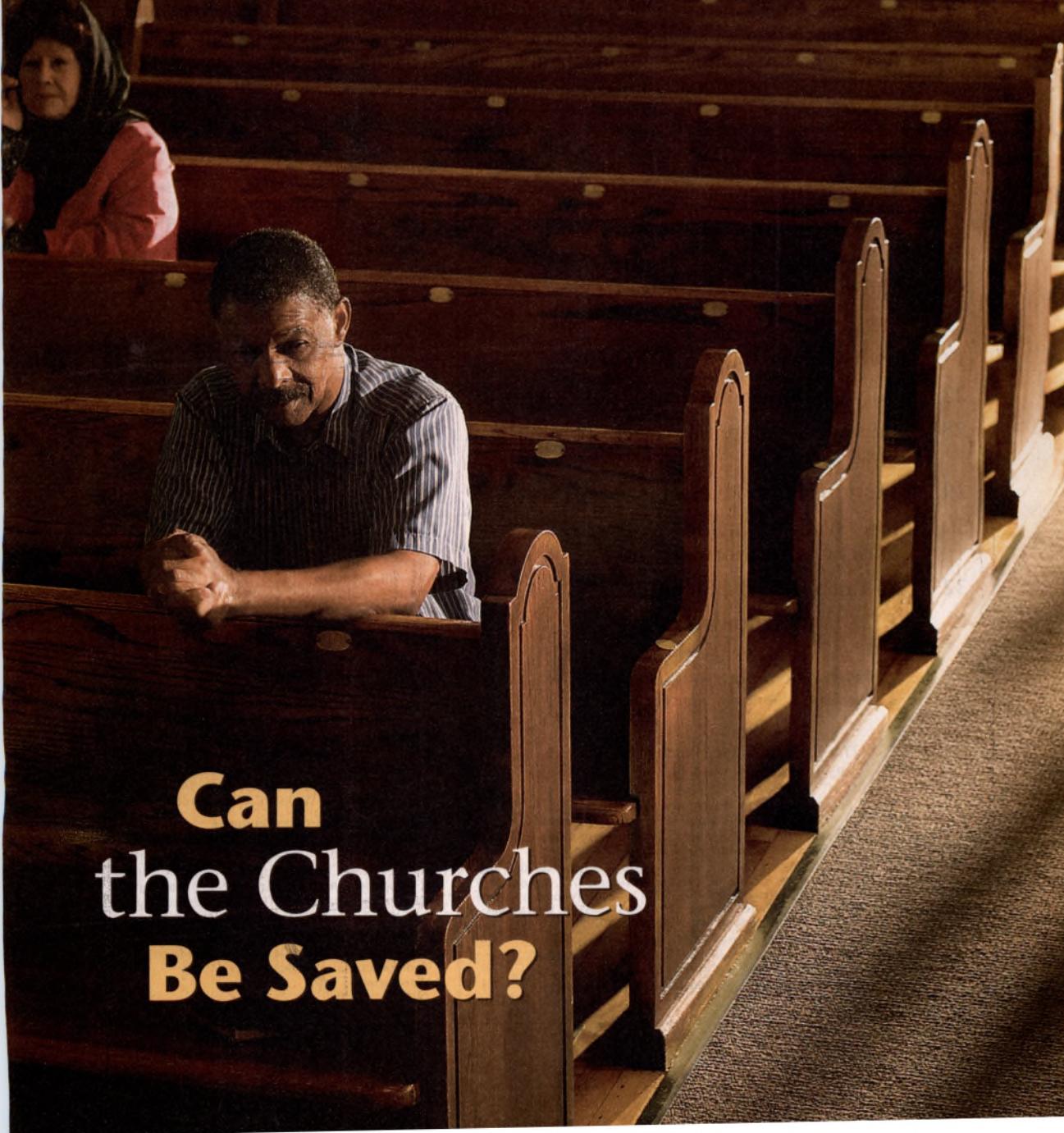




MARCH 1, 2004

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**Can
the Churches
Be Saved?**

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

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Can the Churches Be Saved?

PEOPLE in Britain still believe in God but don't want to make the commitment to Christ," says Stephen Tirwomwe, a Ugandan clergyman. Some 20 years ago, he survived the violent purges of his church in Uganda. Today, he preaches in men's clubs in Leeds, England, making his ten-minute speech before bingo steals his audience.

Across the Atlantic, the recently organized Anglican Mission in America struggles with a similar spiritual crisis. "The United States is now home to the largest population of un-churched and spiritually disconnected English-speaking people in the world," says the mission's official Web site. "We are becoming the mission field." Frustrated with failed efforts to change their church from within, the new mission broke with tradition and joined Asian and African leaders to begin "a missionary outreach to the United States."

Why, though, are African, Asian, and Latin-American missionaries 'saving souls' in the professedly Christian lands of Europe and North America?

Who Is Saving Whom?

For more than four hundred years, a steady stream of devout European missionaries closely followed the advancing flood of colonial expansion into Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and South America. They set out to bring their religion to the so-called heathens in those lands. In time, the American colonies, supposedly founded on Christian principles, joined and then eventually outpaced their European counterparts in establishing their own evangelical missions throughout the world. Now the tide has turned.

"The center [of nominal Christianity] has changed," says Andrew Walls, founder-director of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World. In 1900, 80 percent of those who claimed to be Christians were either Europeans or North Americans. However, today 60 percent of all professed Christians live in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. A recent press report states: "Catholic churches in Europe rely on priests from the Philippines and India," and "one in six priests serving in American Catholic parishes is now imported from abroad." African evangelicals in the Netherlands, largely of Ghanaian origin, see themselves as "a missionary church in a secular continent." And evangelists from Brazil now hold crusades in various parts of Britain. One writer observes: "Christian missionary traffic has gone into reverse gear."

A Gathering Storm

Missionaries may well be needed on the increasingly secularized European and North

American continents. "In Scotland less than 10 percent of Christians regularly go to church," notes one newsmagazine. Even fewer in France and Germany do. When surveyed, "about 40 percent of Americans and 20 percent of Canadians say they go to church regularly," notes another press report. In contrast, attendance in the Philippines is said to be nearly 70 percent, and it is similar in other developing lands.

Even more significant, churchgoers in the Southern Hemisphere tend to be much more traditional than those in the Northern Hemisphere. For example, when Catholics in the United States and Europe are polled, they consistently express a growing distrust of clerical authority and argue for greater lay participation and equality for women. Catholics in the Southern Hemisphere, on the other hand, overwhelmingly embrace the church's traditional stand on these issues. As the demographic shift in the church continues southward, the basis for future confrontation is already being laid. Philip Jenkins, a scholar of history and religion, predicts: "It's very likely that in a decade or two neither component of global Christianity will recognize its counterpart as fully or authentically Christian."

In view of these trends, Walls says that an urgent question is "how African, Asian, Latin American, North American and European Christians can live together in the same church, authentically expressing the same faith." What do you think? Can the churches survive in a divided world? What is the basis for true Christian unity? The following article will present the Scriptural answers, along with clear evidence that a united Christian community is already flourishing worldwide.



AP Photo/Nancy Palmieri

This former church is now a music café



True Christianity Is Flourishing

JESUS CHRIST'S ministry burst onto the world scene in the first century. His message was invigorating, illuminating, and inspiring in a way that astounded people. Many of those who heard him speak were profoundly touched by his words.—Matthew 7:28, 29.

Jesus fearlessly rejected involvement in the oppressive ecclesiastical and political systems of the day but made himself approachable to the common man. (Matthew 11:25-30) He openly acknowledged the pervasive influence of wicked spirits on earth and demonstrated God-given power over them. (Matthew 4:2-11, 24; John 14:30) Jesus skillfully illuminated the fundamental connection between suffering and sin, and he lovingly pointed to God's Kingdom for lasting relief. (Mark 2:1-12; Luke 11:2, 17-23) Once for all time, he lifted the veil of darkness that had so long obscured the true personality of his Father, making God's name manifest to all those interested in having a personal relationship with Him.—John 17:6, 26.

It is not surprising, therefore, that despite intense religious and political persecution, the disciples of Jesus spread his dynamic message rapidly. In just 30 years or so, vibrant Christian congregations were formed in Africa, Asia, and Europe. (Colossians 1:23) The

simple truths Jesus had taught enlightened the hearts of humble, righthearted people throughout the Roman Empire.—Ephesians 1:17, 18.

How, though, would all these new disciples from such diverse economic, cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds come together in a truly united "one faith," as the apostle Paul called it? (Ephesians 4:5) What would keep them 'speaking in agreement' so as not to drift apart? (1 Corinthians 1:10) In view of the serious disunity among professed Christians today, we do well to examine what Jesus himself taught.

The Basis for Christian Unity

When on trial before Pontius Pilate, Jesus identified the basis for Christian unity. He said: "For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone that is on the side of the truth listens to my voice." (John 18:37) Therefore, acceptance of Jesus' teachings along with the rest of God's inspired Word, the Bible, has a powerful

uniting influence on Christ's true disciples.—1 Corinthians 4:6; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

Of course, Jesus' disciples would have sincere questions or disagreements among themselves at times. What then? Jesus explained: "When that one arrives, the spirit of the truth, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak of his own impulse, but what things he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things coming." (John 16:12, 13) Thus, God's holy spirit would enable Jesus' true disciples to understand the truth as it was progressively revealed by God. Also, that spirit would produce fruitage, such as love, joy, and peace, which in turn would promote unity among them.—Acts 15:28; Galatians 5:22, 23.

Jesus left no room for dissension or factions among his disciples; nor did he authorize them to reinterpret divine truths to accommodate cultural or religious traditions of those whom they would meet. Rather, on his last night with them, he fervently prayed: "I make request, not concerning these only, but also concerning those putting faith in me through their word; in order that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in union with me and I am in union with you, that they also may be in union with us, in order that the world may believe that you sent me forth." (John 17:20, 21) Genuine unity, then, in spirit and truth was to be a distinguishing mark of Christ's disciples from the start down to our time. (John 4:23, 24) Nevertheless, today's churches are, not united, but divided. Why is that so?

Why Churches Are Divided

The frank explanation for the vast diversity of beliefs and practices among professed Christians today is that they have not adhered to Jesus' teachings. One writer observed: "As in the past, today's new Christians tend to take from the Bible whatever fits their

needs—and ignore whatever fails to resonate with their own native religious traditions." This is exactly what Jesus and his apostles predicted would happen.

For instance, under inspiration the apostle Paul wrote to his fellow overseer Timothy: "There will be a period of time when they will not put up with the healthful teaching, but, in accord with their own desires, they will accumulate teachers for themselves to have their ears tickled; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, whereas they will be turned aside to false stories." Would all Christians be misled? No. Paul continued: "You, though, keep your senses in all things, suffer evil, do the work of an evangelizer, fully accomplish your ministry." (2 Timothy 4:3-5; Luke 21:8; Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Peter 2:1-3) Timothy and other faithful Christians lived by that inspired counsel.

True Christians Are Still United

Like Timothy, true Christians today are keeping their senses by rejecting human reasoning and by accepting only Scriptural authority for their doctrinal beliefs. (Colossians 2:8; 1 John 4:1) In imitation of first-century Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses are accomplishing their ministry in over 230 lands, bringing Jesus' original message, the good news of the Kingdom, to people everywhere. Consider four important ways in which they unitedly imitate Jesus and practice true Christianity regardless of where they live.

Their beliefs are based on God's Word.

(John 17:17) A parish priest in Belgium wrote about them: "One thing we can learn from them [Jehovah's Witnesses] is their willingness to listen to God's Word and their courage to witness about it."

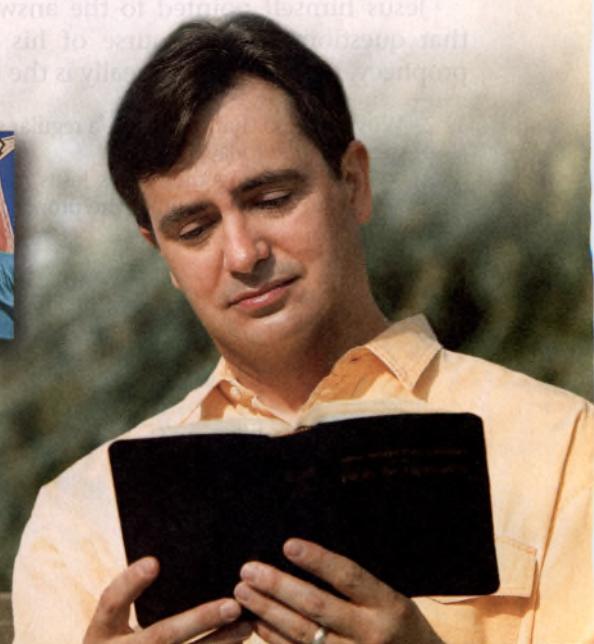
They look to God's Kingdom for relief from global problems. (Luke 8:1) In Barranquilla, Colombia, a Witness spoke to Anto-

nio, a strong supporter of a political movement. The Witness did not take sides with him, nor did he advocate some other political ideology. Instead, he offered to study the Bible with Antonio and his sisters free of charge. Soon Antonio realized that God's Kingdom really is the only hope for poor people in Colombia and in the rest of the world.

They honor God's name. (Matthew 6:9) When Jehovah's Witnesses first met Maria, a sincere Catholic living in Australia, she allowed the Witnesses to show her God's name in the Bible. How did she respond? "When I first saw God's name in the Bible, I wept. I was so moved by the knowledge that I could actually know and use the personal name of God." Maria continued to study the Bible, and for the first time in her life, she got to know Jehovah as a person and was able to build a lasting relationship with him.

They are united by love. (John 13:34, 35) An editorial in *The Ladysmith-Chemainus Chronicle*, Canada, commented: "Regardless of your religious persuasion, or lack of, you've got to hand it to the 4,500 Jehovah's Witnesses who worked around the clock during the past week and a half to build a 25,000-square-foot Assembly Hall in Cassidy . . . To do this cheerfully without arguing, dissension or glory-grabbing is a mark of true Christianity."

So consider the evidence. While Christendom's theologians, missionaries, and churchgoers continue to grapple with the gathering storm of controversy in their churches, true Christianity is flourishing worldwide. Indeed, true Christians are going about their assigned ministry of preaching and teaching God's Word. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) If you are among those who are "sighing and groaning" over the detestable things now taking place and are troubled by the disunity among the religions of Christendom, we invite you to join Jehovah's Witnesses in united Christian worship of the only true God, Jehovah.—Ezekiel 9:4; Isaiah 2:2-4.



A "SLAVE" WHO IS BOTH FAITHFUL AND DISCREET

"Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics?"—MATTHEW 24:45.

ON Tuesday afternoon, Nisan 11, 33 C.E., Jesus' disciples raised a question that has profound meaning for us today. They asked him: "What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" In reply, Jesus uttered a remarkable prophecy. He spoke of a tumultuous period of wars, famines, earthquakes, and diseases. And that would only be "a beginning of pangs of distress." There would be worse to come. What a frightening prospect!—Matthew 24:3, 7, 8, 15-22; Luke 21:10, 11.

² Since 1914, most aspects of Jesus' prophecy have been fulfilled. The "pangs of distress" are upon mankind in full measure. Still, true Christians need not be afraid. Jesus promised that he would sustain them with nourishing spiritual food. Since Jesus is now in heaven, how has he arranged for us here on earth to receive our spiritual food supply?

³ Jesus himself pointed to the answer to that question. In the course of his great prophecy, he asked: "Who really is the faith-

ful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time?" Then he said: "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." (Matthew 24:45-47) Yes, there would be a "slave" who had been assigned to provide spiritual food, a "slave" who would be both *faithful* and *discreet*. Was that slave a particular individual, a succession of individuals, or something else? Since the faithful slave supplies desperately needed spiritual food, it is in our interests to find the answer.

An Individual or a Class?

⁴ "The faithful and discreet slave" cannot be one person. Why not? Because the slave began serving spiritual food back in the first century, and according to Jesus, the slave would still be doing so when the Master arrived in 1914. That would represent some 1,900 years of faithful service for one individual. Not even Methuselah lived that long! —Genesis 5:27.

4. How do we know that "the faithful and discreet slave" cannot be one person?

1. 2. Why is it vital that we receive a regular supply of spiritual food today?
3. What arrangements has Jesus made for us to receive "food at the proper time"?



⁵ Well, might the term “faithful and discreet slave” apply in a general sense to each individual Christian? It is true that all Christians must be faithful and discreet; however, Jesus clearly had something more in mind when he spoke of “the faithful and discreet slave.” How do we know that? Because he said that the “master on arriving” would appoint the slave “over *all* his belongings.” How could each individual Christian be placed over everything—over “*all*” of the Lord’s belongings? Impossible!

⁶ The only reasonable conclusion, then, is that Jesus was referring to a group of Christians as “the faithful and discreet slave.” Can there be such a thing as a composite slave? Yes. Seven hundred years before Christ, Jehovah referred to the entire nation of Israel as “my witnesses” and “my servant whom I have chosen.” (Isaiah 43:10) Every member of the nation of Israel from 1513 B.C.E., when the Mosaic Law was given, down to Pentecost 33 C.E. was part of this servant class. Most Israelites did not have a direct share in administering the nation’s affairs or in coordinating its spiritual feeding program. Jehovah used the kings, judges, prophets, priests, and Levites to carry out those tasks. Still, as a nation, Israel was to represent Jehovah’s sovereignty and tell his praises among the nations. Each Israelite was to be a witness

5. Explain why the term “faithful and discreet slave” does not apply to each Christian individually.
6. How was the nation of Israel intended to function as God’s “servant,” or “slave”?

of Jehovah.—Deuteronomy 26:19; Isaiah 43:21; Malachi 2:7; Romans 3:1, 2.

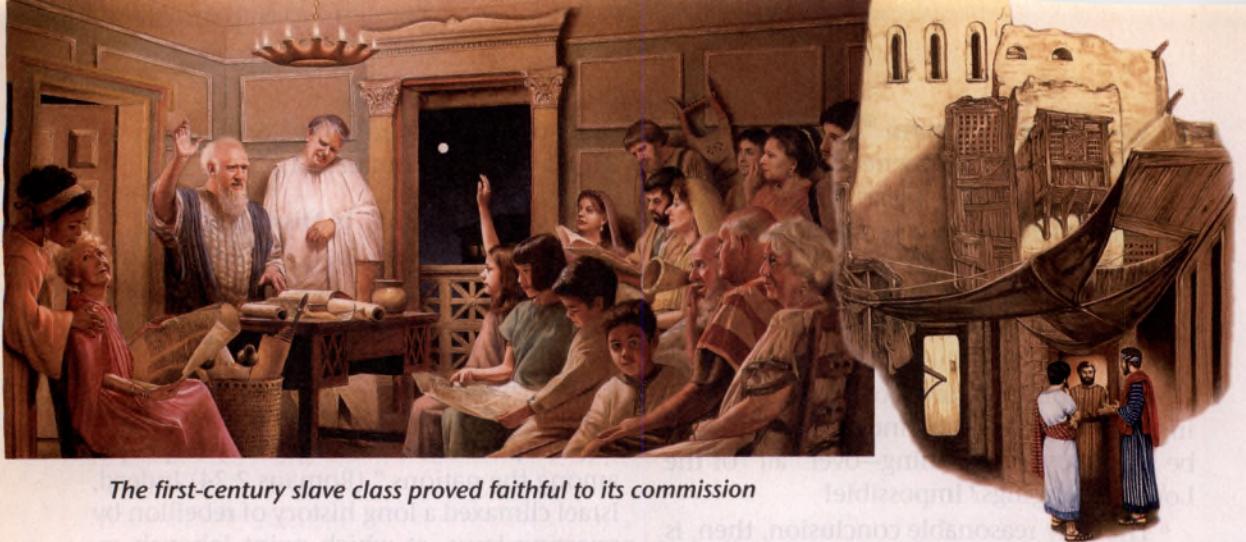
A “Servant” Is Dismissed

⁷ Since Israel was God’s “servant” centuries ago, was it also the slave that Jesus spoke about? No, for ancient Israel sadly turned out to be neither faithful nor discreet. Paul sums up the situation when he quotes Jehovah’s words to the nation: “The name of God is being blasphemed on account of you people among the nations.” (Romans 2:24) Indeed, Israel climaxed a long history of rebellion by rejecting Jesus, at which point Jehovah rejected them.—Matthew 21:42, 43.

⁸ This unfaithfulness on the part of the “servant,” Israel, did not mean that faithful worshipers would be forever cut off from a spiritual food supply. At Pentecost 33 C.E., 50 days after Jesus’ resurrection, holy spirit was poured out upon about 120 of his disciples in an upper room in Jerusalem. At that moment, a new nation was born. Appropriately, its birth was publicized when its members boldly began telling the inhabitants of Jerusalem about “the magnificent things of God.” (Acts 2:11) Thus, that new nation, a spiritual nation, became the “servant” that would declare Jehovah’s glory to the nations and supply food at the proper time. (1 Peter 2:9) Fittingly, it came to be called “the Israel of God.”—Galatians 6:16.

7. Why was the ancient nation of Israel disqualified as God’s “servant”?
8. When was a “servant” appointed to replace Israel, and under what circumstances?





The first-century slave class proved faithful to its commission

⁹ Every member of “the Israel of God” is a dedicated, baptized Christian anointed with holy spirit and having a heavenly hope. Hence, the expression “faithful and discreet slave” refers to all members of that anointed spiritual nation as a group on earth at any particular time from 33 C.E. until now, just as every Israelite living at any time from 1513 B.C.E. until Pentecost 33 C.E. was part of the pre-Christian servant class. Who, though, are the “domestics,” who receive spiritual nourishment from the slave? In the first century C.E., every Christian cherished the heavenly hope. Consequently, the domestics were also anointed Christians, viewed, not as a group, but as individuals. All, including those who held responsible positions in the congregation, needed spiritual food from the slave.—1 Corinthians 12:12, 19-27; Hebrews 5:11-13; 2 Peter 3:15, 16.

“To Each One His Work”

¹⁰ While “the Israel of God” is the faithful and discreet slave class with an assignment of work, each member also has personal responsibilities. Jesus’ words recorded at Mark 13:34 make this plain. He said: “It is like a

9. (a) Who make up “the faithful and discreet slave”? (b) Who are the “domestics”?

10, 11. How do we know that not all members of the slave class have the same assignment of work?

man traveling abroad that left his house and gave the authority to his slaves, *to each one his work*, and commanded the doorkeeper to keep on the watch.” So each member of the slave class has received an assignment—to increase Christ’s earthly belongings. He carries out this task according to his own ability and opportunities.—Matthew 25:14, 15.

¹¹ Further, the apostle Peter told anointed Christians in his day: “In proportion as each one has received a gift, use it *in ministering to one another* as fine stewards of God’s undeserved kindness expressed in various ways.” (1 Peter 4:10) Hence, those anointed ones have the responsibility to minister to one another using the gifts God gave them. Further, Peter’s words indicate that not all Christians would have the same abilities, responsibilities, or privileges. However, each member of the slave class could contribute in some way to the growth of the spiritual nation. How?

¹² First, each one was responsible to be a witness of Jehovah, preaching the good news of the Kingdom. (Isaiah 43:10-12; Matthew 24:14) Just before he ascended to heaven, Jesus commanded all of his faithful disciples,

12. How did each member of the slave class, whether male or female, contribute to the growth of the slave?

both male and female, to be teachers. He said: "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."—Matthew 28:19, 20.

¹³ When new disciples were found, they were to be carefully taught to observe all the things that Christ had commanded his disciples. In time, responsive ones became qualified to teach others. Nourishing spiritual food was made available to prospective members of the slave class in many nations. All anointed Christians, male and female, shared in carrying out the commission of making disciples. (Acts 2:17, 18) This work was to continue from the time the slave first began its work until the end of this system of things.

¹⁴ Newly baptized anointed ones became part of the slave, and regardless of who initially taught them, they went on to receive instruction from members of the congregation who met the Scriptural qualifications to serve as older men. (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9) These appointed men were thus privileged to contribute to the growth of the nation in a special way. Faithful anointed Christian women did not resent that only Christian men were assigned to teach in the congregation. (1 Corinthians 14:34, 35) Rather, they were happy to benefit from the hard work of male members of the congregation and were grateful for the privileges open to women, including that of bringing glad tidings to others. Zealous anointed sisters today manifest the same humble atti-

13. What privilege did all anointed ones enjoy? ¹³

14. To whom were teaching privileges in the congregation limited, and how did faithful anointed women feel about that?

tude, whether the appointed elders are of the anointed or not.

¹⁵ The fundamental spiritual food given in the first century proceeded directly from the pens of the apostles and other disciples who were taking the lead. The letters they wrote—especially those found among the 27 inspired books that make up the Christian Greek Scriptures—were circulated among the congregations and without doubt provided the basis for teaching by the local elders. In this way, representatives of the slave faithfully distributed rich spiritual food to sincere Christians. The first-century slave class proved faithful to its commission.

The "Slave" 19 Centuries Later

¹⁶ What about today? When Jesus' presence began in 1914, did he find a group of anointed Christians who were faithfully dispensing food at the proper time? He certainly did. This group could be clearly identified because of the fine fruitage that it was producing. (Matthew 7:20) History since then has proved this identification to be correct.

¹⁷ At the time of Jesus' arrival, some 5,000 domestics were busy spreading Bible truth. The workers were few, but the slave used a number of ingenious methods to spread the good news. (Matthew 9:38) For example, arrangements were made for sermons on Bible topics to be published in up to 2,000 newspapers. In this way, the truth of God's Word reached tens of thousands of readers at once. In addition, an eight-hour program combining color slides and motion pictures was prepared. Thanks to this innovative presentation, the Bible's message, from the beginning of Creation to the end of the Thousand Year

15. What was one of the main sources of spiritual food in the first century, and who took the lead in providing it?

16, 17. How did the slave class prove itself faithful in carrying out its assignment in the years up to 1914?

Reign of Christ, was conveyed to audiences totaling over nine million on three continents. Printed literature was another avenue that was used. In 1914, for example, some 50,000 copies of this journal were published.

¹⁸ Yes, when the Master arrived, he found his faithful slave conscientiously feeding the domestics as well as preaching the good news. Greater responsibilities now awaited that slave. Jesus said: "Truly I say to you, He will appoint him over all his belongings." (Matthew 24:47) Jesus did this in 1919, after the slave had passed through a period of testing. Why, though, did "the faithful and discreet slave" receive greater responsibilities? Because the Master had received an increase in his belongings. Jesus was given the kingship in 1914.

¹⁹ What are the belongings over which the newly crowned Master appointed his faithful slave? All the spiritual things that belong to Him here on earth. For example, two decades after Christ's enthronement in 1914, "a great crowd" of "other sheep" was identified. (Revelation 7:9; John 10:16) These were, not anointed members of "the Israel of God," but sincere men and women with an earthly

18. When did Jesus appoint the slave over all his belongings, and why?
19. Explain how the spiritual needs of the "great crowd" have been cared for.

What Do You Think?

- Who make up "the faithful and discreet slave"?
- Who are the "domestics"?
- When was the faithful slave appointed over all the Lord's belongings, and why at that time?
- Who have helped increase the Lord's belongings in recent decades, and how?

hope, who loved Jehovah and who wanted to serve him just as the anointed did. In effect, they said to "the faithful and discreet slave": "We will go with you people, for we have heard that God is with you people." (Zechariah 8:23) These newly baptized Christians partook of the same rich spiritual food as the anointed domestics, and the two classes have shared this spiritual table ever since. What a blessing this has been for members of the "great crowd"!

²⁰ The members of the "great crowd" gladly joined the anointed slave class as preachers of the good news. As they preached, the Master's earthly belongings increased, adding to the responsibilities of "the faithful and discreet slave." With the number of truth seekers swelling, expanded printing facilities became necessary to keep up with the demand for Bible literature. Branch offices of Jehovah's Witnesses were established in one land after another. Missionaries were sent out "to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) From approximately five thousand anointed ones in 1914, the ranks of God's praisers have increased to more than six million today, the majority of whom are of the "great crowd." Yes, indeed, the King's belongings have increased manyfold since his coronation in 1914!

²¹ All of this shows that the slave has been both "faithful and discreet." Just after he spoke of "the faithful and discreet slave," Jesus gave two parables that highlighted those qualities: the parable of the discreet and foolish virgins and the parable of the talents. (Matthew 25:1-30) We are intrigued! What meaning do those parables have for us today? We will take up this question in the following article.

20. What role has the "great crowd" played in increasing the Lord's belongings?
21. What two parables will we consider in our next study?

'THE FAITHFUL SLAVE' PASSES THE TEST!

"It is the appointed time for the judgment to start with the house of God."

—1 PETER 4:17.

AT Pentecost 33 C.E., Jesus appointed a "slave" to provide food at the proper time for his "domestics." In 1914, Jesus was enthroned as King, and soon it was time to inspect that "slave." For the most part, he found that the "slave" had proved itself "faithful and discreet." Hence, he appointed it "over all his belongings." (Matthew 24:45-47) However, there was also an evil slave, who was neither faithful nor discreet.

"That Evil Slave"

² Jesus spoke of the evil slave immediately after discussing "the faithful and discreet slave." He said: "If ever that evil slave should say in his heart, 'My master is delaying,' and should start to beat his fellow slaves and should eat and drink with the confirmed drunkards, the master of that slave will come on a day that he does not expect and in an hour that he does not know, and will punish him with the greatest severity and will assign him his part with the hypocrites. There is where his weeping and the gnashing of his teeth will be." (Matthew 24:48-51) The expression "*that evil slave*" draws our attention to Jesus' preceding words about the faithful and discreet slave. Yes, the "evil slave" came from the ranks of the faithful slave.* How?

* In a comparable way, after the death of the apostles, "oppressive wolves" came from the ranks of anointed Christian elders.—Acts 20:29, 30.

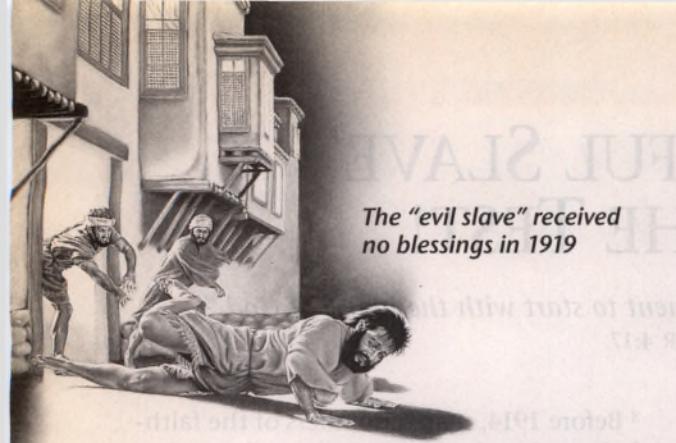
1. What did Jesus encounter when he inspected the "slave"?
- 2, 3. Where did "that evil slave" come from, and how did it develop?

³ Before 1914, many members of the faithful slave class had high hopes of meeting with the Bridegroom in heaven that year, but their hopes were not fulfilled. As a result of this and other developments, many were disappointed and a few became embittered. Some of these turned to 'beating' their former brothers verbally and consorting with "confirmed drunkards," religious groups of Christendom.—Isaiah 28:1-3; 32:6.

⁴ These former Christians came to be identified as the "evil slave," and Jesus punished them with "the greatest severity." How? He rejected them, and they lost out on their heavenly hope. They were not, however, immediately destroyed. They first had to endure a period of weeping and gnashing of teeth in "the darkness outside" the Christian congregation. (Matthew 8:12) Since those early days, a few other anointed individuals have shown a similar bad spirit, identifying themselves with the "evil slave." Some of the "other sheep" have imitated their unfaithfulness. (John 10:16) All such enemies of the Christ end up in the same spiritual "darkness outside."

⁵ Nonetheless, the faithful and discreet slave went through the same tests as "that evil slave." Rather than becoming embittered, however, they were readjusted. (2 Corinthians 13:11) Their love for Jehovah and their

4. How did Jesus deal with the "evil slave" and with all who have shown the same spirit?
5. How did the faithful and discreet slave react, in contrast with the "evil slave"?



The "evil slave" received no blessings in 1919

brothers was strengthened. As a result, they have been "a pillar and support of the truth" during these tumultuous "last days."—1 Timothy 3:15; 2 Timothy 3:1.

Discreet and Foolish Virgins

⁶ After speaking of "that evil slave," Jesus gave two parables to show why some anointed Christians would prove to be faithful and discreet while others would not.* To illustrate discretion, he said: "The kingdom of the heavens will become like ten virgins that took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were discreet. For the foolish took their lamps but took no oil with them, whereas the discreet took oil in their receptacles with their lamps." (Matthew 25:1-4) The ten virgins remind us of anointed Christians before 1914. They had calculated that the bridegroom, Jesus Christ, was about to make an appearance. Hence, they "went out" to meet him, boldly preaching that "the appointed times of the nations" would end in 1914.

—Luke 21:24.

⁷ They were correct. The appointed times

* For another discussion of Jesus' parable, see *Worldwide Security Under the "Prince of Peace,"* published by Jehovah's Witnesses, chapters 5 and 6.

6. (a) How did Jesus illustrate the discretion of his faithful slave class? (b) Before 1914, what message did anointed Christians proclaim?

7. When and why did anointed Christians 'go to sleep,' as it were?

of the nations did end in 1914, and God's Kingdom under Christ Jesus went into operation. But that was in the invisible heavens. On earth, mankind began to suffer foretold "woe." (Revelation 12:10, 12) A time of testing ensued. Not understanding things clearly, anointed Christians thought that "the bridegroom was delaying." Confused and facing hostility from the world, generally they slowed down and virtually stopped the organized public preaching work. Like the virgins in the parable, spiritually speaking they "nodded and went to sleep," even as unfaithful professed Christians did after Jesus' apostles died.—Matthew 25:5; Revelation 11:7, 8; 12:17.

⁸ Then in 1919 something unexpected happened. We read: "Right in the middle of the night there arose a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Be on your way out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and put their lamps in order." (Matthew 25:6, 7) Just when things seemed darkest, there was a call to get active! In 1918, Jesus, "the messenger of the covenant," had come to Jehovah's spiritual temple to inspect and cleanse God's congregation. (Malachi 3:1) Now, anointed Christians needed to go out and meet him in the earthly courtyards of that temple. It was time for them to "shed forth light."—Isaiah 60:1; Philippians 2:14, 15.

⁹ But wait! In the parable, some of the young women had a problem. Jesus continued: "The foolish said to the discreet, 'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are about to go out.'" (Matthew 25:8) Without oil, the lamps would not give light. Lamp oil thus reminds us of God's Word of truth and his holy spirit, which empower true worshipers to be light bearers. (Psalm 119:130;

8. What led to the cry: "Here is the bridegroom!" and what was it time for anointed Christians to do? 9, 10. In 1919, why were some Christians "discreet" and some "foolish"?

Daniel 5:14) Before 1919, discreet anointed Christians had diligently sought to discern God's will for them, despite their temporary weakened state. Hence, when the call came to give forth light, they were ready.—2 Timothy 4:2; Hebrews 10:24, 25.

¹⁰ Certain anointed ones, however, were unprepared to make sacrifices or expend personal effort—although they earnestly desired to be with the Bridegroom. So when it was time to get active in preaching the good news, they were not ready. (Matthew 24:14) They even tried to slow down their zealous companions, asking, in effect, for some of their oil supply. In Jesus' parable, how did the discreet virgins respond? They said: "Perhaps there may not be quite enough for us and you. Be on your way, instead, to those who sell it and buy for yourselves." (Matthew 25:9) Similarly, loyal anointed Christians in 1919 refused to do anything that would diminish their own capacity to bear light. Thus, they passed inspection.

¹¹ Jesus concludes: "While [the foolish virgins] were going off to buy, the bridegroom arrived, and the virgins that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut. Afterwards the rest of the virgins also came, saying, 'Sir, sir, open to us!' In answer he said, 'I tell you the truth, I do not know you.'" (Matthew 25:10-12) Yes, some were unprepared for the Bridegroom's arrival. Thus, they failed inspection and lost the opportunity to attend the heavenly marriage feast. How tragic!

The Parable of the Talents

¹² After illustrating discretion, Jesus went on to illustrate faithfulness. He said: "It is just as when a man, about to travel abroad,

11. What happened to the foolish virgins?
12. (a) What did Jesus use to illustrate faithfulness?
(b) Who was the man who "went abroad"?



*The wise virgins were ready
when the bridegroom arrived*

summoned slaves of his and committed to them his belongings. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, to still another one, to each one according to his own ability, and he went abroad." (Matthew 25:14, 15) The man in the parable is Jesus himself, who "went abroad" when he ascended to heaven in the year 33 C.E. But before his ascension, Jesus committed "his belongings" to his faithful disciples. How?

¹³ During his earthly ministry, Jesus began to prepare a large field of activity by preaching the good news of the Kingdom throughout the land of Israel. (Matthew 9:35-38) Before he "went abroad," he entrusted that field to his faithful disciples, saying: "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." (Matthew 28:18-20) With these words, Jesus authorized his "slaves" to do business until his

13. How did Jesus prepare a large field of activity and authorize his "slaves" to do business?



return, "each one according to his own ability."

¹⁴ That expression indicates that not all first-century Christians had equal circumstances or possibilities. Some, like

Paul and Timothy, were free

to have the fullest possible share in the preaching and teaching work. The circumstances of others may have severely limited their freedom of action. For example, some Christians were slaves, and others were sickly, advanced in age, or had family responsibilities. Of course, certain congregation privileges were not open to all disciples. Anointed women and some anointed men did not teach in the congregation. (1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 3:1; James 3:1) Still, whatever their personal situation, all of Christ's anointed disciples—men and women—were assigned to engage in busi-

14. Why were not all expected to do the same amount of business?

ness, making good use of their opportunities and circumstances in the Christian ministry. Their modern-day counterparts do the same.

Inspection Time Begins!

¹⁵ The parable continues: "After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them." (Matthew 25:19) In 1914—certainly a long time after 33 C.E.—Christ Jesus began his royal presence. Three and a half years later, in 1918, he came to God's spiritual temple and fulfilled Peter's words: "It is the appointed time for the judgment to start with the house of God." (1 Peter 4:17; Malachi 3:1) It was time to settle accounts.

¹⁶ What had the slaves, Jesus' anointed brothers, done with the King's "talents"? From 33 C.E. onward, including the years leading up to 1914, many had been working hard at Jesus' "business." (Matthew 25:16)

- 15, 16. (a) When was it time to settle accounts? (b) What new opportunities to 'do business' were granted to faithful ones?

WHEN DOES JESUS COME?

In Matthew chapters 24 and 25, Jesus is said to "come" in different senses. He does not need to move physically in order to "come." Rather, he "comes" in the sense of turning his attention to mankind or to his followers, often for judgment. Thus, in 1914 he "came" to begin his presence as enthroned King. (Matthew 16:28; 17:1; Acts 1:11) In 1918 he "came" as messenger of the covenant and began judging those claiming to serve Jehovah. (Malachi 3:1-3; 1 Peter 4:17) At Armageddon, he will "come" to execute judgment on Jehovah's enemies.—Revelation 19:11-16.

The coming (or, arriving) referred to a number of times at Matthew 24:29-44 and 25:31-46

is at "the great tribulation." (Revelation 7:14) On the other hand, the coming referred to a number of times at Matthew 24:45 to 25:30 has to do with his judging professed disciples from 1918 onward. It would not be reasonable to say, for example, that the rewarding of the faithful slave, the judgment of the foolish virgins, and the judgment of the sluggish slave, who hid the Master's talent, will take place when Jesus "comes" at the great tribulation. That would imply that many of the anointed will be found unfaithful at that time and will thus have to be replaced. However, Revelation 7:3 indicates that all of Christ's anointed slaves will have been permanently "sealed" by that time.

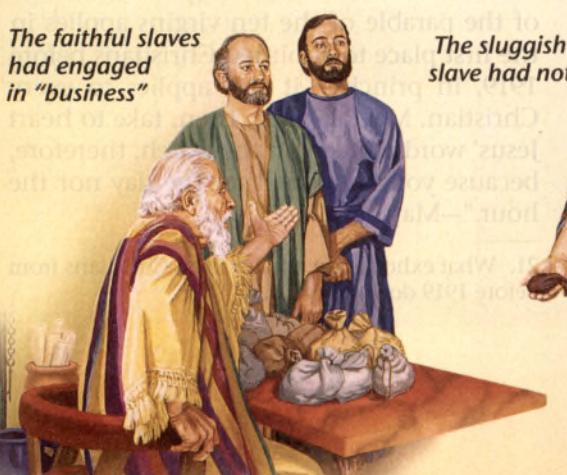
Even during the first world war, they had shown a strong desire to serve the Master. Now it was fitting to give faithful ones new opportunities to 'do business.' The time of the end of this system of things had arrived. The good news had to be preached worldwide. "The harvest of the earth" had to be reaped. (Revelation 14:6, 7, 14-16) The final members of the wheat class had to be located and "a great crowd" of other sheep gathered in.—Revelation 7:9; Matthew 13:24-30.

¹⁷ Harvesttime is a joyful time. (Psalm 126:6) It is fitting, then, that when in 1919, Jesus entrusted his faithful anointed brothers with increased responsibility, he said: "You were faithful over a few things. I will appoint you over many things. *Enter into the joy of your master.*" (Matthew 25:21, 23) Moreover, the joy of the Master as newly enthroned King of God's Kingdom surpasses our imagination. (Psalm 45:1, 2, 6, 7) The faithful slave class share that joy by representing the King and increasing his interests on earth. (2 Corinthians 5:20) Their delight is seen in the prophetic words of Isaiah 61: 10: "Without fail I shall exult in Jehovah. My soul will be joyful in my God. For he has clothed me with the garments of salvation."

¹⁸ Sadly, some did not pass inspection. We

17. How did faithful anointed Christians 'enter into the joy of their master'?
18. Why did some not pass inspection, and with what result?

The faithful slaves had engaged in "business"



The sluggish slave had not



read: "The one that had received the one talent came forward and said, 'Master, I knew you to be an exacting man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not winnow. So I grew afraid and went off and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.'" (Matthew 25:24, 25) Similarly, some anointed Christians had not engaged in "business." Before 1914 they had not enthusiastically shared their hope with others, and they did not want to start in 1919. How did Jesus respond to their insolence? He took away all their privileges. They were 'thrown out into the darkness outside, where their weeping and the gnashing of their teeth would be.'—Matthew 25: 28, 30.

The Inspection Continues

¹⁹ Of course, the majority of those who were to become Christ's anointed slaves during the time of the end were not yet serving Jehovah when Jesus began his inspection in 1918. Did they miss out on the inspection? Not at all. The inspection process only began in 1918/19 when the faithful and discreet slave *as a class* passed the test. Individual anointed Christians continue under inspection until their sealing is made permanent. (Revelation 7:1-3) Realizing this, Christ's anointed brothers are determined to keep on faithfully 'doing business.' They are determined to be discreet, keeping an abundant oil supply so that

the light will shine brightly. They know that when each one reaches the end of his life course in faithfulness, Jesus will receive him into the heavenly dwelling place.

19. In what way does the inspection process continue, and what are all anointed Christians determined to do?



The anointed and the "great crowd" continue to let their light shine

—Matthew 24:13; John 14:2-4; 1 Corinthians 15:50, 51.

²⁰ The great crowd of other sheep have imitated their anointed brothers. They are aware that their knowledge of God's purposes brings great responsibility. (Ezekiel 3:17-21) Hence, with the help of Jehovah's Word and holy spirit, they too keep their oil supply abundant through study and association. And they let their light shine, sharing in the work of preaching and teaching and thus 'doing business' along with their anointed

20. (a) What are the other sheep today determined to do? (b) Of what are anointed Christians aware?

Can You Explain?

- When did Jesus inspect his followers, and what did he find?
- Why did some anointed Christians develop the spirit of "that evil slave"?
- How can we show ourselves to be spiritually discreet?
- Imitating Jesus' faithful anointed brothers, in what way can we keep 'doing business'?

brothers. However, anointed Christians are keenly aware that the talents were placed in their hands. They must render an account for the way the Lord's belongings on earth are administered. Even though they are few in number, they cannot abdicate their responsibility to the great crowd. With this in mind, the faithful and discreet slave continues to take the lead in caring for the King's business, grateful for the support of devoted members of the great crowd. These recognize the responsibility of their anointed brothers and feel privileged to work under their oversight.

²¹ Thus, although these two parables shed light on events in 1919 or thereabouts, they apply in principle to all true Christians throughout the last days. In this way, while the exhortation that Jesus gave at the end of the parable of the ten virgins applies in the first place to anointed Christians before 1919, in principle it still applies to every Christian. May all of us, then, take to heart Jesus' words: "Keep on the watch, therefore, because you know neither the day nor the hour."—Matthew 25:13.

21. What exhortation applies to all Christians from before 1919 down to our day?

HOW WE SHOW OUR LOVE FOR GOD

CULTIVATING love for God is not an academic exercise. As God's servants around the world can testify, true love for God grows as one becomes acquainted with his personality, and it becomes even stronger as one gets familiar with what he loves, what he hates, and what his preferences and his requirements are.

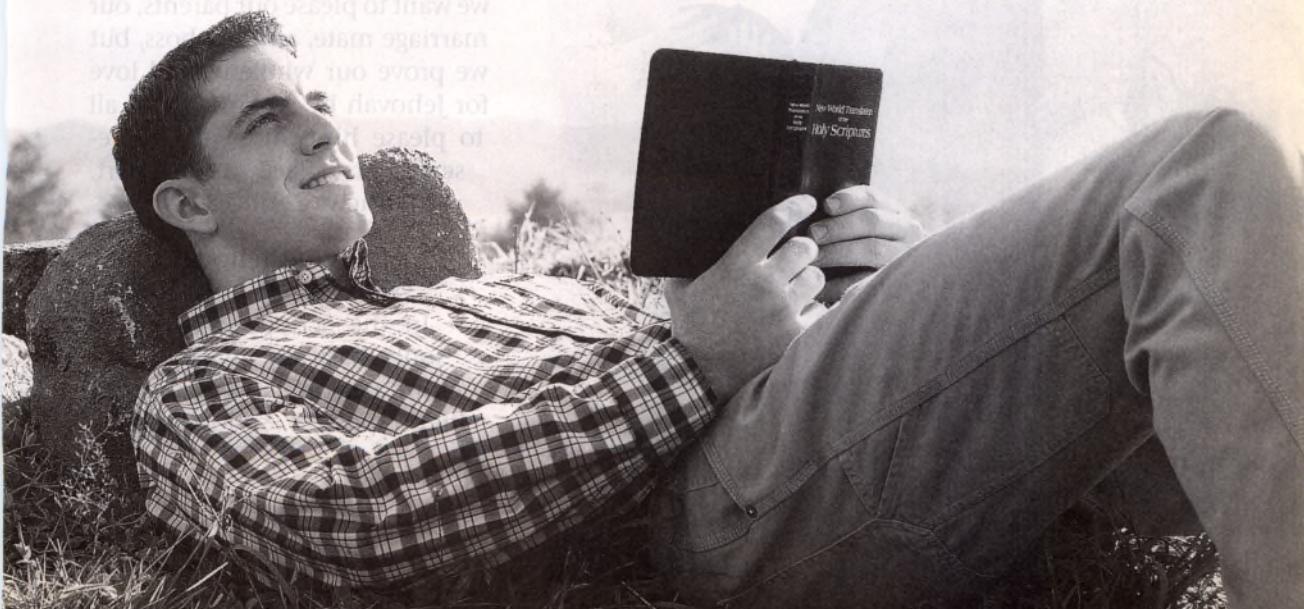
Lovingly, Jehovah has given us his Word, the Bible, in which he reveals himself. From it, we learn how Jehovah dealt with different situations. Just as a letter from a loved one gives us much pleasure, so the Bible brings us delight as we see new aspects of Jehovah's personality revealed.

However, as we at times notice in our public ministry, learning about God does not always cause a person to love him. Jesus said to certain unappreciative Jews of his day: "You

are searching the Scriptures, because you think that by means of them you will have everlasting life; . . . but I well know that you do not have the love of God in you." (John 5: 39, 42) Some spend years learning about Jehovah's loving deeds and yet have little love for him. Why? They fail to contemplate the implications of what they learn. In contrast, millions of sincere people with whom we study the Bible experience that their love for God continues to grow. Why? Because, as we ourselves did, they follow Asaph's example. In what way?

Meditate Appreciatively

Asaph resolved to cultivate love for Jehovah in his heart. He wrote: "With my heart I will show concern . . . I shall remember the practices of Jah; for I will remember your

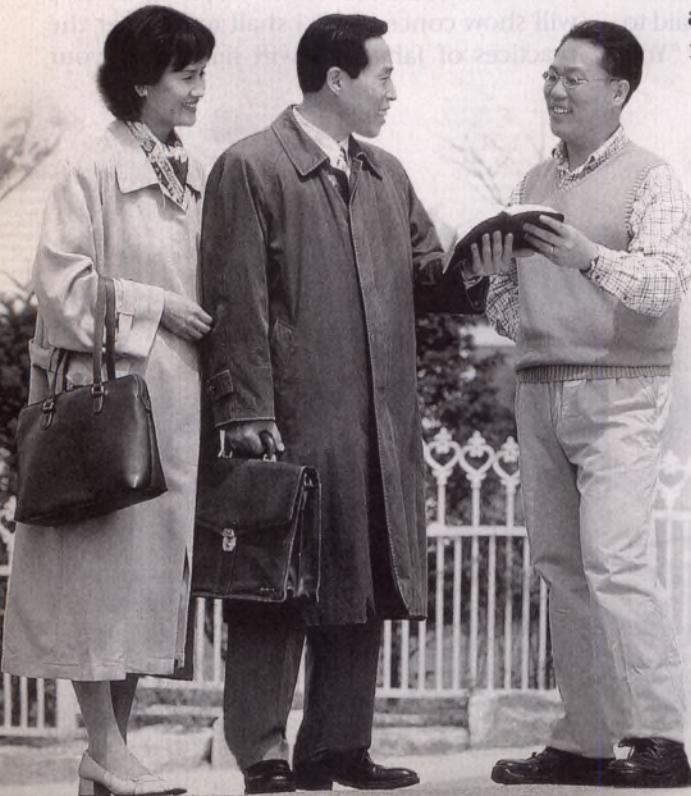


marvelous doing of long ago. And I shall certainly meditate on all your activity, and with your dealings I will concern myself." (Psalm 77:6, 11, 12) Love for God will grow in the heart of one who ponders Jehovah's ways as the psalmist did.

In addition, recalling experiences that we have enjoyed while serving Jehovah strengthens our relationship with him. The apostle Paul said that we are God's "fellow workers," and the friendship that may grow between fellow workers is very special. (1 Corinthians 3:9) When we express our love for Jehovah, he appreciates it, and it makes his heart glad. (Proverbs 27:11) Then, when we ask for Jehovah's help and he guides us through some difficulty, we know that he is with us, and our love for him deepens.

Friendship between two people develops as they express their feelings to each other. Similarly, when we tell Jehovah why we are

We express love for God through actions



devoted to him, we are strengthened in our love for him. We will find ourselves reflecting on Jesus' words: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength." (Mark 12:30) What can we do to make sure that we will continue to love Jehovah with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole mind, and our whole strength?

**Loving Jehovah
With Our Whole Heart**

The Scriptures refer to the figurative heart, which is the inner person—our desires, attitudes, and feelings. So loving Jehovah with our whole heart means that more than anything else, we desire to please God. (Psalm 86:11) We show that we have such love by making our personality acceptable to him. We strive to imitate God by 'abhorring what is wicked and clinging to what is good.'—Romans 12:9.

Our love for God affects our feelings about everything. For example, we may find our employment to be challenging or absorbing, but is this where our heart is? No. Since we love Jehovah with our whole heart, we are first of all ministers of God. Likewise, we want to please our parents, our marriage mate, and our boss, but we prove our wholehearted love for Jehovah by seeking above all to please him. After all, he deserves first place in our heart.

—Matthew 6:24; 10:37.

**Loving Jehovah
With Our Whole Soul**

In the Scriptures the word "soul" basically refers to our entire person as well as to the life we possess. So loving Jeho-

vah with our whole soul means that we use our life to praise him and to prove our love for him.

Of course, we may have other interests in life, such as learning a job, running a business, or raising a family. But at the same time, we prove our whole-souled love for Jehovah by doing things his way and by keeping other things in their proper place in our life, thus "seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness." (Matthew 6:33) Whole-souled worship also means being zealous. We show Jehovah that we love him by zealously preaching the Kingdom message, giving upbuilding comments at the meetings, or helping our Christian brothers and sisters. In everything, we keep "doing the will of God whole-souled."—Ephesians 6:6.

Jesus demonstrated whole-souled love for God by disowning himself. He put God's will first and his personal needs second. Jesus invited us to follow his example. He said: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and continually follow me." (Matthew 16:24, 25) Disowning ourselves means making a dedication. It means that we love God so much that we hand ownership of ourselves over to him, as when an Israelite in Bible times loved his master so much that he obligated himself to him permanently as a slave. (Deuteronomy 15:16, 17) Dedicating our life to Jehovah provides convincing evidence that we love him.

Loving Jehovah With Our Whole Mind

Loving Jehovah with our whole mind means that we make every effort necessary to understand Jehovah's personality, purposes, and requirements. (John 17:3; Acts 17:11) We express our love to Jehovah by using all our mental resources in helping others come to love Jehovah too and by improving our art of teaching. "Brace up your minds for activity,"

urged the apostle Peter. (1 Peter 1:13) Also, we put effort into showing an interest in others, especially fellow servants of God. We are aware of their circumstances and observe when commendation is appropriate or when consolation is needed.

We show Jehovah that we love him with our whole mind by submitting to him mentally. We try to see things his way, take notice of him when we make decisions, and trust that his way is best. (Proverbs 3:5, 6; Isaiah 55:9; Philippians 2:3-7) But as we continue to show our love for God, how can we use our strength?

Loving Jehovah With Our Whole Strength

Many youths in the Christian congregation use their strength in praising Jehovah. (Proverbs 20:29; Ecclesiastes 12:1) One way in which numerous young Christians show that they love Jehovah with their whole strength is by sharing in the pioneer service, the full-time ministry. Many mothers share in this ministry while their children are at school. Faithful elders who make shepherding calls in addition to caring for the welfare of their own families show that they love Jehovah with all their strength. (2 Corinthians 12:15) Jehovah gives power to those who hope in him, so that they can demonstrate their love by praising him, using whatever strength they have.—Isaiah 40:29; Hebrews 6:11, 12.

Love will grow if cultivated properly. Therefore, we continue to take time to meditate. We remember what Jehovah has done for us and why he merits our devotion. As imperfect descendants of Adam, we can never be worthy of "the things that God has prepared for those who love him," but we can show that we love Jehovah with every fiber of our being. Let us continue to do so!—1 Corinthians 2:9.



GODLY CONTENTMENT HAS SUSTAINED ME

AS TOLD BY

BENJAMIN IKECHUKWU OSUEKE

Soon after I started engaging fully in the Christian ministry, I visited my parents' home. Upon seeing me, my father grabbed my shirt and began to shout, "Thief!" He took his cutlass and hit me with the flat side. Stirred by the noise, other villagers gathered at our house. What had I stolen?

Let me explain.

I WAS born in 1930 in the village of Umuariam in southeastern Nigeria, and I was the first of seven children. The eldest of my sisters died at age 13. My parents were Anglicans. Father was a farmer, and Mother a petty trader. She walked to local markets about 20 miles from our village to purchase a tin of palm oil and returned late the same day. Then, early the following morning, she trekked to a railway-station town about 25 miles away to sell the oil. If she made a profit, usually not more than about 15 cents (U.S.), she bought foodstuffs for the

family and returned the same day. That was her routine for about 15 years until she died in 1950.

I started my education in my village at a school run by the Anglican Church, but to finish elementary school, I had to stay at a boarding house about 22 miles away. Since my parents had no money to further my education, I began to search for a job. At first I worked as a house servant for a railway guard in Lagos, western Nigeria, and then for a civil servant in Kaduna, northern Nigeria. In Benin City, midwestern Nigeria, I found work

as a clerk for a lawyer, and later I worked as a laborer at a sawmill. From there I traveled to Cameroon in 1953 to stay with a cousin who helped me find a job on a rubber plantation. My monthly wage was about nine dollars (U.S.). I had only menial jobs, yet I was content as long as I had enough to eat.

A Pauper Dispenses Riches

Silvanus Okemiri, a coworker, was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. He used every opportunity to share with me his Bible knowledge while we cut grass and placed mulch around rubber plants. Though I listened to him, I did nothing more at the time. Still, when my cousin found out that I was in contact with the Witnesses, he did his best to discourage me. He warned me: "Benji, don't visit Mr. Okemiri. He is a Jehovah man and a pauper. Anyone associating with him will become just like him."

In early 1954, unable to bear the harsh working conditions in the company any longer, I returned home. In those days the Anglican Church was rather strict about morals. I grew up to detest immorality. Soon, however, I was disgusted by the hypocrisy among fellow churchgoers. While they strongly professed to follow Bible standards, their life-style belied their claims. (Matthew 15:8) I had repeated arguments with my father, which severely strained our relationship. One night I just left home.

I relocated to Omoba, a small railway town. There I again came in contact with Jehovah's Witnesses. Priscilla Isiocha, whom I knew from my village, gave me the booklets "*This Good News of the Kingdom*" and *After Armageddon—God's New World*.* I devoured



In 1956

them, convinced that I had found the truth. In my church we did not study the Bible; we focused on human traditions. However, the literature of the Witnesses liberally quoted from the Bible.

Less than a month later, I asked Brother and Sister Isiocha when they went to their church. When I attended a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses for the first time, I did not understand a thing. The *Watchtower* article was about the attack by 'Gog of Magog,' mentioned in the prophetic book of Ezekiel. (Ezekiel 38:1, 2) Many terms were foreign to me, but I was so impressed by the warm welcome I received that I decided to go back the following Sunday. During the second meeting, I heard about preaching. So I asked Priscilla when they went out preaching. On the third Sunday, I accompanied them, carrying a small Bible. I had no preaching bag nor any Bible literature. Nevertheless, I became a Kingdom publisher and reported field service at the end of that month!

No one studied the Bible with me, but whenever I visited the Isiochas, I gleaned words of faith and encouragement from the Scriptures and got some Bible literature. On December 11, 1954, at a district convention in Aba, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah by water baptism. My cousin with whom I lived and served as an apprentice stopped providing food and training and did not pay me even a penny for the services I had rendered him. Yet, I held no grudge against him; I was just thankful that I had a personal relationship with God. This provided me with comfort and peace of mind. The local Witnesses came to my assistance. The Isiochas

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses. Now out of print.

gave me food, and others lent me money to start petty trading. In the middle of 1955, I bought a secondhand bicycle, and in March 1956, I took up the regular pioneer work. Shortly thereafter, I paid my debts. The profit I made from trading was very small, but I could now care for myself. What Jehovah was providing sufficed for me.

"Stealing" My Siblings

As soon as I was on my own, my first concern was to assist my siblings spiritually. Father, because of his prejudice and deep suspicion, opposed my becoming a Witness. How, then, could I help my siblings to learn Bible truth? I offered to support my younger brother Ernest, so Father allowed him to stay with me. Ernest quickly embraced the truth and was baptized in 1956. His change stiffened my father's opposition. Nevertheless, my sister who was already married also came into the truth with her husband. When I arranged for my second sister, Felicia, to spend her school holidays with me, Father reluctantly agreed. Soon, Felicia too got baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

In 1959, I went home to take Bernice, my third sister, to stay with Ernest. That is when Father attacked me, accusing me of stealing his children. He failed to grasp that they had made their personal decision to serve Jehovah. Father swore that he would never allow Bernice to come with me. But Jehovah's hand was not short, for the very next year, Bernice came to spend her school holidays with Ernest. Just like her sisters, she embraced the truth and got baptized.

'Learning the Secret'

In September 1957, I started serving as a special pioneer, devoting about 150 hours to the preaching work every month. My partner, Sunday Igobelachi, and I served in the vast territory in Akpu-na-abuo, Etche. At

the first circuit assembly we attended while there, 13 persons from our group were baptized. How thrilled we are now to see 20 congregations in that area!

In 1958, I got to know Christiana Azuike, a regular pioneer associating with the Aba East Congregation. I admired her zeal, and in December of that year, we were married. In early 1959, I was appointed as a traveling overseer, visiting and strengthening congregations of our spiritual brothers. From then until 1972, my wife and I visited nearly all the congregations of Jehovah's people in eastern and midwestern Nigeria.

Congregations were far apart, and our primary means of transportation was the bicycle. When we served congregations in the big towns, our brothers hired a taxi to take us to the next congregation. In some cases the rooms where we stayed had mud floors and no ceilings. We slept on beds made of raffia poles. Some of the beds had a grass mattress covered with a mat; others had no mattress at all. The quantity and quality of food was not a problem for us. Having learned in the past to be content with meager provisions, we enjoyed whatever food was provided, and our hosts appreciated that. Some cities had no electricity in those days, so we always carried along our kerosene lantern. Despite difficult conditions, however, we had many enjoyable times with the congregations.

During those years, we came to appreciate the value of the apostle Paul's admonition: "Having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things." (1 Timothy 6:8) Through adversity, Paul learned a secret that helped him to stay content. What was that? He explained: "I know indeed how to be low on provisions, I know indeed how to have an abundance. In everything and in all circumstances I have learned the secret of both how to be full and how to hunger, both



In 1965, with our sons, Joel and Samuel

how to have an abundance and how to suffer want." We learned the same secret. Paul also said: "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him [God] who imparts power to me." (Philippians 4:12, 13) How true that proved to be in our case! We were blessed with contentment, a full measure of upbuilding Christian activities, and peace of mind.

Serving Congregations as a Family

In late 1959, our first son, Joel, was born, and in 1962, a second boy, Samuel, followed. Christiana and I continued in the traveling work, visiting congregations together with the boys. In 1967, the Nigerian civil war broke out. Schools were closed because of incessant air raids. My wife was a schoolteacher before she joined me in the traveling work, so during the war, she taught the children at home. By the age of six, Samuel could read and write. When he entered school after the war, he was two classes ahead of his peers.

At the time, we did not fully realize the difficulties of rearing children while we stayed in the traveling work. However, being assigned to serve as special pioneers in 1972

proved beneficial for us. This allowed us to stay in one location so that we could give adequate attention to the spirituality of our family. Early on, we taught our sons the value of godly contentment. In 1973, Samuel was baptized, and Joel took up regular pioneering the same year. Both of our sons married fine Christian women and are now raising their own families in the truth.

The Misery of Civil Strife

When the civil war broke out, I was serving a congregation in Onitsha as a circuit overseer, accompanied by my family. That war further impressed on us the vanity of accumulating material things or trusting in them. I saw people running for their lives—abandoning their valued possessions in the streets.

As the war escalated, all able-bodied males were conscripted. Many brothers who refused enlistment were tortured. We could not move about freely. Food shortages wreaked havoc in the land. The price of a pound of cassava rose from 7 cents to 14 dollars (U.S.) and that of a cup of salt from 8 dollars to 42 dollars (U.S.). Milk, butter, and sugar disappeared. To survive, we ground unripe papaya and mixed it with a little cassava flour. We also ate grasshoppers, cassava peelings, hibiscus leaves, elephant grass—any leaves we could find. Meat was a luxury, so I caught lizards for the children to eat. Nevertheless, no matter how bad things got, Jehovah always provided for us.

However, even more dangerous was the spiritual privation caused by the war. Most of the brothers fled the war zone into the jungle or to other villages, and in the process, they lost most if not all of their Bible publications. In addition, the blockade by the government troops prevented new Bible literature from coming into the Biafran area. Although most

of the congregations tried to hold meetings, the spirituality of the brothers suffered because direction from the branch office could not reach them.

Fighting Spiritual Starvation

Traveling overseers did their best to continue the arrangement of visiting each congregation. Since many brothers had fled the towns, I searched for them wherever they could be found. On one occasion, I left my wife and children in a safe place and traveled by myself for six weeks, visiting different villages and parts of the jungle looking for the brothers.

While serving a congregation at Ogbunka, I heard that there was a concentration of Witnesses in the Isuochi area of the Okigwe district. So I asked for word to be passed along to the brothers in that area to gather at a cashew plantation located at Umuaku village. An elderly brother and I rode our bicycles about 10 miles to the plantation, where about 200 Witnesses, including women and children, had gathered. With the help of a pioneer sister, I was able to locate another

What a blessing it is to serve Jehovah as a family!



group of about a hundred Witnesses, who had taken refuge in the Lomara bush.

Lawrence Ugwuegbu was one of a group of courageous brothers living in the war-ravaged town of Owerri. He informed me that there were numerous Witnesses in the Ohaji area. They could not move about freely, as soldiers occupied the area. The two of us rode there under the cover of night and met about 120 Witnesses in a brother's compound. We also used that opportunity to visit some other Witnesses in their hideouts.

Brother Isaac Nwagwu risked his life to help me locate other displaced brothers. He ferried me across the Otamiri River in a canoe to meet with over 150 Witnesses gathered in Egbu-Etche. One brother there exclaimed: "This is the best day of my life! I never thought I would live to see a circuit overseer again. If I die now in the heat of this war, I am satisfied."

I was in danger of conscription, but I repeatedly felt Jehovah's protection. One afternoon, as I was returning to my base after meeting with about 250 brothers, a unit of military commandos stopped me at a road-block. "Why have you not joined the army?" they asked. I explained that I was a missionary preaching God's Kingdom. I realized that they were determined to arrest me. After a quick silent prayer, I said to their captain, "Please release me." Surprisingly, he replied, "Do you say that we should let you go?" "Yes," I answered, "release me." He said, "You are free to go." None of the soldiers said another word.—Psalm 65:1, 2.

Contentment Brings Further Blessings

After the war ended in 1970, I continued serving in the circuit work. It was a privilege to help reorganize the congregations. Then, Christiana and I served as special pioneers

until 1976, when I was once again appointed as a circuit overseer. Toward the middle of that year, I was assigned to the district work. Seven years later, my wife and I were invited to serve at the Nigeria branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses, our present home. Here at the branch, it is always a source of great joy for us to see again brothers and sisters whom we met during the civil war and at other times and who are still serving Jehovah faithfully.

Over the years, Christiana has been a wonderful support and loyal companion to me. Her positive and determined spirit, despite persistent health problems that she has endured since 1978, has helped keep me going. We have experienced the truthfulness of



Today, Christiana and I serve at the Nigeria branch

the psalmist's words: "Jehovah himself will sustain him upon a divan of illness."—Psalm 41:3.

Looking back over these years of theocratic activity, I cannot help but thank Jehovah for his wonderful blessings. Being content with what he provides, I can truly say that I have found great happiness. The joy of seeing my siblings, my children, and their families all serving Jehovah along with me and my wife is a blessing beyond compare. Jehovah has satisfied me with a rich and meaningful life. None of my desires have been left unfulfilled.

A Timely Arrangement Helps to Sustain the Brotherhood

In the mid-1960's, animosity between ethnic groups in northern and eastern Nigeria led to disturbances, revolts, lawlessness, and ethnic violence. These developments put great strain on Jehovah's Witnesses, who were determined to remain strictly neutral in the conflict. About 20 of them were murdered. Most lost all their possessions.

On May 30, 1967, the eastern states of Nigeria seceded from the federation, forming the Republic of Biafra. The federal army was mobilized, and a total blockade was imposed against the East. A bloody and violent civil war ensued.

The neutrality of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Biafran area made them targets of attack. Newspapers published fiery comments, whip-

ping up public opinion against them. However, Jehovah made sure that his servants received spiritual food. How?

Early in 1968, a civil servant was assigned to a post in Europe and another was assigned to the Biafran airstrip. Both were Witnesses. Their assignment placed them at opposite ends of the only link between Biafra and the outside world. These two Witnesses volunteered for the risky task of channeling spiritual food into Biafra. They also helped to supply our distressed brothers with relief materials. The two brothers were able to keep this vital arrangement going throughout the war, which ended in 1970. One of them later said, "This arrangement was beyond anything that humans could have planned."



God's Servants Are Like Trees *In What Ways?*

SPEAKING about an individual who delights in and applies Bible principles in his life, the psalmist notes: "He will certainly become like a tree planted by streams of water, that gives its own fruit in its season and the foliage of which does not wither, and everything he does will succeed." (Psalm 1: 1-3) Why is this comparison fitting?

Trees may live to be very old. For instance, some olive trees in the Mediterranean region are said to be from one to two thousand years old. Likewise, the baobab trees of central Africa attain great ages, and a bristlecone pine in California is believed to be some 4,600 years old. In a forest, mature trees are often beneficial to their surroundings. For example, tall trees provide protective shade for saplings, and the leaves that fall from the trees enrich the soil beneath.

The tallest trees in the world are usually found growing together in forests, where individual trees support one another. Since their roots may be intertwined, several trees collectively may resist a storm much better than can an isolated tree standing in a meadow. A large root system also enables a tree to obtain sufficient water and nutrients from the soil. In some cases, the roots may penetrate deeper into the ground than the height of the tree, or

the roots may extend horizontally well beyond the spread of the tree's foliage.

The apostle Paul may have alluded to a tree when he explained that Christians should "go on walking in union with him [Christ], rooted and being built up in him and being stabilized in the faith." (Colossians 2:6, 7) Indeed, Christians can stand their ground only if they are firmly rooted in Christ.—1 Peter 2:21.

In what other ways may God's servants be likened to trees? Well, as trees in a grove receive support from nearby trees, so all those who stay close to the Christian congregation receive support from fellow believers. (Galatians 6:2) Faithful, mature Christians, having widespread spiritual roots, help newer believers to remain firm in the faith, even in the face of stormlike opposition. (Romans 1:11, 12) Newer Christians can flourish in the protective "shade" of more experienced servants of God. (Romans 15:1) And all members of the worldwide Christian congregation benefit from the fortifying spiritual nourishment provided by "big trees of righteousness," the anointed remnant.—Isaiah 61:3.

How thrilling it is that all of God's servants have the prospect of experiencing the fulfillment of the promise found at Isaiah 65:22, which states: "Like the days of a tree will the days of my people be."

Questions From Readers

Since Levites had no inheritance in ancient Israel, how could the Levite Hanamel sell a field to his Levite cousin Jeremiah, as noted at Jeremiah 32:7?

Regarding the Levites, Jehovah told Aaron: "You will not have an inheritance, and no share will become yours in their [Israel's] midst." (Numbers 18:20) Nevertheless, the Levites were assigned 48 cities along with their pasture grounds, scattered throughout the Promised Land. Jeremiah's hometown was Anathoth, one of the cities assigned to "the sons of Aaron, the priests."—Joshua 21:13-19; Numbers 35:1-8; 1 Chronicles 6:54, 60.

At Leviticus 25:32-34, we find that Jehovah gave specific instructions governing "the right of repurchase" of property owned by Levites. Evidently, individual Levite families would have inheritance rights pertaining to the possession, use, and dispensing of specific allotments. Such would naturally include the sale and repurchase of property.* In many respects, the Levites owned and used property in ways similar to Israelites of other tribes.

Probably, ownership of such Levite property was passed on through family inheritance. As to "the right of repurchase," however, transactions were allowed between Levites only. Also, it seems that the sale and repurchase of land applied only to

* In the first century C.E., the Levite Barnabas sold land that he owned and donated the proceeds to help needy followers of Christ in Jerusalem. The property may have been either in Palestine or in Cyprus. Or it is possible that this was simply a burial plot that Barnabas had acquired in the Jerusalem area.—Acts 4:34-37.

property within the cities, since "the field of pasture ground of their cities" was not to be sold because it was "a possession to time indefinite for them."—Leviticus 25:32, 34.

So the field Jeremiah repurchased from Hanamel evidently was of such a nature that it could be passed along by repurchase. It may have been located within the bounds of the city. Jehovah himself affirmed that "the field" in question belonged to Hanamel and that Jeremiah had "the right of repurchase." (Jeremiah 32:6, 7) Jehovah used this transaction symbolically in order to reinforce his promise that the Israelites would return to reclaim their inheritance of the land after a period of exile in Babylon.—Jeremiah 32:13-15.

There is no indication that Hanamel had improperly come into possession of property in Anathoth. Nothing suggests that he violated Jehovah's law in inviting Jeremiah to buy this field in Anathoth or that Jeremiah inappropriately exercised his right of repurchase in buying the field.—Jeremiah 32:8-15.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

"Do the Work of an Evangelizer"

Jehovah's Word Is Alive—Highlights
From the Book of Exodus

Ehud Breaks the Oppressor's Yoke

2004 "WALK WITH GOD" DISTRICT CONVENTION LOCATIONS

MAY 28-30

BAKERSFIELD, CA, Centennial Garden Arena, 1001 Truxtun Ave.
DE KALB, IL, Convocation Center, Northern Illinois University, 1525 W. Lincoln Hwy.
LONG BEACH, CA, Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

JUNE 4-6

AMARILLO, TX, Cal Farley Coliseum, Civic Center, 401 S. Buchanan St.
BEAUMONT, TX (Spanish only), Civic Center Arena, 701 Main St.
BILLINGS, MT, MetraPark Arena, 308 6th Ave. N
DE KALB, IL, Convocation Center, Northern Illinois University, 1525 W. Lincoln Hwy.
KANSAS CITY, MO, Kemper Arena, 1800 Genesee St.
LONG BEACH, CA, Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
LOVELAND, CO, Budweiser Events Center, The Ranch, 53300 SE Frontage Rd.
MEMPHIS, TN, Mid-South Coliseum, Mid-South Fairgrounds, 996 Early Maxwell Blvd.
SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

JUNE 11-13

AMARILLO, TX, Cal Farley Coliseum, Civic Center, 401 S. Buchanan St.
BAKERSFIELD, CA, Centennial Garden Arena, 1001 Truxtun Ave.
BEAUMONT, TX (Spanish only), Civic Center Arena, 701 Main St.
FLORENCE, SC, Civic Center, 3300 W. Radio Dr.
GREEN BAY, WI, Resch Center, 1901 S. Oneida St.
LONG BEACH, CA (Spanish only), Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
MEMPHIS, TN, Mid-South Coliseum, Mid-South Fairgrounds, 996 Early Maxwell Blvd.
PONTIAC, MI, Silverdome, 1200 Featherstone Rd.
PORTLAND, ME, Cumberland County Civic Center, 1 Civic Center Sq.
SAN DIEGO, CA, Qualcomm Stadium, 9449 Friars Rd.
SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

JUNE 18-20

AMARILLO, TX (Spanish only), Cal Farley Coliseum, Civic Center, 401 S. Buchanan St.
BEAUMONT, TX (Spanish only), Civic Center Arena, 701 Main St.
COLLEGE STATION, TX, Reed Arena, Texas A&M University, Olsen Blvd.
FLORENCE, SC, Civic Center, 3300 W. Radio Dr.
JACKSON, MS, Mississippi Coliseum, 1207 Mississippi St.
PORTLAND, ME, Cumberland County Civic Center, 1 Civic Center Sq.

SAN DIEGO, CA (Spanish only), Qualcomm Stadium, 9449 Friars Rd.
SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Spanish only), Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave.
SUNNYSIDE, NY (Chinese only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 44-17 Greenpoint Ave.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

JUNE 25-27

BAKERSFIELD, CA, Centennial Garden Arena, 1001 Truxtun Ave.
BEAUMONT, TX (Spanish only), Civic Center Arena, 701 Main St.
COLUMBIA, SC, The Colonial Center, 801 Lincoln St.
DAYTON, OH, Ervin J. Nutter Center, Wright State University, 3640 Colonel Glen Hwy.
DE KALB, IL, Convocation Center, Northern Illinois University, 1525 W. Lincoln Hwy.
FORT WORTH, TX, Convocation Center, 1111 Houston St.
HUNTSVILLE, AL, Von Braun Center Arena, 700 Monroe St.
JACKSON, MS, Mississippi Coliseum, 1207 Mississippi St.
KENNEWICK, WA (Spanish only), Tri-Cities Coliseum, 7100 W. Quinault Ave.
LAKE CHARLES, LA, Burton Coliseum, McNeese State University, 7001 Gulf Hwy.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Spanish only), Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave.

SUNNYSIDE, NY (Tagalog only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 44-17 Greenpoint Ave.

TACOMA, WA, Tacoma Dome, 2727 E. "D" St.

TULSA, OK, Convention Center, 100 Civic Center

WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

JULY 2-4

BAKERSFIELD, CA (Spanish only), Centennial Garden Arena, 1001 Truxtun Ave.
BIRMINGHAM, AL, BJCC Arena, 19th St. & 9th Ave. N
BISMARCK, ND, Civic Center Arena, 601 E. Sweet Ave.
COLLEGE STATION, TX, Reed Arena, Texas A&M University, Olsen Blvd.
COLUMBIA, SC, The Colonial Center, 801 Lincoln St.
COLUMBUS, GA, Civic Center Arena, 400 4th St.
CORAOPOLIS, PA (Greek only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1520 Spring Run Rd. Ext.

DAYTON, OH, Ervin J. Nutter Center, Wright State University, 3640 Colonel Glen Hwy.

FORT WORTH, TX, Convention Center, 1111 Houston St.

GLENDALE, AZ, Glendale Arena, 6520 N. 91st Ave.

HUNTSVILLE, AL, Von Braun Center Arena, 700 Monroe St.

JERSEY CITY, NJ (American Sign Language only), Assembly

Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Blvd.

KENNEWICK, WA, Tri-Cities Coliseum, 7100 W. Quinault Ave.

LAKE CHARLES, LA, Burton Coliseum, McNeese State University, 7001 Gulf Hwy.

LINCOLN, NE, Bob Devaney Sports Center, University of Nebraska, 16th St. & Military Rd.

LOVELAND, CO, Budweiser Events Center, The Ranch, 53300 SE Frontage Rd.

MOBILE, AL, Civic Center Arena, 401 Civic Center Dr.

OGDEN, UT, Des Events Center, 4450 S. Harrison Blvd.

PHILADELPHIA, PA, The Liacouras Center, Temple University, 1776 N. Broad St.

RICHMOND, VA, Coliseum, 601 E. Leigh St.

ROANOKE, VA, Civic Center Coliseum, 710 Williamson Rd. NE

ROCHESTER, NY, Blue Cross Arena, Broad & Exchange Sts.

ROMEovILLE, IL (Polish only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 800 Schmidt Rd.

SPRINGFIELD, IL, Prairie Capital Convention Center Arena, One Convention Center Plaza

SUNNYSIDE, NY (Russian only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 44-17 Greenpoint Ave.

TACOMA, WA, Tacoma Dome, 2727 E. "D" St.

TOPEKA, KS (Spanish only), Landon Arena, Kansas Expocentre, One Expocentre Dr.

TULSA, OK, Convention Center, 100 Civic Center

UNIONDALE, NY, Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

WINSTON-SALEM, NC, Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 2825 University Pkwy.

JULY 9-11

AMHERST, MA, The Mullins Center, University of Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.

BAKERSFIELD, CA (Spanish only), Centennial Garden Arena, 1001 Truxtun Ave.

COLLEGE STATION, TX, Reed Arena, Texas A&M University, Olsen Blvd.

COLUMBUS, GA, Civic Center Arena, 400 4th St.

DAYTON, OH, Ervin J. Nutter Center, Wright State University, 3640 Colonel Glen Hwy.

DE KALB, IL, Convocation Center, Northern Illinois University, 1525 W. Lincoln Hwy.

DULUTH, GA, Gwinnett Civic & Cultural Center Arena, 6400 Sugarloaf Pkwy.

EVANSVILLE, IN, Roberts Stadium, 2600 E. Division St.

FORT WORTH, TX, Convention Center, 1111 Houston St.

HAMPTON, VA, Coliseum, 1000 Coliseum Dr.

JERSEY CITY, NJ (French only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Blvd.

JOHNSON CITY, TN, Freedom Hall Civic Center Arena, Liberty Bell Blvd.

KENNEWICK, WA, Tri-Cities Coliseum, 7100 W. Quinault Ave.

LOVELAND, CO (Spanish only), Budweiser Events Center, The Ranch, 53300 SE Frontage Rd.

MIRA LOMA, CA (Armenian only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 3300 Cornerstone Dr.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK, Cox Convention Center Arena, One Myriad Gardens

PHILADELPHIA, PA, The Liacouras Center, Temple University, 1776 N. Broad St.

RICHMOND, CA (Tagalog only), Memorial Convention Center

Arena, 403 Civic Center Plaza

RICHMOND, VA, Coliseum, 601 E. Leigh St.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave.

SUNNYSIDE, NY (Italian only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 44-17 Greenpoint Ave.

TACOMA, WA, Tacoma Dome, 2727 E. "D" St.

TUCSON, AZ, Convention Center, 2605 S. Church St.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL (French only), Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

WINSTON-SALEM, NC (Spanish only), Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 2825 University Pkwy.

JULY 16-18

AMHERST, MA, The Mullins Center, University of Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.

BELTON, TX, Bell County Expo Center Arena, 301 W. Loop 121

CLEVELAND, OH, Convocation Center Arena, Cleveland State University, Prospect Ave. & E. 21st St.

EVANSVILLE, IN, Roberts Stadium, 2600 E. Division St.

HAMPTON, VA, Coliseum, 1000 Coliseum Dr.

JERSEY CITY, NJ (French only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Blvd.

JOHNSON CITY, TN, Freedom Hall Civic Center Arena, 1776 N. Broad St.

KENNEWICK, WA (Spanish only), Tri-Cities Coliseum, 7100 W. Quinault Ave.

LONG BEACH, CA, Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

LOVELAND, CO (Spanish only), Budweiser Events Center, The Ranch, 53300 SE Frontage Rd.

MACON, GA, Centrepark Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr.

MIRA LOMA, CA (American Sign Language only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 3300 Cornerstone Dr.

PHILADELPHIA, PA, The Liacouras Center, Temple University, 1776 N. Broad St.

ROCKFORD, IL, MetroCentre Arena, 300 Elm St.

ST. CHARLES, MO, The Family Arena, 2002 Arena Pkwy.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Spanish only), Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave.

SUNNYSIDE, NY (Japanese only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 44-17 Greenpoint Ave.

TACOMA, WA, Tacoma Dome, 2727 E. "D" St.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

WINSTON-SALEM, NC, Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 2825 University Pkwy.

JULY 23-25

AMHERST, MA, The Mullins Center, University of Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.

BELTON, TX, Bell County Expo Center Arena, 301 W. Loop 121

DE KALB, IL, Convocation Center, Northern Illinois University, 1525 W. Lincoln Hwy.

GLENDALE, AZ, Glendale Arena, 6520 N. 91st Ave.

JERSEY CITY, NJ (Korean only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Blvd.

KISSIMMEE, FL, Silver Spurs Arena, 1875 Silver Spur Ln.

LONG BEACH, CA (Spanish only), Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

MACON, GA, Centrepark Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr.

MIRA LOMA, CA (Korean only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 3300 Cornerstone Dr.

PHILADELPHIA, PA, The Liacouras Center, Temple University, 1776 N. Broad St.

RICHMOND, VA, Coliseum, 601 E. Leigh St.

ROCHESTER, MN, Taylor Arena, Mayo Civic Center, 30 Civic Center Dr. SE

ROCHESTER, NY, Blue Cross Arena, Broad & Exchange Sts.

ST. CHARLES, MO, The Family Arena, 2002 Arena Pkwy.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Portuguese sessions also), Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave.

TUCSON, AZ (Spanish only), Convention Center, 260 S. Church St.

UNIONDALE, NY (Spanish only), Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.

WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

JULY 30—AUGUST 1

AMHERST, MA, The Mullins Center, University of Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.
BELTON, TX (Spanish only), Bell County Expo Center Arena, 301 W. Loop 121
BILOXI, MS, Mississippi Coast Coliseum, 2350 Beach Blvd.
CLEVELAND, OH, Convocation Center Arena, Cleveland State University, Prospect Ave. & E. 21st St.
DULUTH, GA (Spanish only), Gwinnett Civic & Cultural Center Arena, 6400 Sugarloaf Pkwy.
JERSEY CITY, NJ (Portuguese only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Blvd.
KENNEWICK, WA, Tri-Cities Coliseum, 7100 W. Quinault Ave.
KISSIMMEE, FL, Silver Spurs Arena, 1875 Silver Spur Ln.
LONG BEACH, CA, Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
LONG BEACH, CA (Japanese only), Convention Center Seaside Ballroom, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
PHILADELPHIA, PA, The Liacouras Center, Temple University, 1776 N. Broad St.
RICHMOND, VA, Coliseum, 601 E. Leigh St.
ROCHESTER, MN, Taylor Arena, Mayo Civic Center, 30 Civic Center Dr. SE
ROCHESTER, NY, Blue Cross Arena, Broad & Exchange Sts.
ROCKFORD, IL (Spanish only), Metrocentre Arena, 300 Elm St.
SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave.
TUCSON, AZ (Spanish only), Convention Center, 260 S. Church St.
UNIONDALE, NY (Spanish only), Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL, Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

AUGUST 6-8
AMHERST, MA, The Mullins Center, University of Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.
BELTON, TX (Spanish only), Bell County Expo Center Arena, 301 W. Loop 121
BILOXI, MS, Mississippi Coast Coliseum, 2350 Beach Blvd.
CLEVELAND, OH, Convocation Center Arena, Cleveland State University, Prospect Ave. & E. 21st St.
DAYTON, OH, Ervin J. Nutter Center, Wright State University, 3640 Colonel Glen Hwy.
KISSIMMEE FL (Spanish only), Silver Spurs Arena, 1875 Silver Spur Ln.
LONG BEACH, CA (Spanish only), Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
PHILADELPHIA, PA, The Liacouras Center, Temple University, 1776 N. Broad St.
ROCHESTER, MN, Taylor Arena, Mayo Civic Center, 30 Civic Center Dr. SE
ROCKFORD, IL, Metrocentre Arena, 300 Elm St.
SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave.
TUCSON, AZ (Spanish only), Convention Center, 260 S. Church St.
UNIONDALE, NY, Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

AUGUST 13-15
AMHERST, MA (Spanish only), The Mullins Center, University of Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.
BELTON, TX, Bell County Expo Center Arena, 301 W. Loop 121
CLEVELAND, OH, Convocation Center Arena, Cleveland State University, Prospect Ave. & E. 21st St.
DULUTH, GA, Gwinnett Civic & Cultural Center Arena, 6400 Sugarloaf Pkwy.
KISSIMMEE, FL (Spanish only), Silver Spurs Arena, 1875 Silver Spur Ln.
LONG BEACH, CA, Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
PHILADELPHIA, PA, The Liacouras Center, Temple University, 1776 N. Broad St.
ROCHESTER, MN, Taylor Arena, Mayo Civic Center, 30 Civic Center Dr. SE
ROCKFORD, IL (Spanish only), Metrocentre Arena, 300 Elm St.
UNIONDALE, NY, Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

AUGUST 20-22
AMHERST, MA, The Mullins Center, University of Massachusetts, Commonwealth Ave.
BELTON, TX (Spanish only), Bell County Expo Center Arena, 301 W. Loop 121
DULUTH, GA, Gwinnett Civic & Cultural Center Arena, 6400 Sugarloaf Pkwy.

FORT WORTH, TX (Spanish only), Convention Center, 1111 Houston St.
KISSIMMEE, FL, Silver Spurs Arena, 1875 Silver Spur Ln.
LONG BEACH, CA (Spanish only), Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
ROCKFORD, IL (Spanish only), Metrocentre Arena, 300 Elm St.

UNIONDALE, NY (Spanish only), Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

AUGUST 27-29

BELTON, TX (Spanish only), Bell County Expo Center Arena, 301 W. Loop 121
FORT WORTH, TX (Spanish only), Convention Center, 1111 Houston St.
KISSIMMEE, FL, Silver Spurs Arena, 1875 Silver Spur Ln.
LONG BEACH, CA (Spanish only), Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
LONG BEACH, CA (Vietnamese only), Convention Center Seaside Ballroom, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
LOVELAND, CO, Budweiser Events Center, The Ranch, 53300 SE Frontage Rd.
UNIONDALE, NY, Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.
WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Spanish only), Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.

SEPTEMBER 3-5
KISSIMMEE, FL, Silver Spurs Arena, 1875 Silver Spur Ln.
LONG BEACH, CA (Spanish only), Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.
LOVELAND, CO, Budweiser Events Center, The Ranch, 53300 SE Frontage Rd.
UNIONDALE, NY, Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Tpk.

SEPTEMBER 10-12

LONG BEACH, CA, Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

Britain**JUNE 11-13**

JERSEY, C.I., Fort Regent Leisure Centre, St. Helier
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, Newcastle Arena, Arena Way

JUNE 18-20

BOURNEMOUTH, Bournemouth Athletic Football Club, Dean Court Ground
COVENTRY, Coventry City Football Club, Highfield Road Stadium, King Richard St.
NOTTINGHAM, Nottingham Ice Rink, Lower Parliament St.

JUNE 27

LEEDS, Leeds United Football Club, Elland Rd.
PLYMOUTH, Plymouth Argyle Football Club, Home Park

JULY 2-4

LONDON (Spanish only), North London Assembly Hall, 174 Bowes Rd.

MANCHESTER, Manchester Arena, Hunts Bank

JULY 9-11

LONDON (Greek only), North London Assembly Hall, 174 Bowes Rd.

PERTH, St. Johnstone Football Club, McDiarmid Park, Crieff Rd.

WOLVERHAMPTON, Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club, Molineux Grounds, Waterloo Rd.

JULY 16-18

BRIGHTON (A), The Brighton Centre, Kings Rd.

CARDIFF, Millennium Stadium, West Gate St.

LONDON (Italian only), North London Assembly Hall, 174 Bowes Rd.

NORWICH, Norwich City Football Club, Carrow Rd.

JULY 23-25

BRIGHTON (B), The Brighton Centre, Kings Rd.

LONDON (Portuguese only), North London Assembly Hall, 174 Bowes Rd.

JULY 30-AUGUST 1

LONDON (Chinese, Mandarin only), Edgware Kingdom Hall Complex, Avon Crescent

LONDON (French only), North London Assembly Hall, 174 Bowes Rd.

AUGUST 6-8

TWICKENHAM, Rugby Football Union, Whitton Rd.

AUGUST 20-22

DUDLEY (Punjabi only), Assembly Hall, 22 Castle Hill

AUGUST 27-29

DUDLEY (British Sign Language only), Assembly Hall, 22 Castle Hill

Malta**SEPTEMBER 10-12**

ST. PAUL'S BAY, New Dolmen Hotel Conference Centre, Qawra

Ireland**JULY 9-11**

SWORDS, National Show Centre, Cloghran, Dublin.
Circuits 1 and 5

JULY 16-18

SWORDS, National Show Centre, Cloghran, Dublin.
Circuits 2 and 6

JULY 23-25

SWORDS, (French sessions also), Swords Kingdom Hall, Dublin

Canada**JUNE 11-13**

BELLEVILLE, ON, The Belleville Yardmen Arena, 265 Cannifton Rd.

CALGARY, AB, Pengrowth Saddledome, 555 Saddledome Rise SE

CORNWALL, ON, Ed Lumley Arena, Cornwall Civic Complex, 100 Water St. E

DARTMOUTH, NS, Dartmouth Sportsplex, 110 Wyse Rd.

NANAIMO, BC, Frank Crane Arena, Beban Park Recreation Centre, 2300 Bowen Rd.

SUDBURY, ON, Sudbury Community Arena, 200 Brady St.

JUNE 18-20

CORNWALL, ON (French only), Ed Lumley Arena, Cornwall Civic Complex, 100 Water St. E

GRANDE PRAIRIE, AB, Canada Games Arena, 1001 99th Ave.

KAMLOOPS, BC, Sport Mart Place, 300 Lorne St.

KITCHENER, ON, Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex, 400 East Ave.

MONCTON, NB, Coliseum Agrena, Killam Dr. VICTORIA, BC, Esquimalt's Archie Browning Sports Centre (Arena), 1151 Esquimalt Rd.

JUNE 25-27

CORNWALL, ON, Ed Lumley Arena, Cornwall Civic Complex, 100 Water St. E

KAMLOOPS, BC, Sport Mart Place, 300 Lorne St.

KITCHENER, ON (Spanish only), Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex, 400 East Ave.

SASKATOON, SK (Sign language also), Saskatchewan Place, 3515 Thatcher Ave.

JULY 2-4

EDMONTON, AB, Rexall Place, Northlands Park, 7424 118th Ave.

HAMILTON, ON, Copps Coliseum, 101 York Blvd.

KAMLOOPS, BC, Sport Mart Place, 300 Lorne St.

KITCHENER, ON, Kitchener Memorial Auditorium Complex, 400 East Ave.

QUEBEC CITY, QC (French only), Colisee Pepsi, 250, boul. Wilfrid-Hamel

JULY 9-11

HAMILTON, ON, Copps Coliseum, 101 York Blvd.

KAMLOOPS, BC, Sport Mart Place, 300 Lorne St.

MOUNT PEARL, NL, Mount Pearl Glacier, Olympic Dr.

SELKIRK, MB, Selkirk Recreation Complex, 180 Easton Dr.

SHERBROOKE, QC (French only), Palais des sports, 360, rue du Parc

JULY 16-18

BRAMPTON, ON (Portuguese only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2594 Highway 7 W

MONTRÉAL, QC (Italian only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 12700, boul. Métropolitain Est, Pointe-aux-Trembles

PRINCE GEORGE, BC, Prince George Multi-plex Arena, 2188 Ospika Blvd.

SELKIRK, MB, Selkirk Recreation Complex, 180 Easton Dr.

SHERBROOKE, QC (French only), Palais des sports, 360, rue du Parc

JULY 23-25

CALGARY, AB (Spanish only), Calgary Kingdom Hall Centre of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2900 14th Ave NE

KAMLOOPS, BC, Sport Mart Place, 300 Lorne St.

MONTRÉAL, QC (Arabic only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 12700, boul. Métropolitain Est, Pointe-aux-Trembles

SHERBROOKE, QC (French only), Palais des sports, 360, rue du Parc

SURREY, BC (Chinese only), Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 15577 82nd Ave.

Can Faith Heal the Sick?

WHEN sick, we seek relief and healing. Likely, you know from the Bible that time and again Jesus Christ healed all kinds of illnesses, bringing relief to many afflicted ones. How did such healings come about? By the "power of God," the Bible says. (Luke 9:42, 43; Acts 19:11, 12) Hence, it was holy spirit from God that caused the cure, not merely the faith of the individual. (Acts 28:7-9) That was why Jesus did not require sick people to express their faith in him in order to be healed.

You may wonder: 'Are miraculous cures a thing of the past, or will healings of the

kind that Jesus performed occur again? What hope is there for those who are suffering from a painful or incurable disease?'

The Bible explains that in God's new world of righteousness, the power of God will again cause the sort of miraculous healings that Jesus performed while on earth. Jehovah's Witnesses in your locality will be happy to show you how and when God will accomplish what no faith healer could ever do—eliminate all diseases, as well as death. Yes, God "will actually swallow up death forever."—Isaiah 25:8.

