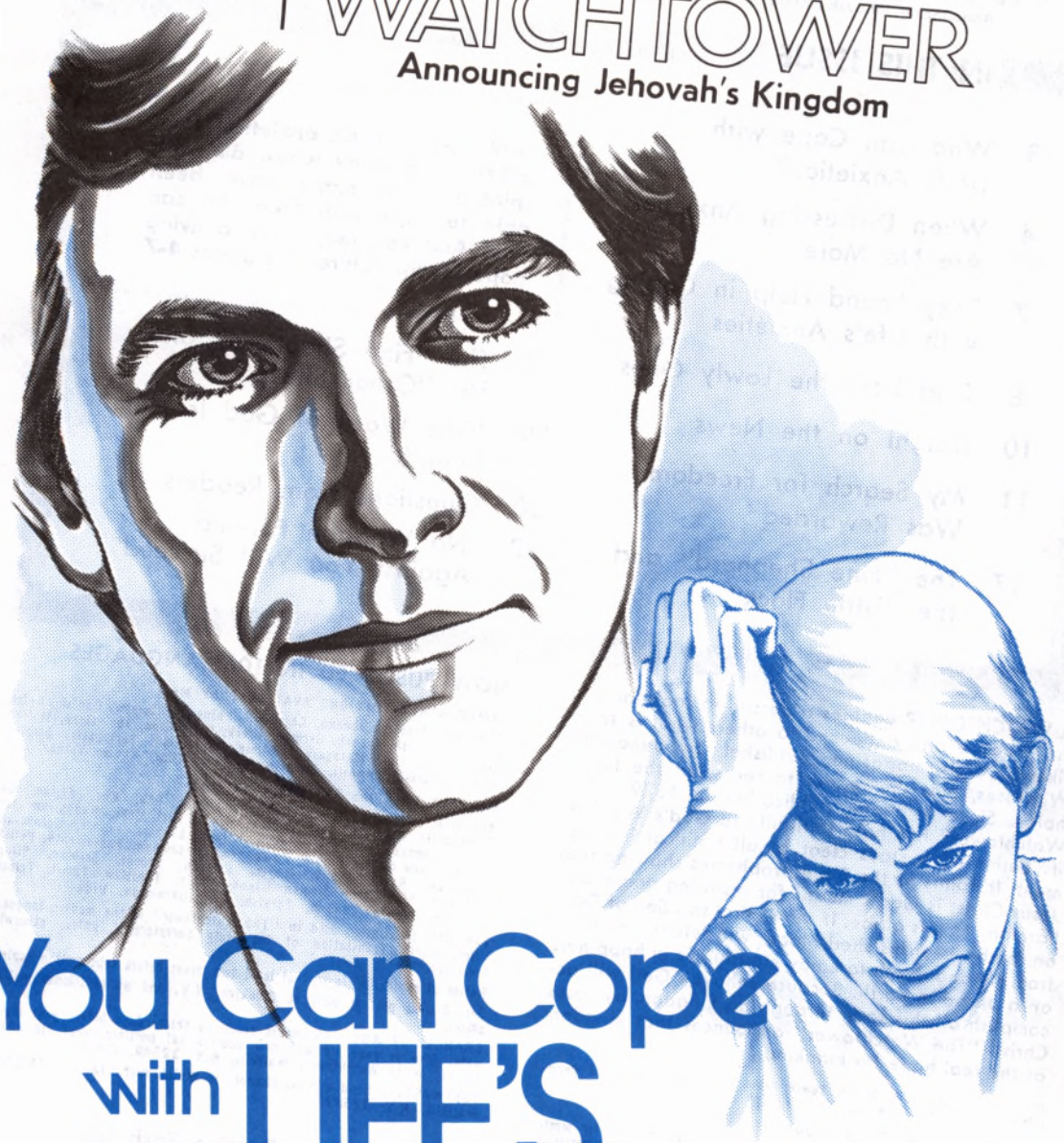
THE WATCHTOWER
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom
JULY 15, 1980



You Can Cope with LIFE'S ANXIETIES!

THE WATCHTOWER®
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

July 15, 1980
Vol. 101, No. 14

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A WATCHTOWER enables a person to look far into the distance and announce to others what is seen. Likewise, this magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, aids the reader to see what the future holds. Since it began publication in 1879, "The Watchtower" has held faithfully to God's Word as its authority. It stays clear of all political involvement. It points to the Bible prophecies showing that Jesus Christ is God's means for restoring peace and harmony to this globe. It shows that this Son of God, on the basis of his shed blood, will release mankind from sin and death to enjoy eternal life in happiness on a paradise earth. Because Jehovah God will accomplish all this soon through his kingdom by Jesus Christ, "The Watchtower" announces that kingdom as the real hope for mankind.

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Who Can Cope With Life's Anxieties?

"WHY can't the cleverest men of all countries get together and use their brains to make it a peaceful world? Why must there always be troubles and tensions somewhere?" These questions perturbed a noted actress. And it is not unlikely that many others have had similar thoughts. For people in general, life seems to be filled with such perplexing questions, as well as a host of anxieties.

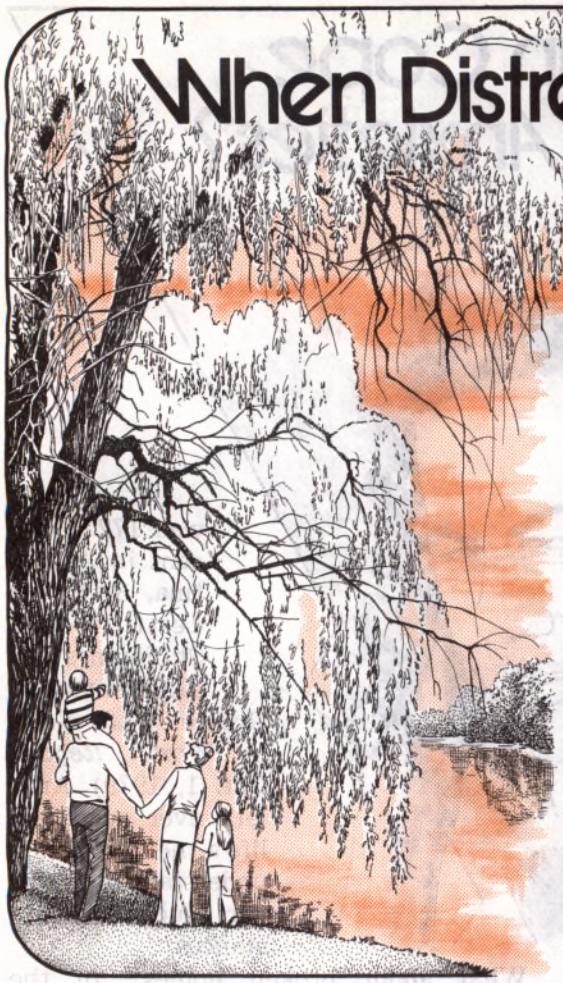
Nobody needs to tell you that mankind faces monumental problems. The cost of living has soared. A breakdown in family life has led to increased divorce, broken homes and at least some loss of parental control over children. Multitudes face ill health, while others suffer due to shortages of food, goods and energy. And people world wide are restless, fearful, anxious about the future.

Think, for instance, about the cost of living. During 1979, the rate of inflation was 172.6 percent in Argentina, 32.4 percent in the Philippines and 27.5 percent in Greece. (*U.S. News & World Report,* Oct. 1, 1979) Anxiety over acquiring life's necessities is understandable under such circumstances.

What about broken homes? In the United States, one in three marriages ends in divorce. The situation is similar in Russia, for the magazine *Soviet Life* has admitted: "On the average every third marriage is dissolved officially." Surely, the present-day breakdown in family life produces many anxieties.

No well-informed person will deny that in many parts of the earth people face shortages of food and goods. And energy problems exist world wide. Add to all of this the stockpiling of nuclear weaponry, and there seems to be good reason for anxiety about the future. Therefore, you may be inclined to ask, Who can cope with life's anxieties?

When Distressing Anxieties Are No More



ANXIETY has been defined as "painful or apprehensive uneasiness of mind usu[ally] over an impending or anticipated ill." Hence, an extremely anxious person experiences distress. And who enjoys being distressed?

EFFORTS AT OVERCOMING ANXIETIES

Hoping to cope with life's anxieties, many turn to tranquilizing drugs. For example, during one recent year, in the United States alone, about 57 million prescriptions were filled for just one type of drug—a tranquilizer. However, there are dangers to consider. Writing in the New York *Post* of April 26, 1978, Harriet Van Horne stated: "About 30 million women use tranquilizers, the [National Institute of Drug Abuse] reports, and 16 million take barbiturates. Last year 200,000 Americans entered drug abuse programs, and they were all taking prescription drugs." Actually, then, anxieties may be increased in this effort to cope with them.

Some turn to the accumulation of money in the quest for freedom from anxiety. Not long ago, an electronics technician in Toronto was enticed by advertisements to sell his house and put the entire sum ($50,000, Canadian) into lottery tickets. He won only $1,500 and two travel vouchers that expired the very day he got them. Clearly, a hoped-for accumulation of money may cause anxiety instead of relieving it.

Anxiety about the future weighs on the mind of many. For one thing, there is the ever-present danger that heavily armed nations eventually will use their deadly weapons, with disastrous consequences to mankind. The journal *To the Point International* said editorially: "Most Western military observers take it for granted that a showdown between East and West is inevitable. . . . Calculations have been made, down to the details, about the effects of a nuclear attack by the Soviet Union on the major cities of the United States . . . The theorists play with mind-boggling figures, like 70 million dead from a single devastating attack." Such words certainly do nothing to allay anxiety about the future.

So it goes. Anxieties multiply and persist, and each individual doubtless has his own private causes of distress. Was life meant to be that way?

ANXIETIES PART OF GOD'S PURPOSE?

No. It was not the original purpose of Jehovah God for humans to be weighed down with anxieties. Our first parents, Adam and Eve, did not find it difficult to acquire the necessities of life. Why, mankind's first home was a paradise that abounded with food! Jehovah had "made to grow out of the ground every tree desirable to one's sight and good for food." Paradise could have been spread earth wide and man could have passed on to his offspring sinless perfection, with the prospect of everlasting life amid security and abundance. But through disobedience to God, that first human pair lost eternal life and all that it promised.—Gen. 2:9, 16, 17; 3:1-7, 17-24.

Despite human sin and imperfection, however, God has made provision for mankind. If the people of ancient Israel were faithful to him, Jehovah promised to bless them so abundantly that the sowing of seed would overlap the harvest because of the great productivity. (Lev. 26:3-5; compare Amos 9:13.) Also, the apostle Paul could tell residents of Lystra: "God . . . did not leave himself without witness in that he did good, giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts to the full with food and good cheer." (Acts 14:15-17) For that matter, God arranged the weather cycles of the earth so as to assure a never-ending supply of good food. (Eccl. 1:6, 7) Under such circumstances, there would be no anxiety about life's necessities.

Besides providing amply for the needs of his servants, Jehovah is "the One executing judgment for the defrauded ones." (Ps. 146:7) It never was God's purpose that 'man should dominate man to his injury.' (Eccl. 8:9) So, if God's will were done on earth as it is in heaven, would there be reason for distressing anxiety about life's necessities or the security and welfare of those who love God? (Matt. 6:9, 10) No, indeed. Jehovah did not purpose that humans should be weighed down with anxiety.

REASON AND REMEDY FOR WORLD WOES

Jehovah God is not the Source of mankind's plaguing anxieties. Rather, these have resulted from the disobedience of our first human parents, Adam and Eve. For disobeying God, they lost their original intimacy with him, as well as their tranquillity. Sinful Adam could bequeath to his offspring only sin and imperfection, with all the anxieties that mar human life. (Rom. 5:12) But behind all of this was a spirit creature, Satan the Devil. This "original serpent" induced man to sin in the first place.—Gen. 3:14, 15; Rev. 12:9.

The Christian apostle John wrote of a time when Michael, or Jesus Christ, and his angels would oust the Devil and his demon angels from heaven. (Rev. 12:7-9) Then the apostle heard a loud voice in heaven that said, in part: "Be glad, you heavens and you who reside in them! Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time."—Rev. 12:12.

Yes, there is a reason for anxieties and world woes. But is there a remedy? Indeed there is! We are assured in the Scriptures: "For his part, the God who gives peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. May the undeserved kindness of our Lord Jesus be with you."—Rom. 16:20.

WHEN DISTRESSING ANXIETIES HAVE VANISHED

So, then, Jehovah God is perfectly capable of bringing distressing anxieties to

an end, and this he will surely do. Nineteen centuries ago, the apostle Peter urged fellow Christians to keep "Jehovah's day" in mind. We, too, need to have confidence in the fulfillment of the apostle's next words: "But there are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell." Indeed, we should conduct ourselves with the realization that the "day of Jehovah" is near, "at the doors," and we should be ready for it, for it will mean the removal of the present wicked system of things. Replacing it will be the marvelous new order that God has promised. —2 Pet. 3:10-13; Matt. 24:33, 34; Luke 21:34-36.

That new system of things will vanquish sorrow, distress and plaguing anxiety. What blessings will then flow to obedient mankind by means of God's heavenly kingdom under the Messianic King Jesus Christ!

When Jesus was on earth as a man, twice he multiplied bread and fish to feed thousands. And there were leftovers. (Mark 6:37-44; 8:1-9) So there will be no anxiety over food and drink under Kingdom rule.

What about clothing? No need for anxiety in that case either. After all, Jesus said to his disciples: "On the matter of clothing, why are you anxious? Take a lesson from the lilies of the field, how they are growing; they do not toil, nor do they spin; but I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. If, now, God thus clothes the vegetation of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much rather clothe you, you with little faith?" (Matt. 6:28-30) The answer is obvious. God can do it—and he will, in the new system he has promised.

Will providing adequate shelter then pose a problem? Not for Jehovah God, who prepared a paradise home for our first parents. He certainly can furnish suitable abodes for those trusting in him. And inhabitants of earth in the new system surely will not enjoy less than what was once foretold for God's people: "They will certainly build houses and have occupancy . . . They will not build and someone else have occupancy." (Isa. 65:21, 22) There will be no reason for anxiety over housing when God's will is done earth wide.

What about poor health, a cause of great anxiety for many? Well, God's Word assures us that Jehovah is able to remove diseases. (Deut. 7:15) According to one Gospel account, God's Son, Jesus Christ, "cured all who were faring badly; that there might be fulfilled what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He himself took our sicknesses and carried our diseases.' " (Matt. 8:16, 17; compare Isaiah 53:4.) Hence, there is no reason for undue anxiety about the removal of maladies under Kingdom rule.

But not only did Jesus perform numerous cures; he was able to dispel the distress associated with death. How? By resurrecting persons to life. For instance, think of the great relief from anxiety and grief experienced when he raised the son of the widow of Nain. (Luke 7:11-17) And what happiness there was when Jesus resurrected his friend Lazarus of Bethany! (John 11:1, 30-44) When on earth, Christ gave the assurance that 'those in the tombs would hear his voice and come out.' (John 5:28, 29) Surely, that promise is certain of fulfillment, since Jesus was able to raise the dead when on earth.—Acts 24:15.

The "day of Jehovah" will bring wickedness and great anxieties to an end. What a blessing that will be! How grand to live when there will be no anxiety over food, clothing and shelter, when illness will be replaced by radiant health, and when resurrections will replace mankind's march to death! Indeed, it will be a delight to live when distressing anxieties are no more.

They Found Help In Coping With Life's Anxieties

EVERY person alive has had his own set of anxieties. But there is a way of life that helps people to cope with such painful distress or mental uneasiness. Yes, it is possible to deal successfully with anxiety. How? By pursuing the Christian way of life.

Illness causes many people great anxiety. "I was in a terrible state with my health when Jehovah's Witnesses first called on me," said one woman in England, adding: "My nerves were in a very bad condition and I was taking 140 nerve tablets a month, besides smoking 40 cigarettes a day. The message of hope from the Bible was an enormous incentive to give up these habits, but it was a great struggle." She did succeed, however, and stated: "With Jehovah's help and spirit, I have been able to come in line with his requirements and I am looking forward to perfect health soon in his new order."

Peace has been so elusive that some have sought it with anxious concern. "I was looking for peace," said a certain young man in Canada, who also sought "true brotherly love." He investigated various religions, but was disappointed. In time, he "became more and more a slave to drugs," twice attempting to commit suicide. While in a hospital recuperating after the second attempt, the young man talked with an individual who was studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. Moved to read the Scriptures, this young person was impressed by the words of Joshua 1:8, and decided that he would follow what was said in the Bible. "Consequently," he reported, "I washed myself, got my hair cut, and immediately stopped taking drugs." Witnesses visited him regularly, and soon the young man was baptized in symbol of his dedication to Jehovah God. During an interview on the day of his baptism, he told a convention audience: "I have found peace and true brotherly love." Yes, his anxious search for peace and brotherly love had been rewarded by happy association with those pursuing the Christian way of life.

A broken marriage was just one of many anxiety-producing circumstances in the life of a certain young woman in the United States. Why, as a 10-year-old child of an alcoholic mother in a broken home, she had attempted to commit suicide! In later years, she wondered, 'What is the meaning and purpose of my life?' After the final breakup of her marriage to one man, the young woman again entered wedlock and came in touch with the Bible's message through her mother-in-law, one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Eventually, this resulted in dedication to God and baptism. Due to the loving concern shown by members of the congregation and the personal assistance of a particular Christian sister, this woman could say: "I feel for the first time in my life that I am a whole person. Before, my life was a wasted product of a bad environment. Now, however, I have a brand-new beginning. Rather than wanting to take my life, I have something to give to others . . . I've found a living hope in my personal relationship with Jehovah." Indeed, she had discovered the meaning of life, having found that "living hope."

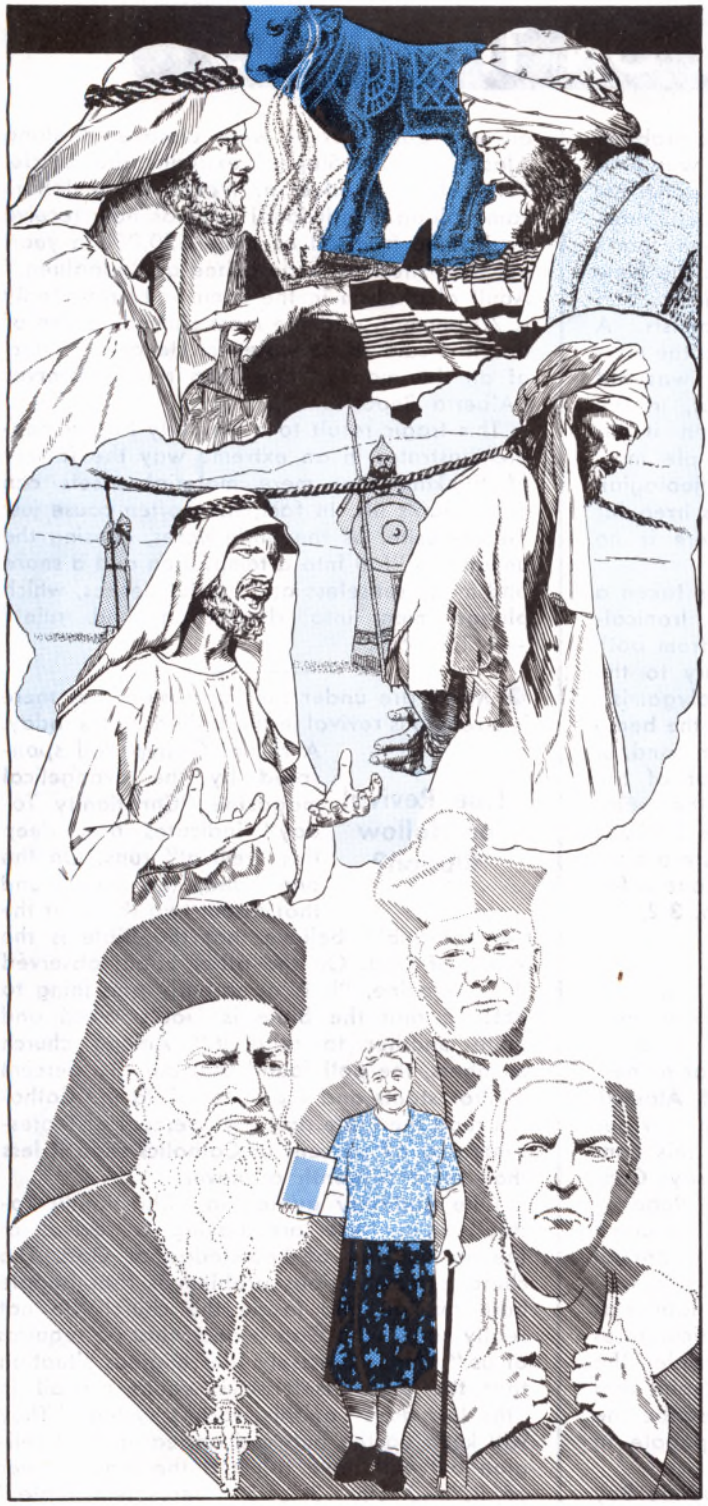
As noted earlier, the Scriptures promise a day when distressing anxieties will exist no more. Even now, however, through Jehovah's provisions many have found spiritual help in coping with life's anxieties.

GOD USES THE LOWLY ONES

THE home of Amos is in Tekoa, a town situated about 10 miles (16 km) south of Jerusalem. To the east lies the wilderness of Judah, with its rounded, barren hills, cleft by valleys and ravines. During the rainy season, the area produces meager vegetation. Here Amos has his employment as a humble sheep raiser. He also engages in seasonal work as a nipper of sycamore figs, pinching or puncturing the fruit to hasten its ripening and to increase its size and sweetness. —Amos 1:1; 7:14, 15.

While doing his shepherding work, Amos receives a call to serve as a prophet of Jehovah. Impelled by God's spirit, he heads northward into the territory of the 10-tribe kingdom of Israel. Courageously, Amos announces a message of doom for the royal house of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, and also foretells the exile of Israel.—Amos 6:7; 7:9, 11.

At Bethel, a center of calf worship, the prophesying of Amos greatly disturbs idolatrous priest Amaziah. Seeking to frighten Jehovah's prophet, he tells him: "O visionary, go, run your way off to the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and there you may prophesy. But at Bethel you must no longer do any further prophesying, for it is the sanctuary of a king and it is the house of a kingdom."—Amos 7:12, 13.



Emboldened by the spirit of God, Amos stands his ground. "I was not a prophet, neither was I the son of a prophet," he says, "but I was a herdsman and a nipper of figs of sycamore trees. And Jehovah proceeded to take me from following the flock, and Jehovah went on to say to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'" Then he declares to Amaziah the judgment that will befall him for opposing God's message: "As regards your wife, in the city she will become a prostitute [being violated by soldiers of the conquering army]. And as regards your sons and your daughters, by the sword they will fall. And as regards your ground, by the measuring rope it will be apportioned out [by those who will come to occupy the land]. And as regards you yourself, on unclean ground [outside the land of Israel] you will die."—Amos 7:14-17.

The choosing of Amos as Jehovah's prophet in the ninth century B.C.E. forcefully illustrates that the Almighty does not depend on the wise ones of the world to accomplish his work. Even today it serves God's purpose well to use the lowly ones who are willing to yield to his spirit. And how fearless they have been in proclaiming his name and kingdom! Thus the wise are put to shame. Jehovah God proves thereby that their wisdom is not needed. The abilities in which they pride themselves are shown up to be valueless. —1 Cor. 1:26-31.

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

Pope's African Dilemma

● During his recent trip to Africa one problem Pope John Paul II had to deal with was how far his Church had gone toward adapting to local marriage customs. "In many parts of the bush," reports the New York "Times," "priests and bishops are polygamists. A Belgian theologian in the capital asserted the other day that it was not polygamy in the strictest sense but, in the church's word, 'concubinage.' When it involved a clergyman, he said, multiple marriages were never formalized." The theologian also said: "Everyone recognizes it is irregular for a priest to have wives, so there is no ceremony."

On the other hand, the pope has taken a strong position advocating celibacy. Ironically, the positions of Church leaders from both Africa and the Vatican are contrary to the teachings of Christ and the Bible. Polygamists and those who live together without the benefit of marriage commit fornication and/or adultery. They were to be put out of the congregation—certainly not hold the office of priest or bishop. And, says the Catholic "Douay" Bible: "It behoveth therefore a bishop to be blameless, the husband of one wife" —not necessarily a celibate.—1 Tim. 3:2, 12; 4:3; Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 5:9-13.

Does Money Bring Happiness?

● The failure of social programs to help native populations in countries taken over by "civilization" is often blamed on lack of money. But the case of Alaskan Eskimos raises serious questions about this conclusion. In fact, says Canada's "Alberta Report," the Eskimos themselves commissioned research which "concluded that an oil-based annual income of a hundred million dollars is well on the way to totally destroying the natives as individuals and as a culture." The article notes that "just 15 years ago these people, the Inupiat, . . . largely maintained the spirit that caused many early explorers to describe the original Eskimos as the happiest people in the world." What happened?

"In the late 60's, the massive Prudhoe Bay oil and gas reserves were discovered along Alaska's North Slope," explains the article. "The whites flooded in. Worse, white dollars came along." Individual Eskimos now receive an income from oil of some $20,000 a year, yet their situation is described as "appalling." Adult alcoholism in the community reportedly is 70 percent, and the most common cause of death is said to be violence. Hence the effect of all this money "has been ruin," observes "Alberta Report."

This tragic result to a formerly happy people illustrates in an extreme way the fallacy of thinking that mere material assets can solve man's ills. In fact, they often cause just the opposite, as the Bible notes, causing the unwary to "fall into a temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin." —1 Tim. 6:9.

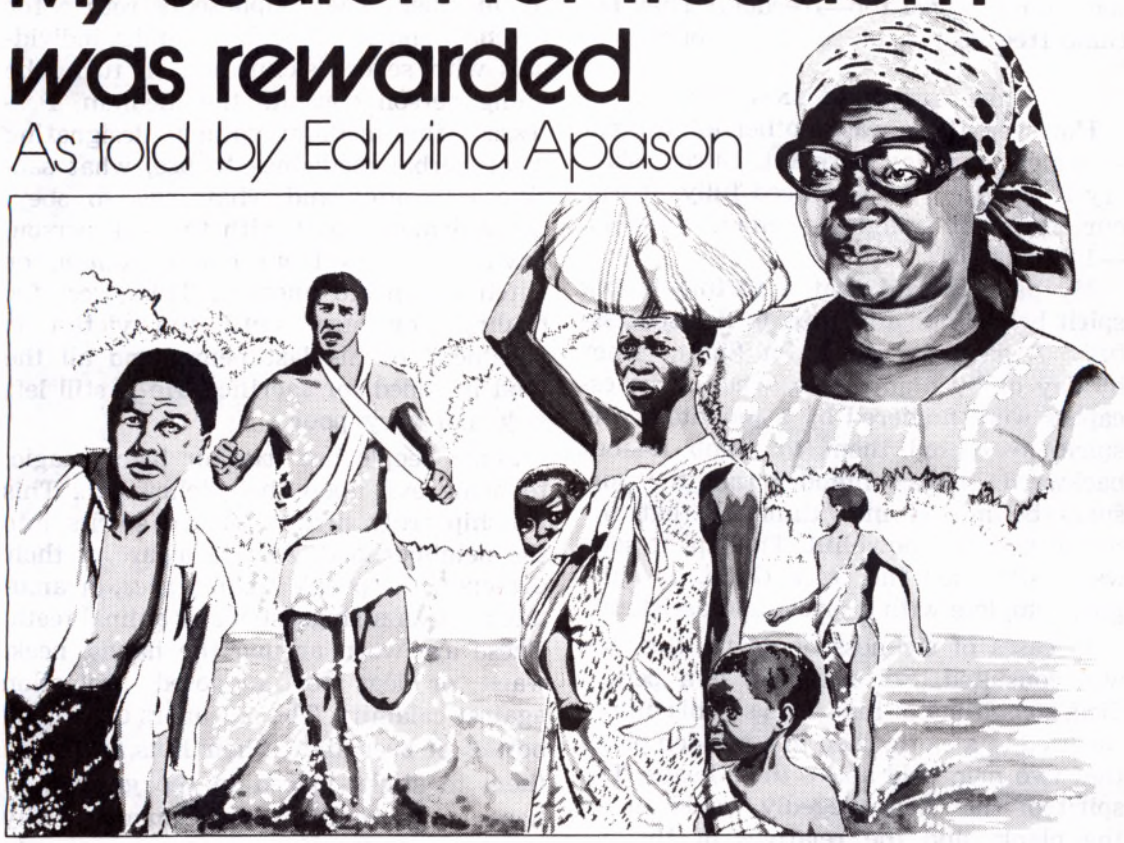
True Revival or Hollow Illusion?

● Many are under the impression that there is a religious revival in the United States today. A recent Gallup Poll sponsored by the evangelical magazine "Christianity Today" indicates how deep this "revival" runs. On the one hand, the poll found that about two thirds of the general public believe that the Bible is the Word of God. On the other hand, observed the magazine, "It is apparently one thing to BELIEVE that the Bible is God's Word and quite another to read it." Among church members, the poll found that only 18 percent of Protestants and 4 percent of Roman Catholics read the Bible daily; 41 percent of Protestants and 67 percent of Catholics read it less than once a month or never.

One authority quoted in "Christianity Today" said: "We are having a revival of feeling but not of knowledge of God. The church's most serious problem is that people both outside and inside the church do not really know who God is and what he requires of us." This is precisely the religious situation that the Bible itself says would prevail in "the last days" of this world's system: "They will keep up the outward appearance of religion but will have rejected the inner power of it."—2 Tim. 3:1, 5, "Jerusalem Bible."

My search for freedom was rewarded

As told by Edwina Apason



"NOW is the time," whispered an old slave. Under the protective cover of darkness, a small band of black slaves dared to flee from a coffee plantation in the northern part of Suriname. Exasperation, tension, despair and yet hope lined their faces. Children clung to their mothers, already loaded down with utensils stolen from the plantation. Axes and machetes were carried by the men.

"Faster, faster! Do not stop!" That was the cry. To be caught meant being taken back to the plantation to be tortured or killed. The vast jungle appeared impenetrable; yet there was no choice but to go deeper. The machetes were wielded, hacking farther southward into the jungle. Day and night the runaways struggled to keep at least one step ahead of their well-armed pursuers, sent by the plantation owner. Any burden that hampered their speed had to be left behind. Sadly, the crying of some abandoned babies echoed in the jungle. Finally, after many months of hardship, the fugitives reached the Tapanahony River, 200 kilometers (125 miles) away.

In succession, more *maroons,* or runaway slaves, followed this example. They spread themselves along the river according to *los,* or families, forming highly regulated communities headed by a *Gran Man,* the head chief. Those fugitives of over 250 years ago were my ancestors, and they formed the Aucaner tribe. In the

face of great hardship and the endangerment of their lives, they finally gained something longed for—freedom! They became free people, or so they thought.

FREE, BUT STILL ENSLAVED

However, there was another kind of enslavement that lay dormant. During slavery it could not be practiced fully. It was our form of religion—demon worship. —1 Cor. 10:20.

My parents said that a fortune-telling spirit helped our ancestors to flee successfully. It gave the signal for flight, either by day or by night. Also, when some escapees were hindered by a mountain, the spirit instructed them to climb it—but backward. It was intended that the pursuers be misled into thinking that the slaves had fled downhill. This spirit soon was proclaimed the *Gran Gado,* or chief god, complete with a priest and assistants.

In cases of sickness or death, this god was consulted. For instance, if a person died, something of his—let's say his hair—was tied to a cloth, then to a wooden plank that two men held above their heads. The spirit of the dead allegedly would sit on the plank, and the relatives of the deceased might ask: "Did you die by sickness?" If the plank gravitated backward, the answer was No. Another question: "Has someone killed you by magic?" If the plank went forward, that meant Yes. "Who killed you?" At that, the men under the spirit's power would run to a certain house, thus identifying the murderer. Then the *Gran Gado* was consulted to verify the verdict.

The *Gran Gado,* though, is not the sole deity of the Aucaner tribe. They also worship trees, animals and stones. Furthermore, to pacify dead ancestors, offerings of food and rum are placed around a prayer pole erected in the center of the village. The people also obey the *koenoe,* or teaser, operating through a human medium. These teasers are believed to be persons who had been murdered by a family member. They supposedly return for revenge, and are thought to afflict individuals with severe sicknesses. In turn, the ailing person consults the medium. Possessed, the medium speaks, designating what herbal medicines to use, what sacrifices to offer and what laws to obey. Some demons sport with the sick person, having him go from one *obia-man,* or witch doctor, to another. This quest for healing continues until the victim is "drained" of his last penny and all the food intended for sacrifice. He is still left sick and very poor.

Some people use *wisi,* or black magic, to bring evil upon their fellowman. This worship truly invites wicked spirits into the neighborhood. Always aware of their presence, the people wear *tapoes,* or amulets made of strings, shells or animal teeth. These are worn around the hands, neck, waist or legs for supposed protection against calamity. The Aucaners even hang bottles of beer above their huts, or fasten them to sticks placed in the ground, in hope of preventing crop damage. Daily these people live, eat, work and sleep in dread. And any individual's change from this way of living certainly causes a stir in the village.

In Coming Issues

- **Confident in a World Beset by Doubts**
- **The "Great Crowd" Renders Sacred Service Where?**
- **Cherubs in Israel's Worship —Why No Idolatry?**

THE WAY WE LIVE

This was my environment for about 48 years. Since there was no school in my home village, Godo-olo, everyone was illiterate. However, at a very early age our parents trained us to develop skills. We girls learned the household arts of baking, cooking and washing. Then we began 'flexing our muscles' to cultivate the ground, gather wood and chop it with an ax. We learned how to paddle the *kroejara,* a dugout canoe, not only in quiet waters but through rapids and waterfalls. In time, our physical stature easily rivaled that of any man! On the other hand, the boys learned to master boat making, hunting, tree cutting, fishing and wood carving.

According to our customs, girls around the age of 14 or 15 are promised to a man, and later they live together. My parents chose a man for me, but I did not like him. As matters eventually turned out, the man to whom I am now married is the father of nine of the 11 children I bore. Incidentally, he is old enough to be my father.

Being a person who liked to get things done, I often took the lead in various duties undertaken by women. This included maintaining the village and looking after the sick and the elderly. Subsequently, the *kapiten,* or village head, asked me to be his female *basja,* or assistant. That brought added responsibilities. One is in connection with the burial of the dead, which is a drawn-out ceremony since the corpse is not immediately buried.

Superstitiously, men serving as gravediggers fear that if their beads of perspiration should fall into the grave this would spell their own death. Of course, under the hot sun it takes very little movement to start perspiring. Besides that, the grave is not in the village locale but at a distance that requires a boat trip. So every day they paddle to the gravesite and dig a little. Since the corpse is not embalmed, it does cause an unbearable stench. Incidentally, the coffin is built in such a way as to catch the liquid that exudes from the body. This, in turn, is poured into a hole along the border of the village. For common people, burial takes five days or more; in the case of a village head, 10 or more. But for the *Gran Man,* the burial ceremony requires three months. For all those days, the women must cook food for perhaps 30 or more gravediggers, plus the drummers, dancers and mourners, as well as for the dead.

HOW A CHANGE CAME ABOUT

In 1959, my man and I traveled the river by canoe, going over waterfalls and through rapids. After five days, we reached Albina, at the eastern border of Suriname. There, we visited a good friend of ours, an *obia-man.* That day, however, he was listening to a 20-year-old man explaining pictures from a book. The young man invited me to listen, and I can still vividly recall his words. From pictures in the Watch Tower publication *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained,* I learned that God originally placed man and woman in a paradise. Through their disobedience, that paradise was lost. But its restoration was sure, for while on the stake, Jesus Christ promised an evildoer: "Truly I tell you today, You will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43) I believed that too. Jesus, the Son of God, could never lie. In my heart burned a great desire to be in that paradise.

For the next seven months, the young man patiently explained the features of each picture in the *Paradise* book, sometimes doing so for two hours or more twice a week. Progressively, true religion became clear and it became evident that I was a prisoner to false worship. Could sufficient courage and strength be summoned to break away from that worship?

Continued study and association with a small group of interested persons began to build my newfound faith in the Grand Creator, Jehovah.

The first person to discourage me was my man, who showed no interest in what I was learning. He understood that this new religion required following a high standard in marriage. So he decided that we should return home, where I lost all contact with Jehovah's Witnesses for the next seven years. But Bible-based hope was very much alive in my heart. Upon returning home, I immediately taught my mother, father and other relatives what I had learned. My parents proved to be a support. Two years thereafter, my father died with the paradise hope, and my mother later became a witness of Jehovah.

FACING SEVERE TESTS

Then came an unexpected test. Three of my children took very ill, becoming unconscious. So a witch doctor was consulted. He said that a black-magic spell had been placed on our plot of farmland, causing the sickness. The witch doctor claimed that he had done away with the spell, but when we returned home, the sickness became more severe. Within a week, both my three-year-old and my eight-year-old died. The third child was going the same way.

Having been notified of the deaths, the *Gran Man* summoned us. On consulting his *Gran Gado,* it was indicated that a teaser was the culprit. I was advised to worship the teaser by giving the woman medium rum and food and wrapping her with *pangi,* or loin cloths. It was said that my refusal to do this would mean that the child I was then carrying would die at birth. Nevertheless, I refused, believing that the demons had caused the death of two of my children.

At the birth of my child, one of his arms was out of joint at the shoulder. The distorted arm apparently resulted from my continuously hurling myself to the ground out of deep sorrow over the death of my children. By plane, we went to the capital where his handicap was corrected. My confidence in Jehovah was flourishing and I had pleased him by not yielding to false worship.

A later pregnancy ended in a miscarriage. Usually in such a case, the *obia-man* is sought out for protection. But instead of doing that, I went to the capital for recuperation. After recovering, I set out to find the Witnesses, but without success.

On returning home, I continued witnessing from my worn-out *Paradise* book. Having decided to get baptized, I informed the village heads that I no longer would participate in idolatrous festivities. The villagers advised my man to accompany me to the capital for my baptism, as they thought there was the possibility that I would leave for good. Therefore, he went along.

When I began to attend Christian meetings, my man put up an argument. My reply? "If you don't accompany me, I will have to leave you one day to fulfill my heartfelt longing to serve Jehovah." To my surprise, he accompanied me to the meeting. Then he began to study the Bible. How wonderful it was when we later brought our lives into harmony with Jehovah's laws by getting legally married! Then came my baptism, and subsequently that of my husband.

Our stay in the capital helped us to gain further knowledge to fortify our faith. However, due to economic pressure we moved 60 kilometers (38 miles) from the city, to cultivate a plot of land that produced bountifully. But what a loss for us and others when a bulldozer came to destroy the plots for a project! We returned to the city, where I began serving as a regular pioneer (a full-time Kingdom pro-

claimer). During that time, other Witnesses taught me to read and write. Then, by reading from my own Bible in the native language of Suriname, I reached many people from different tribes when they came to the city seeking employment. After three years, with my husband's cooperation, I was privileged to become a special pioneer. What blessings we enjoyed as a family! Of four daughters and one son who were baptized, one became a regular pioneer and two others, special pioneers.

FACING ANOTHER TEST

Once, when conducting a Bible study, I received a shocking message. While participating in a protest demonstration, my oldest son, who was not a Witness, had been shot to death. This painful loss triggered more strain, for my relatives said: "If you don't follow the mourning customs, you have no motherly feelings for your son." As the mother, custom required that I cut my hair, wrap my head in a white scarf, wear mourning clothes for months, walk deliberately slow and talk softly in a muffled voice for a year—all of this to show the people and the supposed 'spirit of the dead' that I really was sad. Yet, if I were to do these things, surely my preaching would be in vain and I would lose my clean conscience before God. However, Jehovah came to my help through the constant attention of fellow believers.

To calm a possible revolt of Aucaners, the government provided the liquor and food required for my son's funeral and brought the corpse to my village to be buried according to tribal customs. In honor of my son, the labor union even erected a memorial stone in the capital's center. But my hope is that Jehovah may remember him in the resurrection.—Acts 24:15.

After some months, it was time for the mourning period to end with traditional feasting, dancing and the offering of liquor and food. Finally, all the mourners take an herb bath prepared by the witch doctor. As the mother, I had to go to my village again, but did so a month early so as to explain my nonparticipation. Some tried to scare me, saying: "The spirit of your son will harm you." But I firmly pointed out that the herb bath could not wash away the grief. Also, it was a delight to tell attentive persons about the new system of things.

JEHOVAH ANSWERS THE CHALLENGE

Shortly thereafter, I received a new special pioneer assignment—to Godo-olo, my birthplace. I went to the village head to remind him of my earlier promise to come back after baptism. It had taken six years to fulfill that promise, but he was very happy about my return. My home village was ripe for cultivation. Soon 20 Bible studies were started with men, women and sometimes whole families, including my relatives. From these studies, 11 individuals became dedicated and baptized Christians. Among them was the woman who had been the medium of the teaser to whom I was supposed to render worship after the death of my two children.

Permit me to relate just one more experience. In 1972 a certain man became possessed by a demon, a spirit apparently more powerful than the one of the *Gran Gado*. With magic power, this man killed anyone opposing him, using his magic stick like a gun. Soon the loyalty of the people switched from the "dethroned" *Gran Gado* to the new god of this man. Many villagers had him come and place a wooden pillar in their village, supposedly guaranteeing that there would be no more deaths there for five years. But the village of Godo-olo invited him for yet another purpose. Although opposing villagers had tried to silence us (a small group of Witnesses) by tearing down our huts and

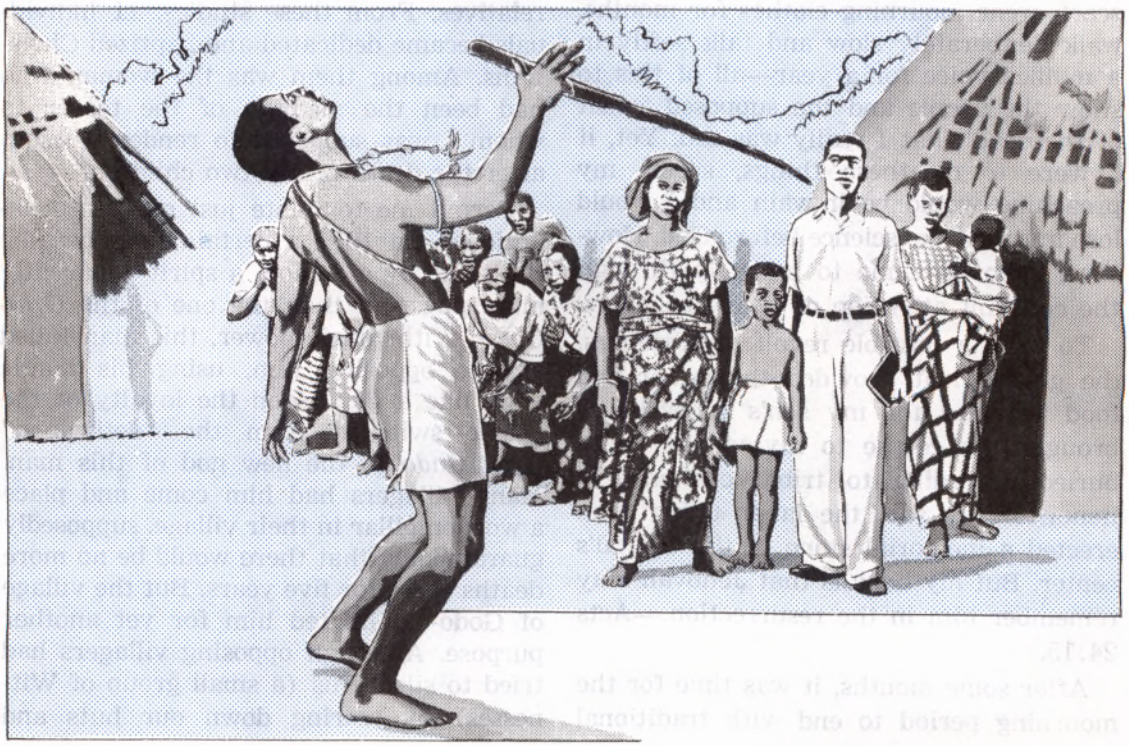
beating us, we kept on talking about Jehovah. Threateningly, they told us: "Today the powerful priest will arrive and all of you will die!" But we confidently responded: "We are not afraid. We will not run away, because you will see that Jehovah, our God, is stronger!"

Soon the witch doctor arrived with his entourage of dancers and drummers. We Christians gathered together and waited calmly, relying on Jehovah's protection. (Ps. 34:7) The drumbeats became louder, wilder. There came the witch doctor, stirred up by the demon. The man stopped, facing us. Uttering his magic formulas, he projected his stick at us. "Now they will die!" screamed the onlookers. But we stood firm, and the witch doctor fell to the ground. He had fainted!

Great confusion developed among the opposers. Very embarrassed, the crowd whisked the witch doctor away and tried to revive him. Indeed, Jehovah's name had proved to be a "strong tower." (Prov. 18:10) From then on we were able to start more Bible studies. Later, I met the witch doctor during my hut-to-hut witnessing. We had a two-hour discussion, and he admitted: "Jehovah is stronger."

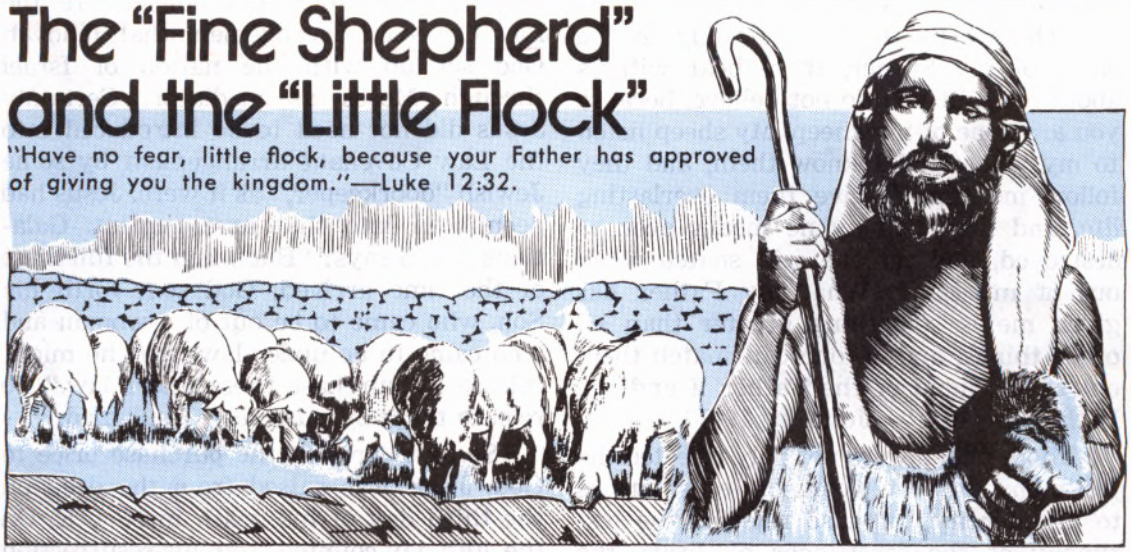
In Godo-olo there now is an active congregation of 27 publishers and three special pioneers. And on April 15, 1979, a Kingdom Hall built by the hands of spiritual brothers and sisters—yes, and by the tiny hands of children too—was dedicated to Jehovah. How thankful we are that his spirit is upon us and that there apparently remain further opportunities to make disciples in this neighborhood!

My ancestors struggled for freedom. But I have found spiritual liberty. It is freedom from false worship. What joys and blessings come from practicing true religion! And just think! Lovers of Jehovah will be able to worship him in real freedom forever.



The "Fine Shepherd" and the "Little Flock"

"Have no fear, little flock, because your Father has approved of giving you the kingdom."—Luke 12:32.



THE onetime shepherd boy of Bethlehem, King David, opened up one of his inspired psalms with the words: "Jehovah is my Shepherd. I shall lack nothing." (Ps. 23:1) A fellow Bible writer, the prophet Isaiah, also likens Jehovah to a shepherd, saying: "Like a shepherd he will shepherd his own drove. With his arm he will collect together the lambs." (Isa. 40:11) But Jehovah has an undershepherd. Appropriately he calls him "David my servant."

[2] Hundreds of years after King David had died, Jehovah inspired another Bible writer, Ezekiel, to prophesy: "And my servant David will be king over them, and one shepherd is what they will all come to have; . . . and David my servant will be their chieftain to time indefinite." (Ezek. 37:24, 25) That prophecy must refer to Jehovah's undershepherd, the Greater David, Jesus Christ. On the night of Nisan 14, 33 C.E., when Jesus Christ was betrayed and taken into custody and brought to trial before his enemies, there came the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah 13:7: " 'O sword, awake against my shepherd, even against the able-bodied man who is my associate,' is the utterance of Jehovah of armies. 'Strike the shepherd, and let those of the flock be scattered.' " Jesus Christ himself applied the prophecy that way.—Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27.

[3] Jesus Christ was therefore quite in order, and not self-assuming, when he made a comparison of himself with a shepherd and called himself "the fine shepherd." (John 10:6, 11, 14) This occurred in connection with his miraculously curing a man that had been born blind. Unbelievers of his own people disputed with him over this, and they asked: "We are not blind also, are we?" What followed this challenging question? "Jesus said to them: 'If you were blind, you would have no sin. But now you say, "We see." Your sin remains.' " (John 9:40, 41) Some time later, during the festival of the dedication of the temple of Jerusalem, in the wintertime (December) of 32 C.E., Jesus said to cer-

1. To what do the psalmist David and the prophet Isaiah liken Jehovah as a caretaker?
2. (a) Who is the David to whom Ezekiel 37:24, 25 applies? (b) How did Jesus apply the prophecy of Zechariah 13:7, and why so?
3, 4. (a) Why did sin remain with those Jews who disputed with him regarding his cure of the man born blind? (b) Later, at the wintertime festival of dedication of the temple, why did not Jesus classify the Jews disputing with him among his "sheep"?

tain unbelieving Jews who encircled him:

[4] "The works that I am doing in the name of my Father, these bear witness about me. But you do not believe, because you are none of my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give them everlasting life, and they will by no means ever be destroyed, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is something greater than all other things, and no one can snatch them out of the hand of the Father. I and the Father are one."—John 10:19-30.

[5] Those unbelievers not only rejected the testimony that the works of Jesus bore as to his identity, but also rejected the testimony of the forerunner of Jesus, the man who introduced Jesus to the Israelites as the Messiah, the Christ. Jesus referred to the need for the true shepherd to have such identification or credentials, when he said: "Most truly I say to you, He that does not enter into the sheepfold through the door but climbs up some other place, that one is a thief and a plunderer. But he that enters through the door is shepherd of the sheep. The doorkeeper opens to this one, and the sheep listen to his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has got all his own out, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice. A stranger they will by no means follow but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers."—John 10:1-5.

"THE SHEEPFOLD" AND "THE DOORKEEPER"

[6] What, now, do "the sheepfold" and "the doorkeeper" mean, inasmuch as Jesus became a carpenter at Nazareth and never was a shepherd of literal sheep? First of all, the "sheepfold" did not picture the Law Covenant arrangement that Jehovah God set up with the nation of Israel through Moses as mediator. Certainly Jesus did not need to be introduced into the Law Covenant arrangement by some Jewish "doorkeeper," as it were. Jesus had been born into that arrangement. Galatians 4:4, 5 says: "But when the full limit of the time arrived, God sent forth his Son, who came to be out of a woman and who came to be under law, that he might release by purchase those under law." To release them by purchase, Jesus died.

[7] So as to present the purchase price to God, Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day of his death in 33 C.E. On the 40th day counted from his resurrection day Jesus ascended back to heaven. Ten days after that came the Jewish springtime festival of Pentecost, Sivan 6, 33 C.E. On that day God used him in pouring out holy spirit upon his disciples waiting in Jerusalem. This meant that he had appeared in God's presence to offer the value of his perfect human sacrifice in order to release by purchase all humans sold under sin, including Jews. Accordingly, on that day, Jehovah God abolished the Law covenant and replaced it with the promised new covenant, making it not with Jews but with the spirit-begotten disciples of the Mediator, Jesus Christ. (Col. 2:13, 14) Thus there was no longer any Jewish Law covenant out from under which the Shepherd Jesus might lead believing Jews.

[8] In the light of the above, the question presents itself even more insistently, What does the "sheepfold" mentioned by Jesus in John 10:1 truly symbolize? Unquestionably it must represent something earlier

5. In John 10:1-5, to what did Jesus liken the forerunner who would introduce him to Israel?
6. Why was the symbolic "sheepfold" into which the "doorkeeper" introduced him not the Law Covenant arrangement?
7. (a) On what day in 33 C.E., did Jehovah abolish the Law Covenant arrangement with Israel, and why? (b) Why, from Pentecost of 33 C.E. onward, was there no Law Covenant arrangement out from under which Jesus might lead the Jews?
8. (a) What, therefore, did the "sheepfold" represent? (b) So, for what were the natural offspring of Abraham looking?

and more comprehensive and longer lasting than the Law covenant of 1513 B.C.E. That was the Abrahamic covenant. When the patriarch Abraham crossed the Euphrates River into the Promised Land in 1943 B.C.E., God's promise went into effect toward him and his future offspring: "I will bless those who bless you, and him that calls down evil upon you I shall curse, and all the families of the ground will certainly bless themselves by means of you." (Gen. 12:3) Years later, when Abraham showed willingness to offer up his son Isaac in sacrifice, God added to his promise: "And by means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves due to the fact that you have listened to my voice." (Gen. 22:17, 18) From then onward the descendants of Abraham began looking for that "seed" to come. So the "sheepfold" symbolized the Abrahamic Covenant arrangement. The sheeplike ones embraced within it would picture those waiting for the promised "seed" to come.

[9] Whether such sheeplike ones knew about the "seed" beforehand or not, they would welcome it when it was made known and presented to them. Anyone trying to get ahold of those "sheep" by false means in order to exploit them would be "a thief and a plunderer." The "doorkeeper" of the sheepfold would not introduce such a false Christ or Messiah. Anyone getting past that "doorkeeper" and through the "door" would be the true "shepherd," the Abrahamic "seed."

[10] Who, though, was that "doorkeeper"? It proved to be John the Baptizer, a man of the priestly family of the tribe of Levi. God had promised to send a forerunner ahead of the promised "seed" of Abraham. In Malachi 3:1 it was foretold: " 'Look! I am sending my messenger, and he must clear up a way before me. And suddenly there will come to His temple the true Lord, whom you people are seeking, and the messenger of the covenant in whom you are delighting. Look! He will certainly come,' Jehovah of armies has said." (Mark 1:1-11) John was therefore looking for the coming of the promised 'seed of Abraham' and, accordingly, he was a sheeplike person the same as those who were in the sheepfold of the Abrahamic Covenant arrangement. However, John was put to death after a year or more of his special ministry. So he did not survive till Pentecost of 33 C.E. to become one of the "little flock" of anointed heirs of the heavenly kingdom.—Matt. 11:11-14; 14:1-12; Luke 12:32; Gal. 3:16.

[11] In discussing what part John the Baptizer played in the outworking of Jehovah's purpose, Jesus said to the Jews: "This is he concerning whom it is written, 'Look! I myself am sending forth my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way ahead of you.' " (Matt. 11:10) Thus Jesus applied the prophecy of Malachi 3:1 to John the Baptizer as the one sent ahead of Jehovah and of his "messenger of the covenant." Jesus Christ, who accompanies the Lord Jehovah to the temple for inspection, is the messenger, not of the Law covenant, but of the Abrahamic covenant. Those within the Abrahamic Covenant arrangement who had faith in Jehovah's prophecies were looking forward to the coming of this Messianic "messenger."

[12] Concerning the principal and basic one of the 'seed of Abraham,' John the Baptizer said: "I viewed the spirit coming down as a dove out of heaven, and it re-

9. Whom would the "doorkeeper" not let past him into the "sheepfold"?
10. Who did that "doorkeeper" prove to be, and according to what prophecy?
11. (a) How did Jesus confirm John the Baptizer as being his forerunner? (b) Of what covenant was Jesus the "messenger" when accompanying the Lord Jehovah to the temple?
12. What did John the Baptizer say as to how he came to "know" the basic one of the 'seed of Abraham'?

mained upon him. Even I did not know him, but the very One who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'Whoever it is upon whom you see the spirit coming down and remaining, this is the one that baptizes in holy spirit.' And I have seen it, and I have borne witness that this one is the Son of God."—John 1:31-34.

13 Jesus did not sidestep going through the "door" into the sheepfold. At 30 years of age he went to John the Baptizer to be immersed in water. After spending 40 days in the wilderness under temptation, he confidently returned to where John the Baptizer was with a number of his disciples. As he approached the figurative "doorkeeper" of the Abrahamic Covenant sheepfold, John saw him coming and cried out: "See, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29, 36) Not the Lamb that takes away the sin of the nation of Israel, but "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." John the Baptizer thus opened the figurative "door" to the true Shepherd who had the necessary identification or credentials from the Universal Shepherd, Jehovah God. In directing the attention of his disciples to the approaching Jesus, John was not pointing to a mere circumcised Jew and fleshly descendant of earthly Abraham. No, he was pointing to the Anointed One, the spirit-begotten descendant of the Greater Abraham, Jehovah God. He was the principal or primary one of that "seed" of the Heavenly Abraham by means of whom all the families of the ground will bless themselves.

14 He therefore deserved to be admitted by the "doorkeeper" into the figurative "sheepfold," the Abrahamic Covenant arrangement. He was the true shepherd, and he came looking, not for Jews or other humans in general, but for those who would respond to the opportunity to become with him part of the composite 'seed of Abraham' through whom blessing would come to all nations. The majority of the natural Jews rejected him, but a remnant of the fleshly Jews did accept him. These were the "sheep" that listened to his voice. So, when he called "his own sheep by name," they responded, and he led them out to pasturage. In the Middle East the shepherd used to assign an individual name to each of his sheep.

15 However, when the shepherd wanted to call all his flock together to him at one time, he would sound out a general call, say, a rattling sound like Dr-r-r-r-r-rt at a certain tone level and with a caliber of voice not reproducible by other shepherds. So it is that, "when he has got all his own out, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him," because they detect the inimitable quality of his voice. Their ears are sharp enough to detect who are "strangers" and imitators. They will not be deceived into following such suspicious and, maybe, evil-designing "strangers." This is a good example for the sheeplike ones who make up the "little flock," to whom it is the good pleasure of the approving Greater Abraham to give the Kingdom, to follow carefully.

16 Do we today understand the meaning of what Jesus was there speaking about? As regards the unbelieving Jews who were in the Law Covenant arrangement, they did not grasp how the comparison that Jesus was making fitted. As the account says: "Jesus spoke this comparison to them; but they did not know what the things meant that he was speaking to

13. (a) When did John the Baptizer open the "door" to the true Shepherd? (b) To what kind of 'seed of Abraham' was John then pointing?
14. (a) On approaching the "sheepfold," was Jesus looking for just natural Jews and other humans in general? (b) How could a Middle Eastern shepherd call an individual sheep to him?
15. (a) How will the shepherd issue a general call to all his flock at one time, and why will they not be deceived into following "strangers"? (b) For whom today is that a safe example to follow?
16. Why did the Jews not grasp the meaning of the comparison that Jesus spoke to them about the shepherd and his flock?

them." (John 10:6) They did not know the voice of the Messianic Shepherd, and he did not know them and call them by their personal names. Self-induced blindness prevented them from identifying him. May we today not be like them.

"THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP"

17 At this point Jesus changed figures of speech to illustrate another vital feature of the matter. "Therefore Jesus said again: 'Most truly I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All those that have come in place of me are thieves and plunderers; but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the door; whoever enters through me will be saved, and he will go in and out and find pasturage. The thief does not come unless it is to steal and slay and destroy. I have come that they might have life and might have it in abundance.'" —John 10:7-10.

18 Let us note that Jesus does not speak of a "doorkeeper" in connection with himself as being a "door." He does not speak of a so-called "vicar of Christ," some head of a religious sect who claims to have infallibility. Jesus said: "I am the door of the sheep." And some months later he added the claim: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) This does not leave out of account that, when Jesus gave his lengthy prophecy on "the sign of [his] presence and of the conclusion of the system of things," he did foretell a "faithful and discreet slave," whom his master would "appoint . . . over all his belongings." (Matt. 24:3, 45-47) But this refers to a "slave" class of his faithful, discreet followers to which he would commit the oversight of his visible belongings on earth, especially during this "conclusion of the system of things." However, such an appointment does not make that "slave" class Jesus' "doorkeeper."

19 Jesus is the figurative "door" to those sheeplike followers of his who are made part with him of the 'seed of Abraham.' So they are in the "sheepfold" of the Abrahamic Covenant arrangement. All together, they make up only a "little flock," comparatively speaking, just 144,000 under him their Shepherd. They make up, as it were, the 12 tribes of spiritual Israel, and they stand upon the spiritual Mount Zion with Jesus Christ, "the Lamb" of God. (Luke 12:32; Rev. 7:1-8; 14:1-5) They owe their salvation to a heavenly inheritance, not to some vicegerent of Christ, but to the one who is "the door of the sheep." For Jesus said: "Whoever enters through me will be saved, and he will go in and out and find pasturage." (John 10:9) Speaking for the "little flock" with the heavenly hope, the apostle Paul refers to "our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have gained our approach by faith into this undeserved kindness in which we now stand; and let us exult, based on hope of the glory of God."—Rom. 5:1, 2; Eph. 2:18; 3:12.

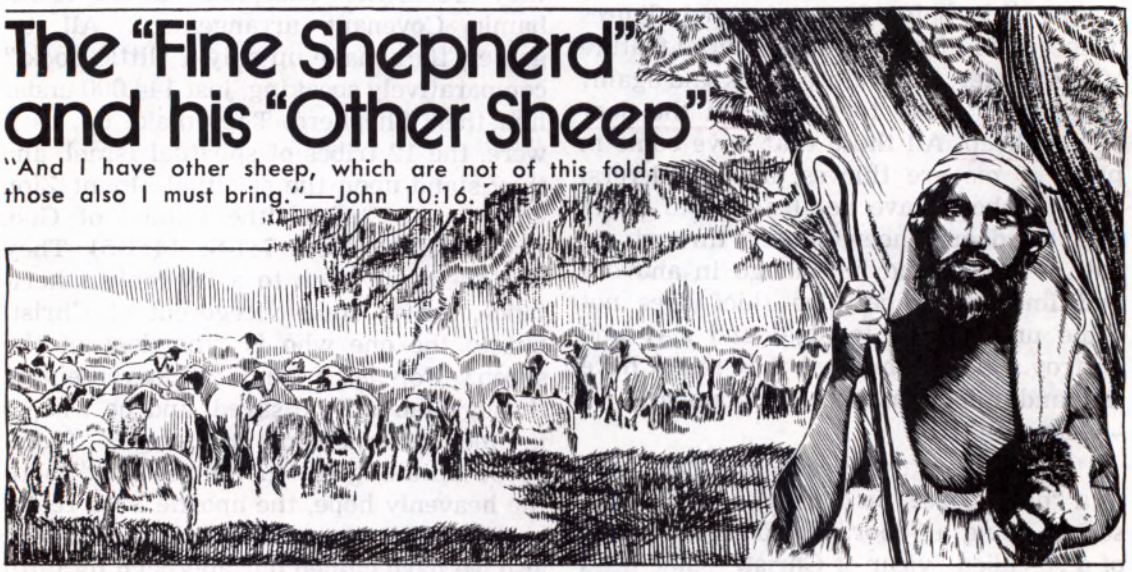
20 In his prophecy regarding the "conclusion of the system of things," Jesus foretold that "false Christs and false prophets" would arise with great deceptiveness. These have "come in place of" the true Christ, and the deceived persons who have followed such impostors have been stolen away religiously and slain and destroyed spiritually, if not actually. (Matt. 24:3, 24, 25; John 10:8, 10) On the other hand, Jesus came as a lifesaver, and to provide for human creatures to enjoy a

17. According to John 10:7-10, to what other feature of a sheepfold did Jesus liken himself?
18. (a) Who on earth tries to act as a doorkeeper to Jesus as the symbolic "door"? (b) Of what class did Jesus speak as a feature of the "conclusion of the system of things," and does this class serve as a doorkeeper to Jesus as the "door"?
19. How great a "flock" do those in the sheepfold of the Abrahamic Covenant arrangement make up, and through what way of entry is their salvation?
20. How has Jehovah's undershepherd stood out in contrast with the "false Christs and false prophets" that "have come in place of" him?

life in greater abundance than they have now, a life in perfection everlastingly and within the provisions for safety made by the Great Shepherd over all, Jehovah God. So his self-sacrificing undershepherd, Jesus Christ, is the one for us to follow, if we desire to gain eternal life as "sheep" of God.

The "Fine Shepherd" and his "Other Sheep"

"And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those also I must bring."—John 10:16.



A FINE shepherd differs from a hired man, who is interested in only the pay that he is to get. Jesus said: "I am the fine shepherd; the fine shepherd surrenders his soul in behalf of the sheep. The hired man, who is no shepherd and to whom the sheep do not belong as his own, beholds the wolf coming and abandons the sheep and flees—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them—because he is a hired man and does not care for the sheep." —John 10:11-13.

[2] Back there in the Middle East shepherding sheep out in pasture grounds had its perils. We recall how the shepherd boy David once had to kill a bear and a lion in order to save the lives of his father Jesse's sheep. (1 Sam. 17:34-36) Jesus spoke of wolves preying upon the sheep. Driving off a wolf might bring a shepherd in danger of bodily hurt. A fine shepherd would not run away for his personal safety like a hired man but would protect the sheep against predatory beasts. A "fine shepherd" would be willing even to 'surrender his soul in behalf of the sheep' so as not to lose even one of them. By calling attention to this Jesus foretold his own death as a human soul in behalf of Jehovah's "sheep." But Jesus was willing to measure up to this characteristic of a "fine shepherd." His heavenly Father, Jehovah God, who is the Owner of the earthly "sheep," was willing to have his Son sur-

1. How does the "fine shepherd" differ from a "hired man"?
2. (a) By saying that the "fine shepherd surrenders his soul in behalf of the sheep," to what was Jesus referring in his own experience? (b) Jesus' surrender of his human soul served in what behalf in general?

render his human soul in behalf of the "sheep" whom his Father loved so much. The human "soul" of Jesus was offered as a ransom sacrifice for buying back mankind from death, which they had inherited from sinful Adam.

[3] A "fine shepherd" also becomes intimate with each sheep of the flock and assigns to it an individual name by which to call it to him and fondle it or care for its needs. With this trait of a Middle Eastern shepherd in mind, Jesus went on to say: "I am the fine shepherd, and I know my sheep and my sheep know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I surrender my soul in behalf of the sheep." (John 10:14, 15) Jesus considered himself to be a figurative "sheep." He was the "Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, he is called the "Lamb" 28 times. Jesus considered himself to be pictured by the ram that the patriarch Abraham offered up in place of his son Isaac, whom Abraham had shown a readiness to offer up in sacrifice at Jehovah's command. (Gen. 22:1-13) Isaac received and passed on to Jacob the Abrahamic promise. Like Isaac, Jesus inherited the Abrahamic promise and was willing to be sacrificed in order to share the promise with his "little flock."

[4] Plainly, then, Jesus was sincerely interested in the salvation of the "little flock" in the "sheepfold" of the Abrahamic Covenant arrangement. He prized them as a highly valuable gift from his heavenly Father. Just as he said: "What my Father has given me is something greater than all other things, and no one can snatch them out of the hand of the Father." —John 10:29.

3. (a) According to John 10:14, 15, Jesus compared himself to what with respect to his Father? (b) In order to share the Abrahamic promise with the "little flock," what was Jesus willing to do?
4. Did Jesus "snatch" the "little flock" out of his Father's hand, and how did Jesus view that "flock"?

"I HAVE OTHER SHEEP"

[5] Even though the churches of Christendom may not think and teach so, Jesus is interested in more than just saving human creatures into heavenly life. Jesus said: "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those also I must bring, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd." (John 10:16) Who, now, are those "other sheep"?

[6] Churches of Christendom claim that the "fold" there spoken of by Jesus was to contain only Jewish Christians, whereas the "other sheep" are those who become Christians from among the non-Jews or Gentiles; and that both believing Jews and believing Gentiles become "one flock" under the "one shepherd" in the one spiritual fold. But this teaching disagrees with other Bible scriptures bearing on the subject. Although the apostle John does not mention it in his Gospel account, Jesus did speak of an earthly Paradise under his kingdom and he spoke of others as being "sheep" besides the "little flock" of his heavenly joint heirs. When Jesus gave his prophecy on the "sign" of his then future presence and of the conclusion of the system of things, he closed it, according to Matthew's account, with the parable of the sheep and the goats. Those "sheep" were to be different from Christ's spiritual "brothers," to whom these sheeplike ones do good things.—Luke 23:43; Matt. 24:3; 25:31-46.

[7] The apostle John was acquainted with that parable, for he and his brother James and also Peter and Andrew were the ones who promoted Jesus' prophecy by asking

5. What indicates that Jesus was interested in saving more than sheeplike humans into heavenly life?
6. (a) What do Christendom's churches teach regarding "this fold" and the "other sheep"? (b) What does Jesus' mentioning of Paradise in Luke 23:43 and his parable of the sheep and the goats indicate?
7. Why could John well recall Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats and appreciate the number enfolded in "this fold"?

him privately about the "sign," and John heard that prophecy in full. (Mark 13:3, 4) So when he recorded Jesus' words about the "other sheep" he could well have called to mind Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats. He was the aged apostle who was given the Revelation that disclosed that the 12 tribes of spiritual Israel would contain only 144,000 members. So he knew that the "sheepfold" containing the "little flock" would enfold only a limited number of all those saved.

[8] In Romans chapter 11, the apostle Paul likens those 12 tribes of spiritual Israel to the branches in a tame olive tree. The root of that symbolic olive tree was prefigured by the patriarch Abraham, the forefather of the nation of Israel according to the flesh. The trunk of the tree pictured therefore the succeeding patriarchs, Isaac, Jacob and the 12 patriarchal heads of the 12 tribes of natural Israel. (Acts 7:8) The branches growing out from this trunk pictured the Jewish members of the 12 tribes of natural, circumcised Israel. Naturally these were heirs of the Abrahamic promise as to the "seed" by means of whom all families and nations of the earth would bless themselves toward attaining everlasting life. For that reason the natural circumcised Jews were the first ones in line to have the opportunity to make up that 'seed of Abraham.'

[9] Now we know that that "seed" is a spiritual seed, a seed that is begotten by Jehovah God to be his spiritual sons. He was the real "root" of that spiritual olive tree. His Son, Jesus Christ, was the principal and essential member of that "seed" of the Greater Abraham, Jehovah God, and so Jesus Christ was pictured by the trunk of this symbolic olive tree. Accordingly, the "branches" in such a tree would picture the faithful disciples who become joint heirs with him as minor members of the spiritual 'seed of Abraham.' Well, now, were the "branches" an unlimited number?

[10] The apostle Paul shows that there would be only a limited number of "branches" in that spiritual olive tree. How so? Because he points out that when one of the natural branches was broken off, the tree would not grow there another natural branch. Instead, a branch from a wild olive tree would be inserted in its place. So this transplanted wild olive branch would not increase the number of branches in the tree. The number of branches in the trunk of that tree would stay the same. Thus, when natural circumcised Jews were broken off from that spiritual tree because of unbelievingly rejecting Jesus Christ as the Principal Seed of the Greater Abraham, then non-Jews or Gentiles were engrafted in the places of those cut-off natural "branches."—Rom. 11:11-32.

[11] Properly, then, those branches in that Abrahamic Covenant tree are not to be considered as natural Jews and foreign Gentiles. They are all to be considered as spiritual Israelites. The apostle Paul is the one that makes that very point. After discussing the Abrahamic promise and the seed of Abraham, he goes on to say: "You are all, in fact, sons of God through your faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one person in union with Christ Jesus. Moreover, if you belong to Christ, you

8. To what does the apostle Paul liken the 12 tribes of spiritual Israel in connection with a tree, and, in a typical way, what did the main parts of that "tree" picture?
9. As to their nature, what were those symbolic "branches," and who, therefore, was the real "root," and who the tree trunk?
10. How, in Romans 11:11-32, does Paul show that there would be only a limited number of "branches" in that symbolic olive tree?
11. How, in Galatians 3:26-29, does Paul show that those in the fold of spiritual Israel are not to be classified as Jews and Gentiles?

are really Abraham's seed, heirs with reference to a promise."—Gal. 3:8, 16, 26-29.

12 The apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians about the years 50-52 C.E. This was at least 17 years after Jehovah had nailed the Law covenant to the tree on which his Son Jesus Christ was impaled. Yet there were some Christians in the congregations of Galatia that wanted to go into slavery to the Law of that Law covenant mediated by Moses at Mount Sinai in Arabia. In this they wanted to go along with the anti-Christian Jews who clung to earthly Jerusalem and the material temple built there by King Herod the Great who tried to have the young child Jesus killed. That Jerusalem had been foreshadowed by Hagar, the slave woman of Abraham and was like a mother to the Jews who still wanted to keep in bondage to the Mosaic law rather than accept Jesus Christ as the Greater Moses. Consequently, with respect to this, Paul wrote:

13 "But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. . . . Now we, brothers, are children belonging to the promise the same as Isaac was. . . . Wherefore, brothers, we are children, not of a servant girl, but of the free woman. For such freedom Christ set us free. Therefore stand fast, and do not let yourselves be confined again in a yoke of slavery."—Gal. 4:21 through 5:1.

14 Isaac, the son of Abraham, was not a Jew or an Israelite. He, as the son of Abraham's free woman Sarah, was the father of Jacob, who was given the name Israel and who became the father of Judah. Christians who belong to the "little flock" in "this fold" of the Fine Shepherd Jesus Christ are like Isaac in being heirs of the Abrahamic promise. Heavenly Jerusalem is their spiritual mother, prefigured by Sarah the mother of Isaac the Hebrew, not a Jew.

15 After discussing the "sheepfold" that contains the members of the composite 'seed of Abraham,' Jesus strikes out in another direction when he proceeds to say: "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those also I must bring, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd. This is why the Father loves me, because I surrender my soul, in order that I may receive it again. No man has taken it away from me, but I surrender it of my own initiative. I have authority to surrender it, and I have authority to receive it again. The commandment on this I received from my Father."—John 10:16-18.

16 We notice that Jesus does not say that he "must bring" those "other sheep" into "this fold." Rather, he says that "they will become one flock," because there will be just the "one shepherd."

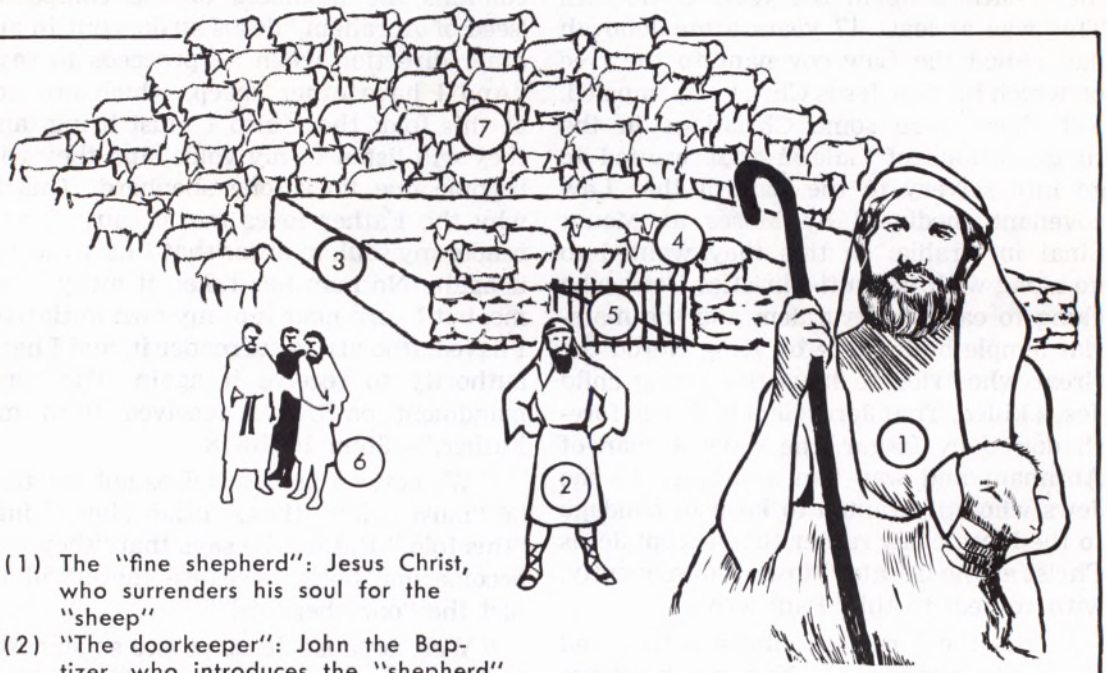
17 Well, because Jesus passes so smoothly from considering "this fold" to introducing the "other sheep," the reader might tend to think that the two actions follow each other in short order, without any great gap of time, certainly not centuries of time. Also, that for such a reason Jesus must be referring to bringing into "this fold" the non-Jewish peoples, the Gentiles, according to the history of the expansion of the Christian congregation in the days of the apostles. So it might be concluded that Jesus was not here making a long-range prophecy of something far distant in time. But such a conclusion is not necessarily the right one. It does not differentiate between "this fold" and "one flock." —Compare Revelation 7:8, 9.

12-14. (a) In Galatians 4:21-31, to whose spiritual motherhood of them does Paul point the Galatian Christians? (b) Hence, does Paul lay stress on any Jewish element in the "little flock" inside "this fold"?

15, 16. In John 10:16-18, does Jesus say that he must bring the "other sheep" into one "fold" in order to have "one shepherd"?

17. What may be argued from the fact that Jesus moves smoothly and uninterruptedly from considering "this fold" to speaking of "other sheep," but is this necessarily true?

Jehovah's Arrangement for His "Sheep"



(1) The "fine shepherd": Jesus Christ, who surrenders his soul for the "sheep"
(2) "The doorkeeper": John the Baptizer, who introduces the "shepherd" to the "sheep"
(3) "The sheepfold": The Kingdom fold of the Abrahamic Covenant arrangement
(4) The "sheep" in this fold: The "little flock," from Jews and Gentiles
(5) "The door of the sheep": Jesus
(6) The "stranger," "thief," "the hired man": Apostates and false shepherds
(7) The "other sheep": The "great crowd" and others who inherit the Kingdom's earthly realm

(See also "The Watchtower" of May 15, 1946, pages 147-158)

[18] Jesus was gifted with prophetic vision and so was able to give his parable of the sheep and the goats although it was to come true 1,900 years later. He was the basic member of the promised 'seed of Abraham' and was therefore highly interested in the salvation of all the families and nations of mankind by blessing themselves for eternity by means of that seed. Such a blessing had to wait upon the completing of that composite 'seed of Abraham' of 144,000 members under him. That was to involve 19 centuries of time, as the facts of history show. True, those blessing themselves would be sheeplike ones of all families and nations, but they would be "other sheep," because they did not belong to "this fold" of heirs of the Abrahamic promise. So they could not be spiritual Israelites, but, relatively speaking, they were Gentiles.

[19] Quite in line with this is the fact that,

18. Was Jesus able to make a long-range prophecy, and upon what prior thing must the blessing of all families of the earth wait?

19. In the light of what precedes in Revelation, chapter 7, who make up the "great crowd" described in Revelation 7:9-17?

after the apostle John saw the sealing of the 12 tribes of spiritual Israel, as described in Revelation 7:1-8, he saw the vision of the numberless "great crowd" of those who are not spiritual Israelites and who are therefore "other sheep." They were seen standing before the divine throne and were saying: "Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb." These are said to survive the "great tribulation," and they take up the rendering of sacred service to Jehovah God in his temple day and night. The "fine shepherd" gives these "other sheep" loving care, for we read: "The Lamb . . . will shepherd them, and will guide them to fountains of waters of life."—Rev. 7:9-17.

[20] In agreement with that order of things as set out in Revelation, chapter 7, it was in the spring of the year 1935, 20 years into the "conclusion of the system of things" that began in 1914, that the explanation of the Revelation vision of the "great crowd" was given. This occurred on May 31, 1935, at the convention in the capital city of the United States of America. On that occasion J. F. Rutherford, the president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, delivered his lecture on the subject "The Great Multitude," and explained how it was, not a secondary heavenly class, but an earthly class, the "other sheep" of the "fine shepherd." This information was later published in the columns of the *Watchtower* magazine. Then indeed the "fine shepherd" began to bring his "other sheep" and they began listening to his voice and following him, for on the next day after that explanation of Revelation 7:9-15 there were 840 that symbolized their dedication to God through Christ by water baptism. The majority of these professed to be of the "great multitude" of Christ's "other sheep."—*AV*.

20. When and where did the fulfillment of the vision of the "great crowd" start taking place, and with what demonstration?

[21] The "fine shepherd" surrendered his "soul" also for these "other sheep" who do not belong to the "fold" of the heirs of the Abrahamic promise. The apostle John, who was one of the Abrahamic "seed" class, wrote: "He [Jesus Christ] is a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, yet not for ours only but also for the whole world's." (1 John 2:1, 2) Jehovah God, the heavenly Father, loved his Son for doing this. In heart appreciation of this Jesus, the "fine shepherd," said before those who hated him among the Jews: "This is why the Father loves me, because I surrender my soul, in order that I may receive it again." (John 10:17) The Father displayed his love for the self-sacrificing "fine shepherd" by raising him from the dead on the third day. In this way the Son of God received his "soul," or being, again, but on a heavenly plane of life.

[22] Up to the time that Jesus spoke about the "other sheep" attempts had been made to take the life of this "fine shepherd." But never did he do anything deserving of death at the hands of men. This explains why he said: "No man has taken it away from me, but I surrender it of my own initiative. I have authority to surrender it, and I have authority to receive it again. The commandment on this I received from my Father."—John 10:18.

[23] A few months later the proof of this statement was furnished. On the night of his being betrayed in the garden of Gethsemane, when his disciple Peter tried to protect him with a sword, Jesus said: "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father to supply me at this moment more than twelve legions of angels? In that case,

21. (a) So, besides the "little flock," for whom else did the "fine shepherd" surrender his soul? (b) How did this shepherd receive his soul again, and in expression of whose love?
22. Despite attempts upon his life, why had no man taken Jesus' human soul away from him, up till his saying the words recorded at John 10:18?
23. When did Jesus surrender his human soul of his own initiative, and why?

how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must take place this way?" (Matt. 26: 53, 54) Thus, after letting his apostles flee from his side, Jesus surrendered himself of his own initiative to the crowds that came to arrest him and make a final attempt to have him put to death. In doing this Jesus was not throwing away his life.

[24] Jesus had the authority from his heavenly Father to take this course, but it was left to his own free will to do so. His authority to receive his soul again by a resurrection depended upon his willing self-surrender. Because he did surrender his soul to death, his heavenly Father clothed him with the authority to receive it again from the only One who could raise him from the dead. No power in heaven or on earth could block this authority for Jesus to receive his "soul," or life, again. Hence, the governor's seal that was put upon the large stone that closed the entry to the tomb in which he was buried after dying on the tree, and also the soldier guard that was stationed at the tomb to prevent his disciples from stealing the dead body, failed to block Jesus in exercising his God-given authority on the third day.—Matt. 27:62 through 28:15.

[25] Really, Jesus was under his heavenly Father's command to do all of this. So, on the third day of his death, Jehovah God issued the command for his obedient Son to arise from the dead and receive life again, in the spirit realm with his heavenly Father. Since he had not forfeited his human life by disobedience to God, he also received the right and title to perfect human life that he might present them to Jehovah God in his heavenly temple and make propitiation for the sin of the whole world.

[26] Thus the way was opened for all the families and nations of the world to "bless themselves" by means of the Chief One of 'Abraham's seed.' (Gen. 12:1-3; 22:15-18) The "great crowd" of the "other sheep" of the Fine Shepherd began to "bless themselves" by means of him when they dedicated themselves to Jehovah God through him and symbolized this dedication by water baptism. Then they listened to the voice of the Fine Shepherd and followed him, together with the anointed remnant of the Abrahamic seed. This start took place notably at the Washington (D.C.) convention of 1935. Since then the anointed remnant have welcomed all the "other sheep" and, just as Jesus foretold, there has come to be "one flock" under the "one shepherd."

[27] During the millennial reign of the "one shepherd," the enthroned Jesus Christ, all the redeemed dead of mankind will be raised from their sleep of death and will have the opportunity to "bless themselves" by becoming part of the Fine Shepherd's "other sheep." This will include the former "doorkeeper" of the "sheepfold" representing the Abrahamic Covenant arrangement, namely, John the Baptizer. (John 10:1-3) Jesus will lead the obedient ones to "fountains of waters of life." The "great crowd" of those who survive the coming "great tribulation" will be a blessing to the resurrected billions that these may avail themselves of the "fountains of waters of life." (Rev. 7:9-17) All the sheeplike ones will be able to join the "great crowd" in saying: "Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb." —Rev. 7:10; 20:11-14.

24. What full authority regarding his soul had Jesus received from his Father, and how did the final attempt to block his exercising that authority fail?

25. Since Jesus did not forfeit his human life by disobedience to God, how did it become available for him to use for mankind?

26. (a) Thus the way was opened for all the families of the earth to do what? (b) When, notably, did the "great crowd" of Jesus' "other sheep" start to bless themselves?

27. Who else besides the "great crowd" that survives the "great tribulation" will become part of the Fine Shepherd's "other sheep," and when?

"The Word Of God Is Not Bound"

WHILE serving his second prison sentence in Rome, the apostle Paul stated this tried and tested truth: "The word of God is not bound." (2 Tim. 2:9) These words can be illustrated by the following experience from the Pacific island of Tahiti.

"During one of our meetings, an elder who was then the Bible study overseer requested an unusual territory—Tahiti prison, where he was employed as a warder. The distressing situation of the prisoners disturbed him, and he was convinced that they too were concerned about the 'good news' written in the Bible. On several occasions our congregation had applied for permission to visit the prisoners, but unfortunately the answer was always: 'Catholics, Protestants, Adventists, Mormons and the like are welcome to come and speak about their religion, because members of those religions are in our prison; but there are no Jehovah's Witnesses here.'

"So the elder decided to preach the 'good news' inside the prison where he worked on the penitentiary staff. Outside working hours, from noon until 2 p.m., he would spread the Kingdom hope. Very soon, his activity started bearing fruit and Bible studies were being conducted regularly.

"Noticing the success of the Witness, other warders, some of whom were Protestant deacons, persuaded a few coreligionist prisoners to complain to the director that his preaching disturbed their noonday siesta. So, he was summoned to the director's office, where he was asked to stop his evangelizing work, the reason being that prisoners in Block A did not like being aroused during their siesta. Tactfully, he stressed the beneficial influence of Bible teaching and pointed out the positive results that he had obtained with prisoners from Block C, whereas those of Block A had never received his visit. The director quickly discerned the insincerity of the protesters; however, for the sake of maintaining peace, he requested the Witness to cease preaching from cell to cell. Nevertheless, he was allowed to continue visiting those who desired his visits.

"Thus, God's Word was not bound. About five prisoners continued taking in the spiritual food that was eventually to transform their lives. In fact, one of these became a vital instrument in distributing this food. This man had been sentenced to prison nine years previously for several thefts. He was a particularly difficult prisoner and had escaped many times, but he was always caught soon thereafter and his sentence was extended. Since the warder had been forbidden to preach from cell to cell, this prisoner quickly understood his responsibility of announcing the 'good news' to fellow prisoners.

"Much to certain warders' annoyance, Jehovah soon became the main topic of conversation inside the prison. Priests and pastors visiting the prison were bombarded with questions on all kinds of subjects, such as soul, purgatory, hell, the time of the end. Some warders claimed that the preaching was a source of unrest, so the director decided to ban Bible teaching on the prison grounds.

"But the Witness elder did not give up in his plan to make the 'good news' known to the prisoners, and he applied for special

permission to have interested prisoners work at his home on Saturdays, his day off. The request was honored; therefore, all those willing came under his care every Saturday. Needless to say, no time was wasted and many Bible studies were conducted week after week.

"The elder was richly rewarded for his perseverance. Indeed, one of the most dangerous prisoners transformed his personality and obtained permission to attend a circuit assembly, where he was baptized.

"From then on, the prison had one Jehovah's Witness among its inmates. The director was so amazed at seeing the outstanding changes that God's Word had made in some of his prisoners that he suggested making out a formal request for a Witness minister to visit the prison on an official basis. The request was submitted and permission was given, with one specification—Jehovah's Witnesses would have, not just one hour with the prisoners (as other religions had), but two hours!

"And so, every Monday after the evening meal, all interested persons may now benefit from a public talk and a one-hour Bible study, thanks to the help of three Witnesses from our congregation. Like the apostle Paul in prison bonds, they too can now say: 'The word of God is not bound.' " —2 Tim. 2:9.

QUESTIONS from READERS

● Why is it that Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate birthdays?

Basically, it is because they respect the Word of God and are keenly interested in responding to its indications.

Birthday celebrations are popular world wide and have been for millenniums. Often there will be a party, with presents being given. But does the Bible say anything about birthdays?

It can be said at the outset that the Bible does not discourage generous giving to a loved one. (Gen. 33:10, 11; Luke 15:22; 2 Cor. 8:19) Nor does it discourage enjoying a feast or party, for eating and drinking in moderation are recommended as one means of enjoying life. (Eccl. 3:12, 13) Jesus shared in a wedding feast. Job's children held what may have been harvest feasts that occasioned family reunions. Abraham had a feast when Isaac was weaned. (John 2:1, 2; Job 1:4, 5, 13; Gen. 21:8) And even though it was not commanded by God, the Jews held an annual festival on the anniversary of the rededication of the temple, which feast Jesus attended.—John 10:22, 23.

The Bible does, though, indicate that certain caution is needed, for it would not be proper to share in just any celebration regardless of its reason or nature. (Ex. 32:1-6; 1 Pet. 4:3; 1 Cor. 10:20, 21) What about noting and celebrating birthdays?

Obviously, many true worshipers kept record of birth dates. Priests and others knew their ages. Such a matter was not left to guesswork. (Num. 1:2, 3; 4:3; 8:23-25) But there is nothing in the Scriptures to suggest that true worshipers had annual birthday celebrations.

The Bible reports only two birthday celebrations, both of persons who were not servants of the true God.

The first was that of Pharaoh of Egypt. It was marked by the hanging of Pharaoh's baker, who had been in prison with Joseph. (Gen. 40:18-22) Commenting on Genesis 40:20, Dr. Adam Clarke observes: "The distinguishing [of] a birthday by a feast appears from this place to have been a very ancient custom. It probably had its origin from [the] notion of the immortality of the soul, as the *commencement* of life must appear of great consequence to that person who believed he was to live for ever."

The second, some 1,800 years later, was the birthday of Herod Antipas. The account in Mark 6:21-24 reads:

"But a convenient day came along when Herod spread an evening meal on his birthday for his top-ranking men and the military commanders and the foremost ones of Galilee. And the daughter of this very Herodias came in and danced and pleased Herod and those reclining with him. The king said to the maiden: 'Ask me for whatever you want, and I will give it to you.' Yes, he swore to her: 'Whatever you ask me for, I will give it to you, up to half my kingdom.' And she went out and said to her mother: 'What should I ask for?' She said: 'The head of John the baptizer.' "—See also Matthew 14:6-11.

Regarding the account of Herod's birthday, Dr. Richard Lenski comments: "The Jews abhorred the keeping of birthdays as being a pagan custom, but the Herods even outdid the Romans in these celebrations, so that 'Herod's birthday' (*Herodis dies*) came to be a proverbial expression for excessive festival display."

How are we to look at these two birthday celebrations? Is it just coincidental that they are mentioned and that both were for persons not having God's approval? Or could it be that Jehovah deliberately had these details recorded in his Word, which he says is "beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight"? (2 Tim. 3:16) At the very least it can be said that these two accounts Biblically put birthday celebrations in a bad light, as a practice of those estranged from God.

Also, it is worth noting that God did not record the exact date of Jesus' birth, which certainly would be the most important birthday if God's servants were to celebrate birthdays. Instead, the Bible indicates the date of Jesus' *death* and instructs Christians to commemorate that as an anniversary each year. (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:23-26) This harmonizes with the fact that the Bible says that the day of a person's death is more significant than the day of his birth if he has made a good name with God during his lifetime.—Eccl. 7:1, 8.

Consistent with the Scriptural indications, the early Christians did not hold birthday celebrations.

"The notion of a *birthday festival* was far from the ideas of the Christians of this period in general."—*The History of the Christian Religion and Church During the First Three Centuries*, by Augustus Neander.

As time passed and there was a falling away from pure Christianity, what began to be commemorated was the death, not the birth.

"The reverence in which the martyrs were held led to an undue attachment to the scene and day of their death. By a happy thought the day of a martyr's death was called his birthday. The places where the martyrs had died were regarded with a holy awe. . . . On the anniversary days the services [in the churches] were largely devoted to recalling his services and character. . . . It must be remembered, however, that these [annual] memorial services were no part of the general order of the Church."—*History of the Christian Church*, by Dr. John F. Hurst, Vol. 1, pp. 350, 351.

So even though the Bible does not contain a specific prohibition against birthday celebrations, Jehovah's Witnesses have long noted the Scriptural indications and have not celebrated birthdays. In this, they harmonize with the pattern of the earliest Christians.

Also, while there is no Bible justification for annually celebrating the date of a Christian's death, we can agree that the day of death is better than the day of his birth. Thus we should concentrate, not on the day of birth but on each day imitating Christ and reflecting God's image. Should we die, then we will have glorified God by our way of life, and he will surely remember us.—Heb. 5:9; 11:6; Phil. 3:8-11.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

August 17: The "Fine Shepherd" and the "Little Flock." Page 17. Songs to Be Used: 41, 1.

August 24: The "Fine Shepherd" and His "Other Sheep." Page 22. Songs to Be Used: 29, 65.

'No weapon formed against you will succeed'

THOSE words of Jehovah, recorded at Isaiah 54:17, have seen fulfillment time and again throughout the centuries. In fact, their fulfillment can even have an amusing aspect, as shown by the following report from an African land where Jehovah's Witnesses are persecuted:

'At the town of K——, a local authority sent soldiers to arrest a group of Witnesses in order to interrogate them. The following day about 80 of the Witnesses, male and female, were rounded up and brought to the zone. After questioning, the zone authority decided to punish the males before locking them in prison. They were ordered to run five laps around the huge compound, and soldiers were assigned to accompany them, making sure they ran and took no shortcuts. The idea was to exhaust them and weaken their balance and reason.

'The local authorities forgot one thing. The arrested Witnesses lived in the bush. Despite the fact that some were getting up in years, they were accustomed to running, for they hunted animals for their food. So they were not discouraged at the idea of running five laps around the town with soldiers. It was preferable to being beaten. To the contrary, it was the soldiers who were displeased at the idea of having to run to control the Witnesses.

'At the end of lap one, Jehovah's Witnesses were running easily. The soldiers, however, were encouraging them to slow down, and to speed up only when they came in sight of the zone authorities. The Witnesses explained that "we are just obeying the instructions" and, little by little, the soldiers fell behind. Before long, the Witnesses were left to run by themselves.

'By the second lap, some of the Witnesses were getting tired, but they kept faithfully on. What a surprise at that point when an older brother, about 60 years of age, overtook the rest of the field and pulled out front. By that time the event had attracted the interest of more and more spectators who began to shout and cheer. The whole thing was becoming a comic theater with an older man "leading the pack," and not a soldier in sight. Even some of the zone authorities were rolling with laughter at the spectacle.

'Seeing that even the Witnesses were enjoying the "sport" and that all had run and not one had tried to escape, and especially that an older man had outrun the rest, the zone authority took pity on them, stopped the race, and released the Witnesses. These made good use of the opportunity to witness to the onlookers. Then they took their wives and returned to their villages. All the charges were forgotten.'