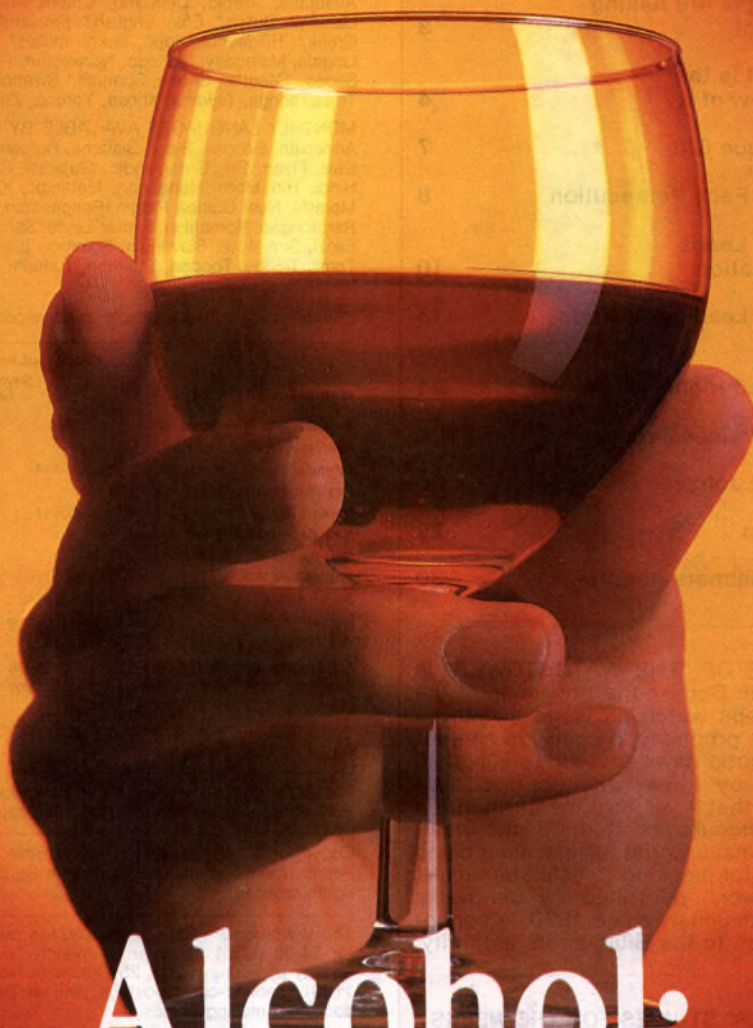


The Watchtower

August 1, 1987

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



Alcohol:

What the Bible Really Says

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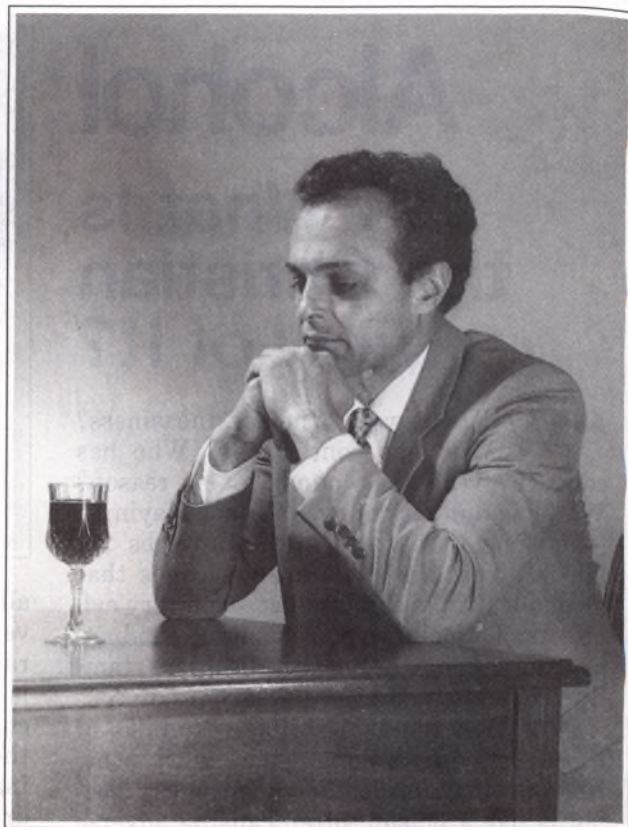
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Questions People Are Asking About Alcohol

“WISE men do not drink wine at all.” So declared a Nigerian clergyman. Not long ago, such a statement would have been dismissed as intolerant and narrow-minded. Today, though, an anti-alcohol sentiment is growing in some parts of the world.

A recent *Reader's Digest*/Gallup survey (U.S.), for example, revealed that “Americans have started drinking less.” *Time* magazine similarly reports that “America is tapering off [alcohol consumption], and doing so at a faster pace than at any time since Prohibition took effect in 1920.” France reports a decrease in wine consumption.

The reason for this trend toward temperance? Some have raised a hue and cry over the terrible carnage on public highways due to drunken drivers. “In 1983,” claimed *Reader's Digest*, “alcohol . . . cost the [United States] \$89.5 billion in lost employment and productivity, health care, property loss and crime, as well as immeasurable damage to the family lives of those involved.” No wonder, then, that the UN's World Health Organization recently recommended that governments “restrict the availability of alcohol in the interest of



the health and welfare of their populations.’
—*New Nigerian*, March 16, 1983.

Some are even arguing for abstinence. The above-quoted Nigerian clergyman claims: “Proverbs 20:1 says specifically that those who drink wine are not wise.” And asserts yet another preacher: “The Holy Scriptures condemn alcohol in the Book of Isaiah,” referring to the texts at Isaiah 5:11, 12, and 22.

In view of such claims, people wonder: What do such Scripture texts mean? Does the Bible really categorically forbid the consumption of alcoholic beverages? Did not Jesus himself drink wine, or was nonalcoholic grape juice involved? In view of the obvious dangers involved, might it be best for Christians to abstain from the drinking of alcohol? The answers to these questions can be found by looking into the Bible itself.

Alcohol

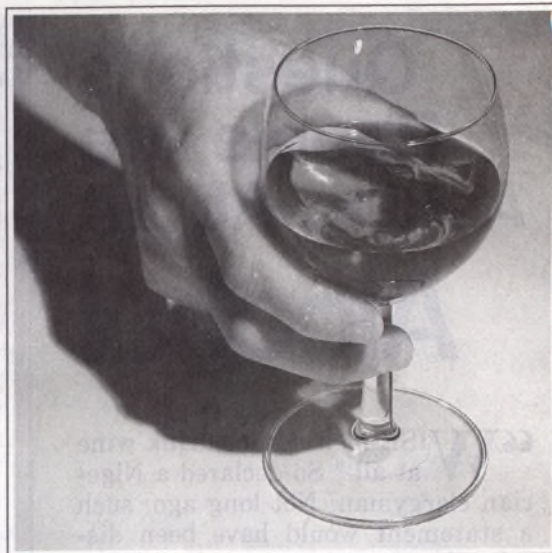
What Is the Christian View of It?

“WHO has woe? Who has uneasiness? Who has contentions? Who has concern? Who has wounds for no reason? Who has dullness of eyes? Those staying a long time with the wine.” (Proverbs 23: 29, 30) Yes, the Bible acknowledges that alcoholic drinks can produce some very evil effects: hallucinations, shameful conduct, psychotic behavior, health disorders, family problems, and even poverty.

Note that the above Bible text talks of those “staying a long time” with wine, habitual drunkards! For such ones, alcohol is like a poison, often causing adverse physical and mental effects. (Proverbs 23: 32-35) Heavy drinkers can lose self-control and begin to do things they would normally be ashamed of. The Bible thus warns: “Do not come to be among heavy drinkers of wine, among those who are gluttonous eaters of flesh. For a drunkard and a glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe one with mere rags.” (Proverbs 23:20, 21) Drunkenness is also classed among “the works of the flesh,” which can debar one from entering God’s Kingdom. —Galatians 5:19, 21; 1 Corinthians 6:10.

“Not Wise”—For Whom?

Does this mean that alcohol is absolutely forbidden to Christians? What of the clergyman’s claim, mentioned in the preceding article, supposedly based on Proverbs 20:1, that “wise men do not drink wine at



all.” The *King James Version* renders this verse: “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” Again, the Bible does not chastise those who *drink* wine but, rather, those who are *deceived* by it! “Those staying a long time with the wine” and “heavy drinkers of wine”—these are the ones who are “not wise.”

Consider, too, Isaiah 5:11, 22. These verses read: “Woe to those who are getting up early in the morning that they may seek just intoxicating liquor, who are lingering till late in the evening darkness so that wine itself inflames them! Woe to those who are mighty in drinking wine, and to the men with vital energy for mixing intoxicating liquor.” What is Isaiah condemning? Is it not *excessive* drinking, that is, drinking from “early in the morning” till “late in the evening darkness”?

Faithful servants of God—like Abraham, Isaac, and Jesus—are reported as drinking wine, in moderation. (Genesis 14: 18; 27:25; Luke 7:34) The Bible also mentions wine among the blessings coming from Jehovah. (Genesis 27:37; Deuteronomy 11:14; Isaiah 25:6-8) The Bible even

indicates that wine in moderation can have beneficial effects. Wine "makes the heart of mortal man rejoice," said the psalmist. (Psalm 104:15) The apostle Paul recommended to Timothy: "Do not drink [contaminated] water any longer, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent cases of sickness."—1 Timothy 5:23.

Wine or Grape Juice?

Some argue that the "wine" spoken of in such Bible texts was ordinary grape juice. McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia*, however, reminds us that "the Bible makes no distinction between intoxicating and non-intoxicating wines—never refers or alludes to such a distinction." Consistent with this, in the Bible "wine" is shown to be an intoxicating beverage and is associated with "strong drink."—Genesis 9:21; Luke 1:15; Deuteronomy 14:26; Proverbs 31:4, 6.

Interestingly, Jesus' first miracle was to convert water into wine. The Bible account says: "When, now, the director of the feast tasted the . . . wine but did not know what its source was, . . . [he] called the bridegroom and said to him: 'Every other man puts out the fine wine first, and when people are intoxicated, the inferior. You have reserved the fine wine until now.'" (John 2:9, 10) Yes, "the fine wine" Jesus produced was real wine.

Indeed, self-righteous religious leaders in Jesus' day criticized him for occasionally drinking wine. Said Jesus: "John the Baptist has come neither eating bread nor drinking wine, but you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of man has come eating and drinking, but you say, 'Look! A man gluttonous and given to drinking wine!'" (Luke 7:33, 34) What would have been the point of contrast between Jesus' drinking and John's not drinking if Jesus had merely been drinking nonalcoholic grape juice?

Remember, it was said of John that he was to "drink no wine and strong drink at all."—Luke 1:15.

Obviously, Jesus did not condemn the drinking of alcoholic beverages in moderation. In his day the drinking of wine was a part of the celebration of the Passover.* And real wine continued to be a part of the Lord's Evening Meal, which replaced the Passover.

Judgment Is Required

So the Bible does not prohibit the drinking of alcoholic drinks. In most cases, whether to have strong drink or not is a matter for personal decision. Yet the Bible forcefully condemns *drunkenness*, along with gluttony: "Do not come to be among heavy drinkers of wine, . . . gluttonous eaters of flesh. For a drunkard and a glutton will come to poverty." (Proverbs 23:20, 21) Thus, all should display moderation and self-control. "Do not be getting drunk with wine, in which there is debauchery, but keep getting filled with spirit." Remember, self-control is one of the fruits of God's spirit.—Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:19-23.

Indeed, one does not have to get drunk to run into problems with alcohol. A booklet produced by the U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse reminds us: "When someone has a drink, the alcohol is absorbed through the digestive system into the bloodstream and reaches the brain quickly. It begins to slow down the parts of the brain that control thinking and emotion. The person feels less inhibited, freer." This "less inhibited" feeling can expose one to moral dangers.

Another danger exists when it comes to

* In Palestine, grapes were harvested in late summer. The Jewish Passover and the Lord's Evening Meal, however, took place in spring—six months later. Without means of preservation, grape juice would naturally ferment.



A Christian may decide to abstain from the drinking of alcoholic beverages on account of another's conscience

driving. According to some estimates, in the United States alone 25,000 people a year are killed in accidents caused by intoxicated drivers. Evidently, many greatly underestimate how severely alcohol impairs their reflexes. But Christians view life as a gift from Jehovah. (Psalm 36:9) Would it be consistent with this view for a person to risk his own life, and that of others, by driving while his reflexes are slowed down by alcohol? Thus, many Christians have decided not to touch alcohol at all when they have to drive.

A Christian is also concerned about the effect of his drinking on others. Doubtless this is why Christian overseers, ministerial servants, and older women all are exhorted not to give themselves "to a lot of wine." (1 Timothy 3:2, 3, 8; Titus 2:2, 3) While one person may have a seemingly high tolerance for intoxicating beverages, he is careful to be moderate in his drinking so as not to influence someone else wrongly; nor does he endeavor to force liquor on someone who does not wish to drink. The

Bible further says: "It is well not to eat flesh or to drink wine or do anything over which your brother stumbles."—Romans 14:21.

Some circumstances may even call for abstaining from drinking. Consider pregnancy. The *International Herald Tribune* (Paris edition) cited a study done at the University of North Carolina (U.S.A.) and reported that "a single episode of heavy drinking early in pregnancy may result in serious physical and mental damage to the developing child." Women should seriously weigh such possible risks of drinking during pregnancy.

Those with a history of drunkenness or a tendency to be immoderate may also find it best to forsake drinking altogether.* It likewise might be best to avoid drinking in the presence of one who is an alcoholic or whose conscience condemns drinking. And drinking intoxicating beverages before Christian meetings or when engaged in the public preaching work would be improper. The ancient Levites set the pattern for this in abstaining when on duty in the temple.—Leviticus 10:8-10.

Finally, respect should be paid to the laws of the land. In some countries alcohol is absolutely forbidden. In others, it is restricted to adults above a certain age. A Christian obeys such policies of "the superior authorities."—Romans 13:1.

Of course, whether you will drink alcoholic beverages or not or how much or how little you will drink are personal decisions. God is glorified when we use discernment and willingly choose the course of moderation. Follow, then, this wise course so that "whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else," you will "do all things for God's glory."—1 Corinthians 10:31.

* Doctors recommend that one diagnosed as an alcoholic completely abstain from alcohol. See *Awake!* of July 8, 1982.

Children's Unique Gift

THE sincere expressions of children often cause adults to stop and think. On one occasion, after seeing Jesus perform some of his miracles, boys began to cry out: "Save, we pray, the Son of David!" The religious leaders objected to this. Blinded by jealousy, they could not discern that Jesus was the Messianic descendant of King David. But Jesus answered them and said: "Did you never read this, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings [God has] furnished praise'?" (Matthew 21:15, 16) Today, God still uses "the mouth of babes" to help those whose minds are blinded by false teaching.—2 Corinthians 4:4.

□ Daleen, aged 12, proved herself a responsible girl at school. One day she was assigned to keep the class busy while her teacher did other work. What would she do? "I decided to explain to my classmates that righteous people will live forever on earth and that everyone will not go to heaven," said Daleen. With the teacher's permission, Daleen presented her information to the class in the form of a conversation with a willing classmate. She read a number of scriptures, including Psalm 37:29: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." What was the response? "The teacher stopped her work and listened as attentively as the children," says Daleen. "Afterward she thanked me, and a few of the children asked questions."

□ Lillian, aged 5, and her parents lived 12 miles (19 km) from a small South African town where they frequently attended meetings and engaged in house-to-house preaching. One Sunday, because of some car trouble, her parents decided to stay home. "Why aren't we going out preaching?" asked Lillian. Not being satisfied with the reason, she said: "I'm not going to let that stop me." Later the mother noticed that Lillian and her witnessing bag were both missing. The little girl was busy visiting nearby homes, liberally giving



out Bible literature—including her mother's personal Bible! One elderly lady was so impressed with Lillian's explanation of the coming Paradise that she later accepted the offer of a Bible study from Lillian's mother. This woman eventually became a dedicated worshiper of Jehovah.

Yes, God still uses "the mouth of babes" to furnish praise. Their sincerity can deeply touch adult hearts. Appropriately, then, children along with adults are included in the grand invitation: "Praise Jehovah from the earth, . . . you young men and also you virgins, you old men together with boys. Let them praise the name of Jehovah, for his name alone is unreachably high."—Psalm 148: 7, 12, 13.



Preparation to Face Persecution

AFTER instructing his apostles in methods of carrying out the preaching work, Jesus warns them about opposers. He says: "Look! I am sending you forth as sheep amidst wolves . . . Be on your guard against men; for they will deliver you up to local courts, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. Why, you will be haled before governors and kings for my sake."

Despite the severe persecution his followers will face, Jesus reassuringly promises: "When they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you are to speak; for what you are to speak will be given you in that hour; for the ones speaking are not just you, but it is the spirit of your Father that speaks by you."

"Further," Jesus continues, "brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise up against parents and will have them put to death." He adds: "You will be objects of hatred by all people on account of my name; but he that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved."

The preaching is of primary importance, so Jesus emphasizes the need for discretion so as to remain free to carry out the work. "When they perse-

cute you in one city, flee to another," he says, "for truly I say to you, You will by no means complete the circuit of the cities of Israel until the Son of man arrives."

It is true that Jesus gave this instruction, warning, and encouragement to his 12 apostles, but it was also meant for those who would share in the worldwide preaching after his death and resurrection. This is shown by the fact that he said his disciples would be '*hated by all people*,' not just by the Israelites to whom the apostles were sent to preach. Further, the apostles evidently were not haled before governors and kings when Jesus sent them out on their short preaching campaign. Moreover, believers were not then delivered up to death by family members.

So when saying that his dis-



Jesus' Life and Ministry

ciples would not complete their circuit of preaching "until the Son of man arrives," Jesus was prophetically telling us that his disciples would not complete the circuit of the entire inhabited earth with the preaching about God's established Kingdom before the glorified King Jesus Christ would arrive as Jehovah's executorial officer at Armageddon.

Continuing his preaching instructions, Jesus says: "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his lord." So Jesus' followers must expect to receive the same ill-treatment and persecution as he did for preaching God's Kingdom. Yet he admonishes: "Do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather be in fear of him that can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna."

Jesus set the example in this matter. He fearlessly endured death rather than compromise his loyalty to the One with all power, Jehovah God. Yes, it is Jehovah who not only can destroy one's "soul" (meaning in

this instance one's future prospects as a living soul) but can even resurrect a person to enjoy everlasting life. What a loving, compassionate heavenly Father Jehovah is!

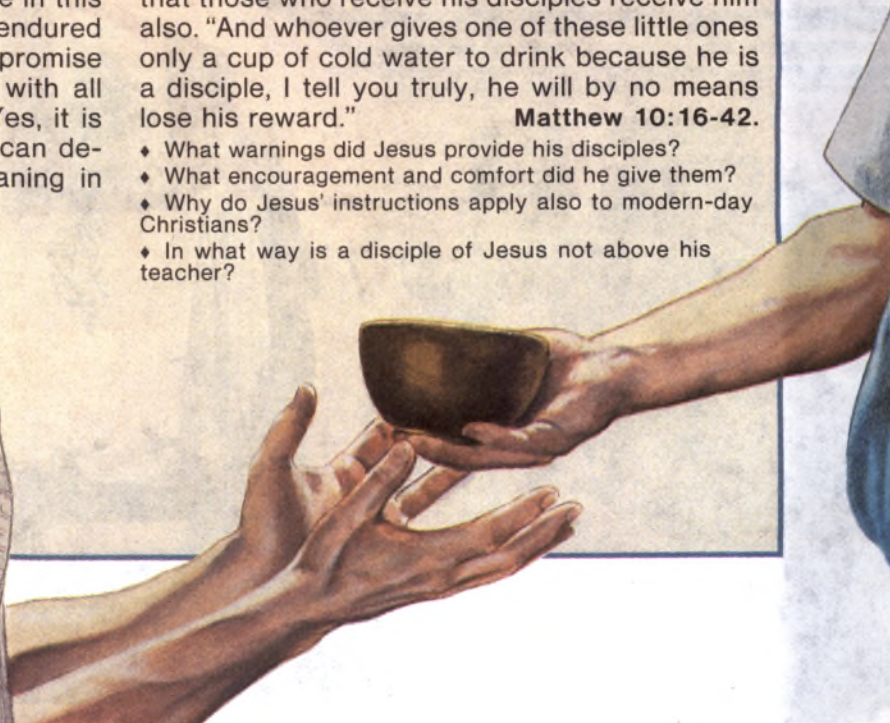
Jesus next encourages his disciples with an illustration that highlights Jehovah's loving care for them. "Do not two sparrows sell for a coin of small value?" he asks. "Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's knowledge. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore have no fear: you are worth more than many sparrows."

The Kingdom message Jesus commissions his disciples to proclaim will divide households, as certain family members accept it and others reject it. "Do not think I came to put peace upon the earth," he explains. "I came to put, not peace, but a sword." Thus, for a family member to embrace Bible truth requires courage. "He that has greater affection for father or mother than for me is not worthy of me," Jesus observes, "and he that has greater affection for son or daughter than for me is not worthy of me."

Concluding his instructions, Jesus explains that those who receive his disciples receive him also. "And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water to drink because he is a disciple, I tell you truly, he will by no means lose his reward."

Matthew 10:16-42.

- ♦ What warnings did Jesus provide his disciples?
- ♦ What encouragement and comfort did he give them?
- ♦ Why do Jesus' instructions apply also to modern-day Christians?
- ♦ In what way is a disciple of Jesus not above his teacher?



Christ Actively Leads His Congregation

"The God of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . made him head over all things to the congregation."—EPHESIANS 1:17, 22.

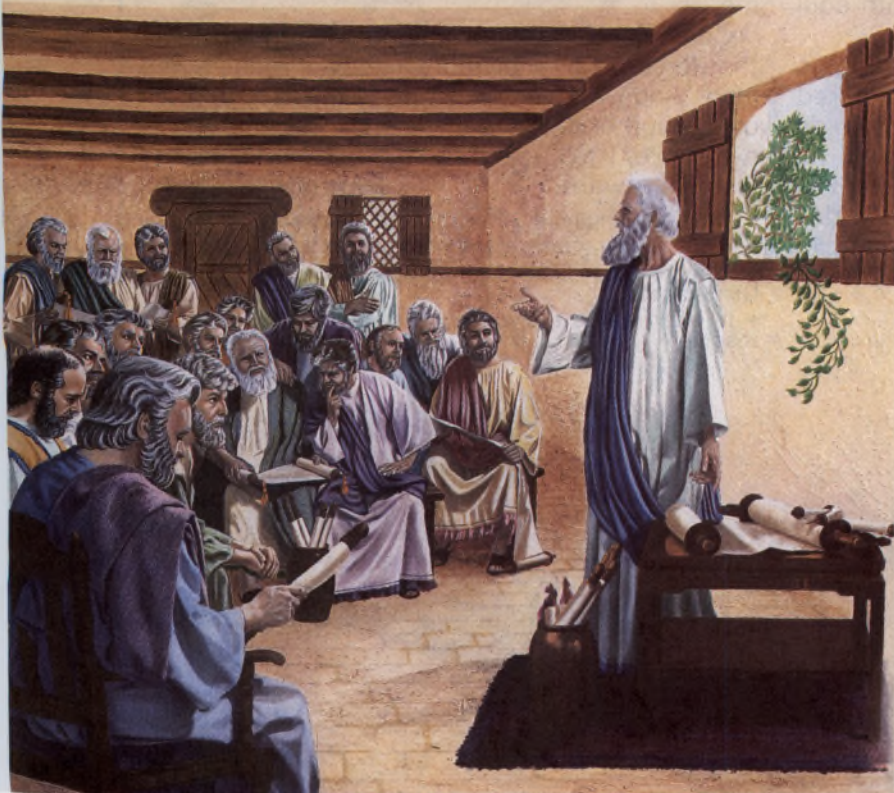
JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES recognize no man as their leader. Their organizational structure has no equivalent of the pope of the Roman Catholic Church, the patriarchs of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, or the leaders of other churches and sects of Christendom. Their allegiance is to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Christian congregation, who stated: "Your Leader is one, the Christ."—Matthew 23:10.

1. How might some members of Christendom's churches answer the question, 'Who is your leader?' but how do Jehovah's Witnesses answer?

² At Pentecost the apostle Peter testified: "David did not ascend to the heavens, but he himself says, 'Jehovah said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I place your enemies as a stool for your feet."' Therefore let all the house of Israel know for a certainty that God made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you impaled." (Acts 2:34-36) But while recognizing that in 33 C.E. Jesus was made Lord and Head of the congregation, are we inclined to think of him as having passively sat at Jehovah's right hand, awaiting his enthronement in 1914? Are we fully aware that right from the start Christ *actively* led his congregation?

2. Why do Jehovah's Witnesses recognize Christ as the Head of the Christian congregation, but what questions might be asked?

Christ also led his congregation by means of a visible governing body



Divine Means for Actively Governing

³ The evening before his death, Jesus said to his faithful apostles: "It is for your benefit I am going away. For if I do not go away, the helper will by no means come to you; but if I do go my way, I will send him to you." (John 16:7) He was going to send not a person but an active force. He made this explicit just before ascending to heaven, saying to his assembled disciples: "I am sending forth upon you *that which* is promised by my Father. You, though, abide in the city until you become clothed with *power* from on high."—Luke 24:49.

⁴ Jesus' faithful disciples stayed in the Jerusalem area until Pentecost. That day they "became filled with holy spirit," as promised. Peter testified: "Because he [Jesus] was exalted to the right hand of God and received the promised holy spirit from the Father, he has poured out this which you see and hear." (Acts 2:4, 33) By this means Jehovah begot these early Christians as his spiritual sons. (Galatians 4:6) Also, Jesus received the spirit from his Father as a means of actively governing his congregation on earth from his heavenly position at God's right hand.

⁵ Furthermore, the apostle Peter wrote concerning Jesus: "He is at God's right hand, for he went his way to heaven; and angels and authorities and powers were made subject to him." (1 Peter 3:22) Angels are, therefore, another means that Jehovah put at Christ's disposal of actively leading the Christian congregation.

⁶ Consequently, when we read in the

3. What did Jesus promise to send to his disciples, and how do we know that he was not speaking of a person?

4. How was the holy spirit used from Pentecost on?

5, 6. (a) What is another means given to Christ to enable him to govern his congregation on earth? (b) Give specific examples of how Jesus used this means in behalf of his disciples and in support of the preaching work.

book of Acts that "Jehovah's angel" or "an angel of God" acted in support of the Christian preaching work or intervened in behalf of members of the Christian congregation, there is every reason to believe that such angels acted under the supervision of Christ Jesus. (Acts 5:19; 8:26; 10:3-7, 22; 12:7-11; 27:23, 24) As "Michael the archangel," Christ has angels at his command, and he used them in actively leading the Christian congregation in the first century C.E.—Jude 9; 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

A Visible Governing Body

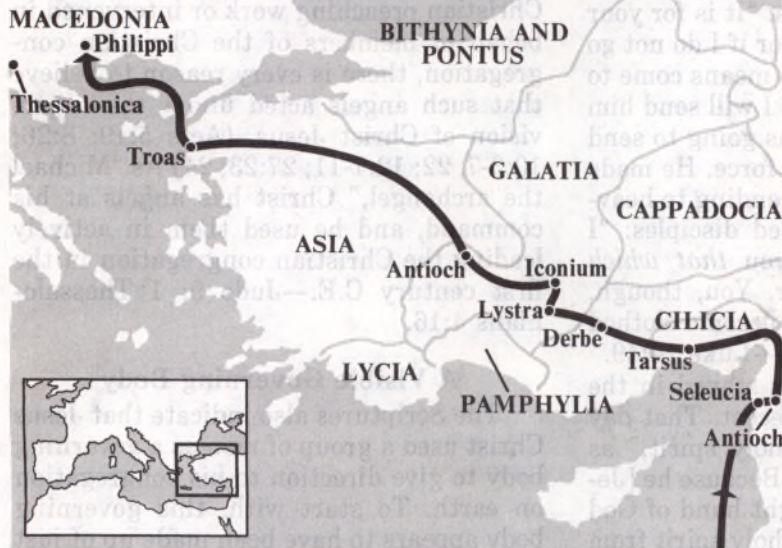
⁷ The Scriptures also indicate that Jesus Christ used a group of men as a governing body to give direction to his congregation on earth. To start with, this governing body appears to have been made up of just the 11 apostles. When seeking Jehovah's will in the replacement of Judas Iscariot, Peter quoted Psalm 109:8, which states: "His office of oversight let someone else take." Then, in their prayer to Jehovah, Peter and his companions asked God to designate the man "to take the place of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas deviated." Matthias was appointed to serve "along with the eleven apostles."—Acts 1:20, 24-26.

⁸ The first recorded instance of the 12 apostles' performing in this "office of oversight" as a governing body was when they appointed spiritually qualified men to serve their brothers within the early congregation. (Acts 6:1-6) The second case was when Philip began to preach Christ to the Samaritans. As a result of this, "the apostles in Jerusalem . . . dispatched Peter and John to them." Only after these

7. What other means did Christ use to give direction to his congregation, and what scriptures speak of this "office of oversight"?

8. What two early examples show how Christ used members of the visible governing body?

Paul's Second Missionary Journey



representative members of the governing body had laid their hands upon the Samaritans did they 'begin to receive holy spirit.'—Acts 8:5, 14-17.

Christ's Personal Leadership

⁹ Thus, right from the beginning of the Christian congregation, Christ had the holy spirit, angels, and a visible governing body at his disposal to enable him actively to lead his disciples on earth. On occasion he even acted personally. For example, Christ personally converted Saul of Tarsus. (Acts 9:3-6) Three days later Jesus spoke directly to "a certain disciple" named Ananias. Revealing to him the threefold mission he had in mind for Saul, Jesus stated: "This man is a chosen vessel to me to bear my name to the nations as well as to kings and the sons of Israel." (Acts 9:10-15) Christ called Saul for a particular work. Saul thus became an

9. Did Christ always act through angels or the governing body? Give an example.

apostle, or one sent forth, better known as the apostle Paul.

¹⁰ Christ personally supervised the preaching work. By means of the holy spirit received from his Father Jehovah, he initiated Paul's missionary journeys and took a personal interest in them. We read: "The holy spirit said: 'Of all persons set Barnabas and Saul apart for me for the work to which I have called them.' . . . Accordingly these men, sent out by the holy spirit, went down to

Seleucia, and from there they sailed away" on the first missionary trip. (Acts 13:2-4) Of course, the holy spirit, Jehovah's active force, could neither 'say' something nor 'send out' someone of itself. The one using the spirit to direct matters was obviously Christ, the Head of the congregation.

¹¹ This use of the spirit by Jesus as he actively led the early Christians is plainly shown in the account of Paul's second missionary journey. After having revisited congregations in Lycaonia (a region of Asia Minor) that had been founded during the first missionary tour, Paul and his traveling companions apparently intended to head west through the Roman province of Asia. Why did they not go through with their plan? "Because they were forbidden by the holy spirit to speak the word in the

10. How did Christ personally supervise the preaching work?

11. What happened during Paul's second missionary journey, and how does this clearly show that Jesus used the spirit in directing the preaching work?

district of Asia.” (Acts 15:36, 40, 41; 16:1-6) But who was using Jehovah’s holy spirit to guide them? The following verse answers. It shows that when they headed north, intending to preach in Bithynia, “the spirit of Jesus did not permit them.” (Acts 16:7) Yes, Jesus Christ was using the spirit he had received from his Father to direct the preaching work actively. He and his Father Jehovah wanted the good news to spread into Europe, so Paul received a vision to that effect.—Acts 16:9, 10.

Christ Backed Up Members of the Governing Body

¹² At the time of the apostle Paul’s first contact with the disciples in Jerusalem, they were understandably reluctant to meet him. “So Barnabas came to his aid and led him to the apostles.” (Acts 9:26, 27) Paul spent 15 days with the apostle Peter. He also met Jesus’ half brother James, by then one of the elders of the Jerusalem congregation. (Galatians 1:18, 19) Subsequent passages in Acts show that the Jerusalem elders became a part of the governing body of the early Christian congregation, along with the 12 apostles.—Acts 15:2; 21:18.

¹³ During his two-week stay in Jerusalem, Paul witnessed to Greek-speaking Jews, but “these made attempts to do away with him.” Luke adds that “when the brothers detected this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.” (Acts 9:28-30) But who was behind this wise decision? Years later, when relating the same episode in his life, Paul stated that Jesus had appeared to him and instructed him to leave Jerusalem quickly. When Paul objected, Jesus added: “Get on

12, 13. At the time of Paul’s first visit to Jerusalem as a Christian, what occurred that showed how Christ backed up decisions made by the responsible brothers in that city?

your way, because I shall send you out to nations far off.” (Acts 22:17-21) Christ was closely following matters from on high and acted both by means of the responsible brothers in Jerusalem and directly by speaking to Paul.

¹⁴ Similarly, an attentive reading of the Scriptures shows clearly that Christ was behind the important meeting of the governing body held to settle the question as to whether Gentile Christians should submit to circumcision and the Law of Moses or not. The book of Acts states that when the issue arose, “they [no doubt the responsible members, or elders, of the Antioch congregation] arranged for Paul and Barnabas and some others of them to go up to the apostles and older men in Jerusalem regarding this dispute.” (Acts 15:1, 2) But when Paul relates the circumstances that led to his going to Jerusalem to have the circumcision issue settled, he states: “I went up as a result of a revelation.” (Galatians 2:1-3; compare 1:12.) As the active Head of the congregation, Christ wanted this important doctrinal matter to be settled by the entire visible governing body. By means of the holy spirit, he guided the minds of these devoted men in making their decision.—Acts 15:28, 29.

An Unusual Decision

¹⁵ Another interesting example of Christ’s active direction of things from heaven is what took place after Paul’s third missionary journey. Luke relates that upon returning to Jerusalem, Paul

14. What comparison between the accounts in Acts and Galatians shows that Christ was directing matters with regard to the meeting of the governing body dealing with circumcision?

15, 16. (a) What did the governing body require Paul to do after he returned from his third missionary journey? (b) Why might this instruction seem unusual, and why did Paul comply with it? (c) What question arises?

made a full report to the members of the governing body on hand. Luke wrote: "Paul went in with us to James; and all the older men were present. And he greeted them and began giving in detail an account of the things God did among the nations through his ministry." (Acts 21:17-19) After hearing Paul, the assembled body gave him clear-cut instruction, stating: "Do this which we tell you." They ordered him to go to the temple and publicly demonstrate that he was not "teaching all the Jews among the nations an apostasy from Moses, telling them neither to circumcise their children nor to walk in the solemn customs."—Acts 21:20-24.

¹⁶ One might question the wisdom of this instruction. As we have already seen, years earlier James, and perhaps other elders present on both occasions, had sent Paul away from Jerusalem because his life was threatened by "Greek-speaking Jews." (Acts 9:29) In spite of this, Paul complied with the order, in line with what he had already said at 1 Corinthians 9:20. But like causes produce like effects. "Jews from [the Roman province of] Asia" caused a riot and tried to kill Paul. Only quick action by Roman soldiers saved him

from being lynched. (Acts 21:26-32) Since Christ is the active Head of the congregation, why did he cause the governing body to require Paul to go into the temple?

¹⁷ The answer becomes apparent in what occurred the second night after Paul's arrest. He had given a fine witness to the mob that sought to kill him and, the following day, to the Sanhedrin. (Acts 22:1-21; 23:1-6) For the second time he was nearly lynched. But that night, Jesus appeared to him and said: "Be of good courage! For as you have been giving a thorough witness on the things about me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness in Rome." (Acts 23:11) Remember the threefold mission Christ had foretold for Paul. (Acts 9:15) Paul had borne Christ's name to "the nations" and to "the sons of Israel," but the time had now come for him to witness "to kings." Because of that decision by the governing body, Paul was able to witness to Roman procurators Felix and Festus, to King Herod Agrippa II, and, finally, to Roman Emperor Nero. (Acts, chapters 24-26; 27:24) Who can doubt that Christ was behind all of this?

Christ Still Actively Leads His Congregation

¹⁸ Before leaving his disciples and ascending to his Father's right hand, Jesus Christ stated: "All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth. Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you. And, look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." —Matthew 28:18-20.

17. How did this unusual decision turn out to be providential, and what does this indicate?

18. What did Jesus Christ state before ascending to heaven?

Points to Remember

- ☐ Why do Jehovah's Witnesses not recognize any man as their leader?
- ☐ How did Christ use the holy spirit to lead the early Christian congregation?
- ☐ How did Christ use angels in leading first-century Christians?
- ☐ How did Christ use a visible governing body in directing his congregation on earth?
- ☐ How did Christ personally direct matters at times?

¹⁹ The book of Acts, relating the history of the early years of Christianity, shows beyond doubt that Christ used his authority by actively leading his congregation on earth. He did this by means of the holy spirit, the angels, and the governing body

19. How did Christ wield his God-given authority in the first century, and what will be considered in the next article?

Christ's Active Leadership Today

"I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things."—MATTHEW 28:20.



WHEN Christ was about to leave his disciples and return to heaven in 33 C.E., he "committed to them his belongings." This involved being "ambassadors substituting for Christ" and taking up the preaching work he had begun, extending it

1. In what way did Christ commit his "belongings" to his disciples?

made up of the 12 apostles and the elders of the Jerusalem congregation. Jesus stated that he would be with his disciples right up to the conclusion of the system of things, where we now are. In the following article, we will see how he is still the active Head of the Christian congregation and how he is leading his "sheep" today.

to "the most distant part of the earth." Before leaving them, he had instructed them to "make disciples of people of all the nations." Do we have evidence that he was attentive as to how they carried out this commission? Indeed we do!—Matthew 25:14; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19.

² Over 60 years after Christ ascended to heaven, he showed that he had been following intently the activities of Christian congregations on earth. In the revelation given to the apostle John, a member of the first-century governing body, Jesus Christ sent messages to seven congregations located in Asia Minor. To five of them he said: "I know your deeds." And he showed that he was very familiar with what was going on within the other two, Smyrna and Pergamum. He gave specific encouragement and counsel to each congregation. There could be no doubt in their minds as to who was their active Leader.—Revelation 1:11; 2:1-3:22.

³ Actually, those seven messages were not limited in their scope to the seven congregations in Asia. The fine counsel and the warnings they contained applied to all congregations, from the first century down into "the Lord's day," where we now are.* Christ's eyes, likened to "a fiery flame," have continually watched what has been going on within "all the congregations."—Revelation 1:10; 2:18, 23.

The Master and His Slave

⁴ After having likened himself to "a man, about to travel abroad, [who] summoned slaves of his and committed to them his belongings," Christ added: "After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them." (Matthew 25:14, 19) In 33 C.E. Christ "went his way to heaven," where he was seated "at God's right hand." (1 Peter

3:22) "After a long time," following his enthronement in 1914, Christ began 'subduing in the midst of his enemies' by hurling Satan and his demons down to the earth. (Psalm 110:1, 2; Revelation 12:7-9) Then he turned his attention to his slaves. The time had come for settling accounts with them. More than ever, he was their active Leader.

⁵ The modern history of God's people shows that this time of accounting came in 1918-19. The parable of the talents illustrates how the Master would settle accounts with the remnant of his anointed slaves. They would have to account individually for the way they had used his belongings, "each one according to his own ability," or spiritual possibilities. Those who had been productive entered into the joy of their Master, who said to them: "You were faithful over a few things. I will appoint you over many things."—Matthew 25:15, 20-23.

⁶ Such individual anointed Christians were found to be faithful ambassadors of the now reigning King, willing to make disciples for their Master. They were collectively found to be the "slave" of whom their Master had said: "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so. Truly I say to you, He will appoint him over all his belongings."—Matthew 24:45-47.

⁷ Christ's "belongings" have become more numerous since 1914. He has been clothed with "kingly power," involving in-

* For a full explanation of these seven messages and their application, see the book *"Then Is Finished the Mystery of God,"* chapters 7 to 14, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

2. What shows that Christ was closely following the activities of first-century congregations?
3. To whom were the seven messages really addressed, and what proves this?
4. How did Christ "travel abroad" and then come back "after a long time"?

5. When did the time of accounting come, and how were the faithful rewarded?

6. What did such faithful anointed Christians form collectively, and what did their Master commit to their care?

7. (a) How have Christ's "belongings" increased since 1914? (b) What shows that Christ is also the active Leader of the "other sheep"?



Christ is symbolically in the midst of the congregations, holding the overseers in his right hand

creased authority and larger responsibilities. (Luke 19:11, 12) He first proceeded to gather in the remainder of "the sons of the kingdom," the 144,000 anointed Christians "bought from among mankind" to become kings and priests with him in heaven. (Matthew 13:38; Revelation 14:1-4; 5:9, 10) Then, as historically manifested since 1935, he has been gathering in "a great crowd" of "other sheep" of whom he said: "Those also I must bring." (Revelation 7:9, 10; John 10:16) Yes, he is the One who brings in these "sheep," and he becomes their active Leader. Interestingly, the Greek text means literally, "And those it is necessary [for] me to lead." How is he actively leading all his "sheep" today?

Overseers in Christ's Right Hand

⁸ The apostle John, a member of the governing body of the early Christian congregation, received a vision in which he "saw seven golden lampstands, and in the

8, 9. (a) What vision did the apostle John receive? (b) What was pictured by the seven lampstands and the seven stars?

midst of the lampstands someone like a son of man . . . And he had in his right hand seven stars." Jesus Christ explained to John: "As for the sacred secret of the seven stars that you saw upon my right hand, and of the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars mean the angels of the seven congregations, and the seven lampstands mean seven congregations."—Revelation 1:12-20.

⁹ Commenting on this passage, the book *"Then Is Finished the Mystery of God"* states: "Are such 'angels' invisible ones? No. The apostle John received the entire Revelation from Jesus Christ by means of a heavenly angel, and it would be unreasonable for him to be writing back to angels in heaven, in invisible realms. They do not need the messages written to the seven congregations in Asia. The basic meaning of the title 'angel' is 'messenger; message bearer.' . . . As these seven symbolic stars are seen to be upon Jesus' right hand, they are in his care and charge and under his direction, his 'right hand' of applied power being able to direct and protect them. . . .

As the 'seven lampstands' in the visionary 'Lord's day' pictured all the true Christian congregations in this present, real 'Lord's day' since 1914 C.E., so the 'seven stars' symbolize all the spirit-begotten, anointed angellike overseers of such congregations of today."*—Pages 102-4.

¹⁰ These anointed overseers in Christ's right hand are all a part of the collective "slave" whom He has appointed "over all his belongings." Because the slave's Master has himself been clothed with enlarged responsibilities since 1914, "all his belongings" must involve many more things for the slave than in the past. For one thing, as "ambassadors substituting for Christ," the remnant are now ambassadors of a reigning King ruling over an established Kingdom. (2 Corinthians 5:20) They have been put in charge of all the spiritual things that belong to the Master on earth. They must serve in fulfillment of the prophecies that apply since the establishment of the Kingdom. This includes preaching "this good news of the kingdom . . . in all the inhabited earth for a witness." (Matthew 24:14) More than ever, they must go on making "disciples of people of all the nations," thus gathering in the unnumbered "great crowd." (Matthew 28:19, 20; Revelation 7:9) Yes, these "desirable things of all the nations" are a part of Christ's increased "belongings" on earth.—Haggai 2:7.

* The December 15, 1971, issue of *The Watchtower* clarified this point still further, stating: "Doubtless, not one individual elder, presbyter, overseer or shepherd, but the entire 'body of elders' was what the glorified Lord, Jesus Christ, called the 'angel' that was symbolized by a heavenly star. . . . The 'body of elders' (or presbytery) there at Ephesus was to act like a star in shedding heavenly, spiritual light upon the congregation over which the holy spirit had made them shepherds."

10. What increased "belongings" have been committed to the slave's care?

¹¹ All of this means more work for the collective "slave," a larger field of activities, extending literally to "all the inhabited earth." It also requires larger headquarters and branch facilities for supervising the work and for printing and distributing literature for preaching and personal study. As in the first century, this work is carried out under the active leadership of Jesus Christ, who is figuratively "in the midst of the lampstands," or congregations. He directs them by means of anointed overseers, whom he holds symbolically "in his right hand." (Revelation 1:13, 16) As in early Christian times, a group of these anointed overseers makes up the visible Governing Body of Christ's congregation on earth. His "right hand" of applied power directs these faithful men as they supervise the Kingdom work.

By Means of the Spirit

¹² With the "other sheep" now numbering upwards of three million, organized into some 52,000 congregations, it is obvious that the anointed remnant need help in taking care of the Master's earthly belongings. Fewer than 9,000, including many sisters, partake of the Memorial emblems, so there is not even one anointed overseer per congregation. Does this mean that Jesus Christ is not in charge of congregations where there is no spirit-begotten "angel," or 'star'?

¹³ By no means! As we have seen in the previous article, in the first century Christ actively led his congregation by means of the holy spirit. Today he uses the spirit-begotten members of the Governing Body

11. (a) What do these increased "belongings" necessitate? (b) Who is directing the work, and how?

12, 13. (a) In view of the great increase, what question arises? (b) How does Christ use the spirit to fill the need for overseers among his disciples on earth?

to appoint overseers chosen from among the "other sheep." These must meet the same requirements as anointed elders, as outlined in such scriptures as 1 Timothy 3: 1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. These Scriptural qualifications were written under the direction of the holy spirit. Recommendations and appointments are made after prayer and under the guidance of the holy spirit. To such nonanointed elders Paul's counsel applies with equal force: "Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers."—Acts 20:28.

¹⁴ Thus, in tens of thousands of congregations, the righteous reigning King Jesus Christ is using "other sheep" as "princes" to protect his "sheep" from spiritual wind, rainstorm, and drought. (Isaiah 32:1, 2) Like David of old, elders, whether of the anointed or the "other sheep," pray to Jehovah: "Your spirit is good; may it lead me in the land of uprightness." (Psalm 143: 10) And Jehovah hears their prayer. By means of his Son, He grants them His spirit, and Jesus uses this means actively to lead his disciples on earth. Naturally, all elders must submit to Christ's "right hand" of control, guidance, and direction, which he exercises by means of the spirit and the spirit-begotten members of the Governing Body.

By Means of Angels

¹⁵ The previous article mentioned that angels were used in the first century to guide and deliver early Christians and help them in their preaching work. Would it be logical to think that our reigning King Jesus Christ no longer uses angels in actively leading his disciples today? Not

14. (a) How is the prophecy of Isaiah 32:1, 2 already being fulfilled? (b) How must all elders submit to Christ's "right hand"?

15. What other means does Christ have at his disposal to lead his disciples on earth actively?

only would it be illogical but it would also be unscriptural.

¹⁶ According to Jesus' parable of the wheat and the weeds, harvesttime would come at "the conclusion of the system of things," which began in 1914. During the harvest, "the sons of the kingdom" would be separated from "the sons of the wicked one." Whom would the Master use to do the harvesting? "The reapers are angels." Christ added: "The Son of man will send forth his angels, and they will collect out from his kingdom all things that cause stumbling and persons who are doing lawlessness." (Matthew 13:37-41) Christ uses angels to protect his brothers on earth.

¹⁷ But what about the "other sheep"? Does Christ use angels to gather them? Assuredly! His parable of the sheep and the goats says: "When the Son of man arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." (Matthew 25:31, 32) Christ uses his angels in this separating work. Just as an angel directed the steps of Philip toward the Ethiopian eunuch, so there is abundant evidence today that Christ uses his angels to direct the steps of his Witnesses toward sheeplike ones. Many people have attested to the fact that they had prayed for help just before a Witness knocked at their door.—Acts 8:26, 27.

Complete Confidence in Christ's Direction

¹⁸ In the first century, circumstances

16, 17. What proof do we have that Christ uses angels in harvesting "the sons of the kingdom" and in gathering the "other sheep"?

18, 19. On the basis of what occurred in the first century, of what are we confident?

Tests that come because of wars, revolutions or outright persecution and official bans may make it impossible for you to carry on Christian worship in a fully organized manner. Circumstances may develop making it impossible to hold large congregation meetings. Contact with the branch office may temporarily be broken off. Visits by circuit overseers may be interrupted. New publications may not arrive. If any of these things happen to you, what should you do?

The answer is: Under the circumstances, do whatever you can, and as much as you can, in the way of pure worship. Personal study should be possible. Usually small groups of brothers can meet for study in homes. Publications studied in the past and the Bible itself can be used as a basis for meetings. Do not become excited or worried. Generally, in a short time some form of communication with responsible brothers will be established. The Governing Body seeks to find ways of getting in touch with the brothers.

But even if you find yourself isolated from all your Christian brothers, keep in mind that you are not isolated from Jehovah and his Son Jesus Christ.—*Organized to Accomplish Our Ministry*, page 168.

did not always lend themselves to Christ's using the governing body in Jerusalem to solve a specific problem. When Paul was isolated up in northern Asia Minor and needed to know which territory to open up next, Christ acted through the spirit. (Acts 16:6-10) Today Jehovah's Witnesses are confident that any of their brothers who become temporarily isolated from the Governing Body because of persecution are still under Christ's active leadership, by means of the spirit and angelic support.

¹⁹ Back in early Christian times, some decisions made by the governing body may have been hard to understand at the time. This was doubtless the case when Paul was sent back to Tarsus or when he was sent to the temple after his third missionary journey. (Acts 9:30; 21:23-25) Yet, Christ was actually behind such decisions.

(Acts 22:17-21; 23:11) Today we can be confident that whatever Christ allows to occur among his disciples on earth has some lofty purpose behind it, even as in the first century.

²⁰ Thus, when we read in the Bible that Christ "is the head of the body, the congregation," we are convinced that he is not a mere titular Head. (Colossians 1:18) We know, from experience, that he is a real, active Head. When we read the book of Acts and see how Christ directed matters among the early Christians, we can observe that he is using the same means today. We see evidence of Christ's use of the holy spirit, angels, and "the faithful and discreet slave" and its Governing Body, to appoint spiritually qualified elders. Confident in Christ's active direction of things, we are determined to go on "speaking the truth" and growing up by love "in all things into him who is the head, Christ."—Ephesians 4:15.

20. Of what are we convinced, and what is our determination?

Main Points to Recall

- ☐ What proof do we have that Christ closely followed the activities of first-century congregations?
- ☐ Whom did Christ appoint over all his "belongings," and what do these include?
- ☐ Who are symbolized by the seven stars in Christ's right hand?
- ☐ How does Christ use the holy spirit, angels, and the anointed Governing Body in leading his congregation today?
- ☐ Why can we have complete confidence in Christ's direction of things today?

My Generation —*Unique and Highly Privileged!*

As told by Melvin Sargent

MANY young people today have been born into a family of Jehovah's Witnesses. But in 1896 this was a rare privilege indeed. From infancy, I was taught by Mother to fear Jehovah properly and to appreciate the ransom sacrifice made by his Son. So I belong to a unique and highly privileged generation—old enough to have seen the beginning of the sign of Christ's presence in 1914 and yet possibly still young enough to live to see its completion at Armageddon.—Matthew 24:3, 33, 34.

Off to a Fine Start With TLC

As a child, I was given what is called the TLC treatment, Tender Loving Care. Yet at times that care could be displayed in ways some today might consider severe. I remember that once Mother overheard me playing with an older boy who suddenly began using words quite new to me. "Those are bad words that you must never use," she told me, impressing it upon me with more than just words! But I realized that her discipline was an expression of tender loving care, and I remember wondering why Jimmie's mother had not dis-



ciplined him. Did she not really love him enough?

We were the only Witness family in Jewell County, Kansas. Father was not a dedicated servant of Jehovah, but he obligingly conducted a Bible study with us children. My sister Eva was the oldest, and Walter was 16 months older than I. Every evening we were expected to share in washing the dishes. But Walter often found excuses and begged off. Eva and I, however, used this chore as a daily opportunity to talk about Bible truths, so it was a blessing in disguise. Later I came to appreciate that people who shirk responsibilities in life miss out on many blessings. This happened to Walter, who later turned away from the truth.

Our TLC treatment led to fine results on August 4, 1912. Eva and I got up before dawn and traveled ten miles (16 km) by horse and buggy to catch the early train to Jamestown, Kansas. A pilgrim, the

designation of traveling Bible Students, was visiting there, and this was to be our first meeting with Bible Students outside our own home. It was also the day of our baptism.

Although only 16, I asked the pilgrim brother if I could take up the full-time ministry, then called colporteur work. He encouraged me to write the Watch Tower Society. Since I was still needed at home, however, this had to be delayed. Meanwhile, I used my spare time regularly helping the Jamestown Bible Students distribute tracts throughout some 75 surrounding cities and towns.

I also witnessed at other times. Once when our landlady came to town on business and stayed with us a few days, I gave her a tract. This must have impressed her. But after she returned home to Iowa, it was 30 years before I saw her again. She had become an Adventist and was not interested in 'my religion.' She had an estate that needed to be cared for, however, and knowing of no "truly Christian man" in her religion in whom she had confidence, she turned to me. The fee she paid me helped keep me in the full-time ministry for several years. What a confirmation of Ecclesiastes 11:1: "Send out your bread upon the surface of the waters, for in the course of many days you will find it again." Or of what Jesus once said: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you."—Matthew 6:33.

Unforgettable Impressions

I attended my first convention in 1913. I was impressed to see 41 new ones baptized, and I was also encouraged to think that with my head start (I had been baptized for ten months), I might have some hope of being able to develop a "Christlike

character" by 1914, in order to make my 'calling and election' sure. I was also impressed at seeing so many red and yellow ribbons. Colporteurs who were looking for partners wore red ones, and anyone wanting to team up with them wore a yellow one.

For me, a highlight of the 1914 convention was seeing the *Photo-Drama of Creation* and getting a closer look at Brother Russell. He had a warm way about him and showed a real desire to impart encouraging information to his listeners. He was sympathetic and willing to listen to those who came to him with problems. But he was not too big for an occasional teenager's horseplay. One evening as I was handing out scenarios of the *Photo-Drama* program, he hurried past. I offered him a copy, pretending not to recognize him. At first he went by, but then he turned and with a laugh thanked me, letting me know he had caught the joke.

Finally in 1917, at 21, I was able to take up the colporteur work. World War I had already been in progress nearly three years. With a suitcase in hand, lots of books, and \$30.00 in my pocket, I headed for Nebraska with my partner, Ernest Leuba, an older experienced colporteur. We had both positive and negative experiences. I remember, for example, when we once decided to use a hurry-up method of placing books. We had cards printed that offered people a free two-day examination of the book *The Finished Mystery*, with the privilege of obtaining it for 60 cents upon our return. One morning we each loaned out ten books in this fashion. Two days later, I was able to place seven of mine, whereas Brother Leuba, who had worked in an overwhelmingly Catholic neighborhood, placed only one. In order to retrieve one of the books he had loaned out, he had to go to the local Catholic priest to whom it had been passed. So we soon decided that our hurry-

up method was really not as good as spending more time talking to the people.

Of course, we had very little money, which meant that we at times were quite ingenious in thinking up ways to be economical. So when we later moved to a new assignment in Boulder, Colorado, we bought a ticket to the nearest station beyond the state line. Then we got off the train and bought another ticket for the rest of the trip on the next train. Why? Because fares within a state were two cents a mile, but interstate rates were higher. Besides saving money, we were able to spend our time during the stopover doing informal witnessing.

Wartime Problems and a New Beginning

By now it was 1918, and the United States was well embroiled in the war. A storm of opposition openly began against the Bible Students, identifying those who were fearful and those who were not. Some brothers of draft age, although conscientious objectors, agreed to perform noncombatant military service.

When I registered, I claimed exemption as a minister. My arguments, I thought, were well based, and my induction was delayed while my case was sent to the appeal board. They thought otherwise and rejected my claim. This delay, however, helped keep me out of prison because by now it was harvesttime, and I was deferred until this essential work on my parents' farm could be finished. Finally my induction was set for November 15.



Melvin and
Lydia Sargent,
colporteurs, 1921

The war ended November 11. I had missed prison by only four days.

Others who fearlessly came out in support of Christian neutrality did not fare as well. At a convention in Denver, I met one of them. Explaining why he was bald, the brother told of being tied to a tree by a fanatical mob that had poured hot tar over him. "The women in the group," he said, "were the worst." He had shaved his hair off to get rid of the tar. Then he broke into a broad smile and said of his experience: "I wouldn't have missed it for anything."

Because of their uncompromising stand, some of the officials of the Watch Tower Society were wrongly imprisoned. But in 1919, while still in prison, they were re-elected to their positions in the Society, despite an attempt by apostates to replace them. The faithful brothers accepted this as an indication of Jehovah's approval. Full of joy, encouraged by a fresh flow of holy spirit, they were now more determined than ever before to take up the Kingdom-preaching work anew and to expose the clergy for their hypocritical failure to support God's Kingdom. A complete break with Babylon had begun.

On February 24, 1918, in Los Angeles, California, after the United States got involved in World War I on April 6, 1917, Brother Rutherford delivered for the first time the thrilling talk "Millions Now Living Will Never Die."

Important Changes Over the Years

For seven years Lydia Tannahill and I had maintained a friendship mainly by correspondence. After prayerful consideration, we decided in 1921 it would be best for us to take advantage of Paul's concession when advising singleness, namely, that he who "gives his virginity in marriage does well." (1 Corinthians 7:38) Our marriage was a gift from Jehovah and caused our hearts to rejoice. Before long, however, we were faced with a crisis. Travel had caused an old back injury of Lydia's to become acute, and my heart, though loyal and loving, was slow, "a tired heart" the doctors called it. This gave way to anemia. Both of us were running out of strength. We were advised to change climate and to limit our daily travels. Our mobile home was ideal for helping us follow this counsel, and so we spent September 1923 on the road to California.

Belonging to the highly privileged generation that I do, I have been allowed to see how Jehovah's visible organization has developed over the years. I was there when Los Angeles was first laid out in individual preaching territories, when Sunday witnessing began, and when we received our new name, Jehovah's Witnesses, in 1931. What a thrill to see adjustments made in 1932 and 1938 that ensured the theocratic, rather than the democratic, appointment of elders. And it has been a joy to see unclear issues and questions, like those of neutrality and the sanctity of blood, clarified.

Although I had dropped out of the colpor-



Melvin and Evamae Sargent, 1976

teur work in 1923, I had always maintained a pioneer spirit. So in 1943 I was able to rejoin the fast-growing ranks of pioneers. In 1945 I was even privileged to become a special pioneer, serving nine years in that capacity until my "tired heart" once again caught up with me. Since 1954 I have served as a regular pioneer.

My marriage to Lydia lasted 48 years until in 1969 she moved on to a new assignment, an inheritance for her "reserved in the heavens," an assignment I, too, hope to receive in due time. (1 Peter 1:4) Although we were never blessed with children, we were blessed with what many considered to be an ideal marriage. Though my loss was great, keeping busy with theocratic interests helped me overcome it. Later I married an experienced pioneer I had known for many years, Evamae Bell. We enjoyed 13 years of companionship until she, too, passed away.

My Generation —Unique in a Special Way

I have sometimes been asked: "What has been your greatest experience in the truth?" Without hesitation I answer:

“Seeing fulfilled within *my* generation the Bible prophecies set down by inspired and dedicated men centuries ago.”

Members of my generation outside the theocratic organization, of course, have turned out to be exactly the way the *Photo-Drama of Creation* of 1914 said they would be: money-mad, pleasure-mad, and glory-mad. Those of us inside the Lord’s organization have tried, in every way possible, to turn their attention to the message of life. We have used slogans, full-page advertisements, radio, sound cars, portable phonographs, gigantic conventions, parades of information-walkers

carrying signs, and a growing army of house-to-house ministers. This activity has served to divide people—those in favor of God’s established Kingdom on the one side, those against it on the other. This was the work foretold by Jesus for *my* generation!—Matthew 25:31-46.

Until this “tired heart” of mine beats its last, it will continue to beat in appreciation for the privilege I have enjoyed of belonging to a unique generation. It will continue to beat in excitement over the privilege I now have of seeing millions of smiling faces that are destined to keep on smiling forever.

A Young One Praises Jehovah

MANY opportunities for witnessing are open to young ones when they have a strong desire to serve Jehovah. This was seen in the experience of a five-year-old boy in western Kenya.—Ecclesiastes 12:1.

His mother asked him: “What do you want to be when you grow up?” The boy had observed a special pioneer in the congregation and replied: “I want to become a special pioneer like Brother F——.”

The mother answered: “But this is not possible; you cannot even be a regular pioneer because you do not have a Bible study.” The boy asked: “What can I do then?” His mother suggested he try to teach his playmates from his copy of *My Book of Bible Stories*.

The five-year-old got his *Bible Stories* book and went calling on his friends, inviting them to study the Bible with him. The result?



He formed a group of ten that he could study with. He made good use of the pictures, raised many searching questions, and asked review questions at the end of the study. If they did not remember, he would go over the material with them again. The mother explained that it was really a joy to see all these children sitting on the ground in front of her house studying together! There was her five-year-old son asking questions, and then all the hands would go up to answer.

It was a further joy to the mother, as well as to the congregation, to see eight of these children attend congregation meetings. The other two were too small. All of this happened because a five-year-old wanted to praise Jehovah and help others.

The Spirit That Jehovah Blesses



“THE Lord be with the spirit you show. His undeserved kindness be with you people.” With these words, Paul concluded his second letter to Timothy. (2 Timothy 4:22) What joy this expression of commendation must have given Timothy and those with him—to know that they displayed the spirit that Jehovah blesses!

But just what is the spirit that Jehovah blesses? What really characterizes those who have this spirit? And how may we also display this spirit and receive Jehovah's blessing?

To help answer these questions, let us go back to the time of Moses. The Israelites are in the wilderness. Jehovah has recently concluded the Law covenant with them, and now he instructs them in the way that they



should worship him. This includes the building of a portable tent of meeting that will require a great amount of gold, precious materials, and skilled workmanship to construct. The opportunity to make voluntary gift offerings to supply the needed materials and labor is presented to the nation in these words: “Let every willing-hearted one bring it as Jehovah's contribution, namely, gold and silver and copper and blue thread and wool dyed reddish purple . . . And let all the wisehearted ones among you come and make all that Jehovah has commanded, namely, the tabernacle with its tent and its covering.”—Exodus 35:5-19.

How did the nation respond to this opportunity? The remainder of chapter 35 tells us that those ‘whose heart impelled them’ and ‘whose spirit incited them’ made contributions and set themselves to work with a diligence that showed that they treasured this opportunity that had been put before them. (Verses 21, 22, 26) Their response was such that chapter 36, verse 6, tells us that “Moses commanded that they should cause an announcement to pass through the camp,

saying: 'Men and women, do not produce any more stuff for the holy contribution.' With that the people were restrained from bringing it in." Yes, they had to be restrained! Jehovah had used no pressure tactics when he had the announcement made: "Let every willing-hearted one . . ." The result was that the nation showed a *willing spirit*, and this brought blessings in the form of great joy, as well as Jehovah's protection and direction in all that they undertook.

Years later, the same spirit was once again manifested. This occurred when King Hezekiah was working to restore pure worship in Israel. The account tells us that, when given the opportunity, "the congregation began to bring sacrifices and thanksgiving sacrifices, and also every one willing of heart, burnt offerings." The result? "Consequently Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced over the fact that the true God had made preparation for the people, because it was all of a sudden that the thing had occurred."—2 Chronicles 29:31-36.

Christians Demonstrate the Right Spirit

Do we observe the same spirit of willing self-sacrifice in Christian times? Note what Paul wrote about the Philippian Christians at Philippians 1:3-5: "I thank my God always upon every remembrance of you in every supplication of mine for all of you, as I offer my supplication with joy, because of the contribution you have made to the good news from the first day until this moment." In what ways were the Philippian Christians outstanding in their 'contribution to the good news'? The succeeding verses make it apparent that not only were they willingly conforming their way of life to Bible principles so as to advance the good news but they were also zealous in their preaching and teaching of the good news to others.

That all Christians should willingly share in the preaching work in these ways is stressed at Hebrews 13:15: "Through him

let us always offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name." So the preaching of the good news by each and every Christian is a key way in which we can show the willing spirit that characterizes true worshipers of Jehovah today. Additionally, Christians are reminded that they should never "forget the doing of good and the sharing of things with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."—Hebrews 13:16.

The Philippian brothers displayed this willing spirit in yet another way. In chapter 4 Paul mentions several occasions when they came to his aid in a financial way, so that the preaching of the good news was advanced. (Philippians 4:14-17) They thus imitated the fine example of those earlier worshipers of Jehovah. They obviously honored "Jehovah with [their] valuable things." (Proverbs 3:9) Do we show the same spirit when similar opportunities are set before us?

The Approved Spirit Evident Today

Psalms 110 shows that there would be many displaying this same fine spirit of willing self-sacrifice in the last days of this present system when the majority of people are interested only in "me." We are told in verse 3 that, after the Messiah took up rulership in the Kingdom in 1914, God's people would "offer themselves willingly" and that those doing so would be as numerous as "dewdrops." Has this proved true?

In April 1881 *The Watchtower* printed an appeal for 1,000 preachers to take up the full-time preaching work. The May 1881 issue stressed that those engaging in this work must be those who would be "working for heavenly wages." Within four years, over 300 had responded—outstanding in view of the small number of dedicated Christians associated with the Watch Tower Society at that time.

This same spirit continues to be evident

today. For example, in 1986 there were 391,294 pioneers (full-time ministers) reporting, on the average, each month. That was a 21.2-percent increase, or 68,473 more than the previous year! However, this willing spirit is not limited to those who are able to spend their full time in the preaching work.*

Many with other Scriptural responsibilities—such as caring for a family, for incapacitated or aged parents—and those whose health will not permit them to share in the full-time Christian ministry also display this same spirit of willing self-sacrifice that is so pleasing to Jehovah. This becomes evident when one realizes that the bulk of the Kingdom preaching work in most lands is actually done by ministers who have to spend the greater part of their time working at some secular job or in caring for family obligations or other Scriptural responsibilities. Truly a commendable display of the spirit that Jehovah blesses.

Displaying the Right Spirit in Other Areas of Life

As in Moses' and Hezekiah's day, opportunities to show a willing spirit present themselves today when local congregations build a Kingdom Hall or other similar facilities. Is the same spirit evident in such cases? Yes, it most certainly is!

This has been especially manifest in a current method of Kingdom Hall construction often called quickly built Kingdom Hall projects. Many hundreds of Witnesses will gather and work from early Saturday morning on through to Sunday evening—some working all night—to accomplish what newspapers have called a “weekend mira-

* For some heartwarming and inspiring examples of those who have spent themselves willingly in the full-time preaching work, see the *Watchtower* articles of 5/15/55, pages 317-8; 6/15/62, pages 375-9; 7/15/63, pages 437-42; 11/1/70, pages 666-70; 3/15/71, pages 186-90; 8/15/76, pages 485-90; 6/15/80, pages 24-7. See *Watchtower Publications Index 1930-1985*, under the heading “Life Stories of Jehovah’s Witnesses” for further examples.

cle.” Where nothing but a concrete slab was on the lot on Friday, a finished Kingdom Hall is used for a meeting Sunday evening!*

Even greater opportunities to display a willing spirit present themselves in connection with the building of branch facilities in various lands. The amount of completely voluntary labor contributed to the work being done in these various projects staggers the imagination. In addition to the contributions of labor, there are, of course, the financial contributions that make it possible to purchase the necessary materials. Very often, Witnesses will spontaneously donate needed items that greatly reduce the cost of the building.

An example of this occurred during the construction of the new branch in Sydney, Australia. There, brothers living in the far north of Queensland prepared and sent to the construction site four semitrailer loads of timber having an estimated value of from \$60,000 to \$70,000! During the construction of the branch, Witnesses by the busload traveled from as far afield as Western Australia, 2,500 miles (4,000 km) away, to do volunteer work for four weeks at a time. Quite a few of the skilled tradesmen voluntarily worked at the site for months and several even for a year or more. This was

* See *The Watchtower* 8/1/82, pages 8-11 and *Awake!* 7/8/81, pages 16-19.

In Our Next Issue

■ **Women’s Improved Role
—A Mixed Blessing?**

■ **Youths—What Will You Do
With Your Life?**

■ **Is the Cross for Christians?**

truly a manifestation of the same spirit that Jehovah has blessed so bountifully throughout the centuries past and that today is often repeated in other lands.

Additional opportunities to show a willing spirit present themselves when Witnesses are congregating at assemblies and conventions. Every such assembly requires many volunteers, often months in advance of the event, to ensure that everything will go smoothly and be well organized. And once under way, sometimes up to one in four of the Witnesses attending will volunteer to help do the many necessary jobs that make for a pleasant and successful convention. The work may involve serving food or cleaning. It may be a task that goes unnoticed by the majority of those in attendance. But it does not go unnoticed by Jehovah! He rewards those who willingly offer themselves to do what is needed. Do you also reap the reward that results when Christians "through love slave for one another" by voluntarily offering your services at assembly times? Have you thought of doing so as a family?—Galatians 5:13.

While these special projects give us fine opportunities to offer ourselves with this spirit of willingness, there are many other opportunities to display the same spirit day by day and week by week. For example, once the Kingdom Hall is built, do you share fully in cleaning and maintaining it? Do you support its operations by making financial contributions as Jehovah blesses you materially? Do you support the preaching work in your land by making contributions to the local branch office? And even more importantly, do you regularly engage in the work of preaching the good news and making disciples of people in your area? Nothing can really ever replace our personal share in this work that Jesus designated as the most important work to be done at the present time, before the end of this system.—Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8.

All who cultivate this spirit that Jehovah so richly blesses have found it to be true that Jehovah "is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name." You too can, by displaying this spirit of willing self-sacrifice, prove that "the blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich, and he adds no pain with it."—Hebrews 6:10; Proverbs 10:22.

Annual Meeting

October 3, 1987

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania will be held on October 3, 1987, at the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Boulevard, Jersey City, New Jersey. A preliminary meeting of the members only will convene at 9:30 a.m., followed by the general annual meeting at 10:00 a.m.

The members of the Corporation should inform the Secretary's Office *now* of any change in their mailing addresses during the past year so that the regular letters of notice and proxies can reach them shortly after August 15.

The proxies, which will be sent to the members along with the notice of the annual meeting, are to be returned so as to reach the Office of the Secretary of the Society not later than September 1. Each member should complete and return his proxy promptly, stating whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not. The information given on each proxy should be definite on this point, since it will be relied upon in determining who will be personally present.

It is expected that the entire session, including the formal business meeting and reports, will be concluded by 1:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter. There will be no afternoon session. Because of limited space, admission will be by ticket only. No arrangements will be made for tying in the annual meeting by telephone lines to other locations.

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

In New Zealand—A Day to Remember

"WE ARE absolutely thrilled to be with you. We shall never forget it!"

"In all my theocratic associations, I have never experienced anything like this."

"It seemed as if we were enjoying a day in the new system of things."

These were some of the comments of delegates to the dedication program of the branch headquarters of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in New Zealand, November 29, 1986. Why were these people so moved? Because it truly was a memorable day. Let us share with you some of the reasons why.

First, the beautiful facilities being dedicated made the day memorable. John E. Barr, of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, described the newly built Kingdom Hall and associated branch facilities as "tasteful, elegant, charming . . . The finished work reflects very careful attention to detail, to beauty. It all seems to match."

A Christian Brotherhood

Then, it was memorable to see together so many old-timers, Witnesses who have been serving Jehovah faithfully for many, many years. In fact, these formed the majority among the 658 invited guests. When they met up with old friends, many of whom they had not seen for decades, they felt like Paul, when, after a long journey, he met up with the brothers from Rome: "Upon

catching sight of [his brothers], Paul thanked God and took courage." (Acts 28:15) To witness such examples of enduring loyalty—some present despite poor health—was a source of encouragement and gratitude.

The day was memorable, too, for the warm international brotherhood experienced. Jehovah's Witnesses belong to an earth-wide brotherhood, and this was evidenced by the guests who came from as far away as Australia, the United States, Canada, Britain, and Taiwan, as well as from Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and other islands of the South Pacific. Telegrams came from many who could not be present personally, including greetings from the Governing Body, members of the Brooklyn Bethel family, and the 82nd class of the missionary school of Gilead. Indeed, it was faith strengthening to be aware of the interest of so many brothers in so many lands in the dedication of the New Zealand branch facilities.

Foundations Laid by Loyal Witnesses

To be reminded of the long history of the preaching work in New Zealand that led up to the building of these latest branch facilities was thrilling and also made the day memorable. (Compare Hebrews 10:32.) As one speaker said: "As important as the physical foundations of the fine new Bethel complex are, the more significant ones are figurative foundations laid by loyal, self-sacrificing broth-

ers and sisters going right back to the beginning of the century."

This was followed by interviews of 11 faithful men and women who had a combined total of 680 years of dedicated service. They told of one of the earliest conventions in New Zealand, in 1913. They recalled the rigors of pioneering in the South Island in the 1930's, the hardships of the World War II years when the organization was banned, the formation of the New Zealand branch in 1947, the arrival of the first Gilead missionaries, and the building of the country's first Kingdom Hall in 1950. A common feeling of those interviewed was: "How grateful we are to be here and to see evidence of an increase that, in earlier days, we would never have dreamed possible!"

Jehovah's Blessing

Perhaps the main thing that made the day unforgettable was the awareness that Jehovah's blessing had guided the construction work and brought it to fruition. Appropriately, one section of the day's program was entitled: "The Good Hand of Our God Upon Us."—Neemiah 2:8.

The good hand of Jehovah was seen in the helpfulness and cooperation of the local businessmen and authorities, as well as in the Christian qualities manifested by the workers themselves on the site. One businessman, visiting the building site, noted: "I have never



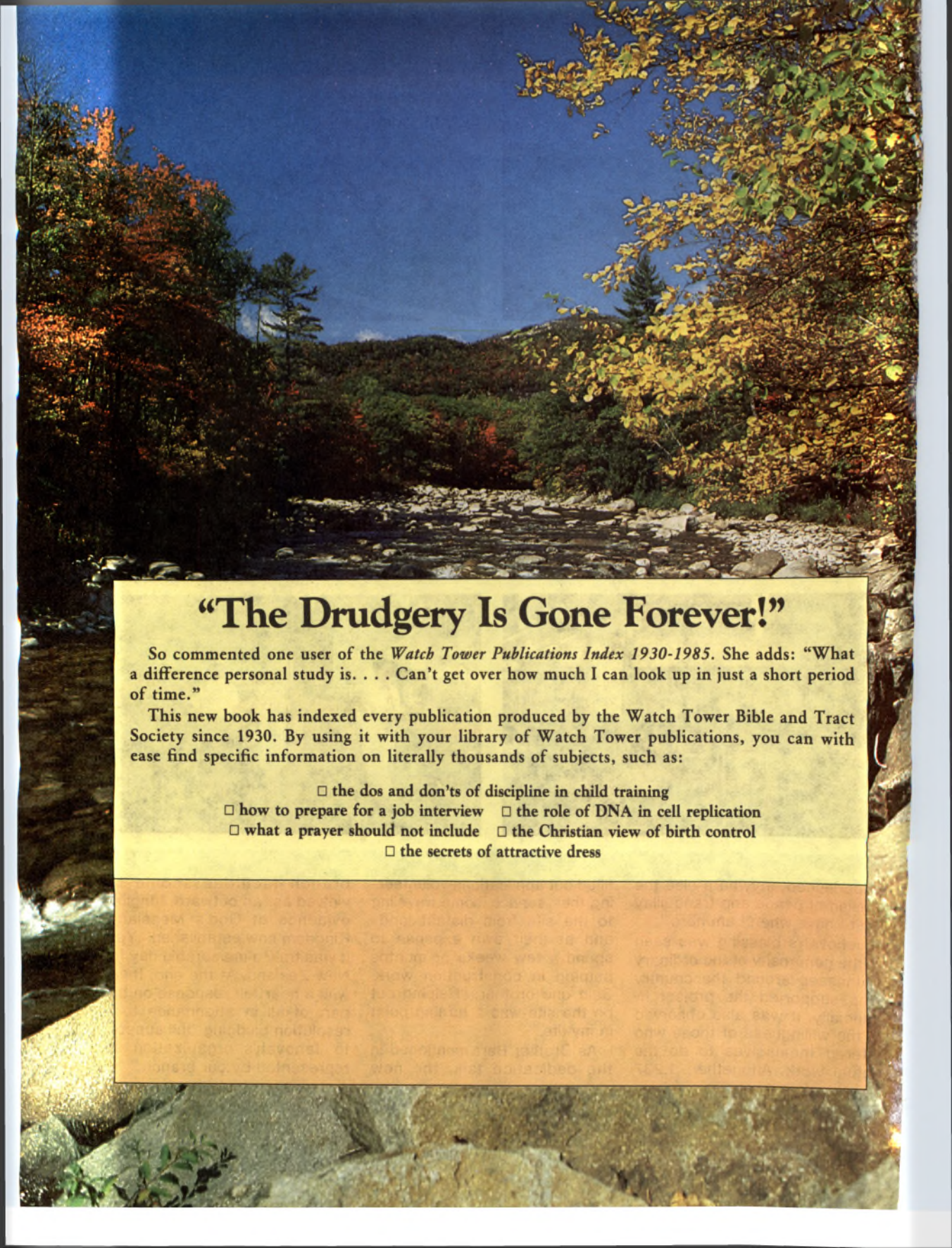
experienced anywhere else the feeling of peace and tranquillity that I have when I am here."

Jehovah's blessing was seen in the generosity of the ordinary Witnesses around the country who supported the project financially. It was also observed in the willingness of those who offered themselves to do the actual work. Altogether, 1,237

filled out applications volunteering their service, some traveling to the site from distant lands and at their own expense to spend a few weeks or months helping in construction work. Said one brother: "Helping out on the site was a turning point in my life."

As Brother Barr mentioned in the dedication talk, the new

branch facilities should be viewed as "an outward, tangible evidence of God's Messianic Kingdom now established." Yes, it was truly a memorable day for New Zealand. At the end, there was a heartfelt response on the part of all in attendance to a resolution pledging "full support to Jehovah's organization as represented by our branch."



“The Drudgery Is Gone Forever!”

So commented one user of the *Watch Tower Publications Index 1930-1985*. She adds: “What a difference personal study is. . . . Can’t get over how much I can look up in just a short period of time.”

This new book has indexed every publication produced by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society since 1930. By using it with your library of Watch Tower publications, you can with ease find specific information on literally thousands of subjects, such as:

- ☐ the dos and don'ts of discipline in child training
- ☐ how to prepare for a job interview
- ☐ the role of DNA in cell replication
- ☐ what a prayer should not include
- ☐ the Christian view of birth control
- ☐ the secrets of attractive dress