

Jehovah's Witnesses

Unitedly Doing God's Will
Worldwide



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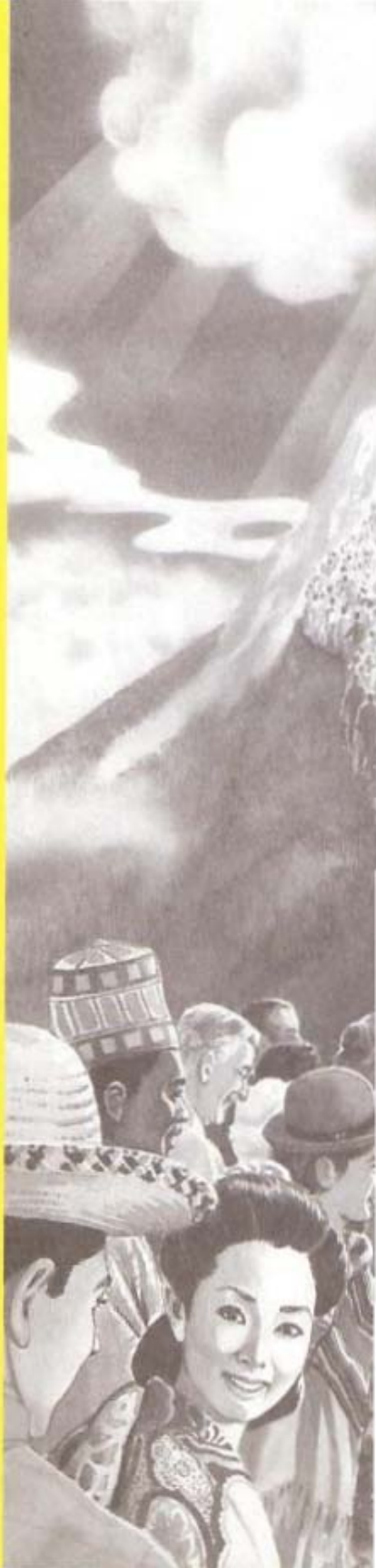
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We Want to Be of Help

This brochure has been provided to acquaint you better with the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses and their arrangements to help you to increase in Bible knowledge. You may have had visits by Jehovah's Witnesses, or perhaps you have talked with them on the street or other places. One of the Witnesses may now be studying with you.

Did you know that their message about God's Kingdom is being proclaimed worldwide? Why? It is because God, our Creator, wants people out of all nations to unite in worshipping him. He foretold for our time: "Many peoples will certainly go and say: 'Come, you people, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths.'"—Isaiah 2:2, 3.

The activity of Jehovah's Witnesses in telling you about God's ways is a fulfillment of this prophecy. The following pages will show why this activity is important now and how you can benefit from it.



God's Purpose Now Reaching Its Climax



God's purpose in creating the earth was to have it inhabited by happy people living under righteous conditions. In order to continue to live, mankind would have to obey God's laws, but the first human pair disobeyed and became sinners, condemned to death. This brought sin and death to all of their offspring.—Genesis 1:27, 28; 2:16, 17; 3:1-19; Romans 5:12.



God, whose name is Jehovah, determined to remove the effects of disobedience and sin from the earth. In time he looked at the earth and saw among mankind a faithful man, Abram, whose name He changed to Abraham. God promised Abraham that his offspring would become a great nation and that through that nation God would provide a seed by means of which all families of the earth would bless themselves.—Genesis 12:1-3; 18:18, 19; 22:18; Psalm 83:18; Hebrews 11:8-16.

Near the end of the 16th century B.C.E., the offspring of Abraham's

grandson Jacob, or Israel, had become 12 tribes living in slavery in Egypt. Jehovah delivered these Israelites from Egypt and formed them into a nation. Through Moses at Mount Sinai he gave them the Law as their national constitution. Jehovah was their King, Judge, and Statute-Giver. The nation of Israel became God's chosen people, his witnesses, organized to carry out his purpose. Through them would come the Messiah, who would establish an everlasting kingdom for the benefit of people of all nations.—Exodus 19:5, 6; 1 Chronicles 17:7-14; 1 Kings 4:20, 25; Isaiah 33:22; 43:10-12; Romans 9:4, 5.

After 15 centuries, or about 2,000 years ago, God sent his only-begotten Son from heaven to earth, to be born of the young Jewish virgin Mary. He was named Jesus and was to inherit the Kingdom that God promised his forefather David. At the age of 30, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptizer and began announcing God's Kingdom. By healing the sick, he demonstrated how that coming Kingdom would

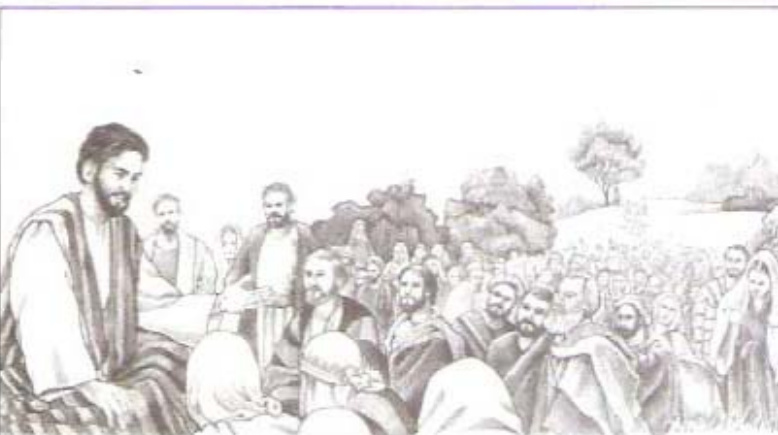
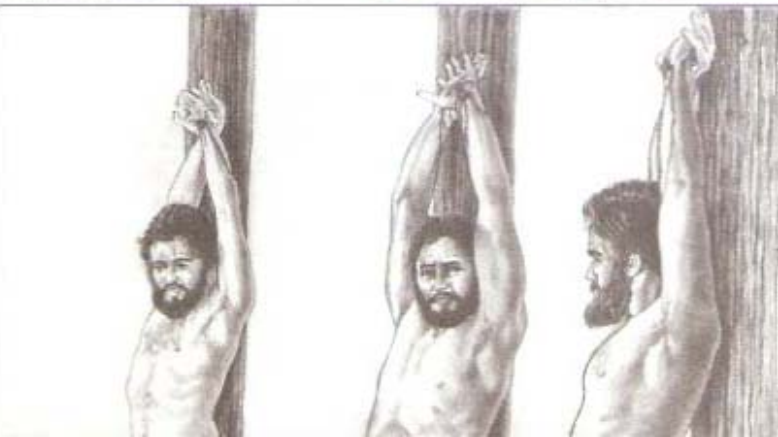


bless mankind. Through illustrations, he explained what would be required of all who wanted everlasting life. Then Jesus was put to death on a stake, his perfect human life becoming a ransom for mankind.—Matthew 1: 18-24; 3:13-16; 4:17-23; 6:9, 10; chapter 13; 20:28; Luke 1:26-37; 2:14; 4:43, 44; 8:1; John 3:16; Acts 10:37-39.

Jesus had explained that the Messianic Kingdom was to be established in the far-distant future, at the conclusion of the system of things. At that time he would be invisibly present in the heavens as the reigning King and would make his presence known by directing his attention to the earth. World events show that we have been living in this time since 1914. As Jesus foretold, the good news of the Kingdom is being preached throughout all the earth as a witness to all nations. As a result, people out of all nations are being gathered to the side of God's Kingdom. These will survive the end of the present system of things and gain everlasting life on earth under the Messianic Kingdom.—Matthew, chapters 24 and 25; Revelation 7:9-17.

Many churches claim to be doing God's will today. But how can you identify the true Christian congregation? By examining the Scriptures about the first-century Christian congregation and then by seeing who today follow that same pattern.

- What part did Abraham and Israel play in the outworking of God's purpose?
- What did Jesus accomplish by his ministry and by his death?
- What events were prophesied to mark our present time?



The First-Century Christian Congregation

At Pentecost 33 C.E., holy spirit was poured out on 120 disciples of Jesus, and in many languages they began speaking about the magnificent things of God. This was the founding of the Christian congregation. About 3,000 new disciples were baptized on that day.—Acts, chapter 2.

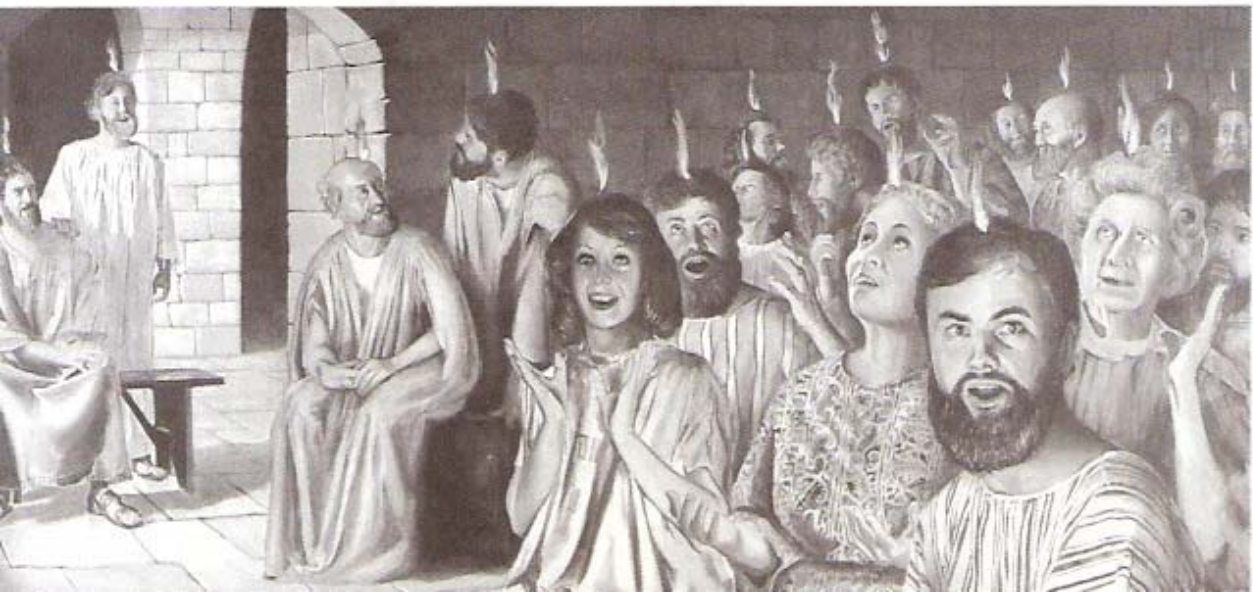
The congregations in different localities grew in numbers as the apostles and others continued speaking the Word of God with boldness. As recorded in the book of Acts, the preaching soon spread throughout the Mediterranean area, from Babylon and North Africa to Rome and perhaps Spain.—Romans 15:18-29; Colossians 1:23; 1 Peter 5:13.

Wherever people became disciples, they formed congregations. Qualified, mature men were appointed as elders, or overseers, to maintain the standard of right teaching and conduct in the congregations. But they did not constitute a clergy class; they were ministers and fellow workers for

the Kingdom of God.—Acts 14:23; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 3:5; 5:13; Colossians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:1-15; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4.

The apostles and other close co-workers served as a governing body. They took the lead in the preaching work. They resolved problems in the Jerusalem congregation. They sent qualified brothers to Samaria and Antioch to strengthen new believers there. They handled a dispute about circumcision, sending out their decision for all congregations to observe. Yet these men were not masters over others but were servants and fellow workers of the entire congregation.—Acts 4:33; 6:1-7; 8:14-25; 11:22-24; 15:1-32; 16:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 3:5-9; 4:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 1:24.

The early disciples were identified as Christians, being called such by divine providence. They also had teachings that distinguished them; these were called the teaching of the apostles, or the pattern of healthful words. This Scriptural teaching was



**The early Christians preached
God's Word with boldness**

**Christians were welcome in the
homes of fellow believers
wherever they traveled**

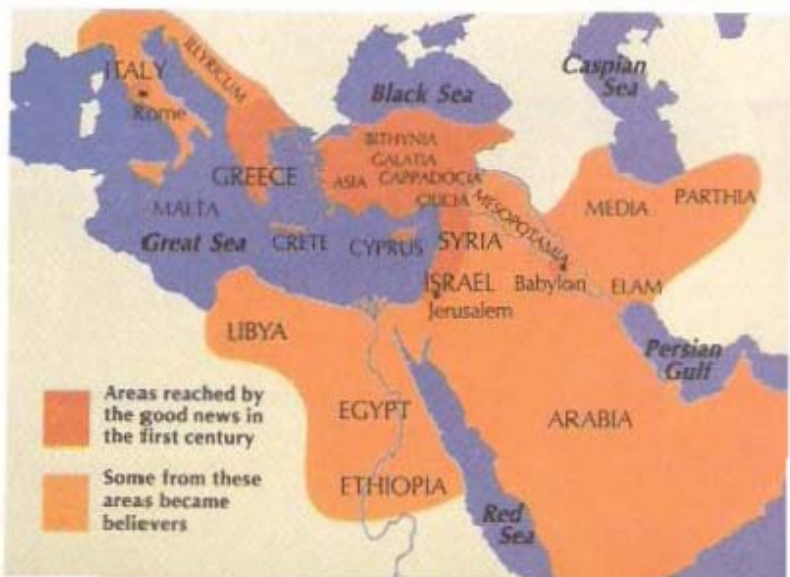
also known as the truth.—John 17:17;
Acts 2:42; 11:26; Romans 6:17; 1 Timothy
4:6; 6:1, 3; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2 Peter 2:2;
2 John 1, 4, 9.

They were a worldwide association
of brothers united in love. They
showed an interest in their fellow be-
lievers in other countries. When trav-
eling abroad, fellow believers wel-
comed them into their homes. They
maintained a high standard of moral
conduct, being a holy people separate
from the world. They kept close in
mind the time for the day of Jeho-
vah's presence and zealously made
public declaration of their faith.
—John 13:34, 35; 15:17-19; Acts 5:42; 11:
28, 29; Romans 10:9, 10, 13-15; Titus 2:11-14;
Hebrews 10:23; 13:15; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 2:9-12;
5:9; 2 Peter 3:11-14; 3 John 5-8.

However, as foretold, a great apos-
tasy began to develop, in the second
and third centuries. This resulted in
large church systems that did not
maintain the purity of the early Chris-
tian congregation as regards teaching,
conduct, organization, and posi-
tion toward the world.—Matthew 13:
24-30, 37-43; 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2.

Jesus foretold, though, that there
would be a restoration of true wor-
ship at the conclusion of the system
of things. Jehovah's Witnesses be-
lieve that this restoration can be seen
in their worldwide activities in our
time, about 1,900 years after Jesus'
prophecy. The following pages will
explain why.

- How was the Christian congregation founded, and how did it grow?
- How was that congregation supervised?
- What things clearly distinguished first-century Christians?



Jehovah Gathers and Equips His People for Work



C. T. Russell in 1879



July 1879 issue



Early Group of Bible Students, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Throughout the centuries, the apostasy had spread throughout the earth. The many church denominations had some Bible teachings but mainly followed human traditions and many customs of heathen origin. Expectations as to the return of Christ were generally pushed into the background.—Compare Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43.

However, Jesus had said to keep on the watch for his return! One group doing this was located in Allegheny (Pittsburgh), Pennsylvania, U.S.A. In the early 1870's Charles Taze Russell and some of his friends began to make a thorough, nondenominational study of the Bible with regard to Christ's return. They also began to seek Bible truth on many other basic teachings. This was the beginning of the modern-day activities of Jehovah's Witnesses.—Matthew 24:42.

This group came to understand that the doctrine of the Trinity is not Biblical but Jehovah alone is the almighty God and Creator; Jesus Christ is His first creation and only-begotten Son; and the holy spirit is not a person but is God's invisible active force. This group saw that the soul is not immortal but mortal, that the hope for the dead is resurrection, and that the punishment for unrepentant wickedness is not eternal torment but annihilation.

Jesus' giving his life as a ransom for mankind was seen to be a basic Bible teaching. First, 144,000 men and women, chosen from the first century down to our time, will be redeemed from the earth to be joint heirs with

Christ in the heavenly Kingdom. Then through Jesus' ransom billions of mankind, the majority of whom will be resurrected from the dead, will attain human perfection with the prospect of everlasting life on earth under that Kingdom rule.

Russell and his associates also saw that Christ's presence was to be invisible, in spirit. The Gentile Times, during which period God's sovereignty was not being expressed through any government on the earth, were to end in 1914. Then God's Kingdom would be established in heaven. These teachings are identified with Jehovah's Witnesses today.

Russell and his companions announced these truths far and wide by talks and printed page. In July 1879 Russell began to publish *Zion's Watch Tower* (now called *The Watchtower*). He determined that the preaching activities of the Bible Students should depend entirely upon voluntary contributions and that no collections would be taken. Also, the message should be circulated through the unpaid, voluntary efforts of those who believed. Russell himself contributed from the means he had accumulated in business up to that time.

The Bible Students gathered together in classes, as their congregations were then called. They assembled up to three times a week, for talks, Scripture study, and testimony meetings. They regularly elected responsible men as elders to supervise the spiritual activities of each class.

In 1884 Zion's Watch Tower Tract

Society was incorporated as a non-profit corporation in Pennsylvania. A president of the corporation was to be elected annually. This provided a legal instrument, not dependent upon the life of any individual, to carry forward the Bible educational work. Charles T. Russell was elected president, and his office was looked to as the headquarters.

Great efforts were made to expand the work to other countries. It reached Canada and England in the early 1880's. In 1891 Russell made a tour of Europe and the Middle East to consider what could be done to further the spread of the truth there. In the early 1900's, branch offices of the Society were established in Britain, Germany, and Australia.

In 1909 the headquarters of the Watch Tower Society was moved to Brooklyn, New York, to further the expansion of the preaching work on an international scale. It became necessary to form an associate corporation under New York State law, which is now known as the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. In 1914 the International Bible Students Association was formed in London, England, to advance the activities of the Bible Students throughout the British Commonwealth. At present some 70 legally formed corporations and associations in many countries around the world are serving the purposes of the Watch Tower Society. All are philanthropic, being supported by voluntary contributions and volunteer workers.

In 1916 Charles Taze Russell died, and Joseph Franklin Rutherford succeeded him as president of the Watch Tower Society. During the closing years of World War I, the Bible Students were severely tested by persecution, climaxed by the wrongful imprisonment of eight brothers serving in responsible positions with the Society's headquarters in America. The work of the Bible Students seemed in jeopardy. However, in 1919 these brothers were released and exonerated, and there now began a greater expansion of the preaching work.

Through the Society's headquarters, the united body of anointed Christian Bible Students continued to provide spiritual food at the proper time for all individuals associated with the organization. Just as the congregation of anointed Christians in the first century constituted "the faithful and discreet slave" mentioned by Jesus, so too the anointed group of dedicated Bible Students, engaged in the Kingdom work, makes up "the faithful and discreet slave" class in our time. At Jesus' coming to inspect the congregation, he found this class to be providing food for the domestics of the household; he then appointed it over all his belongings.—Matthew 24: 45-47; Luke 12:42.

Soon after World War I, it was clearly seen that God's Kingdom by Christ Jesus had been established in the heavens in 1914. So Jesus' words could now have their complete fulfillment: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the



Headquarters, 1889-1909, Pittsburgh, Pa.



Main offices, 1909-1918, Brooklyn, N.Y.



Headquarters residence, 1909-1926, Brooklyn, N.Y.



World headquarters of
Jehovah's Witnesses,
Brooklyn, New York,
U.S.A.

Upper left:
Office complex

Upper right:
Residence buildings

Lower left:
Factory complex

Lower right:
Shipping center

nations; and then the end will come." Joseph F. Rutherford took the initiative to make this Kingdom message available to an even greater number of people.—Matthew 24:14.

Hence, the Society decided to do its own printing using volunteer workers who were dedicated men, in order to ensure constant production of Bible literature at the lowest possible cost. All Bible Students were encouraged to have a regular share in preaching the good news of the Kingdom. Radio broadcasting of Bible talks was used in a number of countries.

Prior to 1918 the Bible Students understood that their purpose in preaching was to gather the remaining ones of those chosen to be with Christ Jesus in heaven and to warn the world of God's coming judgment. Little thought was given to gathering those who would survive the end of the present wicked system to live on earth. Then from 1918 onward the talk "Millions Now Living May Never Die!" was widely presented.

In 1923 a study of Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats at Matthew 25:31-46 showed that prior to Armageddon righteously disposed people not in line for the heavenly Kingdom would also gain God's approval and would survive Armageddon. In 1935 further study showed these sheeplike people to be identical with the great, unnumbered crowd of people described at Revelation 7:9-17. These were to be gathered out of all nations and would have the prospect of surviving the Great Tribulation and gaining everlasting life on earth. This understanding gave great impetus to the preaching work.—John 10:16.

In 1931 the Bible Students adopted the name Jehovah's Witnesses. Prior thereto they were known as Bible Students, International Bible Students, Millennial Dawn people, and Watch Tower people. They were even nicknamed Russellites and Rutherfordites. None of these names properly identified them. While the name Christian, given to Jesus' disci-

ples by divine providence in the first century, was certainly applicable, it was also being used by many groups following false teachings. To distinguish themselves from the millions of nominal Christians, there had to be a name that would distinctly identify Christ's true followers in this day.

A consideration of the Scriptures made clear that even as Jehovah had called his people Israel his witnesses, so his people at the conclusion of the system of things, who were dedicated to making his name and purpose known, should rightly be called Jehovah's Witnesses. This name has properly distinguished Jehovah's true Christian worshipers from all others who claim to be Christian today.—Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 43:10-12.

In 1942, during World War II, Joseph F. Rutherford died, and Nathan H. Knorr succeeded him as president of the Watch Tower Society. The prophecies were now seen to indicate clearly that there would be a postwar period of relative peace and freedom that would allow for a great expansion of the preaching work before the end of this system. In February 1943 the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead was established to train full-time ministers for missionary work in foreign countries. Later that year, a special ministry training program was added to the weekly meeting schedule of Jehovah's Witnesses.

In 1950 the Society began to release portions of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, a modern-English Bible translation made from the original-language

texts. This accurately rendered, easy-to-understand Bible, produced at low cost on the Society's presses, has been a great aid in the preaching work. To date, over 40 million copies have been published in 11 languages.

By the end of 1985, more than three million Jehovah's Witnesses were sharing in the preaching work in more than 200 lands and islands of the sea. For the Memorial of Christ's death, the meeting with the greatest attendance of any held in their 49,716 congregations during 1985, a total of 7,792,109 persons were present.

That God is truly using Jehovah's Witnesses is seen in their continuing to keep active in his service, in their worldwide unity, in their zeal for upholding Jehovah's name and preaching his Kingdom, in their clean moral standards, in their acceptance of the entire Bible as God's infallible Word, and in their freedom from superstition and spiritism.

The following sections show how you can benefit from this restoration of true worship of God.

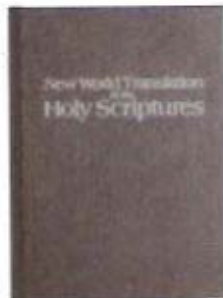
- What basic Bible teachings distinguished the Bible Students from church denominations?
- What organizational developments did the Bible Students experience up to 1918?
- How can it be said that the group of anointed Bible Students made up "the faithful and discreet slave" of Matthew 24:45-47?
- What understanding of God's purpose gave great impetus to expanding the preaching work?
- What purpose does the name Jehovah's Witnesses serve?
- What are evidences that God is truly using Jehovah's Witnesses?



Radio broadcasting by J. F. Rutherford



Watchtower Society's first rotary press, operated by volunteers



New World Translation of Bible, now published in 11 languages

Congregations for Building Up in Love and Unity

You may have attended some congregation meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses near where you live. People from all walks of life—family groups, single people, old and young—were there. They were all united in their worship and were interested in helping others.

In any arrangement where a large number of people desire to work at unity, there needs to be some supervision. God is a God of order; hence, that order should be reflected in the congregation of his people. As in the first century, so today, qualified, mature, and experienced Christian men are designated as elders, or overseers. These supervise the congregation and look after its spiritual needs. They are assisted by other faithful men known as ministerial servants. These men receive no salary or other financial benefit but serve voluntarily, meeting their own expenses, usually from secular employment.—1 Corinthians 14: 33, 40; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8, 9.

How are these selected? They need to be faithful servants of God who display certain Scriptural qualifications. Some of these are: being 'moderate in habits, sound in mind, orderly, hospitable, qualified to teach, and reasonable; not being a lover of money; presiding over his household in a fine manner; not being a newly converted man; having a fine testimony from those on the outside'; 'holding firmly to the faithful word as respects the art of teaching.'—1 Timothy 3:1-15; Titus 1:7-9.

These men are not voted into office by the congregation, where the majority might often be newer Christians. Rather, they are recommended by mature and experienced men who are elders and who have discernment as to the degree to which those considered are meeting the Scriptural requirements. Then appointments of elders and ministerial servants are made under the supervision of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Wit-



Overseers instruct the congregation, take the lead in preaching from house to house, encourage by shepherding visits, give counsel and reproof when needed

nesses, this following the pattern set by the Christian congregation in the first century.

These elders, or overseers, do not constitute a clergy class; they are not masters over others. As Jesus said, any who take the lead must be the slaves of all. In the congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, the elders are truly fellow workers for the Kingdom of God.—Matthew 20:26, 27; 23:8-11; Romans 12:8; 1 Corinthians 3:5; 4:1, 2; Colossians 4:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14.

As overseers, they supervise the instruction provided at meetings and take the lead in the preaching activity. Preaching the good news of the Kingdom throughout its assigned territory is a primary objective of the congregation. Overseers also serve as shepherds, visiting members of the congregation to encourage them as needed.—Matthew 24:14; Acts 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 2:11, 12; 5:14, 15; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Hebrews 13:17; James 5:13-16; 1 Peter 5:1-4.

The elders also have the responsibility to reprove and administer discipline to any who may be following a wrongful course and who may present a danger to the spiritual and moral cleanness and the unity of the congregation. 1 Corinthians 5:4, 5, 7, 11-13; Titus 1:9; 2:15; 3:10, 11.

Regular association with the congregation will give you fine fellowship and many spiritual benefits.—Psalm 35:18; 84:10.

- Who supervise the affairs of individual congregations?
- Upon what basis are overseers selected?
- What are their responsibilities?



Meetings for Inciting to Love and Fine Works



Elder conducting
Watchtower Study,
United States

The early Christians met together, usually in private homes, to receive instruction and enjoy upbuilding fellowship. Today, congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses meet three times a week. You are invited to attend any of these meetings. Their meetings are not ritualistic, but they focus on divine education. Congregation meetings are opened and closed with song and prayer. Attendance is free, and no collections are taken.—Acts 4:23-31; 14:22; 15:32, 35; Romans 16:5; Colossians 4:15.

Perhaps the first meeting that you attend will be the 45-minute public talk, dealing with Bible teachings, prophecy, or counsel on Christian living. Following this talk, there is a study of the Bible, using an article in *The Watchtower* that is especially designed for congregation study. The study follows this format: A paragraph from *The Watchtower* is read, and the conductor propounds questions on the material that those in the audience may volunteer to answer by raising their hand. Usually several

comments are given on each paragraph. The meeting lasts one hour.

Later on in the week, two other 45-minute meetings are held. One is the Theocratic Ministry School. It provides training on how to gather material on Bible subjects and to teach it effectively. Following 21 minutes of special instruction, students who are assigned in advance give short presentations. After each presentation, the school instructor gives counsel showing how the student may improve. Several textbooks have been prepared for use in this school. Those who regularly attend meetings may enroll, provided they are living in a way that accords with Christian principles.

The meeting that follows is called the Service Meeting. It consists of three or four parts that deal with presenting the good news from house to house as well as other features of the ministry. These parts are presented as talks, discussions, or demonstra-



Scene from Theocratic
Ministry School,
Faeroe Islands



Group study in private
home, Yap

Kingdom Hall, New
Braunfels, Texas, U.S.A.,
built in two days by
Jehovah's Witnesses



Kingdom Halls in various countries

tions, with some audience participation. Much of the program is based on material found in *Our Kingdom Ministry*, a four-page instruction sheet published monthly by the Watch Tower Society.

The third meeting is a weekly study held in smaller groups, usually in private homes throughout the congregation's territory. The study is based on the Bible and a recent book published by the Society. Since the group is smaller, there is a better opportunity for all to share in the discussion, and there is a fine opportunity for those in attendance to get better acquainted with one another.

Most congregations hold their meetings in a Kingdom Hall built by Jehovah's Witnesses. The costs are covered by voluntary contributions from the Witnesses themselves, and in most cases the work is done without charge by volunteer workers. Contribution boxes are available at all meetings for the use of those who wish to contribute.

Congregation meetings help Jehovah's Witnesses to follow the counsel at Hebrews 10:24, 25: "Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as [we] behold the day drawing near."

- What features of early Christian meetings can be seen in meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses?
- Outline what is presented at the five meetings held regularly by the Witnesses.
- How have meeting halls been obtained?



Japan



Australia



Austria



Spain

Congregations Organized for Preaching God's Kingdom

When on earth, Jesus Christ preached the Kingdom of God, going from village to village and from city to city. He also trained and sent out his disciples to do the same work. Before ascending to heaven, he commanded his followers to make disciples of people of all the nations. From its very inception, the early Christian congregation was organized for preaching the good news. Wherever the disciples went, they would be found preaching the Kingdom of God.—Matthew 4:17, 23; 10:1-16; 28:19, 20; Luke 4:43, 44; 8:1; 10:1-9; Acts 1:8; 4:31; 5:42; 8:12; 19:8; 28:23, 30, 31; Romans 10:9, 10, 14.

In Jesus' prophecy on the conclusion of the system of things, he stated: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." This preaching is a primary obligation of the Christian congregation today.—Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10.

Worldwide, all congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses are organized to cover their local area systematically



with the preaching of the good news of God's Kingdom. So that it will be done in an orderly manner, in each country the branch office of the Watch Tower Society assigns to every congregation an area for witnessing. The congregation divides that territory assignment into smaller portions, which are then assigned to those who will take the responsibility to see that the people are called on.—1 Corinthians 14:33, 40.

The Witnesses usually contact people by going from house to house. At their congregation meetings, Jehovah's Witnesses have been trained to make short presentations of the

Jehovah's Witnesses preaching God's Kingdom in various countries



Thailand



Mexico



Netherlands



Korea



Kingdom message at the doors, using their Bibles. The Witnesses carry Bible literature to leave with the householders who wish to gain greater knowledge of God's Word.

In order to give everyone in the territory an opportunity to hear the important Kingdom message, the Witnesses keep a detailed record as they go from house to house, indicating where people were not at home or where for some other reason it was not possible to give a thorough witness. A call will be made at another time. Where interest is shown, that is noted, and the Witnesses return to provide additional Scriptural information. If desired, a

regular Bible study will be conducted. All of this is done free of charge.

Jehovah's Witnesses also offer magazines to passersby on the streets. In this way they are able to contact many people they might not find at home. A real effort is made to reach out to everyone who will hear.—Acts 17:17; Revelation 14:6, 7; 22:17.

Why do the Witnesses keep calling when the majority do not show any interest? It has been found that the situation of individuals often changes and they respond positively on another visit, or some other person of the household may be met who will show interest.

Jesus said to his disciples: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness." The preaching of God's Kingdom plays a vital part in our seeking first the Kingdom, and Jehovah's Witnesses make this a very important objective in their lives.—Matthew 6:33; 2 Timothy 4:2.

- What work of Jesus and the early Christians was foretold to be done also in our day?
- How is the preaching activity of Jehovah's Witnesses organized?
- Why do the Witnesses keep calling on people when the majority show no interest?



Curaçao



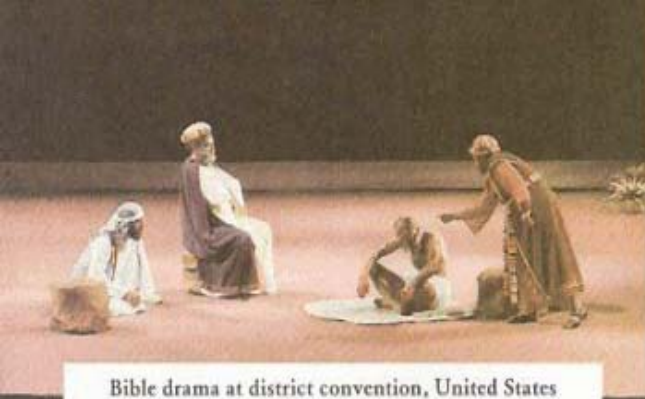
Ghana



Britain



Australia



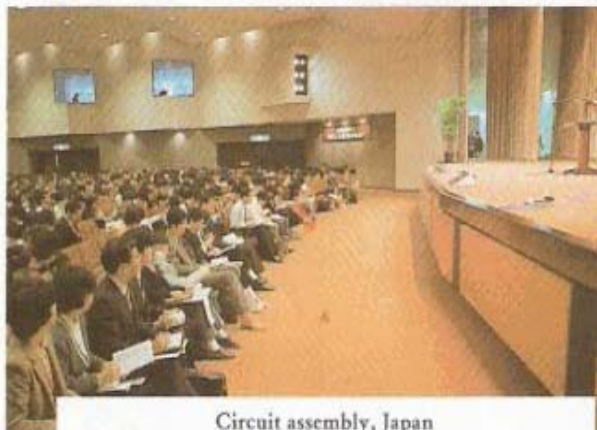
Bible drama at district convention, United States



International convention, Poland



International convention, Argentina



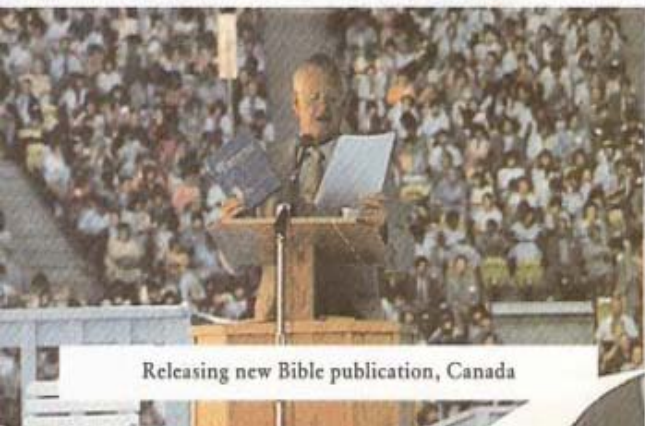
Circuit assembly, Japan



Delegates obtain Bible literature, Switzerland



Baptism at international convention, South Africa



Releasing new Bible publication, Canada



Convention delegates join in singing, Spain

Rejoicing and Praising God at Assemblies

From the early 1880's the Bible Students saw that, in addition to local meetings, it would be beneficial for them to become acquainted with their fellow believers from other areas. So they began to arrange yearly conventions of Bible Students from all over the United States, and later also from Canada. These were periods of spiritual refreshment; for several days intensive Bible instruction was provided, and all enjoyed a delightful interchange of encouragement. Baptism of new believers became a regular feature at conventions. Conventions were also used to give a more extensive witness to the public.

—Romans 1:11, 12.

Today Jehovah's Witnesses enjoy regular assemblies. Usually about 18 to 25 congregations are grouped together in what are called circuits, which are visited, or served, by traveling overseers. Twice a year, circuit assemblies are arranged where the congregations in a circuit, or part of that circuit, meet together on Saturday and Sunday.

Once a year, larger three- or four-day conventions, called district conventions, are arranged in each country, where thousands can be gathered together at one place. These conventions provide spiritual upbuilding for Jehovah's Witnesses and others interested in their activities, and they also give a public witness.

The program for these assemblies and conventions is prepared by the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses and is based on the needs of the Witnesses worldwide. It consists of

talks, discussions, and true-to-life presentations called demonstrations, presented by traveling overseers and qualified Witnesses from congregations. Various ones also relate experiences about how they are meeting the challenge of living as Christians in a godless world or what results they are having in the ministry. At district conventions there is an additional feature—live presentations in the form of Bible dramas or dramas in modern-day settings, depicting how Christians cope with problems they face today.

Also meals and refreshments are provided, for a small contribution. This allows for enjoyable fellowship when meetings are not in session. All the work involved in operating these events is done by volunteers from among Jehovah's Witnesses. The cost of the facilities and other expenses are covered by voluntary contributions. Admittance is free, and no collections are taken.

You can find out from the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses when and where these gatherings are scheduled in your area. Information will also be provided about any travel arrangements, as well as how to obtain rooming accommodations.

These assemblies and conventions help Jehovah's Witnesses and all associating with them to see beyond their local congregation and to appreciate the whole association of their brothers in the world.—1 Peter 2:17.

- What benefits did the early Bible Students gain from their conventions?
- Describe the arrangement and program for circuit assemblies and district conventions.

Traveling Overseers— Fellow Workers in the Truth

In the Christian congregation of the first century, there were traveling overseers who visited congregations to build them up. They gave of themselves, not seeking personal gain, that they might help those in the congregations to continue walking worthily of God.—Acts 11:23, 24; 14:21, 22; 15:32; 20:2, 31-35; Philippians 2:20-22, 29; 1 Thessalonians 2:5-12.

Today the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses also receive the benefits of traveling overseers. These men have many years of experience in the preaching activities of Jehovah's Witnesses and as overseers. They freed themselves of secular work and household responsibilities so that they could offer themselves in the full-time ministry. For those who are married, usually the wives have also shared in the ministry full time with their husbands.

A circuit overseer is assigned to care for a circuit with about 18 to 25 congregations. He visits each congregation in the circuit about twice a

year and after two or three years is assigned to another circuit. In this way the congregations can benefit from the varying experience and abilities of different circuit overseers.

The circuit overseer checks into the spiritual condition of the congregation and its activity. He gives several talks to the congregation and also meets with the elders and ministerial servants to consider how they can improve their service to the congregation.

During the week both he and his wife, if he is married, accompany the local Witnesses, helping them to improve in their house-to-house ministry. He and his wife will also visit newly interested people to encourage them in the faith. You can ask for such a visit.

The district overseer has similar spiritual qualifications and background of experience. He travels from circuit to circuit, rendering service each week in connection with

District overseer addresses a circuit assembly



Circuit overseers give instruction in preaching from house to house, talk to congregation elders, visit Bible studies with newly interested ones, address congregations

the circuit assemblies. He and his wife also work in the field ministry with the Witnesses in one of the congregations of the circuit he is visiting. He supervises the final preparation of the circuit assembly program and gives several talks during the assembly, including the public talk.

When the traveling overseers have concluded their visit in a congregation or a circuit, they continue on to visit another, following the same schedule, until all congregations or circuits have been visited in about six months; then they begin over again.

In many countries the traveling overseers travel by car or use public transportation. In other countries they may use a bicycle or even walk. The Society covers the transportation expenses of the traveling overseer and also provides him and his wife with a small allowance for their personal needs. Usually the traveling overseer and his wife are provided with rooming accommodations and meals by members of each congregation.

This service calls for a spirit of self-sacrifice. The traveling overseers and their wives are determined to render their service to the congregations without placing an expensive burden on them.—1 Thessalonians 2:9.

- What was the purpose of traveling overseers in the first-century Christian congregation?
- How have traveling overseers today become qualified and available for this ministry?
- Describe the service of the circuit and district overseers and how they live.



Full-Time Ministers Spearhead the Preaching Work

Possibly the first one of Jehovah's Witnesses to call on you was a full-time pioneer minister or a missionary. Since Jehovah's Witnesses do not have a paid ministry, you may have wondered how these people could engage in the ministry full time.

All of Jehovah's Witnesses who are dedicated and baptized are ministers, but the greater number have family or other obligations that prevent them from devoting more than a few hours a week to their ministry. However, thousands of Witnesses the world over have cut back on their standard of living so they can cover their reduced expenses with part-time work and then devote 1,000 hours or more a year to the ministry.

True, the full-time pioneer ministers do not have as much money to spend on themselves, but to them this is a way of seeking first God's Kingdom. And they receive many blessings. Just being able to talk to others about God's Word for 90

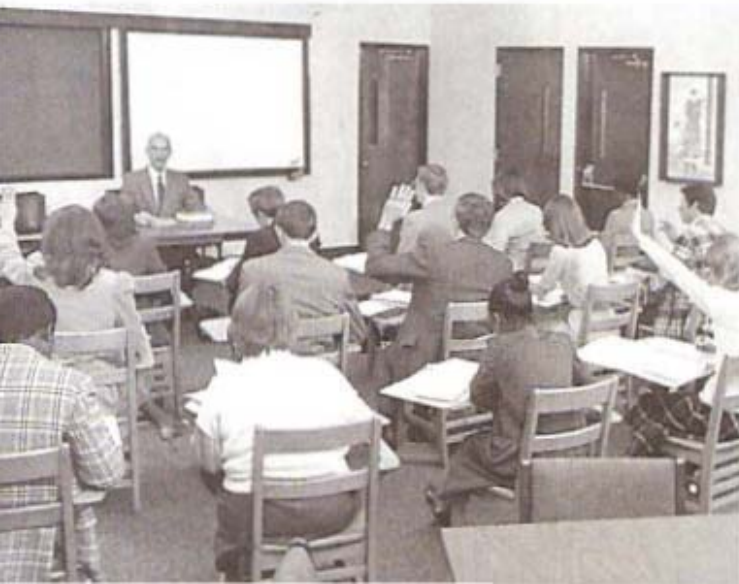
hours or so a month is a fine experience in itself. The full-time minister improves his skill in the ministry and also has the time to follow up on interest properly. This produces very encouraging results. They have what they need materially, and they appreciate very much what they have. —Matthew 6:33.

In February 1943, the Watch Tower Society established the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. The purpose was to train experienced full-time pioneer ministers to serve as missionaries in foreign countries. The five-month course consists of a concentrated study of the Bible, Bible history, Jehovah's organization, and related subjects in preparation for service in a foreign field.

The Society pays transportation to the missionary assignment and provides wholesome meals and modest living accommodations in missionary homes. It also supplies each missionary with a small allowance for per-

Left: Gilead School classroom, Brooklyn, N.Y., U.S.A.

Right: Missionary teaching God's Word in Papua New Guinea



Pioneer ministers and missionaries preaching God's Word in various countries

sonal expenses. The missionaries take their turn in the operation of the home by shopping, preparing meals, and cleaning. With this reasonable care the missionaries are able to devote at least 140 hours a month to preaching from house to house and conducting Bible studies with interested people.

Many of these missionaries are assigned thousands of miles away from home and family. They have had to adjust to a different living standard and culture, to new eating habits, to a different climate, and to speaking another language. They are doing this work because they love people and have a strong desire to help them to learn about God's Kingdom.

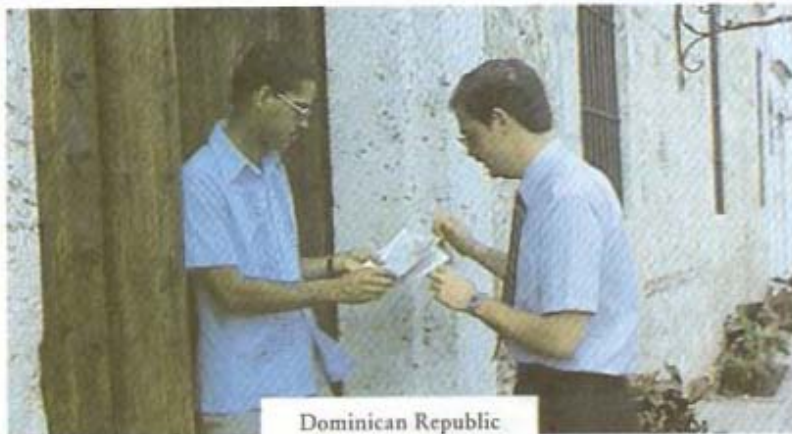
From 1943 through 1985, the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead conducted 80 classes and has sent out more than 6,000 missionaries. Under the supervision of the Society, these have spearheaded the expansion of Bible education throughout Africa, Central and South America, the Orient, and the South Pacific, and they have accomplished much in Europe.

Whether Jehovah's Witnesses engage in the ministry full time as pioneers or as missionaries or part time, they serve without financial gain. They are spending of their own time and money, and of themselves, to help others get the knowledge that leads to everlasting life.—John 17:3.

- How are some of Jehovah's Witnesses able to devote their full time to the ministry, and why do they do this?
- How are ministers trained for the missionary work?
- How are missionaries supported in their foreign assignment?



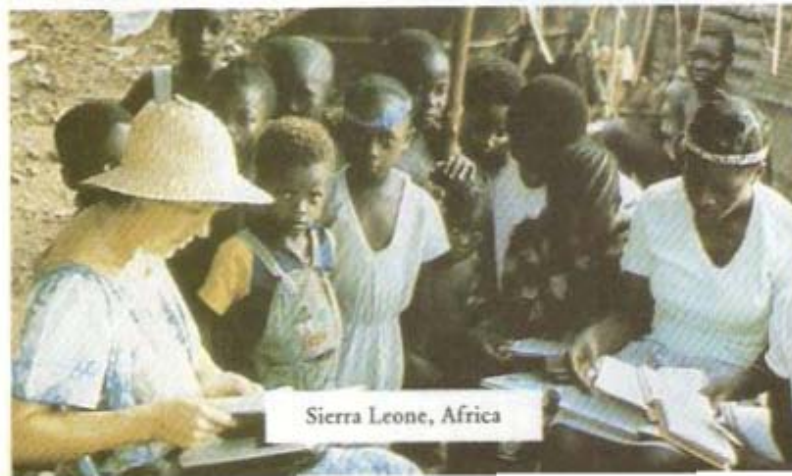
Brazil



Dominican Republic



Spain



Sierra Leone, Africa

Producing Bible Literature to Praise God

Volunteers performing tasks related to production of Bible literature at factory, home, office, and farm, in Brooklyn and Wallkill, New York, U.S.A.



Jehovah's Witnesses are well known for their preaching of God's Kingdom by means of the printed page. Since 1920 the Watch Tower Society has used volunteer workers from among the Witnesses to produce magazines and books for distribution. This has been to ensure a dependable production of literature at the lowest possible cost.

For some 60 years, the Society has developed and expanded its production of Bible literature, first in Brooklyn and then in other countries. All the work has been done by an increasing staff of volunteers.

By the late 1970's the traditional methods of processing and printing text were being phased out in favor of computer processing, phototypesetting, and offset printing. The problem here was that available commercial equipment could process only a limited number of languages. However, the Society was already produc-

ing literature in about 160 languages, and there was a need for more.

So, volunteers were called in to develop a multilanguage electronic phototypesetting system. The results were gratifying. The necessary technical breakthroughs were made, and a text-entry, composition, and phototypesetting system, called MEPS, was developed. This can process nearly 200 languages. More can be added.

Today MEPS text entry and graphics units, produced by Jehovah's Witnesses, are in use in 25 countries, and more are planned for. Volunteer workers from these countries have been trained to operate and maintain this equipment. The Society is now producing magazines in more than 100 languages in 36 countries, and in 5 of these countries bound books and Bibles are also being produced.

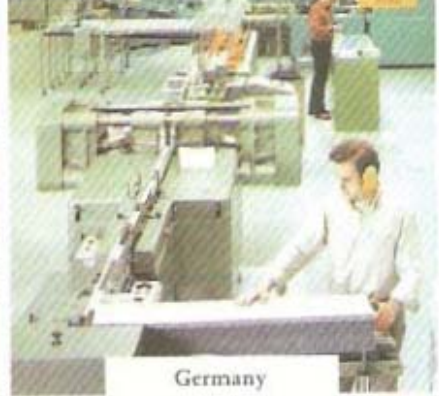
To do this work requires people—writers, translators, proofreaders, printers, bookbinders, and shipping



Volunteers performing various tasks directly or indirectly involved in production of Bibles and Bible literature



Spain



Germany



Finland



Canada



Denmark



Sweden



South Africa



Brazil



Netherlands



Australia

workers. Others must handle correspondence with the congregations. Some produce food, prepare meals, do cleaning, laundry, and so forth. All of this is handled by volunteer workers who make themselves available in the various countries. Around the world during 1985, there were 8,438 volunteer workers serving at the various offices, factories, homes, and farms.

Who are these people? They are men and women, single and married, young and old, all dedicated Jehovah's Witnesses. Some have been in this work 40, 50, and even 60 years. They spend an average of at least 44 hours a week at their work assignments, with extra time as needed. Evenings and weekends are devoted to preaching the good news from house to house, and to other congregation activities.

Around the world these workers are provided with modest rooming and meals at one of the Society's housing institutions, called Bethel Homes. In addition they receive a modest allowance to cover travel expenses in their ministry and a small amount for personal needs.

Since 1920, these volunteer workers have produced over nine billion Bibles, books, magazines, and pamphlets in about 200 languages for worldwide distribution. They are doing their part so that the everlasting good news can be declared as glad tidings to every nation and tribe and tongue and people.—Revelation 14:6, 7.

- What printing operations does the Watch Tower Society have, and why?
- Who do all this work, and how do they live?



C. T. Russell,
1884-1916



J. F. Rutherford,
1916-1942



N. H. Knorr,
1942-1977



F. W. Franz, 1977-

Shepherding God's Flock in Unity

Some ask: 'How is the worldwide congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses governed?' We answer: The governing arrangement follows the pattern of the Christian congregation of the first century.

In the 1870's Charles T. Russell and his associates took the initiative in spreading the results of their Bible study by means of talks and printed matter. Around the country, those who chose to associate with this work looked to Russell and his close associates as the body of men most experienced in doing the Lord's work and from whom they could seek counsel pertaining to their activities.

In 1884 Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society was incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Russell and his responsible associates were closely involved with directing this Society as well as the activities of the Bible Students. In 1909 they moved their headquarters to Brooklyn, New York. Through the years the directors of the Watch

Tower Society and other closely associated, spiritually qualified, anointed men have been serving as a governing body for Jehovah's Witnesses.

The Governing Body consists of a group of anointed Christian men (13 in 1986), including 7 serving on the board of directors of the Watch Tower Society. These preside over the worldwide activities of Jehovah's Witnesses. They are not inspired by God and hence are not infallible, but they rely on God's infallible Word as the highest authority on earth, and have a lifetime of experience in submitting to God's will. Each has a record of more than 40 years in the full-time ministry with Jehovah's Witnesses.

The Governing Body supervises what the Society publishes. What is written is based on observing the spiritual needs of the flock and is the result of prayerful and thorough study and research into God's Word. As these men continue to study the Bible and observe the progressive outworking of God's purposes, the ful-



A few of more than 90 branch offices through which Jehovah's Witnesses' worldwide activities are supervised

fillment of prophecy in world events, and the situation of God's people in the world, they may at times find it necessary to make enlightened adjustments in the understanding of some teachings. In this way, knowledge of truth becomes ever more abundant.—Psalm 97:11; Proverbs 4:18; Daniel 12:4.

The Governing Body has appointed a Branch Committee of three or more spiritually qualified men in each of the more than 90 branches earth wide to supervise activities in more than 200 lands and island groups. The branches communicate with the congregations under their supervision. There is regular communication between the Governing Body and the Branch Committees, and members of the Governing Body personally visit many branches each year so as to keep in touch with conditions.

These men are not masters over the faith of others but are ministers who work hard so that many others can learn about God's Word. They do not serve for financial gain, but they have their material needs provided the same as do all other members of Bethel families. Proof that they are serving faithfully is seen in the zeal, unity, high moral standards, and loyalty to Bible teachings displayed by Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide.—1 Corinthians 3:5-9; 4:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 1:24; 3:1-3; 1 Peter 5:2, 3.

- What governing arrangement developed?
- Who serve on the Governing Body today, and what are their responsibilities?
- How is the work supervised in other lands?



Canada



Zambia



Germany



Japan



Australia



Brazil

Financially Supported by Voluntary Contributions

All the activity previously described is supported by volunteer workers, thus keeping costs down. The house-to-house ministry and distribution of literature is done voluntarily by Jehovah's Witnesses. They pay for their own expenses. The elders who supervise the congregations, assisted by the ministerial servants, receive no payment for their services. They cover all their own expenses.

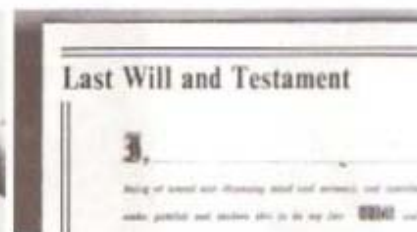
Even the members of the Governing Body and all others who work full

time in the preparation and production of Bibles and Bible literature receive only their room and meals and a small allowance to cover expenses. The same is true of the full-time traveling overseers.

The modest contributions received for literature for the most part cover only the basic costs of materials, production, and shipping. All other expenses are covered by voluntary financial contributions made by Jehovah's Witnesses themselves, through donation or by legal will.

At all meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses, whether local or at assemblies, there are contribution boxes available for those who wish to make contributions. No collections are taken. There are no dues or tithes that have to be paid. As laid down in the Scriptures, each one can contribute as he has resolved in his heart.—2 Corinthians 8:12; 9:7.

• How is all the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses supported financially?



Persecuted for Righteousness' Sake

You may hear from friends and relatives that Jehovah's Witnesses get into trouble with the law, that they are banned by some governments, or that they are otherwise bad people. Why this contrary talk about them?

It is not because the Witnesses disrespect the law but because they follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Jesus said to his disciples that men would reproach them, persecute them, and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against them. This is because God's chief opposer, Satan, is the god of this world, and he would like to turn men away from serving God.—Matthew 5:10-12; 10:16-22, 34-39; 24:9, 10; John 15:17-16:3; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:17.

When the apostles were arrested and taken to court, it was not because they were criminals, men of violence, or seditionists. It was because they were preaching the good news. When the apostle Paul appealed his case to higher courts, it was to defend and legally establish the right of Christians to preach the good news.—Acts 4:18-20; 5:28-32; Philippians 1:7.

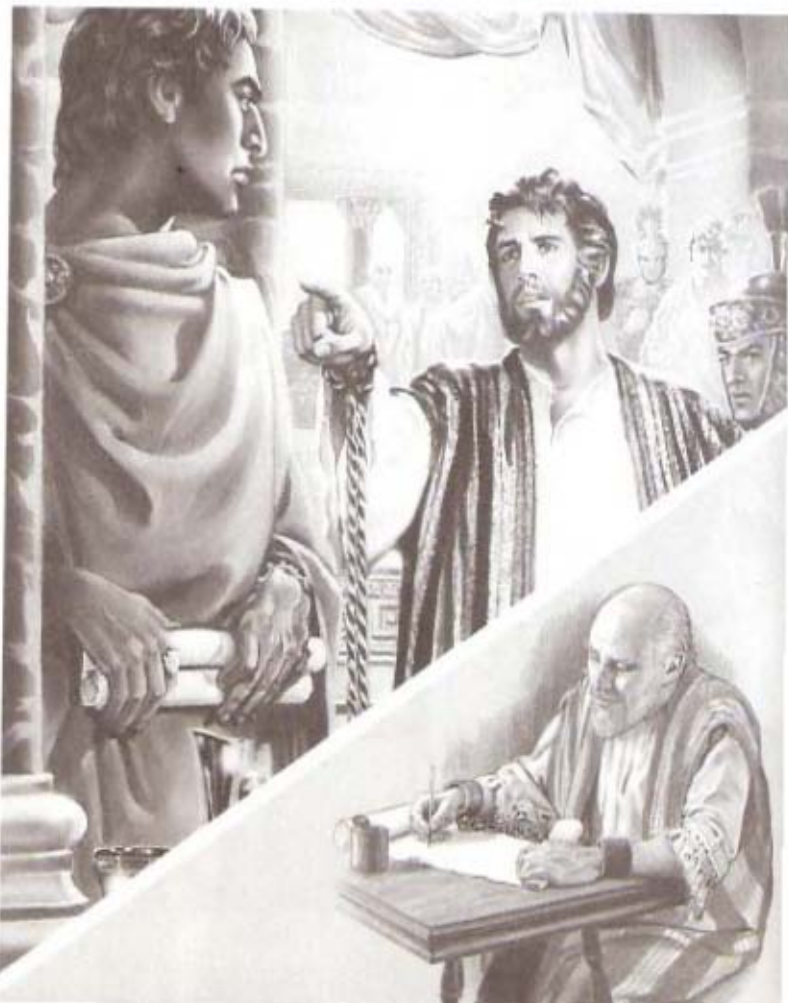
Today, Jehovah's Witnesses are law-abiding Christians who pay their taxes and show respect for those in authority. They pay back Caesar's things to Caesar and God's things to God. If they have a conflict with any governmental authority, it is because the government does not recognize their preaching work, or because of their neutral stand in affairs between the nations. But in this Jehovah's Witnesses must take the same position as did the apostles, who stated: "We must obey God as ruler rather than

men."—Acts 5:29; Mark 12:17; John 18:36; Titus 3:1, 2.

Jehovah's Witnesses do not seek persecution but would prefer to lead a calm and quiet life. However, if because of their following God's law and the example of Jesus Christ they are persecuted, they are happy to endure it.—Matthew 5:10-12; Acts 5:40, 41; 1 Corinthians 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:2; 1 Peter 3:14, 15; 4:12-16.

- Why are Jehovah's servants reproached and persecuted?
- Why do Jehovah's Witnesses sometimes come into conflict with governmental authorities, as did the Christian apostles?
- How do Jehovah's servants view persecution?

Jesus was haled before Pilate and the apostle Paul was imprisoned because of preaching God's Kingdom





Nigeria



Austria



Brazil



Japan



Canada



Guatemala

United in Doing God's Will

We hope that the information presented in this brochure about the ministry, meetings, and organization of Jehovah's Witnesses will encourage you the reader to associate more fully with them in worshiping God. We invite you to learn about the Witnesses firsthand by personally associating with a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses and attending their assemblies. This will contribute much to your understanding of God's will at this time.—Titus 2:11-14.

As you conform your life to the Bible's standard of fine works, you will also have the privilege of sharing with Jehovah's Witnesses in their activities. In addition to enjoying the warm fellowship of a worldwide association of brothers, you will be able to look forward to surviving the end of the present system of things into a new system where peace and righteousness will dwell.—2 Peter 3:13.

Views from 18 of the more than 200 lands and islands of the sea where Jehovah's Witnesses are united in doing God's will



Argentina



Germany



Taiwan



Finland



South Africa



India



United States



Fiji



Chile



Italy



Bolivia



Philippines

**"And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in
all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations."**

—Matthew 24:14.

