

The Watchtower

January 1, 1991

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

The Joyful Nation



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

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The Joyful Nation

THE joyful nation! Does this description fit any nation of mankind today? Can any nation make the joyful claim that it has eliminated violence, crime, poverty, pollution, crippling diseases, political corruption, religious hatreds? Does any nation hold out real hope of achieving such goals? Far from it!

What of the global picture? Mikhail Gorbachev, president of the U.S.S.R., stated last July 16: "We are leaving one epoch in international relations, and entering another, a period, I think, of strong, prolonged peace." However, *Time* magazine of the same date reported that the United States still targets Moscow with 120 nuclear warheads, any one of which would totally devastate that city. And no doubt the Soviets are at the ready to reply in kind. With several members of the United Nations now having the know-how to produce nuclear weapons, there is little joy in contemplating who may first become trigger-happy.

A Truly Joyful Nation

Once in history—some 3,500 years ago—there was a truly joyful nation. That was ancient Israel. When God delivered that people from Egypt's oppression, they joined Moses in an exultant song of victory, and they continued to rejoice as long as they obeyed their God and Deliverer.—Exodus 15:1-21; Deuteronomy 28:1, 2, 15, 47.

Under Solomon's rule "Judah and Israel were many, like the grains of sand that are by the sea for multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing." That was a time of great rejoicing, climaxed by the erecting of what was probably the most glorious building in all history, the temple for Jehovah's worship in Jerusalem.—1 Kings 4:20; 6:11-14.

The Modern-Day Joyful Nation

Ancient Israel foreshadowed a modern nation. Which one? Political Israel of the Middle East? News reports indicate that that struggling nation is anything but

joyful. Has the so-called United Nations brought real joy to its member states? No, true joy is nowhere to be found among today's politicking nations. Greed, corruption, and dishonesty abound, and in many lands the common people struggle unhappily merely to exist.—Proverbs 28:15; 29:2.

However, there is today one remarkable nation that is supremely joyful. It is not political, for its Head, Christ Jesus, said of its people: "You are no part of the world." (John 15:19) Whereas the United Nations is united in name only, the joyful nation draws peace-loving adherents "out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues." (Revelation 7:4, 9) It now numbers more than four million, so that its population is larger than some 60 of the 159 member nations of the UN. The native languages of these four million people number about 200; yet all of them are united in speaking one "pure language."—Zephaniah 3:9.

Is it not strange that so many different cultures should speak a common language? Not really, for this one uniting language includes the message of God's incoming Kingdom of righteousness. This joyful na-

tion comes "from the extremity of the earth" and is known worldwide as 'Jehovah's Witnesses.' (Isaiah 43:5-7, 10; Zechariah 8:23) Almost anywhere you travel on the surface of this globe, you will find them.

At Isaiah 2:2-4, God's prophet describes a throng that streams out of all the nations, saying: "Come, you people, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths." Zealously, these invite others to receive instruction from Jehovah through his Word, the Bible, that they may learn to do his will. This one nation follows the path of true peace, its people having already beaten 'swords into plowshares and spears into pruning shears, not learning war anymore.' A joyful nation indeed!

You too can share in this joy. You can learn of the fast-approaching day when the King, Christ Jesus, removes ruinous men and governments and restores Paradise to earth. (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 6:9, 10) Even now, as a truly united nation, Jehovah's Witnesses find great joy in their work of preparing for that glorious era of true peace, as the following pages will show.

A Global Joy

"LOOK! My own servants will cry out joyfully because of the good condition of the heart." (Isaiah 65:14) So said Jehovah through his prophet Isaiah, and what a magnificent fulfillment his words are having among Jehovah's Wit-

nesses! Whence comes their joy of heart? From their united worship of Jehovah God. He is "the happy God," and those who worship him are "joyful in Jehovah." (1 Timothy 1:11; Zechariah 10:7) This joyful devotion unites them into one nation as

together they preach the good news of the Kingdom and raise a global shout of praise to their God.—Revelation 7:9, 10.

“A Joy That No One Can Take Away”

Indeed, publicizing God's name and Kingdom is a source of constant joy to Jehovah's Witnesses. (Mark 13:10) They respond to the words of the psalmist: “Make your boast in his holy name. Let the heart of those seeking Jehovah rejoice.”—Psalm 105:3.

Often, they overcome obstacles to do this. In Spain, Isidro dedicated himself to Jehovah, and he wanted to talk to others about Him. But he is a truck driver with limited free time, making long journeys through the night and sleeping during the day. Isidro wanted to witness to other truckers, but how could he do this?

He fitted into his truck a CB (citizens band) radio that he could use to talk to the other drivers. He soon discovered a little-used channel, 13, and decided to take advantage of it. Of course, when he first suggested to other truckers that they talk about the Bible over the CB radio, the response was quite negative. But some listened. Word spread, and more and more of those Spanish truckers tuned in to channel 13. Recently, Isidro learned that at least one is taking steps to further his study of the Bible.

In Italy a man heard of Jehovah's Witnesses through a conversation he had on a bus. His wife met them through a friend. Both studied the Bible and were eager to share what they learned with others. So eager were they that the man refused a promotion in his firm and the wife gave up a well-paying job so that they could spend more time telling others the good news of the Kingdom. Was it worth it? Yes. The man says: “Since we came to know the truth, my wife and I have had the joy of helping 20 persons to come to an accurate

knowledge of God's purpose. When evening comes, and I return home after a day in Jehovah's service, I feel tired, it is true. But I am happy, and I thank Jehovah for having given me a joy that no one can take away.”

“To the Most Distant Part of the Earth”

Those in God's joyful nation show a similar zeal wherever they are, even in “the most distant part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) Few places are more distant than northern Greenland. Yet, even there, 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle, is the small congregation of Ilulissat, made up of 19 people. They preach the same good news as that Italian couple, and they were thrilled last year to see seven Greenlanders baptized in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah.

Many thousands of miles from Greenland, on the subtropical island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, Anjinee has the same joy. Things were at first difficult for Anjinee. In Mauritius attending Christian meetings and publicly preaching about God are not viewed as suitable activities for a single girl of Hindu Indian origin. But Anjinee persevered. Now, nine years after she began her Christian course, some of her relatives are also studying the Bible.

In connection with Anjinee should be mentioned Emilio, on the other side of the world, in Honduras. Emilio heard work-mates discussing the Bible at work and asked to be included. He could not read but listened with pleasure when Bible texts were read. As Christian truth penetrated his heart, Emilio gave up his immoral life-style and stopped drinking excessively. Jehovah's Witnesses taught him to read and write, and now he is a minister in God's joyful nation.

Thousands of miles northwest of Honduras, an Eskimo mother in Alaska

learned the same Christian truth. This lady lived in a very isolated village, and her only contact with Jehovah's Witnesses was through the mail. So she studied by mail, asked her questions by mail, and is now zealously sharing what she knows with her neighbors. Examples such as these could be multiplied almost indefinitely. All around the globe, meekhearted ones are coming to "serve Jehovah with rejoicing."—Psalm 100:2.

"Have Love Among Yourselves"

One thing that attracts all of these is the love that exists in God's joyful nation. Jesus said: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) Christian love is seen in the day-to-day lives of these genuine Christians, and especially in times of disaster.

In one African land where the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses is, unfortunately, banned, there was a severe drought. Ten thousand people died, and whole herds of cattle perished. How did the Witnesses survive? By eating the roots of plants and cooked avocado pits! But their plight was dramatically eased when, with God's help, Witnesses in other lands unexpectedly obtained permission to send in 25 tons of relief provisions. Indeed, despite the ban, these provisions were given a military escort to ensure their safe delivery!

Truly, those African Witnesses were overjoyed to receive this proof of the love of their brothers for them as they experienced the fulfillment of Isaiah's words: "Look! The hand of Jehovah has not become too short that it cannot save, nor has his ear become too heavy that it cannot hear."—Isaiah 59:1.

A Peaceful People

Meekhearted ones are also attracted to God's joyful nation because its members

have abandoned the warlike ways of this world and 'have beaten their swords into plowshares.' (Isaiah 2:4) In El Salvador, the house of an ex-military man was full of mementos of his military career. But when he began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, he developed peaceful interests. Eventually, he cleared his house of everything that had to do with war and zealously took up the preaching work.

When antigovernment forces took control of his village, he was taken prisoner—evidently someone had pointed him out as a former military man. He explained, however, that he was no longer a soldier but one of Jehovah's Witnesses. The subversives accused him of having arms in his house, but a search revealed none. The one in charge of the subversives then asked the neighbors about him. A typical comment was: "He just goes up and down the street preaching about the Bible day after day." The man was released. Undoubtedly, his zeal served to save his life.

A report from an African country tells of two soldiers who studied the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. One served in the government's army, the other fought for the rebels. Eventually, both decided to "beat their swords into plowshares" and resigned from the military. When they attended Christian meetings for the first time, the antigovernment soldier asked the other: "What do you want here?" He replied: "And you, what do you want here?" "Then," the report concludes, "hugging each other, they shed tears of joy because they could be together in peace." Both these former military men doubtless prayed to God: "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God the God of my salvation, that my tongue may joyfully tell about your righteousness."—Psalm 51:14.



“You Have Seen My Affliction”

“I will be joyful and rejoice in your loving-kindness, in that you have seen my affliction; you have known about the distresses of my soul.” (Psalm 31:7) So prayed the psalmist, and many today rejoice because God’s Word helps them cope with their afflictions. In France one of Jehovah’s Witnesses conducts a study with a woman who suffers from schizophrenia. This woman had been under psychiatric treatment for some time, but this had not helped. The week after she started her study, the psychiatrist asked: “Do you really understand what this woman is explaining to you from the Bible?” So the following week, the Witness went to his office and studied the Bible with the lady in his presence.

After the study, the psychiatrist told the Witness: “Over the years I have taken an interest in my patients’ religions, but I noticed that no real support was offered by any religion. In your case, though,

Jehovah’s Witnesses in Eastern Europe rejoice now in their new freedom to receive and study “The Watchtower” in their own languages

things are different. Mrs. P—— comes in twice a week for consultation, and she pays me for it. Yet, with your Bible teaching and good advice, you are doing better work free of charge. She is making good progress. Keep it up, and I assure you of my full cooperation if ever you should need it.”

The Bible says: “Happy are the people knowing the joyful shouting. O Jehovah, in the light of your face they keep walking. In your name they are joyful all day long.” (Psalm 89:15, 16) Every one of Jehovah’s Witnesses knows that this psalm is true. From their mouths a global shout of joy is going up to Jehovah’s praise. More and more stream out of the nations to praise God along with them. Why not associate with them and experience that joy for yourself?

"Look! The Man!"

IMPRESSED by Jesus' demeanor and recognizing his innocence, Pilate pursues another way to release him. "You have a custom," he tells the crowds, "that I should release a man to you at the passover."

Barabbas, a notorious murderer, is also being held as prisoner, so Pilate asks: "Which one do you want me to release to you, Barabbas or Jesus the so-called Christ?"

Persuaded by the chief priests who have stirred them up, the people ask for Barabbas to be released but for Jesus to be killed. Not giving up, Pilate responds, asking again: "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?"

"Barabbas," they shout.

"What, then, shall I do with Jesus the so-called Christ?" Pilate asks in dismay.

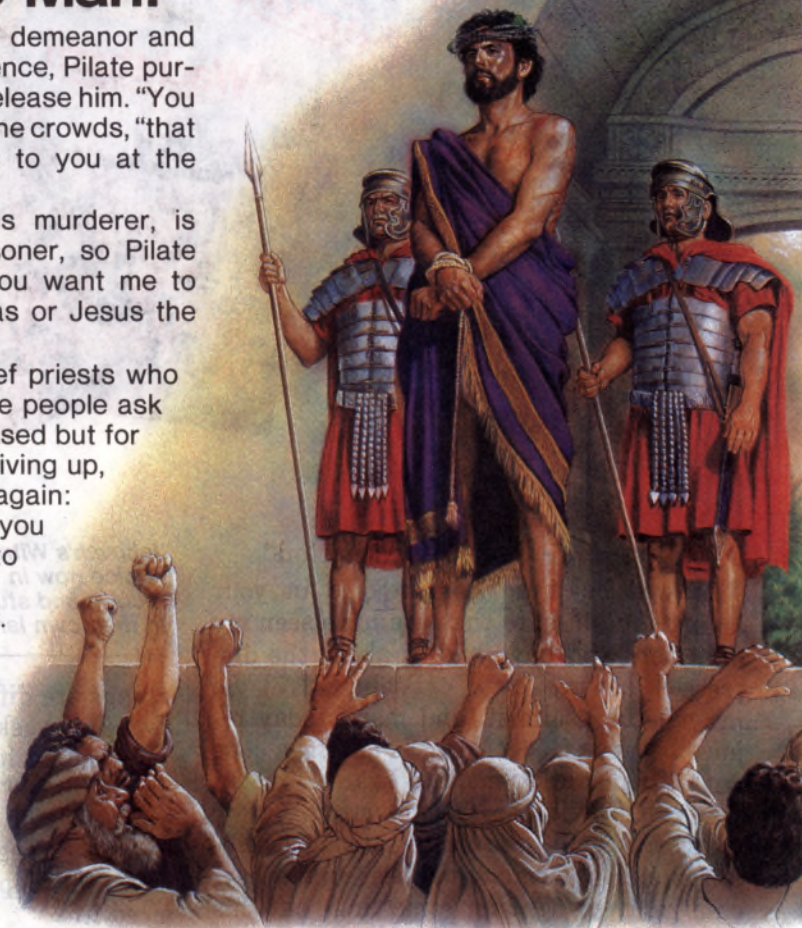
With one deafening roar, they answer: "Let him be impaled!" "Impale! Impale him!"

Knowing that they are demanding the death of an innocent man, Pilate pleads: "Why, what bad thing did this man do? I found nothing deserving of death in him; I will therefore chastise and release him."

Despite his attempts, the enraged crowd, egged on by their religious leaders, keep yelling: "Let him be impaled!" Worked into a frenzy by the priests, the crowd wants blood. And to think, only

five days before, some of them were probably among those who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem as King! All the while, Jesus' disciples, if they are present, remain silent and inconspicuous.

Pilate, seeing his appeals are doing no good but, rather, that an uproar is arising, takes water and washes his hands before the crowd, and says: "I am innocent of the blood of this man. You your-





selves must see to it." At that the people answer: "His blood come upon us and upon our children."

So, in accord with their demands—and wishing to satisfy the crowd more than to do what he knows is right—Pilate releases Barabbas to them. He takes Jesus and has him stripped and then scourged. This was no ordinary whipping. *The Journal of the American Medical Association* describes the Roman practice of scourging:

"The usual instrument was a short whip (flagrum or flagellum) with several single or braided leather thongs of variable lengths, in which small iron balls or sharp pieces of sheep bones were tied at intervals. . . .

As the Roman soldiers repeatedly struck the victim's back with full force, the iron balls would cause deep contusions, and the leather thongs and sheep bones would cut into the skin and subcutaneous tissues. Then, as the flogging continued, the lacerations would tear into the underlying skeletal muscles and produce quivering ribbons of bleeding flesh."

After this torturous beating, Jesus is taken into the governor's palace, and the whole body of troops is called together.

There the soldiers heap further abuse on him by braiding a crown of thorns and pushing it down on his head. They put a reed in his right hand, and they clothe him with a purple garment, the type worn by royalty. Then they say to him mockingly: "Good day, you King of the Jews!" Also, they spit on him and slap him in the face. Taking the sturdy reed from his hand, they use it to hit him on the head, driving even further into his scalp the sharp thorns of his humiliating "crown."

Jesus' remarkable dignity and strength in the face of this mistreatment so impresses Pilate that he is moved to make another attempt to redeem him. "See! I bring him outside to you in order for you to know I find no fault in him," he tells the crowds. Possibly he imagines that the sight of Jesus' tortured condition will soften their hearts. As Jesus stands before the heartless mob, wearing the thorny crown and the purple outer garment and with his bleeding face etched with pain, Pilate proclaims: "Look! The man!"

Though bruised and battered, here stands the most outstanding figure of all history, truly the greatest man who ever lived! Yes, Jesus shows a quiet dignity and calm that bespeak a greatness that even Pilate must acknowledge, for his words are apparently a mingling of both respect and pity. **John 18:39-19:5; Matthew 27:15-17, 20-30; Mark 15: 6-19; Luke 23:18-25.**

- ♦ In what way does Pilate attempt to have Jesus released?
- ♦ How does Pilate try to absolve himself of responsibility?
- ♦ What is involved in being scourged?
- ♦ How is Jesus ridiculed after being scourged?
- ♦ What further attempt does Pilate make to release Jesus?



SERVING JEHOVAH WITH JOY

"Serve Jehovah with rejoicing. Come in before him with a joyful cry."—PSALM 100:2.

THE scene is the Olympia Stadium, Berlin. Fifty-four years earlier, this fine stadium became a center of controversy when Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler reportedly snubbed a black American sprinter who had won four gold medals. A blow, indeed, to Hitler's racist claim

of "Aryan superiority"!* But now, on July 26, 1990, blacks, whites, yellows—a united people from 64 national groups, 44,532 in all—are assembled here for the

* As to "Aryan superiority," *The New York Times* of February 17, 1940, quoted a Catholic regent of Georgetown University as saying that "he had heard Adolf Hitler say that the Holy Roman Empire, which was a Germanic empire, must be re-established." But historian William L. Shirer describes the outcome: "The Third Reich which was born on January 30, 1933, Hitler boasted, would endure for a thousand years, and in Nazi parlance it was often referred to as the 'Thousand-Year Reich.' It lasted twelve years and four months."

1, 2. (a) How was racism brought to the fore in Berlin, Germany, but how did the crusade for a "Thousand-Year Reich" fare? (b) What contrast to 1936 was observed in the Olympia Stadium in July 1990, and in what is the joy of the international group that assembled there anchored?

"Pure Language" District Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses. What joy overflows on that Thursday afternoon! Following the talk on baptism, 1,018 candidates cry out, "Ja!" and again, "Ja!" in affirming their dedication to Jehovah God, to do his will.

² It takes 19 minutes for these new Witnesses to file out of the stadium on their way to the baptism pool. And during all those minutes, thunderous applause resounds throughout that vast arena. Victors at the Olympic Games had never experienced applause such as now welcomes these hundreds, out of many national groups, who are exhibiting the faith that conquers the world. (1 John 5:3, 4) Their joy is anchored firmly in the confidence that God's Kingdom rule by Christ will indeed bring a thousand years of glorious blessings to mankind.—Hebrews 6:17, 18; Revelation 20:6; 21:4, 5.

³ There are no racial or nationalistic hatreds here, for all are talking the pure language of God's Word, thus emphasizing the truth of Peter's words: "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him."—Acts 10:34, 35; Zephaniah 3:9.

⁴ A large segment of these conventioners in Berlin have become believers during long years of oppression, covering the Nazi era (1933-45) and the socialistic era that followed in East Germany, where the ban on Jehovah's Witnesses has just been legally removed on March 14, 1990. Hence, many of them have "accepted the word under much tribulation with joy of holy spirit." (1 Thessalonians 1:6) They now have greater freedom to serve Jeho-

vah, and their joy knows no bounds.—Compare Isaiah 51:11.

Occasions for Joy

⁵ The release of our brothers in Eastern Europe, and currently in parts of Africa and Asia, reminds us of deliverances by Jehovah in former times. We recall Jehovah's mighty act at the Red Sea, and how Israel's song of thanksgiving reached a crescendo in the words: "Who among the gods is like you, O Jehovah? Who is like you, proving yourself mighty in holiness? The One to be feared with songs of praise, the One doing marvels." (Exodus 15:11) Today, do we not continue to rejoice in the marvelous things Jehovah is doing for his people? Certainly we do!

⁶ Joy flooded over in 537 B.C.E. when Israel was restored to its land after the captivity in Babylon. Jehovah's nation could now declare, as Isaiah had prophesied: "Look! God is my salvation. I shall trust and be in no dread; for Jah Jehovah is my strength and my might, and he came to be the salvation of me." What exultation! And how would the nation express that joy? Isaiah continues: "In that day you will certainly say: 'Give thanks to Jehovah, you people! Call upon his name. Make known among the peoples his dealings. Make mention that his name is put on high. Make melody to Jehovah, for he has done surpassingly.'" They could now "shout for joy" in making his mighty acts "known in all the earth," just as Jehovah's liberated servants do today.—Isaiah 12:1-6.

Joy in Jehovah's Work

⁷ In modern times Jehovah's servants

3. What truth is emphasized by the confidence of the conventioners, and how?

4. Under what conditions did the majority of the conventioners become believers, and how have their prayers been answered?

5. How did Israel celebrate Jehovah's deliverance at the Red Sea?

6. What can we learn from Israel's shouting for joy in 537 B.C.E.?

7. What deliverances called for exultation in 1919?

began to shout for joy when he granted them a marvelous deliverance in 1919. On March 26 of that year, members of the Governing Body were released from the United States prison where they had been incarcerated for nine months under false charges of sedition. What a grand celebration took place in welcoming them back to Brooklyn Bethel! Moreover, all those of the anointed remnant could now rejoice at being released spiritually from Babylon the Great, the system of religion in which Satan has enmeshed the entire world.—Revelation 17:3-6; 18:2-5.

⁸ The historic developments of 1919 were crowned by the convention of God's people held at Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A., September 1-8. On the fifth day of that assembly, "Co-Laborers Day," the president of the Watch Tower Society, J. F. Rutherford, addressed 6,000 in a stirring talk entitled "Announcing the Kingdom." After discussing Revelation 15:2 and Isaiah 52:7, he told his listeners that a new magazine, *The Golden Age* (now known as *Awake!*), would be published every two weeks, especially for field distribution. In conclusion he said: "Those who are wholly devoted to the Lord; those who are fearless, whose hearts are pure, who love God and the Lord Jesus with all their mind, strength, soul and being, will, as opportunity is afforded, rejoice to participate in this work. Ask the Lord for his guidance and direction that he may make you a true, faithful, and an efficient ambassador. Then, with a song of joy in your heart, go forth to serve him."

⁹ That "song of joy" has been heard throughout the earth! Many of our readers have shared, no doubt, in raising the circulation of *Awake!* magazine to the

8. What surprise release was announced at the Cedar Point Convention in 1919, and what call to action was given?

9, 10. How has Jehovah prospered the publication of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines?

present 12,980,000 copies of each issue in 64 languages. As a powerful instrument in leading interested persons to the truth, *Awake!* serves as companion to *The Watchtower*. In an Oriental country, a pioneer sister, working a regular magazine route, was surprised to find that each time she delivered the latest magazines, the householder donated the equivalent of \$7 (U.S.) to the worldwide work of Jehovah's Witnesses—surely showing fine appreciation for the Kingdom work!

¹⁰ Now commencing its 112th year of publication, the *Watchtower* magazine has a circulation of 15,290,000 in 111 languages, 59 of these editions appearing simultaneously worldwide with the same contents. As a faithful steward, the anointed remnant continues to give appreciative readers "their measure of [spiritual] food supplies at the proper time." (Luke 12:42) During 1990, Jehovah's Witnesses reported placing 2,968,309 new subscriptions to the two magazines, a 22.7-percent increase over 1989.

Joy Abounds

¹¹ Joy also abounded as God's people, now 10,000 in number, assembled for a second convention at Cedar Point, in September 1922, with 361 being baptized. In his discourse "The Kingdom of Heaven Is At Hand," based on Matthew 4:17, Brother Rutherford led up to the rousing climax: "The world must know that Jehovah is God and that Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. This is the day of all days. Behold, the King reigns! You are his publicity agents. Therefore, advertise, advertise, advertise, the King and his kingdom." Those who broke out in the shout of joy that went up at that convention have expanded in number until in

11. (a) What call was extended to God's people at Cedar Point in 1922? (b) How has the shout of joy been expanded?

1989 more than 6,600,000 were gathered in 1,210 conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide, where 123,688 were baptized.

¹² Jehovah's Witnesses cherish their freedom. Above all, they rejoice in the modern-day fulfillment of Jesus' words: "And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." What a joy to be set free from the mysteries and superstitions of false religion! What inestimable joy to know Jehovah and his Son and to become coworkers with them, with the prospect of everlasting life! (John 8:32; 17:3; 1 Corinthians 3:9-11) God's servants also appreciate it when this world's "superior authorities," under which they live, honor their freedom to proclaim the glorious hope of Jehovah's Kingdom under Christ. They willingly "pay back Caesar's things to Caesar," while at the same time paying "God's things to God."—Romans 13:1-7; Luke 20:25.

¹³ However, if human authorities try to restrict this obligation to God, Jehovah's Witnesses answer as did the apostles: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men." On that occasion, after the rulers released the apostles, these "went their way . . . rejoicing." How did they express that joy? "Every day in the temple and from house to house they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus." (Acts 5:27-32, 41, 42) Likewise, modern-day Witnesses of Jehovah rejoice when they gain greater freedom to pursue their ministry. In many lands where Jehovah has opened the way, they express intense joy by giving a thorough witness to Jehovah's name

12. (a) In what inestimable joy do God's people share today? (b) How do we balance our service to Jehovah with obedience to "the superior authorities"?

13. How have Jehovah's Witnesses expressed their joy at release from oppression?

and incoming Kingdom by Christ Jesus.—Compare Acts 20:20, 21, 24; 23:11; 28:16, 23.

Enduring With Joy

¹⁴ What is this intense joy that true Christians experience? It is far deeper and more permanent than the transitory joy of a victor at the Olympic Games. It is a fruit of God's holy spirit, which God gives to those "obeying him as ruler." (Acts 5:32) *Webster's* dictionary defines joy as being 'deeper-rooted than delight, more radiant or demonstrative than gladness.' To the Christian, joy has an even more profound meaning. Being anchored in our faith, it is a powerful, fortifying quality. "The joy of Jehovah is your stronghold." (Nehemiah 8:10) The joy of Jehovah, which God's people cultivate, far transcends the superficial excitement that people get from fleshly, worldly pleasures.—Galatians 5:19-23.

¹⁵ Consider our brothers in the Ukraine. When the 'superior authority' banished thousands of these to Siberia in the early 1950's, they suffered great hardships. Later, when the authority granted them an amnesty, they were thankful, but not all of them returned to their homeland. Why? Their labors in the East had reminded them of James 1:2-4: "Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials, knowing as you do that this tested quality of your faith works out endurance." They wanted to keep on enduring in that joyful harvest, and what joy it has been at recent conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses in Poland to welcome Witnesses from as far east as Pacific coastal communities. Endurance and joy have gone

14. How does this joy that is a fruit of the spirit surpass that defined by a dictionary?

15. (a) In the experience of faithful Christians, how has endurance been coupled with joy? (b) Cite some scriptures that give strengthening assurance with regard to maintaining joy.

hand in hand to produce this fruitage. Indeed, all of us who endure joyfully in Jehovah's service can say: "Yet, as for me, I will exult in Jehovah himself; I will be joyful in the God of my salvation. Jehovah the Sovereign Lord is my vital energy." —Habakkuk 3:18, 19; Matthew 5:11, 12.

¹⁶ How, though, can we maintain our joy when witnessing among hardheaded opposers? Remember that God's prophets kept a joyful outlook in similar circumstances. Jeremiah stated when under trial: "Your words were found, and I proceeded to eat them; and your word becomes to me the exultation and the rejoicing of my heart; for your name has been called upon me, O Jehovah God of armies." (Jeremiah 15:16) What a privilege to be called by Jehovah's name and to witness to that name! Our diligent personal study and full participation in Christian meetings build us up to continue rejoicing in the truth. Our joy will show through in our deportment in the field and in our Kingdom smile. Even under bitter trial, Job could say of his adversaries: "I would smile at them—they would not believe it—and the light of my face they would

16. How should the fine examples of Jeremiah and Job encourage us in our field work?

In Review:

- ☐ What joyful conquest of racism is seen today?
- ☐ What caused God's ancient people to sing and shout for joy?
- ☐ How has true joy increased in modern times?
- ☐ How do endurance and joy go hand in hand?
- ☐ By what means may we sustain our joy?

not cast down." (Job 29:24) Like faithful Job, we need not become downcast when opposers deride us. Keep smiling! Our countenance can reflect our joy and so gain listening ears.

¹⁷ As we cover territory time and again, our endurance and joy may impress righteously inclined people and encourage them to examine the glorious hope that we hold. What a joy it is to conduct Bible studies with them on a regular basis! And as they take into their hearts the precious truths of God's Word, what joy we feel as they at last become our companions in Jehovah's service! Then we are able to say, as the apostle Paul told new believers in his day: "For what is our hope or joy or crown of exultation—why, is it not in fact you?—before our Lord Jesus at his presence? You certainly are our glory and joy." (1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20) Truly, a satisfying joy is to be found in leading new ones to the truth of God's Word and in helping them to become dedicated, baptized Witnesses.

Joy That Sustains

¹⁸ In our daily lives, many situations may call for endurance. Physical sickness, depression, and economic hardship are just a few. How can the Christian maintain his joy in order to cope with such trials? This can be done by going to God's Word for comfort and guidance. Reading or listening to readings of the psalms can provide much refreshment in time of trial. And note David's wise advice: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to totter." (Psalm 55:22) Jehovah is indeed the "Hearer of prayer." —Psalm 65:2.

17. How may endurance with joy bear fruit?

18. What will help us to cope with various modern-day trials?

¹⁹ Jehovah's organization, through its publications and its congregation elders, stands ever at the ready to help us, frail humans that we are, to grapple with our problems. David warmly counsels: "Roll upon Jehovah your way, and rely upon him, and he himself will act." He could also say: "A young man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread." In association with the Christian congregation, we will realize that "the salvation of the righteous ones is from Jehovah; he is their fortress in the time of distress."

19. Like David and Paul, what confidence may we have?

(Psalm 37:5, 25, 39) Always let us follow Paul's advice: "Therefore we do not give up, . . . while we keep our eyes, not on the things seen, but on the things unseen. For the things seen are temporary, but the things unseen are everlasting."—2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

²⁰ With our eyes of faith, we can see Jehovah's new system just ahead. What incomparable joys and blessings will be there! (Psalm 37:34; 72:1, 7; 145:16) In preparation for that glorious time, let us heed the words of Psalm 100:2: "Serve Jehovah with rejoicing. Come in before him with a joyful cry."

20. What do we see with the eye of faith, and how does this motivate us?

BE FILLED WITH JOY

"The disciples continued to be filled with joy and holy spirit."—Acts 13:52.

JOY! This Christian quality is listed second only to love in Paul's description of the fruitage of the spirit. (Galatians 5:22-25) And what calls forth that joy? It is the good news that God's angel announced to humble shepherds more than 1,900 years ago: "Look! I am declaring to you good news of a great joy that all the people will have, because there was born to you today a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, in David's city." Then the angelic host appeared and joined the angel in joyfully praising God and saying: "Glory in the heights above to God, and upon earth peace among men of goodwill."—Luke 2:10-14.

1. (a) Joy is what kind of fruit? (b) For what joyful provision is God to be glorified?

² Jehovah's goodwill toward men is expressed in providing salvation through Christ the Lord. This firstborn Son of God is the personification of true wisdom and is described as saying of his Father at the time of creation: "Then became I beside him a firm and sure worker, then became I filled with delight day by day, exulting before him on every occasion; exulting in the fruitful land of his earth, yea my fullness of delight was with the sons of men."—Proverbs 8:30, 31, *Rotherham*.

³ It was fitting, therefore, that Jehovah send this Son, who found such delight in

2, 3. (a) Why was it fitting that God send his firstborn Son to become mankind's Redeemer? (b) In what other ways did Jesus serve God's purposes while on earth?



the sons of men, to be mankind's Redeemer. And how would this bring glory to God? It would open the way for him to accomplish his grand purpose of filling the earth with righteous and peace-loving humans. (Genesis 1:28) Moreover, while on earth, this Son, Jesus, would show under the severest test that a perfect man can loyally obey Jehovah as Sovereign Lord, thus fully vindicating his Father's rightful rulership over His creation. (Hebrews 4:15; 5:8, 9) Jesus' integrity-keeping course also left a model for all true Christians to follow his steps closely.—1 Peter 2:21.

⁴ Jesus found surpassing joy in thus doing his Father's will, and that in anticipation of even greater joy, as the apostle Paul indicates at Hebrews 12:1, 2: "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, as we look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus. For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame,

4. Jesus' endurance results in what great joy, and how should this encourage us?

Jehovah's angel announced the birth of Christ the Lord as "good news of a great joy"

and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." What joy is this? It is the joy Jesus has, not only in sanctifying his Father's name and ransoming mankind from death but also in ruling as King and High Priest as he restores obedient humans to endless life in a paradise earth.—Matthew 6:9; 20:28; Hebrews 7:23-26.

⁵ Yes, God's Son has always found joy in serving mankind. And it has been his joy to serve with his Father in selecting the group of integrity-keeping humans whom he calls his "brothers" and who at death are resurrected to heaven. These enter into a unique joy with Jesus. They are pronounced "happy and holy," and they "will be priests of God and of the Christ, and will rule as kings with him for the thousand years."—Hebrews 2:11; Revelation 14:1, 4; 20:6.

5. Who are Jesus' "brothers," and in what unique joy do they share?

⁶ Further, a great crowd of "other sheep," whom the reigning King separates to his right hand of approval, receive his invitation: "Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world." (John 10:16; Matthew 25:34) What a joyful privilege! Of these who are to inherit the earthly realm of the Kingdom, many are even now accepting responsible assignments alongside anointed ones, just as Jehovah foretold: "Strangers will actually stand and shepherd the flocks of you people, and the foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers. And as for you, the priests of Jehovah you will be called; the ministers of our God you will be said to be." All of these join with God's prophet in saying: "Without fail I shall exult in Jehovah. My soul will be joyful in my God. For he has clothed me with the garments of salvation."—Isaiah 61:5, 6, 10.

⁷ We are living now in a very special day. Since 1914 it has been the day of Christ's rule as heavenly King, described at Psalm 118:24, 25: "This is the day that Jehovah has made; we will be joyful and rejoice in it. Ah, now, Jehovah, do save, please! Ah, now, Jehovah, do grant success, please!" It is the day that will reach a climax when Jehovah executes Babylonish religion and unites Christ's bride of 144,000 brothers with their heavenly King. All of God's people will "rejoice and be overjoyed" at this. They will also rejoice as their Messianic King fights at Armageddon to save his loyal nation into his righteous new world. (Revelation 19:1-7, 11-16) Does Jehovah grant success as his people proclaim this joyful hope? The following report will explain.

6. (a) What joyful invitation does the King extend to his "other sheep"? (b) What privileges do many of these sheep enjoy today?

7. Why is this "day" since 1914 very special?

Global Expansion

⁸ The modern-day Witnesses of Jehovah "abound in hope with power of holy spirit." (Romans 15:13) This is reflected in the chart on pages 18 to 21 of this magazine, where the global report of Kingdom service for 1990 is set out in detail. How we rejoice to see a new peak of 4,017,213 active ministers in the field! This marks an increase of 77 percent during the past ten years, as the gathering of the sheep moves on apace in 212 lands around the world. After 15 years, baptisms again reached an all-time peak—301,518! There were some exceptionally high baptism figures at many conventions, particularly those attended by Witnesses from Eastern Europe. Among these were many young people, giving the lie to the socialistic claim that religion would die out with the old folk.

⁹ Multitudes of young people are answering the call at Psalm 32:11: "Rejoice in Jehovah and be joyful, you righteous ones; and cry out joyfully, all you who are upright in heart." It seems that many parents are applying the counsel to train their little ones "from infancy." (2 Timothy 3:15) Good use is being made of the literature and cassette tapes provided for those of tender years. As these youngsters enter school, they are soon giving a fine witness, as for example the eight-year-old Japanese girl who reported: "After summer vacation, I approached my teacher and asked her: 'Did you visit your father's grave during vacation?' She replied: 'Yes, my father was very tender, and I visit his grave every year.' I said: 'If you study the Bible and follow God's teachings, you will be able to see your loving father in an

8. (a) How is joy with holy spirit reflected in the report on pages 18 to 21 of this magazine? (b) What are some highlights of the report?

9. (a) Early parental training is bringing what joyful result? (b) What local or other experiences bear this out?

1990 SERVICE YEAR REPORT OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES WORLDWIDE

Country or Territory	Population	1990 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, One Pub- lisher to:	1990 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 1989	1989 Av. Pubs.	1990 No. Bptzd.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Cong.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Atten- dance
Alaska	555,161	2,053	270	1,908	5	1,821	135	195	25	336,394	1,019	4,207
Algeria	25,600,000	55	465,455	46	28	36	5	1	3	3,004	46	95
American Samoa	38,200	188	203	179	20	149	8	41	3	57,457	245	458
Andorra	50,528	165	306	149	18	126	21	12	2	26,388	78	251
Anguilla	6,966	24	290	22	16	19	3	2	1	3,811	15	88
Antigua	76,296	254	300	241	6	227	13	32	4	50,458	214	665
Argentina	32,321,887	82,532	392	80,981	8	75,215	7,890	11,345	1,323	19,451,045	92,187	194,230
Aruba	67,721	451	150	442	-2*	450	16	34	6	75,636	373	1,249
Australia	16,957,100	53,142	319	51,541	5	49,095	2,732	5,339	645	10,568,882	26,661	98,489
Austria	7,596,081	18,891	402	18,571	3	17,960	912	1,653	252	3,720,319	10,682	32,264
Azores	260,900	436	598	383	20	319	62	35	14	76,281	368	1,067
Bahamas	209,505	1,213	173	1,155	9	1,055	91	175	17	288,405	1,519	3,287
Bangladesh	113,643,608	37	3,071,449	28	22	23	5	5	1	7,968	40	122
Barbados	258,000	1,783	145	1,756	5	1,675	105	198	18	343,705	1,782	5,019
Belau	15,500	62	250	52	0	52	2	14	1	21,683	115	238
Belgium	9,877,782	25,161	393	24,188	3	23,501	1,367	1,953	325	4,532,047	11,515	48,131
Belize	186,000	902	206	834	3	810	51	150	20	237,630	1,208	3,926
Benin	4,551,000	2,290	1,987	2,019	12	1,801	20	201	76	500,440	2,686	10,549
Bermuda	58,616	373	157	334	2	327	26	48	4	79,337	268	849
Bolivia	6,800,000	7,452	913	7,050	11	6,328	832	1,398	105	2,298,565	11,682	29,743
Bonaire	10,850	71	153	66	-1*	67	3	4	1	9,513	52	200
Botswana	1,301,000	591	2,201	500	-5*	526	31	61	19	119,807	590	1,948
Brazil	150,367,800	293,466	512	277,837	11	250,585	27,068	30,115	4,625	55,779,201	341,305	790,926
Britain	55,862,473	120,611	463	115,511	2	112,742	6,014	12,851	1,311	23,304,930	57,235	222,802
Brunei	260,000	13	20,000	9	13	8				536	8	46
Burkina Faso	7,318,695	449	16,300	430	11	389	44	86	17	149,800	884	1,543
Canada	26,584,000	101,713	261	97,752	4	94,176	5,062	11,111	1,270	19,856,674	47,997	179,102
Cape Verde Islands	345,700	410	843	389	13	344	61	59	13	126,457	757	2,285
Cayman Islands	24,000	82	293	76	9	70	1	8	1	18,546	78	202
Central Afr. Rep.	2,899,376	1,327	2,185	1,230	6	1,161	103	172	41	283,465	1,554	5,969
Chad	5,428,000	278	19,525	261	17	223	36	58	11	100,752	522	1,645
Chile	13,173,347	37,768	349	35,682	8	33,062	3,564	4,756	366	8,806,157	51,396	109,623
Colombia	32,677,178	46,793	698	44,078	15	38,339	6,453	7,025	651	11,931,655	77,112	182,331
Comoros	410,000	5	82,000	3	50	2	1	1		1,219	13	10
Congo	1,950,000	1,916	1,018	1,683	8	1,565	276	200	47	500,597	4,095	5,955
Cook Islands	18,000	118	153	105	42	74	15	13	3	22,744	97	308
Costa Rica	2,959,177	12,516	236	12,204	5	11,647	858	1,042	228	2,435,397	14,949	33,272
Côte d'Ivoire	9,273,167	3,415	2,715	3,301	11	2,984	385	646	93	1,149,778	6,795	15,166
Curaçao	162,130	1,460	111	1,446	-1*	1,462	113	142	17	290,497	1,627	3,704
Cyprus	575,000	1,285	447	1,253	6	1,185	65	152	14	263,534	702	2,755
Denmark	5,135,409	16,120	319	15,894	1	15,677	508	1,371	227	2,695,882	5,909	25,037
Dominica	81,200	263	309	244	-2*	248	11	30	6	59,319	275	810

Dominican Rep.	8,000,000	12,108	661	11,767	6	11,081	1,161	2,372	187	3,492,131	22,230	42,737
Ecuador	10,781,613	18,069	597	16,923	17	14,465	2,618	3,133	266	5,064,277	33,659	80,501
El Salvador	5,816,493	18,445	315	17,779	5	16,942	2,137	2,206	326	4,343,539	25,236	60,783
Equatorial Guinea	332,310	169	1,966	158	10	144	21	21	4	42,247	343	624
Faeroe Islands	47,946	122	393	118	9	108	4	30	4	36,205	76	188
Falkland Islands	2,000	9	222	8	0	8	1	1	1	839	3	10
Fiji	727,104	1,542	472	1,506	5	1,434	199	341	41	536,170	2,523	5,691
Finland	4,967,635	17,531	283	17,095	2	16,717	689	2,148	274	3,364,692	8,329	27,649
France	56,555,700	114,308	495	111,884	5	106,475	7,843	10,564	1,428	23,778,095	64,300	221,568
French Guiana	114,600	660	174	624	18	531	99	94	8	179,675	1,159	2,103
Gabon	1,200,000	908	1,322	826	17	704	99	98	15	234,204	2,396	5,182
Gambia	789,000	31	25,452	26	8	24	3	9	1	14,116	69	92
Germany, D. R.	16,598,500	21,166	784	20,874	1	20,696	654	559	239	2,225,325	11,958	42,227
Germany, F. R.	62,259,709	132,942	468	129,756	3	125,793	7,054	9,407	1,667	23,733,286	64,746	226,956
Ghana	14,239,113	33,520	425	31,089	1	30,822	556	3,234	597	3,340,911	31,721	66,588
Gibraltar	30,689	134	229	131	4	126	4	19	2	29,345	42	211
Greece	9,967,000	24,348	409	24,131	1	23,788	593	2,349	332	4,362,023	8,460	42,750
Greenland	55,558	126	441	120	6	113	7	29	7	37,064	99	246
Grenada	111,184	409	272	395	3	385	28	54	7	91,488	439	1,219
Guadeloupe	368,000	6,288	59	6,103	5	5,820	575	385	71	1,092,091	7,632	15,625
Guam	150,000	379	396	364	7	339	25	93	4	117,621	534	1,080
Guatemala	8,750,000	12,230	715	11,616	8	10,770	1,138	1,346	184	2,664,692	14,190	41,344
Guinea	7,506,000	278	27,000	202	18	171	14	37	10	67,124	329	960
Guinea-Bissau	950,000	10	95,000	7	-30*	10	1	2	1	3,614	17	18
Guyana	756,000	1,651	458	1,585	5	1,516	148	221	30	342,741	1,704	5,778
Haiti	6,000,000	6,427	934	6,180	10	5,621	853	903	111	1,703,555	11,729	36,551
Hawaii	1,112,100	6,194	180	5,900	4	5,653	328	938	72	1,467,218	4,455	15,245
Honduras	4,696,053	5,983	785	5,603	7	5,244	436	868	93	1,572,761	9,110	25,415
Hong Kong	6,000,000	2,153	2,787	2,073	11	1,870	162	544	22	783,021	3,454	4,633
Hungary	10,580,000	10,647	994	10,300	6	9,713	1,753	356	238	1,610,106	5,436	21,106
Iceland	253,785	246	1,032	237	5	225	21	29	5	53,594	167	486
India	915,768,880	10,272	89,152	9,725	11	8,784	839	1,121	316	2,106,841	7,289	25,837
Ireland	5,086,000	3,451	1,474	3,338	10	3,038	227	717	93	1,080,532	1,977	6,635
Israel	6,075,900	380	15,989	370	4	355	19	40	6	82,471	354	756
Italy	57,504,745	180,960	318	177,066	6	167,034	12,814	32,596	2,419	50,355,945	105,325	355,816
Jamaica	2,300,000	9,166	251	8,645	3	8,368	591	962	171	1,683,186	9,093	25,375
Japan	122,744,952	147,622	831	143,399	7	133,846	11,166	63,484	2,355	71,480,915	190,256	329,422
Kenya	24,400,000	5,600	4,357	5,255	9	4,814	653	1,116	132	1,832,504	8,284	16,138
Kiribati	70,380	39	1,805	37	28	29	14	5	1	11,469	75	137
Korea, Republic of	42,793,000	62,193	688	59,787	9	54,790	5,523	23,855	1,055	26,364,023	65,676	123,718
Kosrae	7,435	17	437	16	-16*	19	4	4	1	6,336	40	145
Lebanon	2,852,000	2,726	1,046	2,455	2	2,414	121	186	56	454,166	1,708	5,034
Lesotho	1,748,110	1,304	1,341	1,210	12	1,080	101	247	45	381,662	1,898	4,979
Liberia	2,200,000	1,914	1,149	1,830	4	1,753	148	432	39	518,779	3,800	7,811
Libya	4,463,000	44	101,432	12	71	7	7	4	1	1,180	8	23
Liechtenstein	28,452	51	558	49	11	44	4	4	1	10,007	37	94
Luxembourg	456,857	1,541	296	1,502	7	1,404	137	152	22	326,763	1,072	3,322
Macao	400,000	30	13,333	25	19	21	21	7	1	11,220	43	76
Madagascar	11,298,700	3,673	3,076	3,505	10	3,183	381	478	58	932,438	9,923	18,685
Madeira	278,000	670	415	626	5	599	56	44	9	115,211	532	1,575

Country or Territory	Population	1990 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, One Pub- lisher to:	1990 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 1989	1989 Av. Pubs.	1990 No. Bptzd.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Cong.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Atten- dance
Malaysia	17,813,000	1,201	14,832	1,137	11	1,023	85	173	20	330,898	1,838	3,226
Mali	8,700,000	88	98,864	86	13	76	12	40	1	59,901	298	413
Malta	400,000	424	943	401	12	357	46	49	5	90,788	256	773
Marquesas Islands	7,358	21	350	17	55	11	6	7	2	10,688	55	57
Marshall Islands	44,247	167	265	152	3	148	4	30	2	46,419	390	1,058
Martinique	359,570	2,961	121	2,860	7	2,676	271	321	30	661,604	3,149	6,949
Mauritius	1,042,902	906	1,151	872	8	806	80	114	12	226,327	922	2,150
Mayotte	75,000	31	2,419	25	4	24		7	1	14,290	49	88
Mexico	81,140,922	304,756	266	292,023	11	262,371	35,237	42,824	8,189	73,139,896	440,256	1,134,850
Montserrat	11,888	30	396	26	4	25	1	4	1	6,652	34	128
Morocco	25,600,000	51	501,961	39	-26*	53	1	3	3	7,007	35	147
Myanmar	40,000,000	1,763	22,689	1,666	6	1,565	156	259	86	452,158	1,744	4,765
Namibia	1,329,000	644	2,064	566	14	495	34	69	15	133,097	538	1,481
Nauru	6,000	5	1,200	3	-25*	4				168	1	33
Nepal	17,712,221	63	281,146	59	37	43		10	1	15,165	107	220
Netherlands	14,892,574	31,359	475	30,092	2	29,535	1,243	2,123	329	4,639,956	10,571	52,488
Nevis	9,580	39	246	35	-3*	36	1	8	1	12,569	47	94
New Caledonia	164,173	1,165	141	1,098	8	1,014	104	102	11	229,306	1,083	3,198
New Zealand	3,346,200	11,515	291	11,106	6	10,462	744	1,381	151	2,380,867	6,961	22,656
Niger	7,440,000	141	52,766	128	24	103	18	35	7	51,015	234	514
Nigeria	115,152,000	142,073	811	138,107	4	133,036	7,670	16,086	2,681	29,428,771	183,337	426,145
Niue	2,000	21	95	19	19	16	2	2	1	3,821	34	70
Norfolk Island	1,800	6	300	4	33	3		1	1	1,132	6	14
Norway	4,241,575	9,671	439	9,336	3	9,069	496	702	176	1,460,810	3,967	16,294
Pakistan	106,000,000	281	377,224	265	0	264	9	41	6	68,646	377	1,061
Panama	2,315,047	6,454	359	6,089	9	5,587	627	909	133	1,564,052	9,979	21,366
Papua New Guinea	3,010,727	2,471	1,218	2,347	12	2,091	213	298	94	593,065	3,483	11,880
Paraguay	3,745,037	3,501	1,070	3,173	12	2,822	350	507	49	847,401	4,200	7,346
Peru	22,000,000	34,978	629	32,708	9	30,055	3,695	7,940	721	11,565,094	56,679	128,189
Philippines	60,000,000	104,519	574	100,571	2	98,614	6,226	21,131	2,981	25,478,114	75,557	317,563
Poland	38,734,500	96,841	400	93,845	6	88,733	11,387	5,182	1,248	14,998,252	61,859	188,861
Ponape	33,869	70	484	65	-4*	68		19	1	25,186	149	356
Portugal	10,000,000	37,301	268	36,524	5	34,852	2,672	3,016	537	6,501,405	25,462	83,812
Puerto Rico	3,500,000	24,042	146	23,520	2	23,067	1,422	2,397	293	4,607,742	19,194	59,602
Réunion	592,619	1,833	323	1,743	12	1,555	215	192	19	414,026	1,609	4,344
Rodrigues	37,538	32	1,173	28	22	23	2	7	1	13,588	38	70
Romania	23,168,000	19,030	1,217	18,003	15	15,589	1,732	291	228	1,887,590	4,331	36,333
Rota	1,700	18	94	13	30	10		3	1	3,809	16	51
Saba	1,000	5	200	5	0	5		4		3,195	11	20
St. Eustatius	1,335	8	167	5	25	4				1,362	7	23
St. Helena	6,000	109	55	103	3	100	4	3	2	12,811	58	247
St. Kitts	34,120	153	223	140	-2*	143		18	2	34,607	184	397
St. Lucia	140,000	460	304	440	11	395	32	63	6	100,172	536	1,226
St. Maarten	23,678	166	143	144	19	121	11	16	2	30,526	157	556
St. Pierre & Miquelon	6,000	7	857	7	0	7		1	1	976	2	16
St. Vincent	120,000	200	600	183	8	170	15	34	4	59,412	333	604

Saipan	39,467	100	395	87	21	72	7	23	1	30,566	114	281
San Marino	22,115	132	168	128	14	112	22	15	2	32,039	54	236
São Tomé	110,000	56	1,964	48	4	46	8	7	1	14,227	259	176
Senegal	7,300,000	585	12,479	566	4	544	45	135	14	230,373	1,140	1,555
Seychelles	65,000	81	802	76	10	69	15	11	1	18,777	110	249
Sierra Leone	4,538,000	752	6,035	635	4	611	26	128	30	218,682	1,106	3,662
Solomon Islands	308,924	805	384	758	5	720	49	79	35	155,721	765	3,833
South Africa	36,501,919	48,590	751	46,595	5	44,258	3,461	6,067	1,063	11,012,226	45,409	130,278
Spain	39,321,604	84,562	465	81,091	7	75,833	5,823	11,280	1,079	19,935,158	51,674	164,648
Sri Lanka	16,750,000	1,298	12,904	1,252	6	1,184	157	228	34	389,632	1,736	4,521
Suriname	400,000	1,539	260	1,496	7	1,401	156	253	23	395,079	2,060	4,632
Swaziland	712,131	1,235	577	1,165	4	1,124	106	197	51	354,491	1,580	4,195
Sweden	8,574,698	22,742	377	22,176	2	21,639	984	2,724	338	4,332,152	10,556	38,339
Switzerland	6,673,900	16,552	403	16,305	5	15,532	1,004	1,258	297	3,143,927	10,428	29,922
Tahiti	182,122	1,152	158	1,095	13	966	112	101	17	237,702	1,413	3,080
Taiwan	20,000,000	1,690	11,834	1,627	9	1,488	148	491	23	660,340	2,482	4,628
Tanzania	24,840,000	3,619	6,864	3,423	13	3,024	382	781	96	1,177,994	3,978	11,100
Thailand	55,888,393	1,148	48,683	1,106	6	1,042	73	195	34	305,853	1,169	2,692
Togo	3,468,530	5,316	652	4,850	20	4,054	575	621	78	1,338,688	12,124	18,466
Tokelau Islands	1,700	8	213	6	0	6			1	368	1	15
Tonga	94,649	63	1,502	57	12	51	5	10	1	17,982	74	146
Trinidad	1,235,400	5,749	215	5,618	5	5,375	301	1,084	61	1,494,373	8,274	18,346
Truk	56,000	49	1,143	47	15	41	8	16	3	24,551	179	459
Tunisia	8,100,000	37	218,919	32	0	32	3	2	1	5,754	25	83
Turkey	55,000,000	912	60,307	883	4	846	63	83	11	203,087	698	1,692
Turks & Caicos Isls.	14,000	72	194	51	16	44	2	14	1	21,012	152	238
Tuvalu	9,000	50	180	46	10	42	3	8	1	10,156	65	170
Uganda	17,028,000	766	22,230	710	27	561	106	160	18	261,025	1,740	2,945
U.S. of America	245,803,000	850,120	289	816,417	4	788,709	47,234	102,192	9,250	169,778,953	541,024	1,863,641
Uruguay	2,921,000	7,755	377	7,562	8	7,026	468	817	106	1,564,783	9,430	18,942
Vanuatu	142,630	189	755	132	28	103	12	13	2	30,231	301	1,043
Venezuela	20,000,000	51,933	385	49,434	12	44,296	5,907	9,200	567	14,677,855	86,281	197,211
Virgin Isls. (Brit.)	12,000	122	98	113	4	109	15	15	3	27,078	146	421
Virgin Isls. (U.S.)	96,000	487	197	469	-6*	499	8	46	8	88,129	434	1,599
Wallis & Futuna Isls.	14,000	4	3,500	2	0	2		1		772	3	
Western Samoa	157,158	226	695	206	12	184	31	41	5	66,984	223	884
Yap	9,506	22	432	19	-17*	23		6	1	9,807	48	120
Yugoslavia	23,710,000	6,998	3,388	6,754	4	6,467	538	553	143	1,431,582	3,207	13,846
Zaire	37,000,000	50,677	730	44,195	15	38,488	5,946	6,089	1,151	12,204,992	81,168	156,590
Zambia	8,100,000	73,729	110	71,876	6	67,996	7,629	8,646	1,800	15,233,532	92,621	326,991
Zimbabwe	9,275,933	18,382	505	17,383	5	16,618	1,377	1,869	557	3,751,035	19,220	50,209
179 Countries	3,820,704		3,672,334	6.0	3,464,878	284,614	522,455	59,796	861,827,337	3,434,194	9,565,528	
*33 Other Countries	196,509		173,977	8.8	159,895	16,904	14,053	3,220	33,402,087	189,897	384,530	
GRAND TOTAL (212 countries)	4,017,213		3,846,311	6.1	3,624,773	301,518	536,508	63,016	895,229,424	3,624,091	9,950,058	

During the 1990 service year the Watch Tower Society spent \$34,302,428.21 in caring for special pioneers, missionaries, and traveling overseers in their field service assignments.

MEMORIAL PARTAKERS WORLDWIDE: 8,869
 * Percentage of decrease
 # Work banned and reports are incomplete

earthly paradise.' Then I gave her *My Book of Bible Stories*. Now our teacher reads one chapter of this book to the whole class at lunchtime each week."

¹⁰ Young people in their teens have made good use of the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, both for private study and in witnessing to other youngsters. Parents too have appreciated this book. A sister in Switzerland, enrolled as an auxiliary pioneer, decided to visit the parents of her child's schoolmates. This provided an opening for fine discussions with many parents, and 20 books (mostly *Young People Ask*) and 27 magazines were left with them. When a schoolgirl in Trinidad placed this book with her teacher at school, her mother followed through, distributing 25 copies among the staff of 36. She continued into the next month with special attention to parents whom she knew personally, distributing another 92 books and starting new home Bible studies. In Korea a middle-school teacher used the book *Young People Ask* in giving short sermons on such topics as "How Can I Improve My Grades?" and "How Can I Get Along With My Teacher" and then offered the book. After students had accepted 39 books, some parents began to complain. But the headmaster examined a copy, declared it "wonderful," and ordered one for his own daughter.

The Finest Education

¹¹ The educational value of our magazines is also appreciated by many, as for example a U.S. school that ordered 1,200 copies of the July 22, 1990, *Awake!* (exposing crack addiction) for use in its classes. Moreover, the exemplary conduct in school of children

10. What good purpose has been served by the book *Young People Ask*, and what are some examples?

11, 12. What are some testimonials to the fact that publications of the Watch Tower Society provide the finest education?

of Jehovah's Witnesses continues to make a fine impression. In a noisy classroom in Thailand, the teacher called 11-year-old Racha up before the class and commended him on his behavior, saying: "Why don't all of you take him as an example? He is diligent in his studies and well behaved." Then she added: "Well, I guess you would have to become Jehovah's Witnesses like Racha to improve your conduct."—Compare Proverbs 1:8; 23:22, 23.

¹² A young sister in the Dominican Republic writes: "When just four years old, I was about to graduate from a religious preschool, where I had learned to read and write. As a gift, I gave the nun who was my teacher the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* with the message: 'I am very grateful that you taught me to read and write. I wish that you would also understand my faith and come to have my hope of living forever on this earth when it is made a paradise.' For this I was expelled from the school. Eight years later I again met this teacher. She related how, despite much opposition from the priest, she managed to read the book. She moved to the capital, where she was able to study the Bible with a Witness. She was being baptized at the 'Pure Language' District Convention along with me." As prophesied, wisdom can even come from "the mouth of babes"!—Matthew 21:16; Psalm 8:1, 2.

¹³ Solomon gave the encouraging counsel: "Rejoice, young man, in your youth, and let your heart do you good in the days of your young manhood, and walk in the ways of your heart." (Ecclesiastes 11:9) It is a delight today to see so many children of Jehovah's Witnesses applying these words, using their teenage years to prepare for a life of full-time service to Jehovah and entering on this grandest of all careers as they graduate from school. The pioneer ranks contin-

13. How are many teenagers responding to Solomon's counsel, and how is this reflected in the worldwide report?

ue to increase rapidly, with 821,108 reporting during the year. Along with the 11,092 brothers and sisters who served in Bethel, that represents 21 percent of the total publishers!

¹⁴ It is of interest that in many lands, such as the United States, about 75 percent of all pioneer publishers are sisters, giving force to the words of Psalm 68:11: "Jehovah himself gives the saying; the women telling the good news are a large army." Our sisters are to be commended in that they are doing the greater part of the field work. Their skillful teaching at home Bible studies is leading many to the truth, and married sisters who are loyally supportive of husbands with many congregation duties are also to be warmly praised.—Proverbs 31:10-12; Ephesians 5:21-25, 33.

Bible Education Flourishes

¹⁵ The Bible educational work is flourishing, studies being conducted worldwide in an average of 3,624,091 places each month. Bible truth can change personalities, as a report from down under shows. Early in January 1987, a man was deported to New Zealand from Australia after serving a 25-month jail term for robbery and forgery. He had been addicted to drugs and had also peddled them for more than 17 years. The following year his wife began to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, and as her knowledge grew, he noted a remarkable



change in her conduct. She became a better wife and mother. At his wife's urgings, he attended a circuit assembly in June 1989. He now accepted a home Bible study, and big changes began to be seen in his appearance and life-style. All seven family members began to attend meetings. He was baptized in January 1990 as one who had followed Paul's excellent counsel at Ephesians 4:17-24.

¹⁶ An outstanding feature of the year's report is the record attendance of 9,950,058 at the celebration of the Memorial, held on Tuesday, April 10, 1990. More than 70 out of 212 countries reported attendances that were over three times their publisher peak! For example, despite restrictions, seven African countries with a combined peak of 62,712 publishers reported a Memorial attendance of 204,356. Strife-torn Liberia's 1,914 publishers rejoiced to have 7,811 at the Memorial. Haiti, with a publisher peak of 6,427, reported 36,551. The 886 publishers in the scattered islands of Micronesia

14. What contribution are our sisters making, and what commendation do they deserve?

15. (a) How have some countries listed in the worldwide report excelled in home Bible study activity? (b) What experiences can you relate, showing how fruitful Bible studies can be?

16. (a) How are the 1990 Memorial reports a source of joy? (b) What urgency is to be observed, and what effort should we make to help?

had 3,958. Sri Lanka's 1,298 publishers reported 4,521, and Zambia, with 73,729 publishers, had 326,991 attending the Memorial, a ratio of one person to 25 of Zambia's population. The global report reveals again that there are millions of sincere people waiting to be gathered into the sheepfold. But sincerity is not enough. Can we increase and improve the quality of our home Bible study work, helping more Memorial attenders to build strong faith? We want them to become our active companions, praising Jehovah. It means their very lives! —Psalm 148:12, 13; John 17:3; 1 John 2:15-17.

The Fullness of Joy

¹⁷ Whatever the trials that confront us, let us be determined to hold fast to our joy. Probably we will not have to go through so hard an experience as that of Stephen, yet his example can strengthen us. Under accusation, he was able to maintain his joyful composure. His enemies "saw that his face was as an angel's face." God stood by him during his ordeal. He witnessed boldly, being "full of holy spirit" down to his martyr's death. As Paul and Barnabas turned to the nations in their preaching, these too "began to rejoice and to glorify the word of Jehovah." Persecution again arose. But it did not daunt those who believed. "The disciples continued to be filled with joy and holy spirit." (Acts 6:15; 7:55; 13:48-52) Whatever our enemies do to us, whatever our daily trials in life, we must never let our joy of holy spirit be dampened. Paul counsels: "Rejoice in the hope. Endure under tribulation. Persevere in prayer." —Romans 12:12.

¹⁸ How marvelous that hope is! To all of

17. What first-century examples should help strengthen our determination to hold fast our joy?

18. (a) What is the New Jerusalem, and why should God's people rejoice with her? (b) How will "new heavens and a new earth" bless mankind?

his people, Jehovah declares: "Here I am creating new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be called to mind, neither will they come up into the heart. But exult, you people, and be joyful forever in what I am creating." Christ the Lord together with the "New Jerusalem" (now the capital city of God's heavenly organization, "Jerusalem above") and the new world society on earth will bring abounding joy to mankind. (Galatians 4:26) Resurrection of the human dead, the uplifting of all obedient ones to everlasting life in human perfection, an eternity of useful, vibrant living on a paradise earth—what a magnificent hope and cause for exultation this is! As Jehovah himself finds 'joy in Jerusalem and exults in his people,' so his prophet issues the further call to God's people: "Rejoice with Jerusalem and be joyful with her, all you lovers of her. Exult greatly with her." (Isaiah 65:17-19; 66:10; Revelation 14:1; 20:12, 13; 21:2-4) May we ever be filled with joy and holy spirit as we heed the apostle Paul's admonition: "Always rejoice in the Lord. Once more I will say, Rejoice!" —Philippians 4:4.

Summarizing Our Joy:

- ☐ What model of joyful endurance has Jesus left us?
- ☐ Two dedicated groups have what reasons to rejoice?
- ☐ How are young and old today exulting in the truth?
- ☐ Reviewing the 1990 report, what answer is being given now to the prayer, "Jehovah, do grant success, please"?
- ☐ When and how will the fullness of joy be attained?



Joyful Endurance in the MIDDLE EAST

This stirring report comes from Jehovah's Witnesses in Lebanon

OUR 1990 service year started with violent bouts of shelling in Beirut. Then there was a calm that lasted from the end of September 1989 till January 1990.

During those months a new peak of 2,659 publishers was reported (in November), compared with 2,467 in the 1989 service year. Forty-four persons were baptized, and each month an average of 65 shared in the auxiliary pioneer service. For the first time, more than 2,000 Bible studies were reported, and we started to anticipate what could be accomplished in the future.

But the war exploded again in East Beirut, where most congregations are located, and dozens of our brothers had to flee to other parts of the country. For many days we had no contact with the congregations in the affected areas, and field service reports were incomplete. Nevertheless, the brothers who had scat-

tered joined the congregations in the areas to which they had fled, and the house-to-house work continued with fine results throughout the country. Meanwhile, many of our brothers' homes were either burned or damaged by the bombings. One sister lost her life.

With confidence we looked to Jehovah for help and guidance. Courageous pioneers volunteered to take spiritual provisions, along with food and water, to our brothers in the regions under siege. Moved by love for Jehovah and the brothers, they even risked crossing roads that had been mined. A fine witness was given as people saw the aid coming to our brothers' families. They saw what real love can do when all are united in the worship of the one true God, Jehovah.—John 13: 34, 35; 15:13.

During the service year, the brothers did not miss a single issue of our magazines. As was already the case with

The Watchtower, the *Awake!* magazine in Arabic started to be published simultaneously with the English, beginning with the issue of January 8, 1990. Witnesses and interested persons were overjoyed. It was also thrilling to see new releases in Arabic, such as the brochure *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* and the books *The Bible—God's Word or Man's?* and *My Book of Bible Stories*.

These spiritual gifts were provided despite the closing of many factories and other establishments in Beirut. The economic situation is bad all over the country. Many places have no electricity, no water, no telephone service. Now, let some of our brothers tell how they have found joy even while contending with the ravages of a war that has been going on for 15 years.

"The Positive Side"

A brother in Beirut writes: "First of all, I give heartfelt thanks to Jehovah because he has kept us safe within his organization of pure worship despite all the difficult conditions we have faced. During the recent events, I had some experiences that brought me joy, and I consider them to be the positive side of the war.

"During the heavy bombardment, we sat with neighbors on the stairs, since that is the safest place during shelling. We constantly spoke with them about God's Kingdom as the only solution for mankind's problems, and we frequently prayed to our God, Jehovah. This became known to all.

"At times the shelling lasted for days, and we could not attend meetings. So I brought the *Watchtower* magazine with me and studied it while sitting on the stairs. That aroused the interest of our neighbors. Some of them had not been talking with us because we are Jehovah's Witnesses. But when our house was hit

with a shell, they were astonished at the love our brothers showed. Now they wanted to speak with us. That enabled us to place some subscriptions for *Awake!* with them.

"These experiences made me determined to keep speaking about the truth. Jehovah deserves all our worship and all our esteem and all glory."

"Jehovah's Name Saved My Life"

A brother from the Ras Beirut Congregation relates: "My wife, our two little boys, and I started our day in the house-to-house ministry in the west section of Beirut. In the afternoon, we had an English-language meeting at my home. By 6:30 p.m. it was dark. The only people on the streets were armed men. Bombs were raining down. Most residents of our building had fled. There was neither water nor electricity. Then we heard knocking at the door.

"Thinking it might be one of our neighbors needing water or bread, my wife opened the door. Standing there were four armed men. They pointed their guns at my wife and asked for me by name. That week nine men had been taken from their homes in this way and killed immediately. When the armed men saw me, they pointed their automatic rifles at my head and ordered me to go with them. I told them: 'I'll go with you. But first let me get dressed.' I prayed to Jehovah with all my heart, asking for his help. As I finished praying, I felt very relaxed and began to view these armed and frightening men like ordinary people. I could talk with them fearlessly.

"I asked them: 'What do you want from me? Let us talk a little in the house before we leave.' Once in the living room, their chief asked me: 'What right do you have to enter houses and preach to people?' I replied: 'You carry a gun to enforce your

will, and no one stands in your way. I carry the good news of peace that Jesus ordered us to preach.' I then explained the beliefs and work of Jehovah's Witnesses. As soon as I mentioned the name Jehovah, they said: 'We will be satisfied to interrogate you here. There is no need to take you with us.' Apparently, one among them was acquainted with a brother. He said: 'This one is like Jarjoura.'

"We witnessed to those gunmen and answered their questions for an hour and a half. Then, rather than taking me away in the trunk of their car as they had done with others, they apologized, kissed me, offered their help if I ever needed it, and left. All along, I felt Jehovah's protection. Sharing in the house-to-house work that morning and attending a meeting in the afternoon had strengthened me to stand firm. Truly, Jehovah's name saved my life."—Proverbs 18:10.

"Jehovah's Care Surrounded Us"

Another brother writes from Beirut: "It was Wednesday, the 31st of January, 1990. While working along with my brother at a sister's house, the fighting began again. Bombs exploded everywhere. Because of the fierce battle, we could not go back home. The sister was very hospitable even though she had only a few pieces of bread.

"I was very worried about my wife because she is a Filipino and not accustomed to the violence of war. On the second day, however, I was able to leave for my house. Piles of furniture blocked the streets, but thanks to Jehovah, my family was safe. After a brief calm, the heavy shelling started again. We hid in a brother's home near ours. There were five of us—my wife, my two-year-old son, me, my brother, and his wife. Bombs, shells, and rockets fell all around, but Jehovah's care surrounded us. Two days of heavy shelling passed, while

we kept lying on the ground with the smoke of the bombs in our nostrils.

"While listening to the explosions, we remembered David's words at Psalm 18: 1-9, 16-22, 29, 30. In those difficult moments, and despite all that was happening, we were happy and could still smile. We prayed to Jehovah that if we should die, we would die easily, without suffering. Our hope in the resurrection was strong.

"The next day was unbelievable. About 25 bombs fell near the house where we were hiding, but not one of us was hurt. Can you imagine our feelings as we sensed Jehovah's protection? The following morning, we immediately decided to flee. My car was the only one on the street that had not been burned. I drove between the mines and the bombs, and thanks to Jehovah, we were able to escape to an area that was a little calmer than ours. There, our brothers lovingly provided us with clothes, food, and money.

"Despite all the difficulties, we felt happy because Jehovah was with us. It was almost as if he had sent his angels to keep the bombs away from us. (Psalm 34:7) Yes, our joy was great. But our joy will be greater after surviving Armageddon."

Emergency Relief in Action!

Some areas of Beirut looked as if an earthquake had struck. Many of our brothers' houses were damaged or destroyed. When the recent crisis arose, the Branch Committee organized an emergency relief committee to take care of brothers' needs. It started operations on February 16, 1990, just about the time when we could at last move into the afflicted areas. The purpose of this committee was threefold: to give spiritual encouragement to the brothers; to care for their needs for money, food, and water; and to help them repair or rebuild their homes.

There was no need to call for volunteers. Each day many showed up early in the morning to help. Here are some of the comments of those who were assisted:

One sister, as her house was being cleaned and restored, said: "I heard about the help given by the brothers when catastrophe strikes. Now I see it and feel it." Even her neighbor, a Muslim woman, told this sister: "You really love one another. Yours is the right religion. Now I will flee to my village and tell everybody what you are doing here." This neighbor brought some food to the volunteer workers.

An elderly sister commented: "I expected that you would come to visit me, but I did not expect that the Society would send someone to bring me water." She was crying as she kissed the brother that came to help her.

A family of three—a husband and wife who were unbaptized publishers and their little boy—were visited and given a big box of milk, some bread, drinking water, and money. When they were told that Jehovah's Witnesses had made this arrangement, the husband said: "I was in the Evangelical Church for 11 years and was very active. But for these 15 years of war in Lebanon, they never thought to do something like this for their members." He continued: "This is really God's only organization." The husband and his wife were baptized at an assembly in May 1990.

One elder commented: "Words fail to express our thanks for the works of love that you performed toward the afflicted brothers. I was so impressed that I shed tears when I saw a group of young brothers, volunteers, rebuilding my parents' house. Even our neighbors who are not Witnesses expressed their appreciation. We are truly thankful to Jehovah and his organization for the practical support that

has been given. How true are the words of the psalmist at Psalm 144:15: 'Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah.'"

"What Kind of People Are You?"

One sister with a family wrote: "I wish to express my deep appreciation for the love of Jehovah and his organization. My house was hit by many shells and burned. Many told us it could not be fixed. However, here it stands completely repaired as if nothing had happened to it, surrounded by the hundreds of houses on our street that are burned and destroyed.

"Even our neighbors, who are not Jehovah's Witnesses, are asking: 'Where does this love come from? What kind of people are you? Who are these individuals that work with such zeal and who are so quiet and well behaved? Blessed be the God who has given you this love and self-sacrificing spirit.' How fitting are the words of Psalm 84:11, 12: 'For Jehovah God is a sun and a shield; favor and glory are what he gives. Jehovah himself will not hold back anything good from those walking in faultlessness. O Jehovah of armies, happy is the man that is trusting in you.'"

A man whose wife and children are Jehovah's Witnesses wrote: "I would like to thank you for your help in repairing our house. Your work showed a sincere Chris-

In Our Next Issue

- **How God's Spirit Can Affect You**
- **Seek Those Rightly Disposed for Everlasting Life**
- **The Pure Language Unites a Great Crowd of Worshipers**

tian love that is very rare these days. May God bless your efforts."

After one elder's house was restored, he said: "Our mouths fail to express what is in our hearts. We cannot find the words to tell you of our appreciation for Jehovah and his organization. We felt the closeness of Jehovah in our calamity. Your love has encouraged all members of my family to share in helping others in need."

During April, 194 persons in Lebanon enjoyed the auxiliary pioneer work. The night of the Memorial was calmer than other nights, and the Memorial was held

with a total attendance of 5,034. All the assemblies that were planned were held, and the total number of persons baptized for the year was 121, despite the chaos in the country. Many families in the congregations left the country for good. But newly interested ones are progressing toward baptism, and the 2,726 Kingdom publishers continue to grow in number. During the 1990 service year, all of Jehovah's people in Lebanon experienced Jehovah's faithfulness as he took good care of us and guided us through tumultuous times.—Psalm 33:4, 5; 34:1-5.

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

Bible Truth Triumphs Over Tradition

RELIGIOUS tradition can be very deeply rooted. Millions feel that it is wrong to change one's religion. Saul, who became the apostle Paul, evidently felt the same way, since he said: "I was far more zealous for the traditions of my fathers [than many of my own age]." But upon being shown the truth, he changed from Judaism and became a Christian. (Galatians 1:13-16) Many today have come to realize that Bible truth comes from a source higher than tradition. Note how Bible truth triumphed in Italy.

One woman explains: "My sister and I grew up in a large family with long-standing Catholic traditions, and we were very devout Catholics. As time went on, I married. Then I lost my husband, and I lived as a widow for many years alone with my children. My niece taught catechism, and she kept asking me

priest Bible questions, but she received no satisfying answers.

"While visiting my hometown, I had my first contact with Jehovah's Witnesses and accepted a Bible study. All my former Catholic companions ridiculed me for studying the Bible. I was not discouraged, however. For the first time, I owned a Bible, and no one was going to take it away from me. My sister also took her stand for Jehovah, and in less than two years, both of us were baptized.

"I cried when I first broke away from the church because I feared to abandon traditions rooted in me for 76 years. But now I am happy to walk in Jehovah's ways and do my best to help others get out of spiritual darkness!"—Compare 1 Peter 2:9.

Barber Corrects Wrong Thinking

A barber in Japan was fond of talking about demons and UFO's

while cutting customers' hair. However, after he started to study the Bible, he realized how dangerous this practice was. So he instead invited his customers to join him in his Bible study. He witnessed to young customers about creation. Every week he ordered Bibles and copies of the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* from the Witness who was studying with him so that he could place them with his customers.

Although not yet a Witness, he placed over 30 sets of Bibles and *Live Forever* books during his first year of studying. More than 25 people started studying the Bible as the result of his informal witnessing. Sometimes as many as ten would participate in his group Bible study. Now seven of those to whom he witnessed when trimming their hair have had their wrong thinking corrected and are baptized Witnesses of Jehovah!

He Found a Tract on the Track

THE year was 1921.

On the highlands of the Transvaal, a province of South Africa, a team of railroad maintenance men worked their way along a stretch of railway track. The crew supervisor, an Afrikaner named

Christiaan Venter, noticed a piece of paper wedged under a rail. It was a tract published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

After ordering his men to stop, Christiaan read the tract with intense interest. He ran to meet his son-in-law, Abraham Celliers, and announced excitedly: "Abraham, today I have found the truth!"

Shortly afterward, they wrote to the publishers of the tract for more information. In response, the South Africa branch of the Watch Tower Society sent additional



Bible literature. The two men studied it together during their lunch breaks and into the late hours of the night. Soon they began to share the truth with friends and strangers.

Eventually, both Christiaan and Abraham became dedicated Witnesses of Jehovah. As a result of their zeal and faithfulness, many South Africans were helped to come to a knowledge of the truth. Furthermore, over a hundred of their descendants are active Witnesses of Jehovah today! One of them serves at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York, and another at the Watch Tower Society's offices in South Africa.

Today, some 70 years later, Bible tracts continue to play an important role in spreading the Kingdom message.

Questions From Readers

■ Did the young Jewish woman Esther have immoral sex with the Persian king to win his favor and thus gain advantages?

Some may have concluded this from secular reporting, but the reliable record in the Bible contradicts this presumption.

The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus provides a secular report that Persian queen Vashti refused to appear before her husband, Ahasuerus. Thereupon, the king, evidently Xerxes I of the fifth cen-

tury B.C.E., angrily rejected Vashti and agreed to an empire-wide search to find a new queen. Beautiful young virgins were assembled and given a lengthy beauty treatment.

"Then, when [the king's eunuch] thought that the virgins had had sufficient care . . . and were now fit to come into the king's bed, he

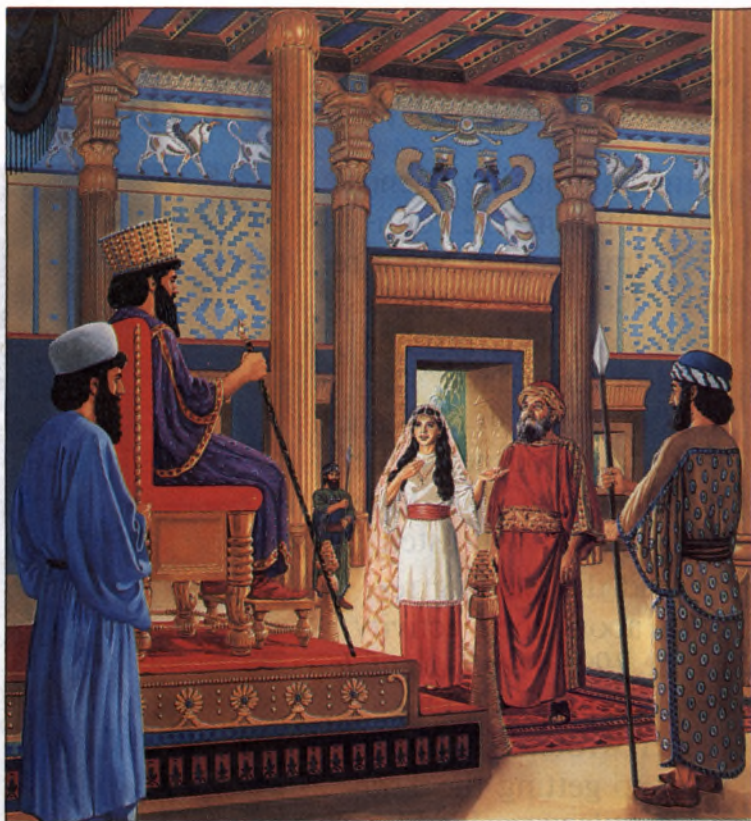
sent one every day to lie with the king, who, after having intercourse with her, at once sent her back to the eunuch. But, when Esther came to him, he was pleased with her and then, having fallen in love with her, made her his lawful wife and held their wedding."—*Jewish Antiquities*, Book XI, 184-202, translated by Ralph Marcus, (Book 11, chapter 6, paragraphs 1, 2, as translated by William Whiston).

This secular account could lead one to think that the virgins shared in immoral sex with the king and that the only difference in the case of Esther was that her immorality led to marriage and her becoming the queen. The Bible, however, provides us with more accurate and satisfying information.

After describing the beauty treatments, the Bible says: "Then on these conditions [each] young woman herself came in to the king. . . . In the evening she herself came in, and in the morning she herself returned to the second house of the women in charge of Shaashgaz the king's eunuch, the guardian of the concubines. She would not come in anymore to the king unless the king had taken delight in her and she had been called by name." —Esther 2:13, 14.

The Scriptures say that Esther "was taken" to "the house of the women" for the lengthy, prescribed beauty regimen: "Then Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus . . . And the king came to love Esther more than all the other women, so that she gained more favor and loving-kindness before him than all the other virgins. And he proceeded to put the royal headdress upon her head and make her queen instead of Vashti." —Esther 2:8, 9, 16, 17.

Did you note from the Bible account where the women were taken after they had spent the night with the king? 'To the second house of the women, under the guardian of the concubines.' So they had become concubines. Mordecai, the writer of the Bible book of Esther, was a Hebrew, and among his people back then, a concubine had the social status of a secondary wife. The divine law provided that an Israelite man could take a foreign girl who was



captured during war, and she would become his concubine, or secondary wife, with rights and legal protection. (Deuteronomy 21:10-17; compare Exodus 21:7-11.) Children born to such a legal concubine were legitimate and could gain inheritance. Jacob's 12 sons, forefathers of the 12 tribes of Israel, were the offspring of his wives and legal concubines. —Genesis 30:3-13.

The procedure was that after the virgins were with the Persian king, they went to the house of concubines. This indicates that they became his secondary wives.

What about Esther? The Bible does not say that she slept with the king and thus gained his favor. It does not tell of her being taken to the house of concubines, but simply says: "Then Es-

ther was taken to King Ahasuerus at his royal house . . . And the king came to love Esther more than all the other women." Recall that earlier, without any sexual compromise of her virtuous and virgin state, she won the "loving-kindness" of "Hegai the guardian of the women." Further: "All the while Esther was continually gaining favor in the eyes of everyone seeing her." (Esther 2:8, 9, 15-17) So Esther clearly impressed the king and won his respect, even as she had won the respect of others.

How thankful we can be to have the facts and insight that the Bible provides for us! Though we are thousands of years removed from the events, we thus have reason for confidence that Esther acted with true virtue and in accord with godly principles.

"A Worldwide Family Reunion"

Imagine having friends and family in 212 countries. Impossible? No, a reality. Jehovah's Witnesses are a worldwide brotherhood of Christians. They worship Jehovah God and share the good news of his Kingdom by Christ Jesus with all who will listen.

Read the exciting reports about their activity in the *1991 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*. One reader wrote: "I look forward to getting the *Yearbook* each year. It's like attending a worldwide family reunion when I read the many wonderful experiences and comments of friends."

1991 YEARBOOK OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES