

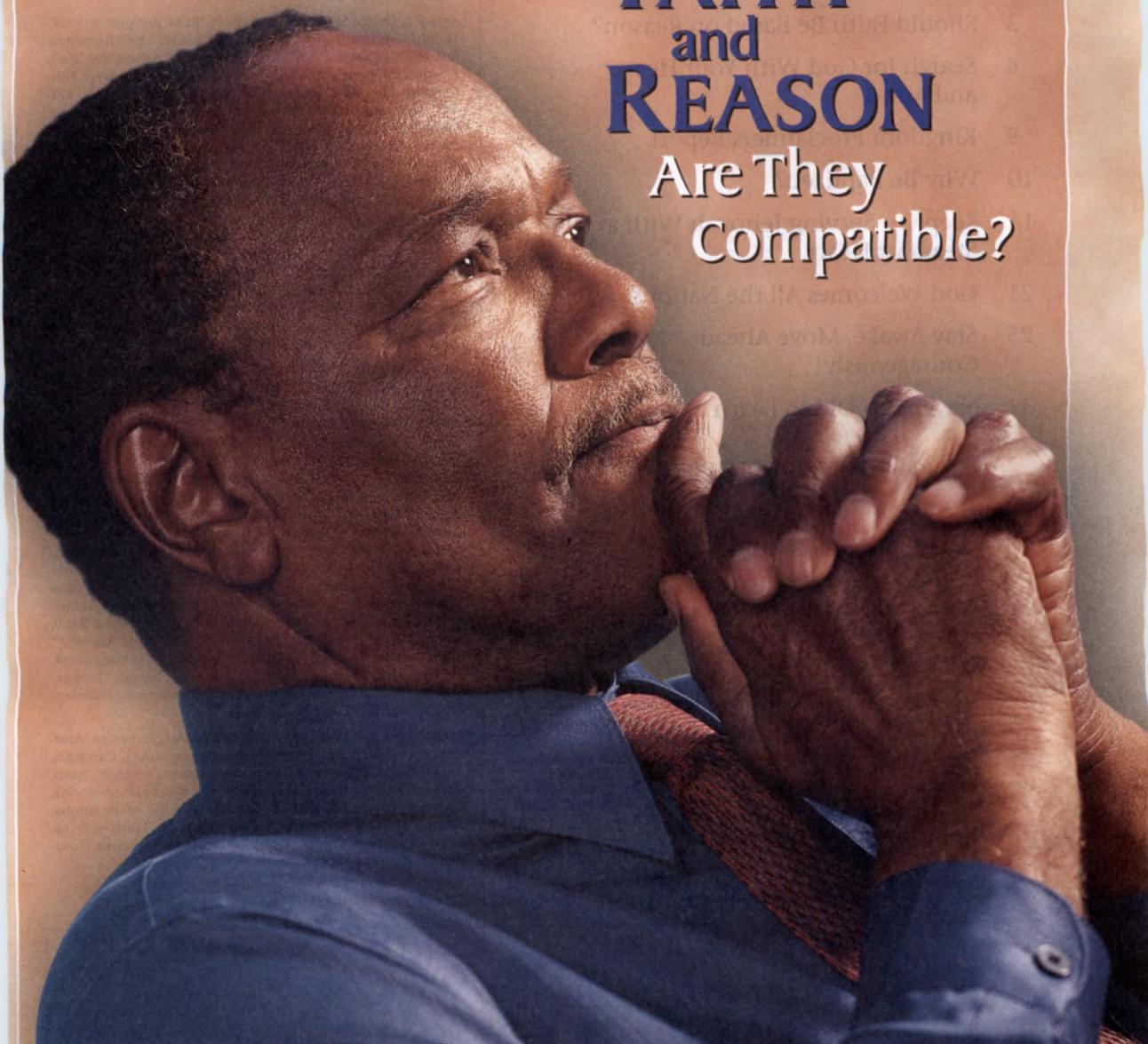
THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

APRIL 1, 2002

FAITH and REASON

Are They
Compatible?



THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

April 1, 2002

Average Printing Each Issue: 24,147,000

Vol. 123, No. 7

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.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 Should Faith Be Based on Reason?
- 4 Search for God With Your Heart and Mind
- 9 Kingdom Proclaimers Report
- 10 Why Be Baptized?
- 15 Keep On Serving Jehovah With a Steadfast Heart
- 21 God Welcomes All the Nations
- 25 Stay Awake, Move Ahead Courageously!
- 32 Never Too Old to Learn

WATCHTOWER STUDIES

MAY 6-12:

Why Be Baptized?

Page 10. Songs to be used: 13, 196.

MAY 13-19:

Keep On Serving Jehovah With a Steadfast Heart.

Page 15. Songs to be used: 92, 10.

Publication of *The Watchtower* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

The Bible translation used is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*, unless otherwise indicated.

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simons, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589.

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

© 2002 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.
All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

www.watchtower.org

Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Jehovah's Witnesses, using the appropriate address below.

America, United States of: Walkill, NY 12589. **Antigua:** Box 119, St. Johns. **Australia:** Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. **Bahamas:** Box N-1247, Nassau, N.P. **Barbados, W.I.:** Crusher Site Road, Prospect, St. James. **Britain:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **Canada:** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. **Germany:** Niederselters, Am Steinfels, D-65618 Selters. **Ghana:** P. O. Box GP 760, Accra. **Guyana:** 50 Brickdam, Georgetown 16. **Hawaii 96819:** 2055 Kam IV Rd., Honolulu. **Hong Kong:** 4 Kent Road, Kowloon Tong. **India:** Post Bag 10, Lonavla, Pune Dis., Mah. 410 401. **Ireland:** Newcastle, Greystones, Co. Wicklow. **Jamaica:** P. O. Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. **Japan:** 1271 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa Pref., 243-0496. **Kenya:** P.O. Box 47788, 00100 Nairobi GPO. **New Zealand:** P.O. Box 75-142, Manurewa. **Nigeria:** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City, 300001, Edo State. **Philippines, Republic of:** P. O. Box 2044, 1060 Manila. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of:** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe. **Zambia:** Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. **Zimbabwe:** Private Bag WG-5001, Westgate.

NOW PUBLISHED IN 144 LANGUAGES. SEMIMONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL: Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Bicol, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano,* Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified),* Cibemba, Croatian,* Czech,** Danish,** Dutch,** East Armenian, Efik,* English,** (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,** French,** Ga, Georgian, German,** Greek,* Gujarati, Gun, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hiri Motu, Hungarian,* Igbo,* Iloko,* Indonesian, Italian,** Japanese** (also Braille), Kannada, Kinyarwanda, Korean** (also Braille), Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Marathi, Myanmar, Nepali, New Guinea Pidgin, Norwegian,** Pangasinan, Papiamento (Curaçao), Papiamento (Aruba), Polish,** Portuguese** (also Braille), Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian,* Russian,* Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sango, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak,* Slovenian, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Spanish,** Sraranntongo, Swahili,* Swedish,** Tagalog,* Tahitian, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Tongan, Tshiluba, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian,* Urdu, Venda, Vietnamese, Wallisian, Xhosa, Yoruba,* Zulu*

MONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL: Armenian, Azerbaijani (Cyrillic script), Azerbaijani (Roman script), Cambodian, Chitonga, Gilbertese, Greenlandic, Hausa, Icelandic, Isoko, Kaonde, Kazakh, Kiluba, Kirghiz, Kirundi, Kwanyama/Ndonga, Luganda, Luvala, Marshallese, Mauritian Creole, Monokutuba, Moore, Niuean, Ossetian, Otetela, Palauan, Persian, Ponaean, Seychelles Creole, Tatar, Tiv, Trukese, Tumbuka, Tuvanian, Umbundu, Yapese, Zande

* Study articles also available in large-print edition.

** Audiocassettes also available.

Semimonthly

ENGLISH

Should FAITH Be BASED ON REASON?

"There are too many 'religious' people who become religious precisely to avoid having to think," writes the dean of a theological seminary in the United States. "They simply want to accept everything 'on faith,'" he adds.



THE implication is that most people who profess religious faith give little thought to why they believe what they do or to whether there is a reasonable basis for their faith. It is no wonder that religion has become a topic that many are reluctant to talk about.

Regrettably, such practices as using religious images and repeating prayers by rote also discourage reasoning. These practices, along with impressive architecture, elaborate stained-glass windows, and captivating music, more or less define the extent of the religious experience of millions. Though some churches claim that their faith is based on the Bible, their message of 'believe in Jesus and you will be saved' makes light of serious Bible study. Others turn to preaching a social or political gospel. What is the result of all of this?

Concerning the situation in North America, one religion writer said: "Christianity . . . tends to be superficial, [and] its adherents are poorly educated in the faith." A pollster even went so far as to describe the United States as "a na-



tion of biblical illiterates." To be fair, these observations would also be true of other countries where so-called Christianity prevails. Many non-Christian religions likewise discourage reasoning and instead emphasize chants, ritualistic prayers, and various forms of meditation that involve mysticism, rather than logical, constructive thinking.

Yet, in their everyday life, the same people who give little thought to the accuracy or truthfulness of their religious beliefs often think other matters through very carefully. Does it not strike you as odd that the person who does extensive research just to buy a car—which one day will end up on the scrap heap—would say regarding his religion, 'If it was good enough for my parents, it's good enough for me'?

If we are truly interested in pleasing God, should we not consider seriously the accuracy of what we believe about him? The apostle Paul spoke of certain religious people of his day who had "a zeal for God; but not according to accurate knowledge." (Romans 10:2) Such ones could be compared to a hired painter who works hard to paint a house but uses the wrong colors because he fails to

listen to the owner's instructions. The painter may be pleased with his work, but would it be acceptable to the owner?

What is acceptable to God regarding true worship? The Bible answers: "This is fine and acceptable in the sight of our Savior, God, whose will is that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Timothy 2:3, 4) Some may feel that it is impossible to find such knowl-

edge among the many religions of today. But think—if it is God's will that people should come to an accurate knowledge of truth, would he unfairly conceal it from them? Not according to the Bible, which says: "If you search for [God], he will let himself be found by you."—1 Chronicles 28:9.

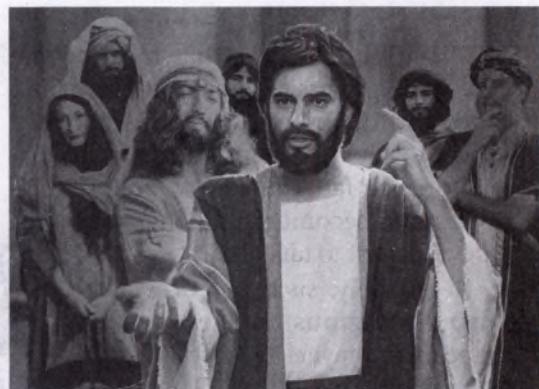
How does God make himself known to those who sincerely search for him? The next article will provide the answer.

Search for God With Your **HEART AND MIND**

True Christianity encourages the use of both the heart and the mind in building faith that pleases God.

IN FACT, Christianity's founder, Jesus Christ, taught that we must love God with our "whole mind," or intellect, in addition to our "whole heart" and "whole soul." (Matthew 22:37) Yes, our mental faculties must play a key role in our worship.

When inviting his listeners to reflect on his teaching, Jesus often said: "What do you think?" (Matthew 17:25; 18:12; 21:28; 22:42) In like manner, the apostle Peter wrote to fellow believers in order to 'arouse their clear thinking faculties.' (2 Peter 3:1) The most widely traveled early missionary, the apostle Paul, exhorted Christians to use their "power of reason" and to "prove to [themselves] the good and acceptable and perfect will of



God." (Romans 12:1, 2) Only by such a thorough, careful approach to their beliefs can Christians build faith that is pleasing to God and is equal to the tests that arise in life.—Hebrews 11:1, 6.

To help others build such faith, early Christian evangelizers "reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving by references" the things taught. (Acts 17:1-3) Such a reasonable approach elicited a fine response from honesthearted ones. For example, a number of people in the Macedonian city of Beroea "received the word [of God] with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures daily as to whether these things [explained by Paul and his companions] were so." (Acts 17:11) Two things are worth noting here. First, the Be-

roceans were *eager* to listen to God's Word; second, they did not blindly assume that what they heard was correct, but they referred back to the Scriptures. The Christian missionary Luke humbly commended the Bereans for this, calling them "noble-minded." Do you reflect such a noble mind in your approach to spiritual matters?

Mind and Heart Cooperate

As mentioned earlier, true worship involves both the mind and the heart. (Mark 12:30) Think back to the illustration in the preceding article of the hired painter who used the wrong colors when painting a house. If he had listened carefully to his employer's instructions, he could have put his heart and soul into his work and had confidence that his work would have the owner's approval. The same applies to our worship.

"The true worshipers," Jesus said, "will worship the Father with spirit *and truth*." (John 4:23) Hence, the apostle Paul wrote: "That is also why we . . . have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the accurate knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual comprehension, in order to walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him." (Colossians 1:9, 10) Such "accurate knowledge" enables sincere individuals to put their heart and soul into their worship with full confidence because they "worship what [they] know." —John 4:22.

For these reasons, Jehovah's Witnesses do not baptize infants or newly interested people who have not carefully studied the Scriptures. Jesus commissioned his followers: "Make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19, 20) Only after having gained an accurate knowledge of God's will can sincere Bi-

ble students make an informed decision about the matter of worship. Are you striving to gain such an accurate knowledge?

Understanding the Lord's Prayer

To see the difference between having an accurate knowledge of the Bible and having a passing acquaintance with what it says, let us consider what is commonly called the Our Father, or the Lord's Prayer, recorded at Matthew 6:9-13.

Millions regularly recite Jesus' model prayer in church. But how many have been taught its meaning, especially the first part of the prayer dealing with God's name and Kingdom? These subjects are so important that Jesus placed them first in the prayer.

It begins: "Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified," meaning hallowed, or made holy. Note that Jesus said to pray for God's *name* to be sanctified. To many people, that raises at least two questions. First, what is God's name? And second, why does it need to be sanctified?

The answer to the first question can be found in over 7,000 places in the Bible in its original languages. One is at Psalm 83:18: "That people may know that you, whose name is *Jehovah*, you alone are the Most High over all the earth." Concerning the divine name, Jehovah, Exodus 3:15 says: "This is my name to time indefinite, and this is the memorial of me to generation after generation."* But why does the name of God, which is the very epitome of purity and holiness, need to be sanctified? Because it has been reproached and maligned from the very beginning of human history.

* Some scholars prefer the rendering "Yahweh" instead of "Jehovah." However, most modern Bible translators have erased God's name from their versions in any form, replacing it with the generic titles "Lord" or "God." For an in-depth discussion of God's name, please see the brochure *The Divine Name That Will Endure Forever*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

In Eden, God told Adam and Eve that they would die if they ate the forbidden fruit. (Genesis 2:17) Satan brazenly contradicted God, saying to Eve: "You positively will not die." Hence, Satan accused God of lying. Yet, he did not rest there. He heaped still more reproach on God's name, telling Eve that God was unjustly withholding valuable knowledge from her. "For God knows that in the very day of your eating from [the tree of the knowledge of good and bad] your eyes are bound to be opened and you are bound to be like God, knowing good and bad." What slander!—Genesis 3:4, 5.

By partaking of the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve took their stand with Satan. Most humans since then, knowingly or not, have added to that original reproach by rejecting God's righteous standards. (1 John 5:19) People still malign God by blaming him for their suffering—even though it may be due to their own bad ways. "A man's own folly wrecks his life, and then he bears a grudge against the Lord," says Proverbs 19:3. (*The New English Bible*) Can you see why Jesus, who truly loved his Father, prayed that His name be sanctified?

"Let Your Kingdom Come"

After praying for God's name to be sanctified, Jesus said: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matthew 6:10) Concerning that passage, we may ask: 'What is God's Kingdom? And what does its coming have to do with God's will being done on earth?'

In the Bible, the word "kingdom" basically means a "rulership by a king." Logically, then, God's Kingdom would refer to a rulership, or government, by God, with a king of his choosing. This King is none other than the resurrected Jesus Christ—the "King of kings and Lord of lords." (Revelation 19:16; Daniel 7:13, 14) Concerning God's Messian-

ic Kingdom in the hands of Jesus Christ, the prophet Daniel wrote: "In the days of those kings [human governments now ruling] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite," that is, forever.—Daniel 2:44.

Yes, God's Kingdom will take complete control of the earth, ridding it of all the wicked and ruling "to times indefinite," that is, forever. In this way, God's Kingdom is the means by which Jehovah sanctifies his name, clearing it of all the lying reproach of Satan and wicked humans.—Ezekiel 36:23.

Like all governments, God's Kingdom has subjects. Who are these? The Bible answers: "The meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." (Psalm 37:11) Similarly, Jesus said: "Happy are the mild-tempered ones, since they will inherit the earth." Of course, these ones have accurate knowledge of God, which is a requirement for life.—Matthew 5:5; John 17:3.

Can you imagine the whole earth filled with meek, mild-tempered people who truly love God and love one another? (1 John 4:7, 8) That is what Jesus prayed for when he said: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." Do you appreciate why Jesus taught his followers to pray that way? More important, do you see how that prayer's fulfillment may affect you personally?

Millions Are Now Reasoning on the Scriptures

Jesus foretold a global campaign of spiritual education that would announce God's incoming Kingdom. He said: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the in-

habited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end [of the present world, or system] will come.”—Matthew 24:14.

Around the world some six million of Jehovah's Witnesses are sharing that good news with their neighbors. They invite you to learn more about God and his Kingdom by “carefully examining the Scriptures,” using your power of reason. Doing so will fortify your faith and make your eyes glow with the hope of life on a paradise earth, which will be “filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea.”

—Isaiah 11:6-9.

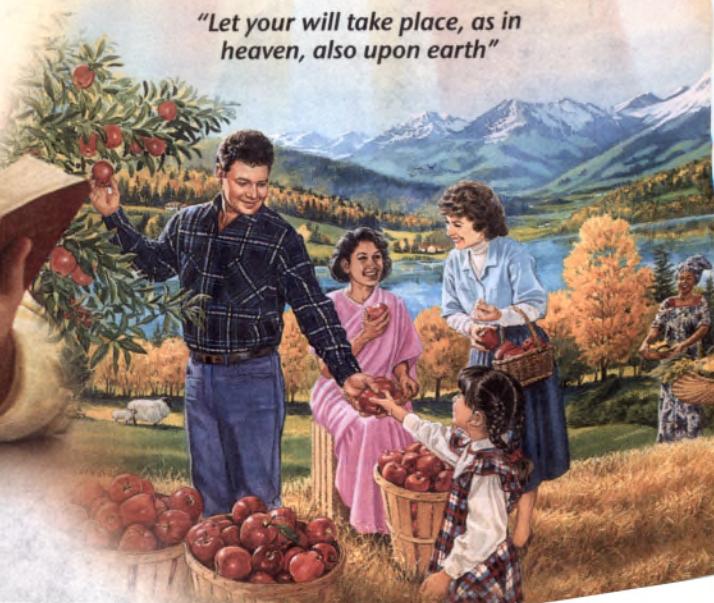
יהוָה
YHWH

“Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified . . .”

“Let your [Messianic] kingdom come . . .”



“Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth”



IMITATE THE GREAT TEACHER

Jesus often taught by focusing on specific Bible topics. For example, after his resurrection he explained his role in God's purpose to two disciples who were in a quandary over his death. Luke 24:27 says: "Commencing at Moses and all the Prophets he interpreted to them things pertaining to himself in all the Scriptures."

Note that Jesus chose a specific subject—"himself," the Messiah—and that he quoted from "all the Scriptures" in his discussion. In effect, Jesus put relevant Bible texts together like the pieces of a puzzle, which enabled his disciples to see a clear pattern of spiritual truth. (2 Timothy 1:13) As a result, they were not simply enlightened but deeply moved. The account tells

us: "They said to each other: 'Were not our

hearts burning as he was speaking to us on the road, as he was fully opening up the Scriptures to us?'"—Luke 24:32.

Jehovah's Witnesses strive to imitate Jesus' methods in their ministry. Their prime study aids are the brochure *What Does God Require of Us?* and the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*. These address dozens of interesting Bible topics, such as: "Who Is God?," "Why Does God Permit Suffering?," "How Can You Find the True Religion?," "These Are the Last Days!," and "Building a Family That Honors God." Each lesson contains numerous scriptures.

You are welcome to contact Jehovah's Witnesses in your community or to write to the address on page 2 of this magazine for a free home Bible study of these and other subjects.

Reach the heart of your student by focusing on specific Bible topics



"I Wanted to Serve God"

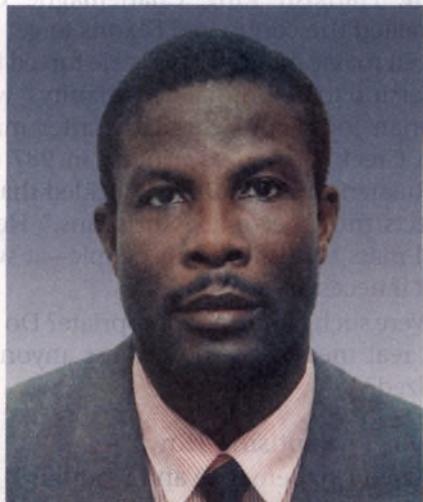
GET out of her, my people." That was an angelic call heard by the apostle John in the first century C.E. In our day millions of honesthearted ones have responded and fled "Babylon the Great," the world empire of false religion. (Revelation 18:1-4) Among them is Wilner from Haiti, who relates his experience.

"I was born in 1956 into a devout Catholic family in the little town of St. Marc, Haiti. Imagine my family's joy when I was selected, along with two others from our town, to attend a seminary in St. Michel de l'Atalaye, Haiti. Then, in 1980, we were sent to Stavelot, Belgium, for additional training. There we also attended a Catholic university.

"At first I was enthusiastic about entering the priesthood. One day in the lunchroom, the priest in charge of our group asked me to stay for a few minutes because he had something he wanted to tell me. Imagine my shock when he openly declared that he was sexually attracted to me! I rejected his advances but became totally disillusioned. I wrote to my family about the incident and left the seminary a few months later, despite their displeasure. I found lodging in the village and pursued studies in another profession.

"When I returned to St. Marc, I no longer had any confidence in the Catholic Church. Still, I wanted to serve God, but I did not know what to do. I went to the Adventist church, the Ebenezer church, and the Mormon church. I was spiritually adrift.

"Then I recalled that while attending the seminary in Belgium, I used to read the Crampon Bible. In it I had discovered that God has a name. So using his name I prayed fervently to God to help me find the true religion.



By reading the Bible, Wilner discovered that God's name is Jehovah

"Shortly thereafter, two of Jehovah's Witnesses moved into my neighborhood. They were quiet, respectful, and dignified. I was impressed by their way of life. One day, one of the two Witnesses, invited me to attend the annual Memorial of Christ's death. I thoroughly enjoyed the meeting and agreed to a regular Bible study with the Witnesses. In about six months, I became convinced that I had found the right way to serve God. I dedicated my life to Jehovah and was baptized on November 20, 1988."

In time, Wilner took up the full-time service. Today, he serves as a congregation elder. He and his wife, along with their two children, serve happily in the congregation.

WHY BE BAPTIZED?

"Go . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them."
—MATTHEW 28:19.

THE Frankish King Charlemagne compelled the conquered Saxons to get baptized en masse in 775-77 C.E. "He forced their conversion to a nominal Christianity," wrote historian John Lord. Similarly, after marrying a Greek Orthodox princess in 987 C.E., the Russian ruler Vladimir I decided that his subjects must become "Christians." He decreed mass baptisms of his people—at sword point if necessary!

2 Were such baptisms appropriate? Do they have real meaning? Should just anyone be baptized?

Baptism—How?

3 When Charlemagne and Vladimir I forced people to undergo baptism, those rulers were acting out of harmony with God's Word. In fact, no good is done when baptisms involve sprinkling, the pouring of water on the head, or even immersion of individuals who have not been taught Scriptural truth.

4 Consider what took place when Jesus of Nazareth went to John the Baptizer in 29 C.E. John was baptizing people in the Jordan River. They had voluntarily come to him for baptism. Did he merely have them stand in the Jordan while he poured a little river wa-

ter on their heads or sprinkled them with it? What happened when John baptized Jesus? Matthew reports that after being baptized "Jesus immediately came up from the water." (Matthew 3:16) He had been down in the water, having been *immersed* in the Jordan River. Likewise, the devout Ethiopian eunuch was baptized in "a body of water." Such bod-



- 1, 2. (a) Under what circumstances have some baptisms taken place? (b) What questions are raised regarding baptism?
- 3, 4. Why is sprinkling or pouring of water upon the head not proper Christian baptism?

ies of water were needed because the baptisms of Jesus and his disciples involved total immersion.—Acts 8:36.

⁵ Greek words translated “baptize,” “baptism,” and so forth, refer to immersing, dipping, or plunging under water. *Smith's Bible Dictionary* says: “*Baptism* properly and literally means immersion.” Certain Bible translations thus refer to “John the Immerser” and “John the dipper.” (Matthew 3:1, Rotherham; Diaglott interlinear) Augustus Neander's *History of the Christian Religion and Church, During the Three First Centuries* observes: “Baptism was originally administered by immersion.” The noted French work *Larousse du XX^e Siècle* (Paris, 1928) comments: “The first Christians received baptism by immersion everywhere where water was found.” And the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* states: “It is evident that Baptism in the early Church was by immersion.” (1967, Volume II, page 56) So today, baptism as one of Jehovah's Witnesses is a voluntary step involving total water immersion.

A New Reason for Baptism

⁶ The baptisms performed by John differed in purpose from immersions carried out by Jesus' followers. (John 4:1, 2) John baptized people as a public symbol of their repentance over sins against the Law.* (Luke 3:3) But something new was involved in the baptism of Jesus' followers. At Pentecost 33 C.E., the apostle Peter urged his listeners: “Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins.” (Acts 2:37-41) Though he was address-

* Since Jesus was sinless, he was not baptized to symbolize repentance. His baptism symbolized his presentation of himself to God for the doing of his Father's will.—Hebrews 7:26; 10:5-10.

5. How did the early Christians baptize people? 6, 7. (a) For what purpose did John perform baptisms? (b) What was new about the baptism of Jesus' followers?

ing Jews and proselytes, Peter was not talking about baptism to symbolize repentance over sins against the Law; nor did he mean that baptism in Jesus' name pictures the washing away of sins.—Acts 2:10.

⁷ On that occasion, Peter used the first of “the keys of the kingdom.” For what purpose? In order to unlock for his listeners knowledge about their opportunity to enter the Kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 16:19) Since the Jews had rejected Jesus as the Messiah, repenting and exercising faith in him was a new and vital factor in seeking and receiving God's forgiveness. They could give public evidence of such faith by being immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ. In that way they would symbolize their personal dedication to God through Christ. All who desire divine approval today must exercise similar faith, dedicate themselves to Jehovah God, and undergo Christian baptism in symbol of an unreserved dedication to the Most High God.

Accurate Knowledge Essential

⁸ Christian baptism is not for everyone. Jesus ordered his followers: “Go . . . 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 28:19, 20) Before being baptized, people must be ‘taught to observe all the things Jesus commanded his disciples.’ Hence, forced baptisms of those lacking faith based on accurate knowledge of God's Word are valueless and contrary to the commission Jesus gave his true followers.—Hebrews 11:6.

⁹ What does it mean to be baptized “*in the name of the Father*”? It means that the baptismal candidate recognizes our heavenly

8. Why is Christian baptism not for everyone?
9. What does it mean to be baptized “*in the name of the Father*”?

Father's office and authority. Jehovah God is thus acknowledged as our Creator, "the Most High over all the earth," and the Universal Sovereign.—Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 40:28; Acts 4:24.

¹⁰ To be baptized '*in the name of the Son*' means to recognize Jesus' office and authority as God's only-begotten Son. (1 John 4:9) Those qualified for baptism accept Jesus as the one through whom God has provided "a ransom in exchange for many." (Matthew 20:28; 1 Timothy 2:5, 6) Baptismal candidates must also acknowledge the "superior position" to which God has exalted his Son.—Philippians 2:8-11; Revelation 19:16.

¹¹ What is the significance of baptism '*in the name of the holy spirit*'? This indicates that the baptismal candidates recognize that the holy spirit is Jehovah's active force, used in various ways in harmony with his purpose. (Genesis 1:2; 2 Samuel 23:1, 2; 2 Peter 1:21) Those qualifying for baptism acknowledge that the holy spirit helps them to understand "the deep things of God," to carry on the Kingdom-preaching work, and to display the spirit's fruitage of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control."—1 Corinthians 2:10; Galatians 5:22, 23; Joel 2:28, 29.

Importance of Repentance and Conversion

¹² Except in the case of the sinless man Jesus, baptism is a God-approved symbol associated with repentance. When we repent, we feel deep regret, or contrition, over something we have done or have failed to do. First-century Jews who wanted to please God had to repent of their sins against Christ. (Acts 3:

10. Being baptized 'in the name of the Son' means what?
11. What is signified by being baptized 'in the name of the holy spirit'?
12. How is Christian baptism associated with repentance?

11-19) Certain Gentile believers in Corinth repented of fornication, idolatry, stealing, and other grave sins. Because of their repentance, they were "washed clean" in Jesus' blood; were "sanctified," or set apart, for God's service; and were "declared righteous" in Christ's name and with God's spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) Repentance is a vital step toward gaining a good conscience and God-given relief from guilt over sin.—1 Peter 3:21.

¹³ Conversion must take place prior to our baptism as Witnesses of Jehovah. Conversion is a voluntary act performed freely by one who has made a wholehearted decision to follow Christ Jesus. Such individuals reject their former wrong course and determine to do what is right in God's sight. In the Scriptures, Hebrew and Greek verbs pertaining to conversion have the sense of turning back, turning around. This action denotes a turning to God from a wrong way. (1 Kings 8:33, 34) Conversion calls for "works that befit repentance." (Acts 26:20) It requires that we abandon false worship, act in harmony with God's commandments, and render exclusive devotion to Jehovah. (Deuteronomy 30:2, 8-10; 1 Samuel 7:3) Conversion results in changes in our thinking, objectives, and disposition. (Ezekiel 18:31) We "turn around" as ungodly traits are replaced by the new personality.—Acts 3:19; Ephesians 4:20-24; Colossians 3:5-14.

Wholehearted Dedication Vital

¹⁴ The baptism of Jesus' followers must also be preceded by a wholehearted dedication to God. Dedication signifies a setting apart for a sacred purpose. This step is so important that we should express to Jehovah in prayer our decision to give him exclusive devotion forever. (Deuteronomy 5:9) Of course, our ded-

13. As regards baptism, what does conversion involve?
14. What does the dedication of Jesus' followers signify?

ication is not to a work or to a human but to God himself.

¹⁵ When we dedicate ourselves to God through Christ, we express a determination to use our life in doing the divine will as set forth in the Scriptures. In symbol of that dedication, baptismal candidates undergo water immersion, even as Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River to symbolize the presentation of himself to God. (Matthew 3:13) It is noteworthy that Jesus was praying on that very important occasion.—Luke 3:21, 22.

¹⁶ Jesus' baptism was a serious but joyful event. So is present-day Christian baptism. When we see people symbolize their dedication to God, our joy may be expressed by respectful applause and warm commendation. But cheering, whistling, and the like are avoided out of regard for the sacredness of this expression of faith. Our joy is expressed in a dignified manner.

¹⁷ Unlike those who sprinkle babies or force Scripturally uninformed masses to be baptized, Jehovah's Witnesses never coerce anyone into baptism. In fact, they do not baptize those who do not qualify spiritually. Before anyone can become even an *unbaptized* preacher of the good news, Christian elders make sure that he understands basic Bible teachings, lives in harmony with them, and gives an affirmative response to a question of this kind, "Do you really want to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses?"

¹⁸ With few exceptions, when individuals are having a meaningful share in the Kingdom-preaching work and express a desire to be baptized, Christian elders hold discussions with them to make sure that they are believers who have made a dedication to

15. Why do baptismal candidates undergo immersion?

16. How can our joy appropriately be shown when we see people get baptized?

17, 18. What helps to determine whether individuals qualify for baptism?

Jehovah and who meet divine requirements for baptism. (Acts 4:4; 18:8) Personal responses to over 100 questions on Bible teachings help the elders to determine whether those responding meet Scriptural requirements for immersion. Some do not qualify and therefore are not accepted for Christian baptism.

Is Something Holding You Back?

¹⁹ Many coerced participants in mass baptisms may have been told that they would go to heaven at death. But with reference to his doorstep followers, Jesus said: "No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him." (John 6:44) Jehovah has drawn to Christ 144,000 who will be Jesus' joint heirs in the heavenly Kingdom. Forced baptism has never sanctified anyone for that glorious place in God's arrangement.—Romans 8:14-17; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Revelation 14:1.

²⁰ Since the mid-1930's in particular, multitudes hoping to survive "the great tribulation" and live on earth forever have joined the ranks of Jesus' "other sheep." (Revelation 7:9, 14; John 10:16) They qualify for baptism because they have conformed their lives to God's Word and love him with 'their

19. In view of John 6:44, who will be Jesus' joint heirs?

20. What might help certain ones who have not yet been baptized?

Do You Recall?

- How is Christian baptism performed?
- What knowledge is needed for one to be baptized?
- What steps lead up to the baptism of true Christians?
- Why do some hold back from baptism, but how might they be helped?



**Do you know what it means
to be baptized 'in the
name of the Father, the Son,
and the holy spirit'?**

'whole heart, soul, strength,
and mind.' (Luke 10:25-28)

Though some people realize
that Jehovah's Witnesses 'wor-
ship God with spirit and truth,'
they have not yet followed Jesus'
example and given public evidence
of genuine love and exclusive devotion
to Jehovah by getting baptized. (John 4:
23, 24; Deuteronomy 4:24; Mark 1:9-11) Ear-
nest and specific prayer regarding this vital
step may well provide them with the incen-
tive and courage to conform fully to God's
Word, to make an unreserved dedication to
Jehovah God, and to be baptized.

²¹ Some hold back from dedication and
baptism because they are so absorbed in af-
fairs of the world or in the pursuit of wealth
that they have little time for spiritual things.
(Matthew 13:22; 1 John 2:15-17) How happy
they would be if they changed their views
and goals! Drawing close to Jehovah would
enrich them spiritually, would help to allay
anxiety, and would bring them peace and the
satisfaction that results from doing the di-

21, 22. For what reasons do some hold back from
dedication and baptism?



vine will.—Psalm 16:11; 40:8; Proverbs 10:22;
Philippians 4:6, 7.

²² Others say that they love Jehovah but do
not make a dedication and get baptized be-
cause they think that they will thus avoid ac-
countability. But each of us must render an
account to God. Responsibility came upon us
when we heard the word of Jehovah. (Ezekiel
33:7-9; Romans 14:12) As a 'chosen people,'
the ancient Israelites were born into a na-
tion dedicated to Jehovah, and they therefore
had an obligation to serve him faithfully in
accord with his precepts. (Deuteronomy 7:6,
11) Nobody is born into such a nation today,
but if we have received accurate Scriptural in-
struction, we need to act on it in faith.

²³ Fear that they lack sufficient knowledge
may hold some back from baptism. Yet, all of
us have much to learn because 'mankind will
never find out the work that the true God
has made from the start to the finish.' (Eccl-

23, 24. What fears should not hold individuals
back from baptism?

sia 3:11) Consider the Ethiopian eunuch. As a proselyte, he had some knowledge of the Scriptures, but he could not answer every question about God's purposes. After learning about Jehovah's provision for salvation through Jesus' ransom sacrifice, however, the eunuch promptly underwent water baptism.—Acts 8:26-38.

²⁴ Some hesitate to make a dedication to God because they are afraid of failure. Says 17-year-old Monique: "I have been holding back on baptism for fear of not being able to live up to my dedication." If we trust in Jehovah with all our heart, however, 'he

will make our paths straight.' He will help us to "go on walking in the truth" as his faithful dedicated servants.—Proverbs 3:5, 6; 3 John 4.

²⁵ Because of implicit trust in Jehovah and heartfelt love for him, each year thousands are moved to make a dedication and get baptized. And surely all dedicated servants of God want to be faithful to him. Yet, we are living in critical times, and we face various tests of faith. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) What can we do to live up to our dedication to Jehovah? This we will consider in the next article.

25. What question now merits consideration?

KEEP ON SERVING JEHOVAH WITH A STEADFAST HEART

"My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast."—PSALM 57:7

JEHOVAH can make us steadfast in the Christian faith, so that we can cling to true Christianity as his dedicated servants. (Romans 14:4) Therefore, we can have conviction like that of the psalmist David, who was moved to sing: "My heart is steadfast, O God." (Psalm 108:1) If our heart is steadfast, we will be motivated to fulfill our dedication to God. And by looking to him for guidance and strength, we can prove to be immovable, firm in determination and belief as integrity keepers, "always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord."—1 Corinthians 15:58.

² In exhortations addressed to Jesus' followers in ancient Corinth but certainly applicable to present-day Christians, the apostle Paul

said: "Stay awake, stand firm in the faith, carry on as men, grow mighty." (1 Corinthians 16:13) In Greek each of these imperatives is in the present tense, thus urging continuous action. What is the import of this admonition?

³ We can "stay awake" spiritually by opposing the Devil and staying close to God. (James 4:7, 8) Reliance upon Jehovah enables us to keep our ranks unbroken and to 'stand firm in the Christian faith.' We—including the many women among us—"carry on as men" by serving God courageously as Kingdom proclaimers. (Psalm 68:11) We "grow mighty" by continually looking to our heavenly Father for strength to do his will.—Philippians 4:13.

⁴ We took our stand for the true faith when we made an unreserved dedication to

1. Why can we have conviction like that of David?
2. What is the import of Paul's exhortations recorded at 1 Corinthians 16:13?

4. What led up to our baptism as Christians?

Jehovah and symbolized it by undergoing water immersion. But what led up to our baptism? First we took in accurate knowledge of God's Word. (John 17:3) This built faith and moved us to repent, manifesting true sorrow over past wrongdoing. (Acts 3:19; Hebrews 11:6) Next came our conversion, for we turned away from wrong practices in order to pursue a life in harmony with God's will. (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:23, 24) This was followed by a wholehearted dedication to Jehovah in prayer. (Matthew 16:24; 1 Peter 2:21) We made request to God for a good conscience and were baptized in symbol of our dedication to him. (1 Peter 3:21) Bearing these steps in mind will help us to remain focused on the need for continuous effort to live up to our dedication and keep on serving Jehovah with a steadfast heart.

Continue Your Quest for Accurate Knowledge

⁵ To live up to our dedication to God, we must continue to gain faith-building Scriptural knowledge. What a delight it was to take in spiritual food when we first became acquainted with God's truth! (Matthew 24:45-47) Those "meals" were delicious—and they nourished us well spiritually. Now it is essential to keep on taking in rich spiritual food so that we maintain a steadfast heart as Jehovah's dedicated servants.

⁶ Effort is needed to acquire further knowledge of the Scriptures. It is like searching for hidden treasures—something that calls for exertion. But how rewarding it is to find "the very knowledge of God"! (Proverbs 2:1-6) When a Kingdom publisher first studied the Bible with you, he or she may have used the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*.

5. Why should we continue to take in Scriptural knowledge?
6. How may you have been helped to develop heartfelt appreciation for Bible truth?

Considerable time may have been taken to cover each chapter, perhaps in more than one session. You benefited when cited scriptures were read and discussed. If a point was hard to grasp, it was explained. The one conducting your Bible study prepared well, prayed for God's spirit, and helped you to develop heartfelt gratitude for the truth.

⁷ This effort was appropriate, for Paul wrote: "Let anyone who is being orally taught the word share in all good things with the one who gives such oral teaching." (Galatians 6:6) Here the Greek text indicates that the teachings of God's Word were sounded



down into the mind and heart of the one "being orally taught." Your being taught that way qualifies you to be a teacher of still others. (Acts 18:25) To be faithful to your dedication, you must maintain your spiritual health and steadfastness by continual study of God's Word.—1 Timothy 4:13; Titus 1:13; 2:2.

7. What qualifies a person to teach God's truth to others?

Remember Your Repentance and Conversion

⁸ Do you recall the relief you felt when you learned the truth, repented, and then had a sense of God's forgiveness based on faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice? (Psalm 32:1-5; Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 3:18) Surely you do not want to return to a sinful life. (2 Peter 2:20-22) Among other things, regular prayer to Jehovah will help you to maintain godly conduct, live up to your dedication, and keep on serving Jehovah faithfully.—2 Peter 3:11, 12.

⁹ Having converted by turning away from sinful practices, continue to seek God's help in keeping your heart steadfast. In effect, you were going down the wrong highway but consulted a reliable map and began to travel on the right road. Do not lose your way now. Keep relying on God's guidance, and be determined to stay on the road to life.—Isaiah 30:20, 21; Matthew 7:13, 14.

Never Forget Your Dedication and Baptism

¹⁰ Bear in mind that you made a dedication to Jehovah in prayer, with an eternity of faithful service in view. (Jude 20, 21) Dedication signifies a setting apart, or a separation, for a sacred purpose. (Leviticus 15:31; 22:2) Your dedication was neither a temporary agreement nor a commitment to men. It was a permanent dedication to the Universal Sovereign, and living up to it requires loy-

8. How is it possible to maintain godly conduct?
9. Having turned away from sinful practices, what course should we pursue?
10. What points should we keep in mind regarding our dedication to God?



alty to God for life. Yes, 'live or die, we belong to Jehovah.' (Romans 14:7, 8)

Our happiness depends on our submission to his will and our continuing to serve him with a steadfast heart.

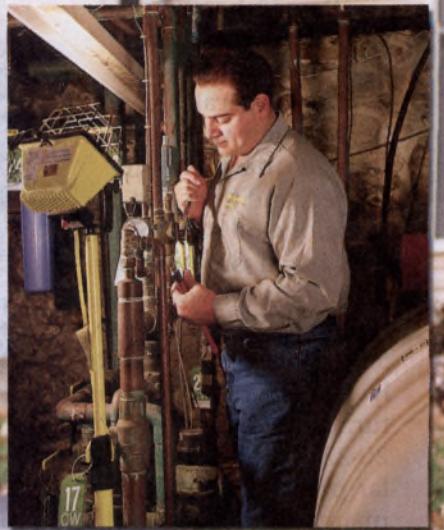
¹¹ Always remember your baptism in symbol of your wholehearted dedication to God. It was no forced baptism, for you made the decision on your own.

Are you now determined to exercise your will in harmony with the divine will for the rest of your life? You made a request to God for a good conscience and were baptized in symbol of your dedication to him. Preserve that good conscience by fulfilling your dedication, and the rich blessing of Jehovah will rest upon you.—Proverbs 10:22.

Your Will Plays a Part

¹² Dedication and baptism have, indeed, brought great blessings to millions of people throughout the earth. When we symbolize our dedication to God by undergoing water baptism, we die with respect to our past course of life but not with respect to our own will. As properly instructed believers, we actually exercised our own will when we made a dedication to God in prayer and got baptized. The course of dedication and baptism requires that we determine what God's will is and then deliberately choose to do it. (Ephesians 5:17) Thus we imitate Jesus, who exercised his will when he laid aside his carpenter's tools, got baptized, and devoted himself fully to the doing of his heavenly Father's will.—Psalm 40:7, 8; John 6:38-40.

11. Why should you remember your baptism and its significance?
- 12, 13. How is our own will related to dedication and baptism?



¹³ Jehovah God purposed that his Son would be made “perfect through sufferings.” Jesus therefore had to exercise his will so as to endure such sufferings in faithfulness. To that end, he offered up “supplications and also petitions . . . with strong outcries and tears, and he was favorably heard for his godly fear.” (Hebrews 2:10, 18; 5:7, 8) If we display similar reverential fear of God, we too are sure to be “favorably heard,” and we can be confident that Jehovah

Are you maintaining your spiritual health by daily reading God's Word?

Making the Christian ministry our chief work helps us to keep on serving Jehovah with a steadfast heart

will make us steadfast as his dedicated Witnesses.—Isaiah 43:10.

You Can Maintain a Steadfast Heart

¹⁴ What will help you to maintain a steadfast heart and thus live up to your dedication to God? With the purpose of taking in ever-increasing knowledge of God's Word, read the Bible daily. This is something that “the faithful and discreet slave” constantly urges us to do. Such counsel is given because living up to our dedication requires that we keep on walking

14. Why should we read the Bible daily?

in God's truth. If Jehovah's organization knowingly endorsed false teachings, advice to read the Bible would never be given to Jehovah's Witnesses and those to whom they preach.

¹⁵ When making decisions, always consider how they may affect the fulfilling of your dedication to Jehovah. This may relate to your secular work. Do you endeavor to make it help you in advancing true worship? Although employers in general find that dedicated Christians are dependable and efficient, they also note that Witnesses of Jehovah are not consumed by ambition to get ahead in the world and are not competing with others for the most lucrative positions. This is because the goal of the Witnesses is not the attainment of wealth, fame, prestige, or power. For those who are living up to their dedication to God, the most important thing is doing the divine will. A secular job that enables them to obtain life's necessities is an avocation, an occupation of secondary importance. Like the apostle Paul, their vocation, or chief work, is the Christian ministry. (Acts 18:3, 4; 2 Thessalonians 3:7, 8; 1 Timothy 5:8) Do you keep Kingdom interests first in your life?—Matthew 6:25-33.

¹⁶ Some may have been nearly overwhelmed by various anxieties before they learned the truth. But how their heart welled up with joy, gratitude, and love for God when they embraced the Kingdom hope! Reflecting on the blessings they have enjoyed since then may well help them to live up to their dedication to Jehovah. On the other hand, what if undue anxiety over problems common to life in this system now threatens to choke out "the word of God," just as thorns

15. (a) What should be considered when making decisions? (b) Why can it be said that secular employment is a Christian's avocation?

16. What can we do if undue anxiety is making it difficult to live up to our dedication to God?

may prevent seedlings from reaching fruitful maturity? (Luke 8:7, 11, 14; Matthew 13:22; Mark 4:18, 19) If you sense that this is beginning to happen to you or your family, cast your anxiety upon Jehovah and pray that he will help you to grow in love and appreciation. If you throw your burden upon him, he will sustain you and give you the strength to keep on serving him happily with a steadfast heart.—Psalm 55:22; Philippians 4:6, 7; Revelation 2:4.

¹⁷ Keep on praying to Jehovah God regularly, even as you prayed when making your dedication to him. (Psalm 65:2) When tempted to do wrong or when faced with a severe trial, seek God's guidance and his help to follow it. Bear in mind the need for faith, for the disciple James wrote: "If any one of you is lacking in wisdom [to cope with a trial], let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him. But let him keep on asking in faith, not doubting at all, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and blown about. In fact, let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from Jehovah; he is an indecisive man, unsteady in all his ways." (James 1:5-8) If a trial seems overwhelming, we can be sure of this: "No temptation has taken you except what is common to men. But God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out in order for you to be able to endure it."—1 Corinthians 10:13.

¹⁸ What if a serious concealed sin is bothering your conscience and weakening your resolve to live up to your dedication to God?

17. How is it possible to cope with severe trials?

18. What can we do if a serious concealed sin is weakening our resolve to live up to our dedication to Jehovah?

If you are repentant, you can take comfort in the knowledge that Jehovah 'will not despise a heart broken and crushed.' (Psalm 51:17) Seek the help of loving Christian elders, knowing that they—in imitation of Jehovah—will not treat lightly your desire to experience the restoration of a good relationship with your heavenly Father. (Psalm 103:10-14; James 5:13-15) Then with a renewal of spiritual strength and a steadfast heart, you will be able to make straight paths for your feet and find it possible to live up to your dedication to God.—Hebrews 12:12, 13.

Keep On Serving With a Steadfast Heart

¹⁹ In these critical times, we must work hard to live up to our dedication and keep on serving God with a steadfast heart. Jesus said: "He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved." (Matthew 24:13) Since we are living in "the last days," the end can come at any time. (2 Timothy 3:1) Moreover, none of us can be sure that we will be alive tomorrow. (James 4:13, 14) So it is vital that we keep on living up to our dedication today!

²⁰ The apostle Peter emphasized this in his second letter. He showed that even as the ungodly perished in the Flood, so the symbolic earth, or wicked human society, will be de-

19, 20. Why is it vital that we keep on living up to our dedication?

Do You Recall?

- Why should we continue to take in accurate knowledge of the Bible?
- Why should we keep in mind our repentance and conversion?
- How do we benefit from remembering our dedication and baptism?
- What will help us to keep on serving Jehovah with a steadfast heart?

stroyed during "Jehovah's day." Peter therefore exclaimed: "What sort of persons ought you to be in holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion"! He also urged them: "Beloved ones, having this advance knowledge, be on your guard that you may not be led away [by false teachers and ungodly men] and fall from your own steadfastness." (2 Peter 3:5-17) How tragic it would be if a baptized person were to be led astray and come to the end of his or her life as one who failed to maintain a steadfast heart!

²¹ Your determination to live up to your dedication to God may well be strengthened if you keep in mind the happy day of your baptism and seek God's help so that your words and deeds will make his heart rejoice. (Proverbs 27:11) Jehovah never fails his people, and surely we should be faithful to him. (Psalm 94:14) He showed mercy and pity in thwarting the enemies' plans and delivering David. Grateful for this, David declared the firmness, the immovableness, of his love for his Deliverer. With deep feeling, he sang: "My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast. I will sing and make melody." —Psalm 57:7.

²² Like David, true Christians have not budged from their devotion to God. With steadfast hearts, they ascribe their deliverance and preservation to Jehovah, to whom they joyfully sing praises. If your heart is steadfast, it will be reliant upon God, and with his help you will be able to fulfill your dedication. Yes, you can be like "the righteous one" concerning whom the psalmist sang: "He will not be afraid even of bad news. His heart is steadfast, made reliant upon Jehovah." (Psalm 112:6, 7) With faith in God and full reliance upon him, you can live up to your dedication and keep on serving Jehovah with a steadfast heart.

21, 22. How have the words of Psalm 57:7 proved true in the case of David and of true Christians?



God Welcomes All the Nations

ON HIS first trip to Mali, John was touched by the warm hospitality shown by Mamadou and his family. As John sat on the ground and clumsily ate from the common dish, he wondered how best to share with his host a most precious gift—the Kingdom good news from God's Word, the Bible. Though he knew French, a language spoken in Mali, John wondered how he could communicate with a family that had a totally different religion and way of thinking.

Not surprisingly, John thought about the Bible account of the city of Babel. There God confused the language of the rebellious people. (Genesis 11:1-9) As a result, populations with different languages, religions, and thinking patterns have sprung up in various parts of the earth. Today, as travel and migration become commonplace, many face a challenge similar to the one John faced, even in their own neighborhood: How to share their Bible-based hope with people of a different background?

An Ancient Example

Like other prophets in Israel, Jonah spoke primarily to the Israelites. He prophesied at a time when the apostate ten-tribe kingdom openly engaged in God-dishonoring practices. (2 Kings 14:23-25) Imagine Jonah's

reaction when he received the special mission to leave his home country and go to Assyria to preach to the inhabitants of Nineveh, people with a different religion and culture. Jonah might not even have spoken the Ninevites' language, at least not fluently. Whatever the case, Jonah apparently found the challenge overwhelming, and he fled.—Jonah 1:1-3.

Clearly, Jonah needed to learn that Jehovah God sees beyond mere appearances and examines the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7) After miraculously saving Jonah from drowning, Jehovah commanded him a second time to preach to the inhabitants of Nineveh. Jonah obeyed, and as a result, the Ninevites repented en masse. Still, Jonah did not have the right viewpoint. By means of a powerful object lesson, Jehovah taught him that he needed to change his attitude. Jehovah asked Jonah: "Ought I not to feel sorry for Nineveh the great city, in which there exist more than one hundred and twenty thousand men who do not at all know the difference between their right hand and their left?" (Jonah 4:5-11) What about us today? How can we help people from a different background?

Welcoming Samaritans and Non-Jews

In the first century, Jesus ordered his followers to make disciples of people of *all* the nations. (Matthew 28:19) This was not easy for them. Jesus' disciples were Jews and, like Jonah, were used to talking only to people from the same background and culture. Naturally, they would also have felt pressured by the common prejudices of the day. Jehovah directed matters, however, so that his servants progressively discerned his will for them.

The first step was to overcome the prejudice between Jews and Samaritans. Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. Yet, more than once, Jesus prepared the way for the future acceptance of the good news

by the Samaritans. He showed his impartiality by speaking to a Samaritan woman. (John 4:7-26)

On another occasion, by means of the illustration of the neighborly Samaritan, he showed a religious Jew that people other than the Jews were capable

of showing love for neighbor. (Luke 10:25-37) When the time came for Jehovah to bring Samaritans into the Christian congregation, Philip, Peter, and John—all of Jewish origin—preached to the inhabitants of Samaria. Their message produced a great deal of joy in that city.—Acts 8:4-8, 14-17.

If it was hard for the Jewish Christians to love Samaritans, who were in fact distant relatives of the Jews, it must have been even harder for them to show neighborly love to non-Jews, or Gentiles, who were scorned and hated by the Jews. Nevertheless, after Jesus died, the barrier between Jewish Christians and Gentiles could be removed,

(Ephesians 2:13, 14) To help Peter accept this new arrangement, Jehovah showed him a vision in which He told him to "stop calling defiled the things God has cleansed." Jehovah's spirit then led him to a Gentile named Cornelius. When Peter understood God's viewpoint—that he should not call this man of the nations defiled because God had cleansed him—he said under inspiration: "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:9-35) How amazed Peter was when God showed that he accepted Cornelius and his family by pouring out holy spirit upon them!

Paul—A Chosen Vessel to the Nations

Paul's ministry is an outstanding example of how Jehovah progressively prepares his servants to love and help all sorts of people. At the time of Paul's conversion, Jesus said that Paul would serve as a chosen vessel to bear His name to the nations. (Acts 9:15) Paul then went to Arabia, perhaps to meditate on God's purpose to use him in declaring the good news to the nations.—Galatians 1:15-17.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Feeling Secure Now—Being
Secure Forever

Guide Your Steps by Godly Principles

Empathy—Key to Kindness
and Compassion

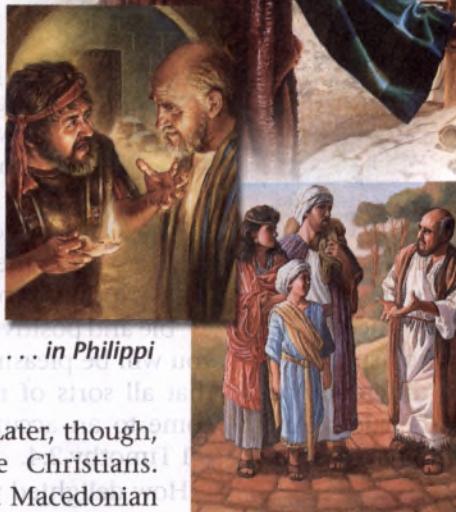
Paul shared the good news with people everywhere by being adaptable

... in Athens

During his first missionary journey, Paul showed zeal in preaching to non-Jews. (Acts 13: 46-48) Jehovah blessed Paul's activity, proof that the apostle was doing things according to Jehovah's arrangement. Paul showed that he fully appreciated Jehovah's viewpoint when he courageously corrected Peter, who had manifested partiality in avoiding association with his non-Jewish brothers.—Galatians 2:11-14.

Further evidence that God was directing Paul's efforts is seen in his second missionary journey when the holy spirit prevented Paul from preaching in the Roman province of Bithynia. (Acts 16:7) The time was apparently not right. Later, though, some Bithynians became Christians. (1 Peter 1:1) In a vision, a Macedonian entreated Paul, saying: "Step over into Macedonia and help us." Paul drew the conclusion that he should change his route in order to declare the good news in that Roman province.—Acts 16:9, 10.

Paul's ability to adapt was strongly tested when he preached to the Athenians. Greek and Roman law prohibited the introduction of foreign gods and new religious customs. Paul's love for people moved him to consider closely their religious practices. In Athens he noticed an altar inscribed "to an Unknown God." He mentioned this detail in his wit-



... in Philippi

... while traveling



nessing work. (Acts 17:22, 23) What a fine way to introduce his message in a kind, respectful manner!

How happy Paul must have been when he looked back on the results of his work as an apostle to the nations! He helped to establish congregations made up of numerous Christians of non-Jewish origin in

Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, and towns in Galatia. He helped men and women of faith, like Damaris, Dionysius, Sergius Paulus, and Titus. What a privilege to see people who knew neither Jehovah nor the Bible accept the truth of Christianity! Regarding his role in helping non-Jews come to a knowledge of the truth, Paul stated: "In this way, indeed, I made it my aim not to declare the good news where Christ had already been named,

... but, just as it is written: 'Those to whom no announcement has been made about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.' " (Romans 15:20, 21) Could we share in declaring the good news to people who are not from our culture?

Helping All the Peoples of the Earth

Solomon prayed to Jehovah about non-Israelites who would come to worship at the temple in Jerusalem. He petitioned: "May you yourself listen from the heavens, your established place of dwelling, and you must do according to all that for which the foreigner calls to you; in order that *all* the peoples of the earth may get to know your name." (1 Kings 8:41-43) Thousands of Kingdom proclaimers in many countries today echo those feelings. They meet people like the Ninevites who, spiritually speaking, 'do not know the difference between their right hand and their left.' And Kingdom preachers are eager to have a share

in the fulfillment of prophecies concerning the gathering of true worshipers from many different nations.—Isaiah 2:2, 3; Micah 4:1-3.

Just as people from Christendom have accepted the Bible's message of hope, people from other religious backgrounds are doing so. How should this affect you personally? Examine yourself honestly. If you feel that prejudice is deeply rooted in you, get rid of it with love.* Do not reject people whom God is willing to accept.—John 3:16.

Prepare yourself mentally before you talk to people from another background. Get acquainted with their beliefs, their concerns, and their way of thinking; then search for common ground. Manifest goodness and compassion toward others. Avoid confrontation, be flexible and positive. (Luke 9:52-56) Doing so, you will be pleasing Jehovah, "whose will is that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." —1 Timothy 2:4.

How delighted we are to have in our congregations people from a wide variety of backgrounds! (Isaiah 56:6, 7) How heart-warming it is to hear today not only such names as Mary, John, Stephen, and Tom but also such names as Mamadou, Jegan, Reza, and Chan! Truly, "a large door that leads to activity has been opened" to us. (1 Corinthians 16:9) May we seize the opportunities before us to extend the invitation offered by the impartial God, Jehovah, to welcome people of *all* the nations!

* See *Awake!*, July 8, 1996, pages 5-7, "Walls That Block Communication."





Stay Awake, Move Ahead COURAGEOUSLY!

REPORT ON

Special Meetings



WHO can rightly deny that we are living in "critical times hard to deal with"? As Jehovah's Witnesses, we are not immune to the pressures of living in "the last days." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) But we recognize that people need help. They do not understand the meaning of world events. They need comfort and hope. What, primarily, is our role in helping our fellowman?

We have a God-given commission to share the good news of God's established Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14) People need to know that this heavenly Kingdom is the only hope for mankind. Our message, though, is not always favorably received. In some places our work has been banned and our brothers have been persecuted. Still, we do not give up. With full trust in Jehovah, we are determined to stay awake and to keep moving ahead courageously, declaring the good news without letup.—Acts 5:42.

That firm determination was evident at special meetings that took place in October of 2001. On Saturday, October 6, the annual meeting of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract

Society of Pennsylvania was held at the Jersey City, New Jersey, Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in the United States.* The following day, supplementary meetings were held at four locations, three in the United States and one in Canada.[†]

In his opening remarks at the annual meeting, the chairman, Samuel F. Herd, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, referred to Psalm 92:1, 4 and then stated: "We want to show ourselves thankful." Indeed, reasons for thankfulness were provided in five reports from around the world.

Reports From Far and Wide

Brother Alfred Kwakye reported on the progress of the preaching work in Ghana, formerly known as the Gold Coast. Our work in that land was banned for a number of years.

* The annual meeting program was tied in electronically to a number of locations, bringing the total attendance to 13,757.

[†] The supplementary meetings were held in Long Beach, California; Pontiac, Michigan; Uniondale, New York; and Hamilton, Ontario. The combined attendance, including those tied in electronically at other locations, was 117,885.



People would ask: "Why the ban? What did you do?" This opened up opportunities to give a witness, explained Brother Kwakye. In 1991 when the ban was lifted, there were 34,421 Witnesses of Jehovah in Ghana. In August 2001, the total was 68,152—a 98-percent increase. Plans are under way to build a 10,000-seat Assembly Hall. Clearly, our spiritual brothers in Ghana are making the most of their religious freedom.

Despite the political unrest, our brothers in Ireland are actively sharing in the ministry, and they are respected for their neutral stand. Ireland has 115 congregations in 6 circuits, said Branch Committee member Peter Andrews. Brother Andrews told an experience about Liam, a ten-year-old boy who is fearless in witnessing in school. Liam placed *My Book of Bible Stories*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, with 25 of his classmates as well as with his teacher. Liam wanted to be baptized, but someone asked if he was too young. Liam replied: "It is not my age but my love for Jehovah that should be the determining factor. My baptism will show how

much I love him." Liam's goal is to become a missionary.

In 1968 there were 5,400 publishers of the good news in Venezuela. But there are now over 88,000, noted Stefan Johansson, Branch Committee coordinator. And there is potential for further increase because over 296,000 attended the Memorial in 2001. In December of 1999, torrential rains caused mud slides that killed an estimated 50,000 people, including a number of Witnesses. One Kingdom Hall was filled with mud up to two feet from the ceiling. When someone suggested that the building be abandoned, the brothers replied: "No way! This is our Kingdom Hall, and we do not want to abandon it now." They went to work, removing tons of mud, stones, and other debris. The building was remodeled, and the brothers say that it is more beautiful now than it was before the disaster struck!

There are 87 languages and dialects spoken in the Philippines, said Brother Denton Hopkinson, coordinator of the Branch Committee. During the past service year, the complete *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* was released in the country's three main languages—Cebuano, Iloko, and Taga-

log. Brother Hopkinson related an experience of a nine-year-old boy who read the book *Good News—To Make You Happy*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses. He obtained other publications from the branch, which he also read, but his family opposed him. Years later when he was in medical school, he contacted the branch and requested a Bible study. He was baptized in 1996 and soon entered the full-time ministry. He now serves with his wife at the branch office.

'Puerto Rico is in the "Witness export" business,' explained Branch Committee coordinator Ronald Parkin. There are about 25,000 publishers on the island, and the number has stayed the same for years. Why? Well, it is estimated that Puerto Rico "exports" about 1,000 publishers per year to the United States, many of them relocating for economic reasons. Brother Parkin told of a landmark court decision involving Luis, a 17-year-old Witness who had leukemia. Because Luis refused blood, his case was taken to court. The judge wanted to talk to him directly, so she visited him in the hospital. Luis asked her: "Why is it that if I committed a serious crime, you would judge me as an adult, but when I want to obey God, you treat me as a minor?" The judge was convinced that he was a mature minor and able to decide for himself.

Following the reports from faraway lands, Harold Corkern, of the U.S. Branch Committee, conducted interviews with four longtime servants of Jehovah. Arthur Bonno has spent 51 years in full-time service and is now serving on the Ecuador Branch Committee. Angelo Catanzaro has spent 59 years in full-time service, most of them as a traveling overseer. Richard Abrahamson graduated from Gilead School in 1953, and he was privileged to oversee the work in Denmark for 26 years before returning to Brooklyn Bethel. Finally, all were delighted to hear from 96-year-old Car-

ey W. Barber. Baptized in 1921, Brother Barber has spent 78 years in the full-time ministry and has been a member of the Governing Body since 1978.

Stirring Discourses

The annual meeting included a series of thought-provoking discourses. Brother Robert W. Wallen spoke on the subject "A People for His Name." We are God's name people, and we can be found in more than 230 lands. Jehovah has given us "a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11) We must continue to promote God's Kingdom, sharing the wonderful message of comfort and solace. (Isaiah 61:1) "May we day by day," Brother Wallen concluded, "continue to live up to the name by which we are called, Jehovah's Witnesses." —Isaiah 43:10.

The last portion of the program was a symposium by three members of the Governing Body. It was entitled "Now Is the Time to Stay Awake, Stand Firm, and Grow Mighty." —1 Corinthians 16:13.

First, Brother Stephen Lett spoke on the subject "Stay Awake at This Late Hour." Physical sleep is a gift, explained Brother Lett. It reinvigorates us. Spiritual sleep, however, is never good. (1 Thessalonians 5:6) How, then, can we remain spiritually awake? Brother Lett outlined three spiritual "pills": (1) Have plenty to do in the work of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:58) (2) Be conscious of your spiritual need. (Matthew 5:3) (3) Be responsive to Bible-based counsel so as to act wisely.—Proverbs 13:20.

Brother Theodore Jaracz delivered a stirring talk entitled "Stand Firm Under Test." Referring to Revelation 3:10, Brother Jaracz asked: "What is 'the hour of test'?" That test comes "in the Lord's day," where we find ourselves. (Revelation 1:10) The test revolves around the key issue—are we for God's established Kingdom or for Satan's wicked system

of things? Until that hour of test ends, we are bound to face trials or difficulties. Are we going to remain loyal to Jehovah and his organization? 'We will have to display such loyalty as individuals,' noted Brother Jaracz.

Finally, Brother John E. Barr spoke on the theme "Grow Mighty as a Spiritual Person." Referring to Luke 13:23-25, he noted that we must exert ourselves "to get in through the narrow door." Many fail because they are not diligent enough to grow mighty. In order to become full-grown Christians, we must learn to apply Bible principles in all aspects of life. Brother Barr urged: "I am sure you will agree that now is the time to (1) keep Jehovah first and foremost; (2) grow mighty; and (3) exert ourselves in doing Jehovah's will. In this way we will be able to get through the narrow door that leads to wonderful life without end."

As the annual meeting drew to a close, there was one question that had not been answered: What is the yeartext for the 2002 service year? That question was answered the following day.

Supplementary Meeting

Expectations were high on Sunday morning as the program for the supplementary meeting got under way. It began with a summary of the week's *Watchtower* lesson, followed by a brief presentation of some highlights of the annual meeting. Next, all were delighted to hear a talk on the yeartext for 2002: "Come to me, . . . and I will refresh you." (Matthew 11:28) The talk was based on study articles later published in the December 15, 2001, issue of *The Watchtower*.

Following that, some who had been delegates to the special "Teachers of God's Word"

Conventions in France and Italy in August 2001 shared their impressions.* Finally, as the highlight of the day's program, two final talks were delivered by visiting speakers from Brooklyn Bethel.

The first was entitled "Courageously Trusting in Jehovah During These Critical Times." The speaker developed the following main points:

(1) *Courageously trusting in Jehovah has always been vital for God's people.* The Bible contains many examples of those who displayed courage and faith in the face of opposition. (Hebrews 11:1-12:3)

(2) *Jehovah provides a sound basis for us to trust him implicitly.* His works and his Word guarantee that he cares for his servants and that he will never forget them. (Hebrews 6:10)

(3) *Courage and trust are especially needed today.* We are "objects of hatred," as Jesus foretold. (Matthew 24:9) In order to endure, we need reliance upon God's Word, confidence that his spirit is with us, and courage to keep on declaring the good news.

(4) *Examples show that we are facing opposition right now.* All were deeply moved as the speaker related what our brothers have endured in Armenia, France, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkmenistan. Truly, now is the time to demonstrate courage and trust in Jehovah!

* Three special conventions were held in France—in Paris, Bordeaux, and Lyons. In Italy delegates from the United States were assigned to Rome and Milan, although a total of nine conventions were held simultaneously.



has established an organization that is unified. In 29 C.E., Jesus was anointed by holy spirit with a view to his bringing "all things"—those with a heavenly destiny as well as those with an earthly hope—into God's united family. (Ephesians 1:8-10) (3) *Conventions are an outstanding demonstration of international unity.* This was clearly evident at the special conventions held in France and Italy last August. (4) *A stimulating resolution was adopted in France and Italy.* The speaker shared a few excerpts from the stirring resolution. The full text of the resolution appears below.

At the conclusion of the last talk, the visiting speaker read a touching announcement prepared by the Governing Body. It said, in part: "Now is the time to stay awake and keep on the watch, discerning how events on the world scene develop. . . . We want to convey to you the loving concern the Governing Body has for you and for all the rest of God's people. May he bless you richly in doing his will whole-souled." Jehovah's people everywhere are determined to stay awake in these critical times and to keep moving ahead courageously with Jehovah's unified organization.

RESOLUTION

In August 2001, special "Teachers of God's Word" Conventions were held in France and Italy. At those conventions a stirring resolution was presented.

Following is the text of that resolution.

"**A**S JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES, all of us assembled at this 'Teachers of God's Word' Convention have been instructed by teaching that is highly beneficial. The source of this teaching has been clearly identified. The teaching is not of human origin. It comes from the One described by the ancient prophet Isaiah as our 'Grand Instructor.' (Isaiah 30:20) Note Jehovah's reminder as stated at Isaiah 48:17: 'I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk.' How does he accomplish this? The primary way is through the most widely translated and circulated book in the world, the Bible, wherein we are told in unequivocal terms: 'All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial.'—2 Timothy 3:16.

"Today, mankind is in dire need of such beneficial teaching. Why can this be said? In con-

sidering the changing, perplexing scene of this world, what do thinking people acknowledge? Simply this: Although millions have been taught by the world's educational systems, there is a woeful lack of real values and a failure to distinguish between right and wrong. (Isaiah 5:20, 21) Bible illiteracy abounds. While technology provides access to a glut of information through the use of computers, where are the answers to such vital questions as, What is the purpose of life? How are we to understand the events of our time? Is there a solid hope for the future? Will peace and security ever become a reality? Furthermore, on library shelves are found millions of pages in reference works covering virtually every field of human endeavor. Still, mankind repeats mistakes of the past. Crime soars. Diseases once thought to be eradicated recur, while others, such as AIDS, spread alarmingly. Family life disintegrates at a

bewildering rate. Pollution ruins the environment. Terrorism and weapons of mass annihilation threaten peace and security. Problems without solutions keep piling up. What is our proper role in helping our fellowman in these critical times? Is there teaching that explains the cause of mankind's plight and not only shows the way to a better life now but also offers a bright, sure hope for the future?

"Our Scriptural commission is to 'go and make disciples of people of all the nations, teaching them to observe all the things that Christ commanded.' (Matthew 28:19, 20) This commission was issued by Jesus Christ following his death and resurrection, when he received all authority in heaven and on earth. It transcends all activity promoted by humans. From God's standpoint, our commission, which focuses on the spiritual needs of those hungering for righteousness, has first priority. We have sound Scriptural reasons for taking that commission seriously.

"This calls for keeping such activity foremost in our lives. With God's blessing and help, the work will be done, notwithstanding a host of distracting influences, obstacles, and opposing forces from religious and political elements, designed to impede the progress of this global teaching program. We are confident and have faith that this work will continue to prosper and reach its grand completion. Why can we be so sure? Because the Lord Jesus Christ promised that he would be with us in our God-given ministry right down to the conclusion of this system of things.

"The hour is late for distressed mankind. Our present commission must be fulfilled before the final end comes. Therefore, we, as Jehovah's Witnesses, resolve that:

First: As dedicated ministers, we are determined to keep Kingdom interests first in our lives and continue to grow spiritually. To that

end, our prayer is in line with the words of Psalm 143:10: 'Teach me to do your will, for you are my God.' This calls for being good students, endeavoring to read the Bible daily, engage in personal study and research. To make our advancement manifest to all persons, we will make every reasonable effort to prepare for and benefit fully from theocratic education provided at congregation meetings, at assemblies in the circuit, and at district, national, and international conventions.—1 Timothy 4:15; Hebrews 10:23-25.

Second: In order to be taught by God, we will feed exclusively at his table and carefully heed the Bible's warning about misleading teachings of demons. (1 Corinthians 10:21; 1 Timothy 4:1) We will take special precaution to avoid harmful elements, including religious falsehoods, futile reasonings, disgraceful sexual perversions, the plague of pornography, debasing entertainment, and everything that is not in 'accord with healthful teaching.' (Romans 1:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 3:20; 1 Timothy 6:3; 2 Timothy 1:13) Out of regard for 'gifts in men,' who are qualified to teach what is wholesome, we will genuinely respect their efforts and wholeheartedly cooperate with them in upholding the clean and righteous moral and spiritual standards of God's Word.—Ephesians 4:7, 8, 11, 12; 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13; Titus 1:9.

Third: As Christian parents, our wholehearted endeavor will be to instruct our children not only by word but also by example. Our primary concern is to help them from their infancy to 'learn the holy writings so as to become wise for salvation.' (2 Timothy 3:15) We will keep close in mind that our bringing them up in the discipline and mental regulating of Jehovah will give them the best opportunity to experience the divine promise that 'it will go well with them and they may endure a long time on the earth.'—Ephesians 6:1-4.



Fourth: When anxieties or serious problems are encountered, we will, first of all, 'make our petitions known to God,' having the assurance that 'the peace of God that excels all human thought' will safeguard us. (Philippians 4:6, 7) Having come under Christ's yoke, we will find refreshment. Knowing that God cares for us, we will not hesitate to cast our anxieties upon him.—Matthew 11:28-30; 1 Peter 5: 6, 7.

Fifth: In expression of our gratitude to Jehovah for the privilege of being teachers of his Word, we will renew our efforts to 'handle his word of truth aright' and 'fully accomplish our ministry.' (2 Timothy 2:15; 4:5) Because we are acutely aware of what is involved, our heartfelt desire is to search out deserving ones and cultivate the seed sown. Furthermore, we will enhance our teaching by effectively conducting more home Bible studies. This will bring us more into harmony with God's will that 'all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth.'—1 Timothy 2: 3, 4.

Sixth: Throughout the past century and into this one, Jehovah's Witnesses in many lands have experienced various forms of opposition and persecution. But Jehovah has proved to be with us. (Romans 8:31) His infallible Word assures us that 'no weapon formed against us' to hinder, slow down, or stop our



Kingdom preaching and teaching work will succeed. (Isaiah 54:17) Whether in favorable or in troublesome season, we cannot stop speaking the truth. Our resolve is to fulfill our preaching and teaching commission urgently. (2 Timothy 4:1, 2) Our aim is to share as fully as possible the good news of God's Kingdom with people of all nations. Thus, they will continue to have opportunity to learn about the provision for gaining everlasting life in a righteous new world. As a united throng of teachers of God's Word, our determination is to keep on following the example of the Great Teacher, Jesus Christ, and reflecting his godly qualities. All of this we will do to the honor and praise of our Grand Instructor and Life-Giver, Jehovah God.

"All in attendance at this convention who favor the adoption of this resolution, please say AYE!"

When the concluding question of the resolution was put to 160,000 assembled at three conventions in France and 289,000 in the nine locations in Italy, a thunderous "Aye" was shouted in the many languages represented among the delegates.





Never Too Old to Learn

KSENIYA was born in 1897. She had 3 daughters, a son, 15 grandchildren, and 25 great-grandchildren. All her life she did what her parents taught her to do. Although she had come to Moscow as a refugee from the war-torn Abkhaz Republic, located between the Black Sea and the Caucasus, she was quite satisfied with her life, especially with what she called her inherited faith.

In 1993, Kseniya's daughter Meri became one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Meri started to

talk to Kseniya about Jehovah God and the Bible, but she did not want to listen. Kseniya kept telling her daughter, "It is too late for me to learn something new."

Still, her daughter Meri; her grandson's wife, Londa; and her great-grandchildren Nana and Zaza, who had all become Jehovah's Witnesses, continued to talk to her about the Bible. One evening in 1999, they read a scripture to Kseniya that touched her heart. It contained Jesus' moving words to the faithful apostles when he was instituting the Lord's Evening Meal. (Luke 22:19, 20) At the age of 102, Kseniya decided that evening to start studying the Bible.

"After living for 102 years," says Kseniya, "I finally understood the meaning of life. I now realize that there is nothing better than serving our wonderful, loving God, Jehovah. I am still alert and healthy. I can read without glasses and actively associate with my family."

On November 5, 2000, Kseniya was baptized. She says: "Now I give my life to Jehovah to serve him with love. I place magazines and tracts while sitting at the bus stop near my home. Relatives often come to visit, and I happily share with them the truth about Jehovah."

Kseniya is looking forward to the day when 'her flesh becomes fresher than in youth, and she returns to the days of her youthful vigor.' (Job 33:25) If a centenarian does not feel too old to learn the meaning of life from the Bible, how about you?