnant been fulfilling this commission, and why did this take tremendous faith?
5. What means has helped modern-day Christians to spread the witness to the ends of the earth?
- 6, 7. (a) How are the anointed remnant symbolized in Revelation, chapter 9, and what do they have at their disposal? (b) What do these picture? (c) What comment did the book "*Then Is Finished the Mystery of God*" make on this prophecy?

"armies of cavalry" numbering "two myriads of myriads," or 200,000,000, used for, symbolically speaking, 'killing' a large fraction of humanity. (Verses 16-19) The "horses" in this vision picture the means used by the anointed remnant to publicize Jehovah's judgment messages directed particularly against Christendom, the most reprehensible part of "Babylon the Great" (the world empire of false religion).

<sup>7</sup> Explaining this fascinating vision, the book "*Then Is Finished the Mystery of God*" states: "The charging of these symbolic 'horses' increased greatly when the Watch Tower's magazines began to be offered on the streets, from house to house, from store to store." (Pages 246, 247) So, while these symbolic "horses" include books, booklets and tracts, undoubtedly the magazines have played, and are still playing, an important part in spreading the Kingdom witness "to the most distant part of the earth."\*

<sup>8</sup> Not only have the anointed remnant zealously and courageously led such symbolic cavalry against the bastions of false religion, but they have also heeded Christ's

\* For a full explanation of this prophecy, see the book "*Then Is Finished the Mystery of God*," pages 238-247.

8. How have the anointed remnant also obeyed Christ's command to 'go make disciples'?

command to 'go make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them.' Since 1935 an increasing number of persons have read the judgment messages published against the world empire of false religion and have obeyed the divine order to 'get out of "Babylon the Great."' (Rev. 18: 1-4) They have dedicated themselves to Jehovah God and have been baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit." Having themselves been helped by *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*, they have joined the anointed remnant in disseminating these fine magazines far and wide, yes, "to the extremity of the earth."

—Isa. 49:6.

#### ARE YOU AN ACTIVE PROCLAIMER OF THE "GOOD NEWS"?

<sup>9</sup> The order to be witnesses "to the most distant part of the earth" and to go "make disciples of people of all the nations" applies to all who claim to be Christians. Hence, all dedicated witnesses of Jehovah should have a deep, heartfelt determination to share in fulfilling that blessed commission.

<sup>10</sup> If you are now a member of the "great crowd," described in Revelation 7: 9-17, remember that in order to "come out of the great tribulation" you have to

9. What is the duty of each and every Christian?  
 10. (a) What should members of the "great crowd" remember? (b) What, however, has been the attitude of some?

#### Distribution Chart of Worldwide Activity

Years	Tracts & Pamphlets (Booklets)	Magazines	Bound Books	Total
1879 to				
1917	419,078,170 (Mags. included)	9,894,056	428,972,226	
1918	102,775	13,140	256,609	372,524
1919 to				
1980	2,322,888,592	4,767,784,340	450,642,739	7,541,315,671
Grand				
Totals	2,742,069,537	4,767,797,480	460,793,404	7,970,660,421

"keep on . . . saying: 'Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb,'" and you must not stop "rendering him [Jehovah] sacred service day and night in his temple." Lately, however, some have adopted the attitude that it is sufficient to attend the Memorial of Christ's death once a year, keep abreast of current Bible knowledge by reading the Watch Tower Society's publications, attend meetings from time to time and let their light shine merely by leading a good life and giving an occasional witness if and when the opportunity to do so occurs.

<sup>11</sup> But is this enough? How could the Christian witness have been given "to the most distant part of the earth" if the early Christians and the modern-day anointed remnant had just stayed where they were, leading good lives? In order to 'make disciples of people of all nations,' they first had to "GO!" Yes, they had to get out and witness "from house to house" and "in people's homes." (Acts 5:42, *New World Translation; Today's English Version*) This public witnessing is an indispensable part of our "sacred service."

<sup>12</sup> Where do *you* stand? Have you been a Kingdom publisher who found inward joy in making known the "good news" and also Jehovah's judgments by means of the symbolic "horses," particularly the Society's magazines? If you have slowed down or even stopped altogether, is it because you have lost sight of the spiritual significance of such activities, namely, helping the anointed remnant to fulfill their commission to "proclaim the year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah and the day of vengeance on the part of our God"? (Isa. 61:1, 2, 5) Then it is high time for you to rediscover that joy by again busying yourself in Jehovah's service.

11. Can the Christian commission be fulfilled merely by leading a good life, or how else?

12. What may some have forgotten, and what are these now encouraged to do?

#### DO YOU HAVE DIFFICULTY IN EXPRESSING YOURSELF?

<sup>13</sup> Perhaps you have found witnessing from house to house difficult because you are not fluent in expressing yourself. Or maybe you are among the millions who appreciate reading the Society's magazines and meeting with Jehovah's Witnesses in their Kingdom Halls, but who have never taken part in house-to-house witnessing because they are afraid they will not know what to say. You are well aware that the witness must be given "to the most distant part of the earth" and that disciples must be made among "people of all the nations," but you just do not feel capable yourself of facing the people at their doors. You know you should do it, and you meet the Scriptural qualifications, but you feel you cannot. Your heart is full of appreciation for the truth of God's Word, but your legs just refuse to carry you to that first door because you are afraid that your lips will not find the words you need. What can you do about it?

<sup>14</sup> You might start by taking your Bible and rereading Romans 10:8-15. That should set your feet tingling to get out and "declare good news of good things." Next, pray to Jehovah for strength—yes, to "him who imparts power." (Phil. 4:13; compare Acts 1:8.) Then, the next time you go to the Kingdom Hall or to your local congregation book study, ask one of the Christian elders to put you in touch with a Witness who has had some experience in telling out the "good news" from house to house. This Kingdom publisher will not expect you to engage the householders in Bible-based conversations right from the start. Most likely he (or she) will suggest that you spend a little time together considering the latest is-

13, 14. (a) Why may some have held back from witnessing from house to house? (b) What practical suggestions are made to help them to overcome their timidity?

sues of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* before going together from door to door to present these fine magazines to the public.

<sup>15</sup> Witnessing with magazines is an ideal way to get started or to get busy again in the work of preaching and making disciples. It is undoubtedly one of the easiest and best ways of getting out among the people and gaining experience in witnessing from house to house. Each issue provides new talking points. In addition, if you call back on all those who accept a magazine, soon you will have a list of people you can call on regularly with the latest issues. You will gradually get to know these people. Such features as the series "Have You Ever Wondered . . . ?" (in *Awake!*) will enable you to start a conversation and even begin a Bible study. Read the first paragraph to the householder, ask the first printed question (subtitle)—allowing the person to reply—before reading the following paragraph and any scriptures cited. Then go on to the next question (subtitle), and so on for the time the householder has available. Why not try this? You will be amazed at the joy and godly contentment you feel by regularly rendering to Jehovah such "sacred service."—Rev. 7:15.

#### YOUNG CHRISTIANS, GET THOSE "HORSES" MOVING!

<sup>16</sup> The responsibility to be "witnesses . . . to the most distant part of the earth" rests upon all Christians, young and old. The prophetic 110th Psalm says of Christ:

*"The rod of your strength Jehovah will send out of Zion, saying: 'Go subduing in the midst of your enemies.' Your people will offer themselves willingly on the day of your military force. In the splendors of holiness, from the*

15. Why is the magazine work an ideal way to gain experience in house-to-house witnessing and in starting home Bible studies?

16. What scriptures show that young Christians are also involved?



*womb of the dawn, you have your company of young men just like dewdrops."*  
(Ps. 110:2, 3)

Another Messianic psalm speaks of "virgins" who would be "companions" of Christ's bride. (Ps. 45:13, 14) Both of these passages apply to the anointed remnant and to the "great crowd" that literally includes you "young men" and "virgins." So you, too, must 'offer yourselves willingly' and be loyal "companions" to the remaining ones of the anointed bride class still on earth, also symbolized by the "four angels" who are directing the "armies of cavalry" against Satan's religious world empire.—Rev. 9:15-19; 21:2, 9.

<sup>17</sup> Many such young men and women are performing "sacred service" at the Brooklyn headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses and in the 97 branches located throughout the earth. There, they willingly perform various tasks directly connected with the preparation and the shipping of the symbolic "horses"—publications containing judgment messages related to the "day of vengeance on the part of our God" and setting forth also comforting truths about "the year of goodwill on the part of Je-

17. How are many fine young men and women performing "sacred service"?

hovah." (Isa. 61:1, 2) All these willing ones not only share in preparing the "horses" for use in the field, but also take part in the actual field service, making extensive use of such "horses," particularly the magazines.

<sup>18</sup> Other young Christians "offer themselves willingly" and prove themselves to be zealous companions of the anointed remnant by serving as "pioneers," that is, by devoting at least 1,000 hours a year to the public witnessing work. The zeal of all these young Christians is highly regarded by the King Jesus Christ and his anointed "brothers" still on the earth.—Compare Matthew 25:34-40.

<sup>19</sup> But there are many thousands of other "young men" and "virgins" within the congregations of Jehovah's people. Are you 'offering yourselves willingly on the day of Christ's military force'? Or are you letting the symbolic "horses" pile up in your room or lie dormant in your witnessing bag? Get those "horses" moving! Get out into the field during your after-school hours, your midweek break (where this arrangement exists), weekends and the various vacation periods you have throughout the year. The auxiliary pioneer service gives you a wonderful opportunity to 'offer yourselves willingly' for "sacred service." And the magazine work is a method of Christian witnessing that is especially appropriate for you young ones. It is within your reach and it can produce fine results.

#### ACTIVE WITNESSES UP UNTIL THE END

<sup>20</sup> To the early Christians Jesus stated: "You will be witnesses of me . . . to the

18. (a) How are other young Christians proving themselves to be zealous companions of the remnant? (b) How do the King and his "brothers" consider their zeal?

19. What encouragement is given to all other young Christians?

20, 21. (a) What commission did Christ give to first-century Christians and to those living in the "last days"? (b) The testimony of a history professor shows what? (c) How have Jehovah's Witnesses used the magazines to this end?

most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) To Christians living in the "last days," or the "time of the end," he stated prophetically: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come."—Matt. 24:14; Dan. 12:4; 2 Tim. 3:1.

<sup>21</sup> The Jewish high priest, an archenemy of the early Christians, ruefully admitted: "Look! you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching." (Acts 5:28) In his book *These Also Believe*, history professor Charles Braden wrote: "Jehovah's Witnesses have literally covered the earth with their witnessing. . . . It may be truly said that no single religious group in the world displayed more zeal and persistence in the attempt to spread the good news of the Kingdom than the Jehovah's Witnesses." Although numbering only a few thousand in 1919, the anointed remnant accepted the challenge. Through the "power" of the holy spirit and with increasing help from the ever-expanding "great crowd" of their companions, they have indeed "literally covered the earth with their witnessing." From 1919 to 1980, these Christians have distributed over four and three-quarter billion copies of *The Watchtower* and its companion magazine (*The Golden Age; Consolation; now Awake!*).

<sup>22</sup> These two fine Christian magazines have been and continue to be important means for witnessing to the ends of the earth and making "disciples of people of all the nations." (Matt. 28:19, 20) The facts show that there is still much witnessing to be done. So to your "horses" all you faithful Christian witnesses! Get them and keep them moving out in the "field," and may Jehovah continue to bless the intensive use of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* in the days ahead.

22. What do the facts show, and so what are we all encouraged to do?

# INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

● In a recent Toronto "Star" column, "Youth Clinic," an 18-year-old girl asked whether the Bible forbids sex before marriage. The answer by Anglican priest Graham Cotter was:

**Bad Advice by Cleric**  
"There is no specific passage in the Bible which forbids sex before marriage

in all circumstances." However, letters to the editors pointed out that many specific Bible passages do indeed condemn premarital sex. The paper tried to explain that the clergyman was not "defending casual sex" but that the problem was in determining "what constitutes marriage."

As to "what constitutes marriage," the Bible says: "Let marriage be honorable among all, and the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers." (Heb. 13:4) Certainly, for marriage to be "honorable" it must be legally and morally sound. Therefore premarital sex is not a basis for "honorable" marriage. Hence, the Scriptures classify as fornication sexual relations outside of marriage, counseling: "Flee from fornication." Also, God's Word warns: "Neither fornicators . . . nor adulterers . . . will inherit God's kingdom."—1 Cor. 6: 9, 10, 18.

When a clergyman tries to accommodate a promiscuous generation by condoning fornication, or obscuring what it is, he is giving bad advice. The young woman needed sound counsel on the wisdom of exercising self-control before marriage, which would also be expected of her after marriage. Refusing to direct people toward such decent behavior is a great disservice to both God and man.

● "Infant baptism must remain the practice in the Catholic church," observed the "National Catholic Reporter" recently.

**Baptism for Infants?** This was based on a directive issued by the Vatican reaffirming that baptism "must be administered soon after birth, not deferred until people reach the age of reason," commented the New York "Times."

Were infants baptized in first-century Christianity? No, for Jesus did not teach infant baptism, he himself being 30 years old at

his own baptism. (Luke 3:21-23) The Bible shows clearly that baptism is for only those who are old enough to gain an accurate knowledge of Christianity and who then offer themselves for water immersion. Jesus instructed: "Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them . . . and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you." "When they believed . . . they were baptised, both men and women," not infants. Also, the Bible says: "They were convinced by his [the apostle Peter's] arguments, and they accepted what he said and were baptised"—which could not apply to infants.—Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2:41; 8:12, Catholic "Jerusalem Bible."

Religious historian Neander says of first-century Christianity "that the practice of infant baptism was unknown at this period."

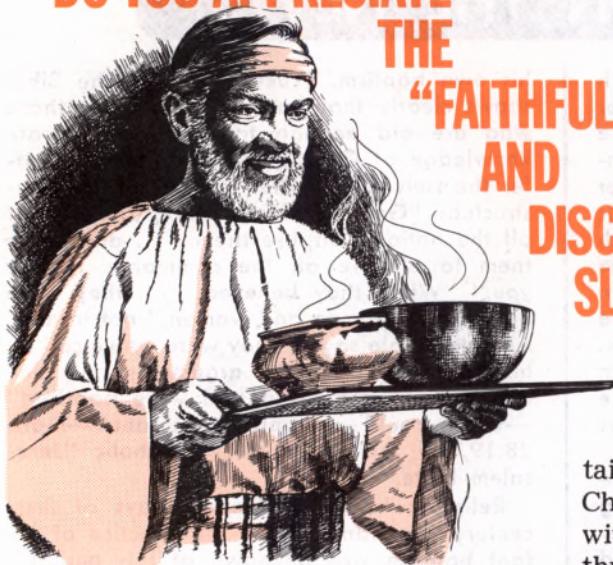
● The three great Western religions (Christendom's churches, Islam and Judaism) 'constitute an obstacle to world community and therefore world peace,' said Mortimer Adler, chairman of the board

**'Obstacle to Peace'** of editors of "Encyclopædia Britannica." At a symposium entitled "Religion and World Conflict" held at the University of Idaho, Adler stated that there could be no world community or world peace until those religions ceased to conflict with one another.

However, history shows that conflict long has been an integral part of these religions, and still is. That conflict not only has been of a doctrinal nature but often has involved literal warfare against one another and within their own kind. An example of the latter is the backing that Christendom's churches gave to each side in both world wars of this century. Moslem nations, too, have warred against one another in recent times.

Because a 'leopard will not change its spots,' these religions will not suddenly become peacemakers. (Jer. 13:23) History bears this out. That is why the Bible includes them all as part of "Babylon the Great" that is to be forcibly removed by God himself at his coming execution of judgment against this entire wicked system of things.—Rev. 17:5, 16; 18:11-21.

# DO YOU APPRECIATE THE “FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE”?



**W**HO really is the faithful and discreet slave?" With that question, Jesus Christ introduced a parable, or an illustration, of prophetic importance. It is part of the "sign" he gave regarding the "conclusion of the system of things," in which we are now living. (Matt. 24:3) After instructing his disciples to keep on the watch, Jesus said:

"Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so. Truly I say to you, He will appoint him over all his belongings."—Matt. 24:42-47.

Who is this "slave" and who are the "domestics"? What are the "belongings"? Such questions are not of mere academic interest. Properly identifying and cooperating with the "faithful and discreet slave" will mean great happiness and rich spiritual rewards.

## “WHO REALLY IS THE FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE?”

Some state that the "slave" refers to

Christian ministers, or their office of oversight, with responsibility to care for the spiritual needs of the congregation. The 'master's' arrival is said to be either the second coming of Christ or the death of the individual minister. Thus it is held that the parable should motivate Christian ministers to care well for what is entrusted to them.

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that this parable pertains to the one true congregation of Jesus Christ's anointed followers. Beginning with Pentecost, 33 C.E., and continuing through the 19 centuries since then, this slavelike congregation has been feeding its members spiritually, doing so faithfully and discreetly. Especially has the identity of this "slave" become clear at the time of Christ's return or presence. The "slave" is identifiable by its watchfulness and by the fact that it is faithfully and discreetly providing spiritual food as needed by all in the Christian congregation. Indeed, this "slave," or spirit-anointed congregation, is the one approved channel representing God's kingdom on earth in the "time of the end." (Dan. 12:4) Witnesses of Jehovah understand that the "slave" is comprised of all anointed Christians as a group on earth at any given time during the 19 centuries since Pentecost. Accordingly, the "domestics" are these followers of Christ as individuals.

Some readers may feel that this is a rather sectarian view of matters. Or they may object to the idea that the "slave" and the "domestics" represent the same class, one as a composite body and the other as individuals. The objectors may argue that not all of Christ's anointed disciples have a share in preparing the

spiritual food, so that perhaps the "slave" pictures only the leading ones, and the "domestics" those they serve in the congregation.

There is no point in trying to force an interpretation of the parable. Self-deception is of no benefit and is spiritually damaging. Therefore, we must look to the Scriptures for an understanding. In doing this, what do we find? This "slave" is a servant of the Master Christ Jesus and his Father, Jehovah. (Compare Matthew 10:24, 25.) And a servant can be a collective group. In the past, the entire nation of Israel was Jehovah's servant, or slave. He said to them: "You, O Israel, are my servant." (Isa. 41:8, 9; 44:21) This one servant was composed of individuals, as Isaiah 43:10 shows in stating: "'You are my witnesses [plural],' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'even my servant [singular] whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and have faith in me.'" These Israelites of ancient times were Jehovah's "special property," a "holy nation." (Ex. 19:5, 6) Even though not every individual shared in administrating the nation's affairs, all individuals made up the one people, God's "servant." Only

a few shared in writing or copying the Holy Scriptures, yet the apostle Paul could say of the people of Israel: "They were entrusted with the sacred pronouncements of God." (Rom. 3:1, 2) To these belonged the covenants, the Law and the promises. (Rom. 9:3-5) So the entire nation was Jehovah's collective, or composite, "servant," while it, at the same time, was made up of individuals, his "witnesses."

When Jesus was on earth, he told Israel's religious leaders: "The kingdom of God will be taken from you and be given to a nation producing its fruits." (Matt. 21: 43) This "nation" producing Kingdom fruits must be the widespread true Christian congregation, concerning which Peter wrote: "You are . . . 'a holy nation, a people for special possession, that you should declare abroad the excellencies' of the one [God] that called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. For you were once not a people, but are now God's people." (1 Pet. 2:9, 10) Such congregation is also called the "Israel of God" and "God's household." (Gal. 6:16; 1 Tim. 3: 15) The individuals in the congregation are called "members of the household of God." (Eph. 2:19)



'Faithful stewardship' among such household members involves the dispensing of spiritual truths, which constitute suitable "food" for believers. (1 Cor. 3:2-5; 4:1, 2) It is noteworthy that the "faithful and discreet slave" is called a "steward" at Luke 12:42-48.

While alive on earth, Jesus' faithful apostles were especially responsible for providing spiritual teaching for the "household of God." Appointed 'shepherds' of the "flock," as well as others, also had similar responsibility. However, the apostle Peter shows that such stewardship of divine truths actually was committed to *all* the 'chosen ones.' Hence, each respective member of the congregation made a contribution to the building up of the body. (Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Pet. 1:1, 2; 4:10, 11; 5:1-3) Thus we see a clear Scriptural basis for saying that all anointed followers of Christ Jesus make up God's "servant," with Jesus as its Master. Accordingly, that servant, or "slave," as a collective body provides spiritual food for all the individuals of this congregation, which make up the household of "domestics." These individually benefit as recipients of that food.—1 Cor. 12:12, 19-27; Heb. 3:5, 6; 5:11-14.

#### THE 'FAITHFUL SLAVE' DISAPPEARS FROM CLEAR VIEW

This *clear identity* of the "faithful and discreet slave" class was not to continue all through the centuries until the return of the Master with his kingly power. The apostles warned that a great apostasy would develop after their death and would continue until Christ's presence. (2 Thess. 2:1-12; Acts 20:29, 30; 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:2, 3) Jesus also indicated this in his parable of the 'wheat and the weeds.' According to this illustration, fine seed, wheat, was planted in the world field. The "wheat" are "the sons of the kingdom," or true anointed disciples of Jesus Christ. However, an "enemy" (the Devil) was

represented as sowing "weeds" ("the sons of the wicked one," or false Christians) among the "wheat," and both were to grow together until the "harvest."—Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43.

The apostasy developed with the bringing in of heathen philosophy and false doctrines. More and more, the apostate congregation became a part of this world, adopting its teachings, customs and attitudes. Jesus foretold that both the "wheat" and the "weeds" would grow together until the "harvest," or "conclusion of the system of things," when the "wheat" (true Christians) would be separated from the "weeds" (false Christians) and would let their spiritual light shine. (Matt. 13:30, 39-43) Thus the identity of the "faithful and discreet slave" class would not again become clear until the time for Christ Jesus to return.

At that time, Jesus' faithful disciples would come into clear view. Their well-fed spiritual condition would harmonize with the prophecy of Daniel, which foretold that at the "time of the end" those having insight would shine like the stars, would enjoy increased Scriptural knowledge and understanding and would bring many to righteousness. (Dan. 12:3, 4, 9, 10) This indicates that the congregation of Christ's anointed disciples, those having insight, would be watching for the Master's return and be found faithfully providing spiritual food at the proper time when he returned.—Matt. 24:43-46.

#### THE 'FAITHFUL SLAVE' IDENTIFIED BY ITS ACTIVITY

Though the "weeds" dominated the world's religious scene through the centuries, some "wheat" was active and spiritual food was provided for the "domestics." By the early 1870's there was a group of sincere Bible students sufficiently well fed spiritually to be in expectation of the Lord's return and to realize the need

for thorough study of the Scriptures so as to be prepared. Their unsectarian search of the Bible produced an abundance of knowledge.

During those years, the churches of Christendom were bound by the traditions, dogmas and ceremonies stemming from the great apostasy. They clung to such false doctrines as the Trinity, immortality of the soul and a burning hell. Also, they were part of this world. Skepticism as to the Bible was infiltrating their theological seminaries. Darwin's theory of evolution was being pitted against the Bible's creation account, applied psychology was rejecting the teaching of inherent sin and the need for a ransom, and the whole field of higher criticism was attacking the divine authorship and infallibility of the Scriptures.

Amid all of this, the Bible Students (as Jehovah's Witnesses then were known) were standing as strong advocates of Bible teaching. They held Scripturally that there is one Almighty God and Creator, Jehovah, and that Christ Jesus is his only-begotten Son and first creation, whom God sent to the earth to offer his life as a ransom for sinful humankind. They took up the fight to defend the entire Bible as God's infallible, inspired Word and published the results of their Biblical study as "food at the proper time," thus sharing this vital information with all desiring to be prepared for the Lord's return. The Bible Students made known the true Christian teaching that the human soul is mortal and the hope for the dead is the resurrection. They pointed out that the purpose of Christ's ransom is not only to pave the way for the 144,000 to be redeemed from the earth so as to be joint heirs with Christ in the heavens but also to give the rest of Adam's offspring opportunity to gain everlasting life on earth during the 1,000-year Messianic Kingdom reign. Also, they proclaimed to the world that the end

of "the appointed times of the nations" would come in 1914. (Luke 21:24) This faith-strengthening restoration of Bible truths and the urgings to wakefulness regarding the presence of Christ Jesus resulted in the gathering together and building up of a congregation of anointed disciples of Christ who displayed evidence of being well fed spiritually.

#### OVERWHELMING CREDENTIALS

The "faithful and discreet slave" has abundant credentials. Following is a partial list of Scriptural and prophetic designations applying to or being represented in the remnant of Jesus Christ's anointed followers since the notable year 1919:

- (1) Noah's wife, Gen. 7:7; (2) angels sent to Lot, Gen. 19:15; (3) Rebekah, Gen. 24:64; (4) Joseph and Benjamin, Gen. 45:14; (5) gleanings left behind, Lev. 19:9; (6) two spies to Rahab, Josh. 2:4; (7) Barak, Judg. 4:14; (8) Jephthah, Judg. 11:34; (9) Naomi and Ruth, Ruth 2:2; (10) David's Israelite warriors, 2 Sam. 18:1; (11) Jehu, 2 Ki. 10:11, 15; (12) Mordecai and Esther, Esther 4:13; (13) Job, Job 42:10, 13; (14) King's daughter, Ps. 45:13; (15) men of loving-kindness, Ps. 50:5; (16) intimate group, Ps. 89:7; (17) Shear-jashub, Isa. 7:8; (18) light of the nations, Isa. 60:3; (19) big trees of righteousness, Isa. 61:3; (20) ministers of our God, Isa. 61:6; (21) cluster preserved, Isa. 65:8; (22) servants called by another name, Isa. 65:15; (23) men trembling at God's word, Isa. 66:5; (24) new nation born, Isa. 66:8; (25) Jeremiah, Jer. 1:10; (26) Jehovah's people in the new covenant, Jer. 31:33; (27) enduring watchman, Ezek. 3:16-27; (28) man in linen, Ezek. 9:2; (29) cleansed people, Ezek. 36:29-32; (30) dwellers in center of earth, Ezek. 38:12; (31) the host of heaven, Dan. 8:10; (32) sanctuary restored (cleansed), Dan. 8:14; (33) they that are wise, Dan. 11:33; (34) the happy one who is keeping in expectation, Dan. 12:12; (35) all flesh receiving the spirit, Joel 2:28; (36) Jonah, Jon. 3:1-3; (37) apple of Jehovah's eye, Zech. 2:8; (38) liberated remnant, Zech. 2:7; (39) a Jew, Zech. 8:23; (40) sons of Levi, Mal. 3:3; (41) wheat, Matt. 13:25; (42) sons of the kingdom, Matt. 13:38; (43) workers for the vineyard, Matt. 20:1; (44) those invited to marriage feast, Matt. 22:3-14; (45) chosen ones, Matt. 24:22; (46) eagles, Matt. 24:28; (47) faithful and discreet slave, Matt. 24:45; (48) discreet virgins, Matt. 25:2; (49) brothers of the king, Matt. 25:40; (50) little flock of sheep, Luke 12:32; (51) beggar Lazarus, Luke 16:20; (52) sheep in "this fold," John 10:1-16; (53) branches of the vine, John 15:4; (54) royal palace of David, Acts 15:16; (55) heirs with Christ, Rom. 8:17; (56) the remnant, Rom. 11:5; (57) branches in the olive tree, Rom. 11:24; (58) holy ones or saints, 1 Cor. 6:2; Rev. 16:6; (59) temple, 1 Cor. 6:19; (60) new creation, 2 Cor. 5:17; (61) ambassadors for Christ, 2 Cor. 5:20; (62) congregation of God, Gal. 1:13; (63) part of Abraham's seed, Gal. 3:29; (64) Israel of God, Gal. 6:16; (65) body of Christ, Eph. 1:22, 23; (66) soldiers of Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. 2:3; (67) house under Christ, Heb. 3:6; (68) holy priesthood, 1 Pet. 2:5; (69) holy nation, 1 Pet. 2:9; (70) association of brothers, 1 Pet. 2:17; (71) seven congregations, Rev. 1:20; (72) twenty-four persons of advanced age, Rev. 4:4; (73) spiritual Israel, Rev. 7:4; (74) locusts, Rev. 9:3; (75) two witnesses, Rev. 11:3; (76) two olive trees, Rev. 11:4; (77) seed of the woman, Rev. 12:17; (78) New Jerusalem, Rev. 21:2; (79) the bride of Christ, Rev. 22:17; 19:7; (80) Jehovah's witnesses, Isa. 43:10.

# THE 'FAITHFUL SLAVE' GIVES "FOOD AT THE PROPER TIME"

FOLLOWING the first world war (of 1914 to 1918), the churches of Christendom gave their support to the League of Nations and urged nominal Christians to support it. In contrast, the Bible Students never failed to direct attention to the Kingdom as mankind's only hope and to expose the League of Nations as a human makeshift doomed to failure.

Down to the present time, the churches of Christendom have been infected by the spirit of this world, and by its materialism, evolutionary thinking, higher criticism and philosophies that deny Bible truth. Most have accepted the world's immorality, fornication, adultery and homosexuality, resulting in the breakdown of marriage and family life, juvenile and adult delinquency, the spread of venereal disease and the increase of violence. The churches are involved in this world, upholding dictatorships in certain countries and actively supporting terrorism and lawless activities in some others.

## EVIDENCE OF FEEDING ON TRUE SPIRITUAL FOOD

In contrast, the worldwide congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses has continued faithful to Bible teaching. They are adhering to clean, chaste moral standards that are in harmony with the wisdom from above. The Witnesses are showing high regard for marriage and family life, are cultivating the fruits of the spirit and are maintaining a close relationship with God. (Gal. 5:22-26; Jas. 3:17, 18) With the aid

of this journal and similar Bible study material they continue to build up their faith and accurate knowledge through personal Bible study and participation in congregation meetings. Because of putting full confidence in the kingdom of God, they maintain strict neutrality in the conflicts of this world and are in proper

submission to governmental "superior authorities," paying back "Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God."—Matt. 22:21; Acts 5:29; Rom. 13:1-10.

#### WHY ADJUSTMENTS IN UNDERSTANDING?

Some may ask: 'If Jehovah's Witnesses are getting "food at the proper time," why have their views on certain teachings changed from time to time?' The Bible answers: "The path of the righteous ones is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established." (Prov. 4:18) Even as the congregation in the first century had only partial knowledge, so it is with the "faithful and discreet slave" today. Knowledge of many spiritual matters will become complete only as God's purposes are worked out in completion. (1 Cor. 13:9-12) The "slave" is not divinely inspired but continues to search the Scriptures and carefully scrutinize world events, as well as the situation of God's people, so as to understand the ongoing fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Because of human limitations, at times there may be an incomplete or incorrect understanding of some matter that may require correction later.

But this does not mean that the "slave" should avoid publishing a possible explanation until the final, complete understanding is available. Originally, Christ's disciples were not aware that the Kingdom would be heavenly, but Jesus realized that they would grow in knowledge under the influence of the holy spirit and therefore did not hesitate to give them a commission to be his witnesses. (Acts 1:6-8; John 14:25, 26) Actually, one of the identifying characteristics of the 'faithful slave' class is its spiritual wakefulness, coupled with great respect for God's Word. (Matt. 24:43, 44) If an adjustment needs to be made, this class is humble and teachable enough to admit it and make such change as an

evidence of its faithfulness to Jehovah and his Word.

#### "OVER ALL HIS BELONGINGS"

Jesus said that if he found the "slave" giving the "domestics" their "food at the proper time," he would "appoint him over all his belongings." (Matt. 24:45-47) Such an additional responsibility, more extensive than providing spiritual food for the anointed disciples, would include preaching God's judgments to the nations and also serving as God's instrument to gather the "great crowd" of men and women from all nations into association with the congregation. Bringing in these "other sheep" and providing spiritual food for them would build up their hope of gaining everlasting life on earth.—Isa. 2:1-4; Zech. 8:23; Matt. 25:31-46; John 10:16; Rev. 7:9-17.

#### AN "EVIL SLAVE"

At Matthew 24:48-51 an "evil slave" is mentioned. This does not indicate that the 'faithful slave' becomes unfaithful, so that the "domestics" are without care. But there is the possibility that some individuals of that "slave" class would lose faith in the return of the Master. By saying in their hearts, "My master is delaying," they cease to be watchful and thereby open the way for abandoning the whole body of Christian truth. These individuals may even go so far as to attack their former "fellow slaves." Though not working together as one organized body, such individuals who fall away make up a class of unfaithful ones.\*

#### REJOICE WITH JEHOVAH'S WELL-FED SERVANTS

While the various church groups of Christendom continue to experience spiritual hunger, the worldwide congregation of Jehovah's anointed witnesses and their

\* See *God's Kingdom of a Thousand Years Has Approached*, pp. 357-362, paragraphs 55-65.

companions, the "other sheep," remain spiritually well fed and joyful. (Isa. 65: 13-16) The "slave" class continues to be identifiable both by its activity of providing spiritual food and by the existence of a spiritually well-fed worldwide congregation. Furthermore, the "slave" is identified by reason of having the same views and attitudes as those of Jehovah's faithful servants in pre-Christian and early Christian times.

Such views and attitudes include: Complete confidence in Jehovah and dependence on him. (Prov. 3:5-7) Full acceptance of the entire Bible as truth, as God's inspired guide for man. (Ps. 119:160; Rom. 15:4; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21) Humbly following in the steps of Jesus Christ, even to denying self and joyfully enduring persecutions. (1 Pet. 2: 21; Matt. 16:24) Awareness that God's servants must be teachable, not independent, and that they must keep on seeking.

(Ps. 25:9; Matt. 7:7) Recognition that Jehovah's people must exert themselves vigorously in his service, preaching and making disciples. (Luke 13:24; Matt. 24: 14; 28:19, 20) Seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.—Matt. 6: 33, 34.

These are only some of the Scriptural views identifying the one, true congregation of Jehovah's people today. But they furnish a basis for urging all our readers to associate actively with a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. You are encouraged also to keep studying the Bible with this magazine and companion publications in hand, carefully comparing what you learn with the Holy Scriptures. (Acts 17: 11) In this way, you may continue to be spiritually well fed with "food at the proper time" and may share the happiness of the "faithful and discreet slave" in rendering Jehovah acceptable sacred service.

certainly it would be most fitting for mercy to be shown and forgiveness to be extended to the erring one. Every reasonable effort should be made to preserve the marriage relationship that exists, while realizing that there likely will be some strained relations and problems to be worked out for a while. Thus matters could work out not only to the blessing of the married couple and any children still at home but also as a defeat of the great marriage-wrecker, Satan the Devil.

In some instances, it may be very difficult for the innocent mate to find a real basis for continuing the marriage. Even before the adultery came to light, there may have been very serious problems in applying Bible principles relating to headship and subjection. There may have been little communication, with love and respect for each other being at a very low ebb. Bitterness, resentment or other factors may have interfered with rendering to each other the sexual due. Is there going to be any real improvement in trying to work out these serious, deep-rooted problems if forgiveness is extended? The innocent mate may feel

## QUESTIONS from READERS

- When an innocent mate resumes sexual relations with an adulterous mate after learning of the adultery, does such resumption of sex relations constitute evidence of forgiveness by the innocent mate?

Sexual relations outside the marriage provides the basis for divorce, if the innocent mate desires this; by the same token, if there is a resumption of sexual relations, forgiveness and a healing of the breach is to be understood. Otherwise, there is no real harmony of action with the extending of forgiveness.—Matt. 19:9; 5:37.

When there is genuine repentance on the part of the adulterous mate, and both mates have a sincere desire to work together in solving the problems that have developed, cer-

that the chances of improvement are very slim and may choose to divorce the adulterous mate, even though this will mean adjustments in life, such as facing the trauma of divorce, the need possibly to arrange for other accommodations, caring for any children involved, and so forth. Also, to be borne in mind is the fact that Jehovah 'hates a divorcing.'—Mal. 2:16.

These are all factors that the innocent mate must weigh in determining whether or not to extend forgiveness. *This should be done before resuming sex relations*, before the renewing of intimate privileges reserved for those who are married. Talking matters over, discussing the problem areas, trying to reach an understanding, and determining the willingness of both persons really to work at building love and respect in the marriage, all are things that can be done without implying forgiveness. But when the innocent mate brings himself or herself to the point emotionally where he or she can have sexual relations with the adulterous mate, it is to be assumed that the innocent mate extends unqualified forgiveness, and will not use the known unfaithfulness as a basis for getting a Scriptural divorce permitting remarriage.

In thus acting consistently in extending forgiveness, the innocent mate imitates Jehovah in forgiving, without holding over the head of the guilty one his past sins and continually reminding this one of what transpired in the past. (Ps. 103:3, 8:14; Isa. 55:7; Eph. 4:32; 1 Pet. 4:8; 1 John 1:9) Of course, this puts a responsibility on the recipient of forgiveness to appreciate this and avoid a repetition of the wrongdoing.

Admittedly, at times tragic, unforeseen problems develop afterward that, had these been known, might have caused the innocent mate to withhold forgiveness, including the resuming of sexual relations. However, rather than providing a basis for changing the status of the marriage, the possibility of these problems' developing emphasizes even more the importance of the innocent mate's carefully weighing all factors and not making a hasty decision when faced with deciding whether to extend forgiveness or not.

The situation would be the same even where pregnancy results from the adultery committed by the wife, and the pregnancy is not known at the time sexual relations are resumed by the man with his wife. The possibility of

pregnancy is certainly something the husband would want to take into consideration in determining whether he could forgive his wife and take her back. Practical wisdom would dictate that he wait until such time as it could be definitely determined if she was pregnant with another man's child. If he forgives her and has relations with her before knowing, then what? He should have decided in advance that he was willing to accept the possibility of her having a child and that, if a child was born to his wife, he would accept this child into his home and care for it as his own.

It is understood that when "fornication" on the part of a believing marriage mate comes to light, this should be brought to the attention of the body of elders in the congregation. (Matt. 19:9) If the guilty party does not do this, then the innocent mate would have a responsibility to report the wrongdoing in the interests of keeping Jehovah's congregation clean. If there is genuine repentance on the part of the guilty one, such a person may be retained in the congregation, and this would be true even though the innocent mate might not choose to extend forgiveness. If there is no repentance, the guilty mate would be disfellowshiped, even though the innocent mate might choose to extend forgiveness and continue living with the disfellowshiped mate.

All of this emphasizes that marriage responsibilities cannot be taken lightly. Only "fornication" by one's mate gives the other mate Scriptural grounds for dissolving the marriage with a view to remarrying. But once marriage intimacies are resumed, the Christian congregation must be consistent as the couple must be consistent, in viewing the past known "fornication" as no longer being a basis for dissolving the marriage. Looking to Jehovah, the couple should work diligently to build up love and respect in their relationship, so as to have a good measure of happiness and success in their marriage.

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#### "WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

April 5: Witnesses to the Most Distant Part of the Earth. Page 12. Songs to Be Used: 25, 74.

April 12: Go! Make Disciples. Page 17. Songs to Be Used: 4, 103.

