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THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

Is Faith Healing Approved by God?

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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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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Is Faith Healing Approved by God?

"WE HAVE seen strange things today!" Yes, the observers were impressed. A severely paralyzed man had been healed before their very eyes. The healer told the man: "Get up and pick up your little bed and be on your way home." And the man did just that! He was no longer paralyzed. No wonder that those present "began to glorify God"! (Luke 5:18-26) This cure, performed by Jesus Christ almost 2,000 years ago, very clearly had God's approval.

What about today? Is miraculous healing still a good possibility for those who can find no medical cure? Jesus performed healing miracles. Faith healers today claim to imitate him. How should we view their claims?

Faith healing is defined as "a method of treating diseases by prayer and exercise of faith in God." The *Encyclopædia Britannica* affirms: "The history of faith healing in Christianity began with the astonishing personal ministries of Jesus and the apostles." Yes, Jesus effected outstanding cures. Do faith healers today perform miracles as he did?

Faith—A Requirement?

According to *Black's Bible Dictionary,* Jesus "specified [faith] as a prerequisite for his miracles of healing." But was that the case? Did Jesus demand that a sick person have faith before he would heal him? The answer is no. Faith was needed on the part of the healer but not necessarily on the part of the sick person. On one occasion Jesus' disciples failed to cure an epileptic boy. Jesus healed the boy and afterward told the disciples why they had been unable to heal him. "He said to them: 'Because of *your* little faith.'" —Matthew 17:14-20.

According to Matthew 8:16, 17, Jesus "cured all who were faring badly." True, these people had a measure of belief in Jesus that caused them to approach him. (Matthew 8:13; 9:22, 29) In most cases they had to come and ask before he healed them. However, no confession of faith was required for the miracle to be performed. On one occasion Jesus healed a lame man who did not even know who Jesus was. (John 5:5-9, 13) On the night of his arrest, Jesus restored the severed ear of the high priest's servant, although this man was one of the group of Jesus' enemies who had come to arrest him. (Luke 22:50, 51) Indeed, on occasion, Jesus even raised the dead!—Luke 8:54, 55; John 11:43, 44.

How could Jesus perform such miracles? Because he relied on God's holy spirit, or active force. This is what did the curing, not the faith of the sick individual. If you read the accounts in the Gospels, you will also notice that the healings by Jesus were performed with a minimum of ceremony. There was no exhibitionism or playing on emotions. Further, no matter what the disease, Jesus never failed. He was always successful, and he never charged a fee.—Matthew 15:30, 31.

Modern Healings Like Those of Jesus?

Sickness is a terrible problem, and when it strikes, we naturally seek relief. What,

though, if we live in a place where "people, especially those of little means, are treated by professional health workers as things and not as human beings"? That is the situation a doctor observed in one Latin-American country. And what if we live in a location where, as in that same country, 'only 40 percent of medical doctors are qualified to practice their profession'?

Small wonder that many, seeing no other way out, view faith healing as at least worth a try. Yet, claimed cures by faith healers are controversial. For example, an estimated 70,000 attended a meeting in São Paulo, Brazil, where two healers 'trampled upon hundreds of eyeglasses thrown by the audience, promising the credulous owners restoration of their eyesight.' One of the healers honestly acknowledged in an interview: "I cannot say that all those sick ones for whom we pray will be cured. It depends on their faith. If a person believes, he will be cured." He blamed any failure to be healed on a lack of faith on the part of the sick one. Remember though, as we saw earlier, that Jesus blamed a failure to heal on the lack of faith of those doing the healing!

Another healer promised to cure cancer and paralysis. What happened? According to *Veja* magazine, "the promise, evidently, was not fulfilled." And listen to the way the man conducted himself: "During nearly two hours, [the faith healer] entertained the audience with sermons, prayers, screams, singing—even using blows, with a view to expelling demons lodging in the bodies of the faithful. At the end, he threw his necktie and his handkerchief to the entranced audience and passed a plate in order to collect 'voluntary contributions.'" Jesus and his apostles never asked for money for miraculous healings, and they never engaged in such theatrics.

Clearly, then, such modern faith healers are not doing what Jesus did. And it is hard to see that God would approve what they are doing. Does he, though, approve any miraculous healing today? Or is there any way that our faith can help us when we or our loved ones fall sick?

How Faith Can Help the Sick

THE accounts of miraculous cures in the Bible reassure us that God is concerned about our well-being, and they show his power to heal. Since these miraculous cures glorified God and brought so much joy, it is reasonable to ask, Does the gift of healing by holy spirit still operate?

The answer to that question is no—and the reason may surprise some. Those miraculous cures in the first century have fulfilled their purpose. *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary* correctly notes: "The purpose of the healing miracles was theological, not medical." What were some of the theological purposes served by those miracles?

For one thing, Jesus' healing miracles served the purpose of identifying him as the Messiah. And after his death, they helped to establish that God's blessing was upon the new Christian congregation. (Matthew 11: 2-6; Hebrews 2:3, 4) Further, they demonstrated that God's promise to heal mankind in the new world will be fulfilled. They confirm our faith that the time really will come when "no resident will say: 'I am sick.' The people that are dwelling in the land will be those pardoned for their error." (Isaiah 33: 24) Once these first-century purposes were achieved, miracles were no longer needed.

It is noteworthy that Jesus' first-century disciples themselves suffered infirmities that were not healed miraculously. This is further evidence that Jesus' miraculous healing activity as well as that of the apostles was designed to teach important truths, not to provide a medical service. When recommending therapy for Timothy's frequent cases of sickness, Paul advocated the medicinal use of wine, not faith healing. Paul, who performed miracles of healing, got no relief from the "thorn in the flesh" that kept "slapping" him.—2 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Timothy 5:23.

When the apostles died, the gift of healing passed away. Paul himself indicated that this would happen. Likening the Christian congregation to an infant, Paul said: "When I was a babe, I used to speak as a babe, to think as a babe, to reason as a babe; but now that I have become a man, I have done away with the traits of a babe." The point of his illustration was that miraculous gifts of the spirit were part of the infancy of the Christian congregation. They were "the traits of a babe." Hence, he stated: "They [miraculous gifts] will be done away with."—1 Corinthians 13:8-11.

Can Faith Help When We Fall Sick?

However, even if we do not rely on faith healing, it certainly is appropriate to pray to God for help when we fall sick. And there is surely nothing wrong with prayer by others in our behalf. But the prayers have to be realistic and in harmony with God's will. (1 John 5:14, 15) Nowhere does the Bible command us to pray for faith healing.*

* Some think that the words at James 5:14, 15 have to do with faith healing. But the context shows that James is here talking about spiritual sickness. (James 5:15b, 16, 19, 20) He counsels individuals who have become weak in the faith to call on the elders for help.

Rather, we pray for Jehovah's loving support during the trials caused by sickness.

The Bible shows what faithful ones may pray for in sickness when it says: "Jehovah himself will sustain him upon a divan of illness; all his bed you will certainly change during his sickness." (Psalm 41:3) Meditation on God's Word will help those suffering emotional sickness. The psalmist wrote: "Your own loving-kindness, O Jehovah, kept sustaining me. When my disquieting thoughts became many inside of me, your own consolations began to fondle my soul." —Psalm 94:18, 19; see also 63:6-8.

In addition, we need to show good sense in health matters, and the Bible counsels us about this. It is much better to live according to Bible principles than to engage in drug abuse, smoking, heavy drinking, or overeating and then when sickness follows, turn in desperation to faith healing. Praying for a miracle when one is struck by sickness is no substitute for wise conduct to escape avoidable sickness, such as by eating nutritious food if it is available or seeking qualified medical aid where possible.

God's Word also encourages us to cultivate healthy mental attitudes that can benefit our physical health. The book of Proverbs counsels: "A calm heart is the life of the fleshly organism, but jealousy is rottenness to the bones." "A heart that is joyful does good as a curer, but a spirit that is stricken makes the bones dry." (Proverbs 14:30; 17:22) Praying for the holy spirit to develop calmness and joy in us can only have beneficial effects on our physical health.—Philippians 4:6, 7.

What About Faith Healing?

Of course, even if a person lives as healthy a life as his situation permits, sickness may still strike. What then? Is there any harm in going to a faith healer in hopes of being healed? Yes, there is harm. Modern faith healers rarely perform free of charge. And spending money on a faith healer when that money could be spent on medical help could cost us dearly. Besides, why give money to individuals who take advantage of people's credulity?

Some may argue: 'Surely, faith healing must have some value if even a small percentage of those who go to the "healers" are healed.' But it is arguable whether faith healers really heal anyone in a permanent way. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* acknowledges: "Relatively little controlled research has been achieved on the many unknown factors in faith healing."

Even if a small number seem to be healed, this is not evidence of holy spirit at work. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: "Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and perform many powerful works in your name?' And yet then I will confess to them: I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness." (Matthew 7:22, 23) Jesus also said that certain ones, although disapproved by God, would attract attention to themselves by means of signs: "For *false* Christs and false prophets will arise and will give great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the chosen ones." (Matthew 24:24) Surely, modern faith healers could be included in the application of those words, with their dramatic presentations, constant demands for money, and claimed miraculous healings.

Such ones are not following in Jesus' footsteps. Who, then, are they following? The apostle Paul gives us an indication when he says: "Satan himself keeps transforming himself into an angel of light. It is therefore nothing great if his ministers also keep transforming themselves into ministers of righteousness. But their end shall be according to their works." (2 Corinthians 11:14, 15) If faith healers do not perform the healings they claim, then they are deceivers, following the path of Satan, "who is misleading the entire inhabited earth." (Revelation 12:9) But what if, in a small minority of cases, they do perform healings? Must not their "powerful works" be effected in the power of Satan and his demons? Yes, that must be the case!

The Time of Real Healing

The miraculous cures of Jesus were performed with the help of God's holy spirit. They demonstrated his purpose to solve all of man's health problems in his due time. Jehovah promises "the curing of the nations." (Revelation 22:2) And he will not only heal sicknesses but do away with death. John explains that Jesus came "that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) What a fine healing that will be! Jesus will again perform cures like those recorded in the Bible but on a far grander

Jesus' miraculous healings fulfilled their purpose

Jesus will repeat and multiply healing miracles

scale. He will even resurrect the dead! (John 5:28, 29) When will this happen?

In God's new world, which, according to all the evidence, is close at hand. That new world, to be ushered in after the wickedness of this system of things has been removed forever, will be a real blessing for right-hearted mankind. It will be a world without suffering. "[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:4) What a contrast to what we see around us today!

Therefore, in cases of sickness, pray to God for support. And whether sick or healthy, learn how eternal life without sickness will indeed be possible. Build up your faith in this trustworthy promise of God by studying the many references to it in the Bible. Learn how God's purpose in this regard is nearing fulfillment according to his own timetable. Have no doubt, for God's Word assures us: "He will actually swallow up death forever, and the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces."—Isaiah 25:8.

KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

Nigerian Schoolchildren Blessed for Faithfulness

THE apostle Paul wrote: "If possible, as far as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men." (Romans 12:18) Schoolchildren of Jehovah's Witnesses in Nigeria apply this counsel, even when persecuted. As a result, Jehovah blesses them.

☐ One teacher disliked Jehovah's Witnesses very much. During one morning's assembly, he called all the Witnesses to the front and ordered them to sing the national anthem. They refused, stating that they wanted to give exclusive devotion to God. The teacher then took all of them outside and told them to cut the grass. Meantime, the other students continued with their classes.

An adult Witness took the brochure *School and Jehovah's Witnesses* to the teacher, explaining the neutral stand of Jehovah's Witnesses. However, the teacher refused to discuss the matter or to accept the brochure. In fact, he immediately intensified the punishment of the children.

The young Witnesses continued to endure this punishment and went on cutting the grass even when the teacher was not present. One day the teacher hid and watched them unobserved as they continued working and singing Kingdom songs. He was so impressed that he sent them back to class, expressing amazement at their attitude. What was the result? The teacher is now having a Bible study with Jehovah's Witnesses!

Certainly these schoolchildren were blessed for their faithfulness to Jehovah and his principles. —Proverbs 10:22.

☐ Ruth and her friends were also blessed for their faithfulness to Jehovah's requirement to be "no part of the world." (John 17:16) Ruth, who is 18, started pioneering when she was 12. She and other Witnesses received opposition from members of the school staff because of refusing to sing the national anthem. A teacher asked to see the girls' parents. After they gave an explanation, using the *School* brochure, the teacher was satisfied and gave the students no more trouble.

One day, however, a teacher from India insulted

and punished one of the girls in front of the class when the girl did not sing the national anthem. The girl boldly defended her faith and the teacher took her to see the school principal. When they got there, the young Witness found that the vice-principal was also present. Much to her surprise, the principal and the vice-principal started to laugh. Turning to the teacher, the principal said: "Madam, do not worry yourself about these girls. Even if you should kill them, they would rather die than recite the anthem. Haven't you heard about them?" She and her assistant then spoke of the faith and courage of Jehovah's Witnesses. Speaking to the girl, the principal said that she was sorry for the embarrassment suffered. She then added: "Continue in your deeds of faith. I admire your religion and your courageous stand both outside and here in the school." Later, the teacher who had been opposed apologized to the Witness, saying that she now understands the neutral stand taken by the Witnesses.

These children followed the example of the three Hebrews who would not break their integrity to God by bowing down to an image, and also of Daniel, who refused to stop praying to Jehovah. These men were blessed by Jehovah because they were faithful to God's righteous laws.—Daniel, chapters 3 and 6.

A FREE PEOPLE BUT ACCOUNTABLE

"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."—JOHN 8:32.

FREEDOM. What a powerful word that is! Mankind has endured uncounted wars and revolutions as well as incalculable social turmoil because of the desire of humans to be free. Indeed, *The Encyclopedia Americana* says: 'In the evolution of civilization, no concept has played a more important role than liberty.'

[2] Nevertheless, how many people are really free? How many even know what freedom is? *The World Book Encyclopedia* says: "For people to have complete freedom, there must be no restrictions on how they think, speak, or act. They must be aware of what their choices are, and they must have the power to decide among those choices." In view of this, do you know anyone who is truly free? Who can say that they have "no restrictions on how they think, speak, or act"? In truth, only one person in the whole universe fits that description—Jehovah God. He alone has absolute freedom. Only he can make any choice he wishes and then carry it out despite all opposition. He is "the Almighty."—Revelation 1:8; Isaiah 55:11.

[3] For lowly humans, freedom can only be relative. It is usually granted or guaranteed by some authority and related to our subjection to that authority. Indeed, in almost every case, a person can only be free if he recognizes the authority of the guarantor of his freedom. For example, individuals living in the "free world" enjoy many benefits, such as freedom of movement, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion. What guarantees these freedoms? The law of the land. An individual can only enjoy them as long as he obeys the law. If he abuses his freedom and breaks the law, he is held accountable by the authorities, and his freedom may be drastically curtailed by a prison sentence. —Romans 13:1-4.

1, 2. (a) How has freedom featured in human history? (b) Who alone is truly free? Explain.
3. On what condition do humans usually enjoy freedom?

Godly Freedom —With Accountability

[4] In the first century, Jesus spoke about freedom. He said to the Jews: "If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31, 32) He was not speaking of freedom of speech or freedom of religion. He was certainly not speaking of liberation from the yoke of Rome, for which many Jews longed. No, this was something much more precious, a freedom granted, not by human laws or the whim of some human ruler, but by the supreme Sovereign of the universe, Jehovah. It was freedom from superstition, freedom from religious ignorance, and much, much

4, 5. What freedom do worshipers of Jehovah enjoy, and for what will he hold them accountable?

more. Freedom granted by Jehovah is real freedom, and it will endure throughout eternity.

[5] The apostle Paul said: "Jehovah is the Spirit; and where the spirit of Jehovah is, there is freedom." (2 Corinthians 3:17) Over the centuries Jehovah has been dealing with mankind so that faithful ones will eventually enjoy the finest and greatest kind of human freedom, "the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Romans 8:21) In the meantime, Jehovah grants us a measure of freedom by means of Bible truth, and he holds us accountable if we abuse that freedom. The apostle Paul wrote: "There is not a creation that is not manifest to his sight, but all things are naked and openly exposed to the eyes of him with whom we have an accounting."—Hebrews 4:13.

[6] Accountability to Jehovah came to the fore when our first human parents, Adam and Eve, were alive. Jehovah created them with the precious gift of free will. As long as they used that free will responsibly, they enjoyed other blessings, such as freedom from fear, freedom from sickness, freedom from death, and the freedom to approach their heavenly Father with a clean conscience. But when they abused their free will, all of that changed.

[7] Jehovah placed Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, and for their enjoyment he gave them the fruit of all the trees of the garden—except one. That one he kept to himself; it was "the tree of the knowledge of good and bad." (Genesis 2:16, 17) By refraining from eating the fruit of that tree, Adam and Eve would acknowledge that only Jehovah was free to set the standard of what is good and bad. If they acted responsibly and refrained from eating the forbidden fruit, Jehovah would continue to ensure their other freedoms.

[8] Sadly, Eve listened to the Serpent's subtle suggestion that she should 'know good and bad' for herself. (Genesis 3:1-5) First she, and then Adam, ate of the forbidden fruit. As a result, when Jehovah God came to speak with them in the garden of Eden, they were ashamed and hid themselves. (Genesis 3:8, 9) They were now sinners who had lost the sense of freedom of approach to God that came from a clean conscience. Because of this, they also lost freedom from sickness and death, both for themselves and for their offspring. Paul said: "Through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned."—Romans 5:12; Genesis 3:16, 19.

[9] Nevertheless, mankind still had free will, and in the course of time, some imperfect humans used this in a responsible way to serve Jehovah. The names of some of them have been preserved for us from antiquity. Men such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (also called Israel) are examples of individuals who used the measure of freedom they still enjoyed to do God's will. And it went well with them as a result.—Hebrews 11:4-21.

The Freedom of God's Chosen People

[10] In the days of Moses, Jehovah liberated the sons of Israel—then numbering in the millions—from slavery in Egypt and made a covenant with them whereby they became his special people. Under this covenant, the Israelites had a priesthood and a system of animal sacrifices that covered

6-8. (a) What freedoms did Adam and Eve enjoy, and on what condition could they keep those freedoms? (b) What did Adam and Eve lose for themselves and their offspring?

9. Who are on record as having used well the measure of freedom they enjoyed?

10. What were the terms of the covenant Jehovah made with his special people?

their sins in a token way. Thus, they had freedom to approach God in worship. They also had a system of laws and regulations to keep them free from superstitious practices and false worship. Later, they would receive the Promised Land as an inheritance, with the assurance of divine help against their enemies. Their part of the covenant called on the Israelites to keep Jehovah's Law. The Israelites willingly accepted this condition, saying: "All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do."—Exodus 19:3-8; Deuteronomy 11:22-25.

[11] For more than 1,500 years, the Israelites were in that special relationship with Jehovah. But time after time they failed to keep the covenant. Repeatedly they were seduced by false worship and came into bondage to idolatry and superstition, so God permitted them to be physically enslaved to their enemies. (Judges 2:11-19) Instead of enjoying the liberating blessings that came from keeping the covenant, they were punished because of transgressing it. (Deuteronomy 28:1, 2, 15) Eventually, in 607 B.C.E., Jehovah allowed the nation to become enslaved in Babylon.—2 Chronicles 36:15-21.

[12] This was a hard lesson. They should have learned from it the importance of keeping the Law. Nevertheless, when, after 70 years, the Israelites returned to their own land, they still failed to observe the Law covenant properly. Almost a hundred years after their return, Jehovah said to Israel's priests: "You men—you have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble in the law. You have ruined the covenant of Levi." (Malachi 2:8) Indeed, even the most sincere among the Israelites could not measure up to the perfect Law. Instead of being a blessing, it became, in the words of the apostle Paul, "a curse." (Galatians 3:13) Clearly, something more than the Mosaic Law covenant was needed to bring imperfect, faithful humans to the glorious freedom of the children of God.

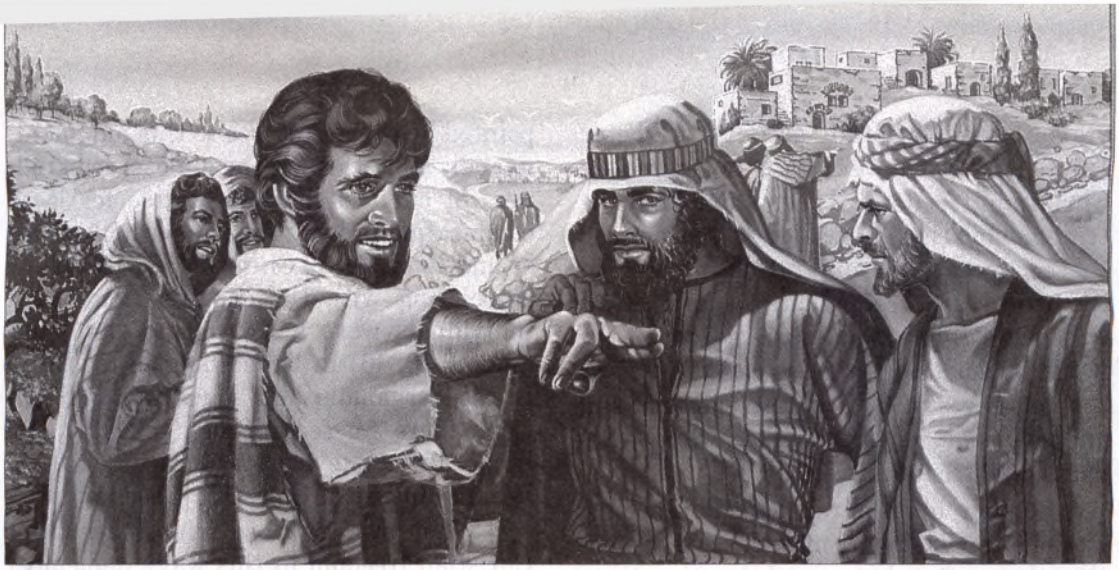
11. What resulted when Israel failed to keep her side of the covenant with Jehovah?
12. What eventually became evident regarding the Mosaic Law covenant?

The Nature of Christian Freedom

[13] That something more was the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. About the year 50 C.E., Paul wrote to the congregation of anointed Christians in Galatia. He described how Jehovah had freed them from slavery to the Law covenant and then said: "For such freedom Christ set us free. Therefore stand fast, and do not let yourselves be confined again in a yoke of slavery." (Galatians 5:1) In what ways did Jesus set men free?

[14] After Jesus' death, Jews who accepted him as the Messiah and became his disciples came under a new covenant, which replaced the old Law covenant. (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:7-13) Under this new covenant, they—and non-Jewish believers who later joined them—became part of a new, spiritual nation that replaced fleshly Israel as God's special people. (Romans 9:25, 26; Galatians 6:16) As such, they enjoyed the freedom that Jesus promised when he said: "The truth will set you free." Apart from setting them free from the curse of the Law of Moses, the truth liberated Jewish Christians from all the onerous traditions that religious leaders had imposed upon them. And it released non-Jewish Christians from the idolatry and superstitions of their former worship. (Matthew 15:3, 6; 23:4; Acts 14:11-13; 17:16) And there was more.

13. What better basis for freedom was eventually provided?
14, 15. In what wonderful ways did Jesus set believing Jews and non-Jews free?



The freedom Jesus gave was much better than any freedom man can grant

15 Jesus, when speaking of the truth that sets free, said: "Most truly I say to you, Every doer of sin is a slave of sin." (John 8:34) Since Adam and Eve sinned, every individual who ever lived has been a sinner and thus a slave of sin. The only exception was Jesus himself, and Jesus' sacrifice released believers from that slavery. True, they were still imperfect and sinful by nature. Now, though, they could repent of their sins and beg forgiveness on the basis of Jesus' sacrifice, confident that their petitions would be heard. (1 John 2:1, 2) On the basis of Jesus' ransom sacrifice, God declared them righteous, and they could approach him with a cleansed conscience. (Romans 8:33) Moreover, since the ransom opened up the prospect of a resurrection to endless life, the truth even freed them from fear of death.—Matthew 10:28; Hebrews 2:15.

16 In a wonderful way, Christian freedom was opened up to men and women no matter what their situation, humanly speaking. Poor people, prisoners, even slaves, could be free. On the other hand, the high ones of the nations who rejected the message about the Christ were still in slavery to superstition, sin, and the fear of death. We should never cease to thank Jehovah for this freedom that we enjoy. Nothing the world offers comes close to equaling it.

16. How was Christian freedom more inclusive than any freedom offered by the world?

Free but Accountable

17 In the first century, likely the majority of anointed Christians rejoiced in their freedom and maintained their integrity whatever the cost. Sadly, though, some tasted Christian freedom with all its blessings and then spurned it, returning to slavery in the world. Why was that? The faith of many doubtless weakened, and they just 'drifted away.' (Hebrews 2:1) Others 'thrust aside faith and a good conscience and experienced shipwreck concerning their faith.' (1 Timothy 1:19) Perhaps they fell to materialism or an immoral life-style. How important that we guard our faith and build on it, keeping busy in personal study, association,

17. (a) How did some in the first century lose out on Christian freedom? (b) Why should we not be deceived by the seeming freedom in Satan's world?

prayer, and Christian activity! (2 Peter 1:5-8) May we never cease to appreciate Christian freedom! True, some may be tempted by the laxness they see outside the congregation, thinking that those in the world are freer than we are. Really, though, what looks like freedom in the world is usually just irresponsibility. If we are not slaves of God, we are slaves of sin, and that slavery pays a bitter wage.—Romans 6:23; Galatians 6:7, 8.

[18] Further, in his letter to the Philippians, Paul wrote: "There are many, I used to mention them often but now I mention them also with weeping, who are walking as the enemies of the torture stake of the Christ." (Philippians 3:18) Yes, there were onetime Christians who became enemies of the faith, perhaps becoming apostates. How vital that we do not follow their course! In addition, Peter wrote: "Be as free people, and yet holding your freedom, not as a blind for badness, but as slaves of God." (1 Peter 2:16) How may an individual hold his freedom as a blind for badness? By committing serious sins—perhaps secretly—while still associating with the congregation.

[19] Remember Diotrephes. John said of him: "Diotrephes, who likes to have the first place [in the congregation], does not receive anything from us with respect. . . . Neither does he . . . receive the brothers with respect, and those who are wanting to receive them he tries to hinder and to throw out of the congregation." (3 John 9, 10) Diotrephes used his freedom as a blind for his own selfish ambition.

[20] The disciple Jude wrote: "Certain men have slipped in who have long ago been appointed by the Scriptures to this judgment, ungodly men, turning the undeserved kindness of our God into an excuse for loose conduct and proving false to our only Owner and Lord, Jesus Christ." (Jude 4) While associating with the congregation, these individuals were a corrupting influence. (Jude 8-10, 16) In Revelation we read that in the Pergamum and Thyatira congregations, there was sectarianism, idolatry, and immorality. (Revelation 2:14, 15, 20-23) What a misuse of Christian freedom!

[21] What awaits those who abuse their Christian freedom in this way? Remember what happened to Israel. Israel was God's chosen nation, but Jehovah finally rejected her. Why? Because Israelites used their relationship with God as a blind for badness. They boasted that they were sons of Abraham but rejected Jesus, the Seed of Abraham and Jehovah's chosen Messiah. (Matthew 23:37-39; John 8:39-47; Acts 2:36; Galatians 3:16) "The Israel of God" as a whole will not prove similarly unfaithful. (Galatians 6:16) But any individual Chris-

18-20. (a) How did some become "enemies of the torture stake"? (b) How did some 'hold their freedom as a blind for badness'?

21. What awaits those who abuse their Christian freedom?

Can You Explain?

- ☐ Who alone is truly free?
- ☐ What freedoms did Adam and Eve enjoy, and why did they lose them?
- ☐ What freedoms did the Israelites enjoy when they observed their covenant with Jehovah?
- ☐ What freedoms came to those who accepted Jesus?
- ☐ How did some in the first century lose or abuse their Christian freedom?

tian who causes spiritual or moral pollution will eventually face discipline, even adverse judgment. All of us are accountable for how we use our Christian freedom.

[22] How much better to slave for God and so be truly free. Only Jehovah grants the freedom that really counts. The proverb says: "Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, that I may make a reply to him that is taunting me." (Proverbs 27:11) Let us use our Christian freedom to Jehovah's vindication. If we do so, our lives will have meaning, we will bring pleasure to our heavenly Father, and eventually we will be among those who enjoy the glorious freedom of the sons of God.

22. What joy comes to those who use their Christian freedom to slave for God?

MAKE WISE USE OF YOUR CHRISTIAN FREEDOM

"Be as free people, and yet holding your freedom . . . as slaves of God."—1 PETER 2:16.

WHEN our first parents sinned in the garden of Eden, they lost for their children a glorious heritage —freedom from sin and corruption. As a result, all of us were born slaves to corruption and death. Happily, though, Jehovah purposes to restore faithful humans to a wonderful freedom. Today, righthearted ones anxiously await "the revealing of the sons of God," as a result of which they "will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God."—Romans 8:19-21.

'Anointed to Preach'

[2] Who are these "sons of God"? They are spirit-anointed brothers of Jesus who will be rulers with him in the heavenly Kingdom. The first of these appeared during the first century C.E. They accepted the liberating truth that Jesus taught, and from Pentecost 33 C.E., they partook of the glorious privileges that Peter spoke of when he wrote to them: "You are 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for special possession.' "—1 Peter 2:9a; John 8:32.

[3] To be God's special possession—what a wonderful blessing! And the modern-day remnant of these anointed sons of God enjoy the same blessed standing with God. But with such an elevated privilege comes responsibilities. Peter drew attention to one of these when he went on to say: "'You should declare abroad the excellencies' of the one that called you out of

1. What freedom did Adam lose, and to what freedom will Jehovah restore mankind?
2, 3. (a) Who are "the sons of God"? (b) What wonderful standing do they enjoy, bringing what responsibility?

darkness into his wonderful light."—1 Peter 2:9b.

[4] Have anointed Christians fulfilled this responsibility to declare abroad God's excellencies? Yes. Speaking prophetically of the anointed since 1919, Isaiah said: "The spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah is upon me, for the reason that Jehovah has anointed me to tell good news to the meek ones. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to those taken captive and the wide opening of the eyes even to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah and the day of vengeance on the part of our God." (Isaiah 61: 1, 2) Today, the anointed remnant, following the example of Jesus, to whom this scripture primarily applied, zealously declare to others the good news of freedom. —Matthew 4:23-25; Luke 4:14-21.

[5] As a result of their enthusiastic preaching, a great crowd of other sheep have appeared on the world scene in these latter days. They have come out of all nations to join the anointed in serving Jehovah, and the truth has made these free as well. (Zechariah 8:23; John 10:16) Like Abraham they are declared righteous on the basis of faith and have entered into a close relationship with Jehovah God. And like Rahab their being declared righteous puts them in line for survival—in their case, survival of Armageddon. (James 2:23-25; Revelation 16: 14, 16) But such elevated privileges also entail the responsibility to tell others about God's glory. That is why John saw them publicly praising Jehovah, "crying with a loud voice, saying: 'Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.'"—Revelation 7:9, 10, 14.

[6] Last year the great crowd, now numbering more than four million, together with the small remaining band of anointed Christians, spent nearly a billion hours declaring abroad the excellencies of Jehovah. This was the best possible use of their spiritual freedom.

"Have Honor for the King"

[7] Our Christian freedom entails other responsibilities. Peter pointed to some when he wrote: "Honor men of all sorts, have love for the whole association of brothers, be in fear of God, have honor for the king." (1 Peter 2:17) What is implied by the expression "have honor for the king"?

[8] "The king" represents secular rulers. Today, a spirit of disrespect for authority has developed in the world, and this can easily affect Christians. A Christian may even wonder why he should honor "the king," since "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) In view of these words, he might feel free to disobey inconvenient laws and withhold taxes if he can get away with it. But this would be against the express command of Jesus to "pay back . . . Caesar's things to Caesar." It would be, in effect, 'using his freedom as a blind for badness.'—Matthew 22:21; 1 Peter 2:16.

[9] Christians are obliged to have honor for authority and to be subject to it—even if this is in a relative way. (Acts 5:29) Why? At 1 Peter 2:14, 15, Peter points to three reasons when he says that governors are "sent

4. How have anointed Christians fulfilled the responsibility that comes with their Christian freedom?

5, 6. (a) What has resulted from the enthusiastic preaching of anointed Christians? (b) What privileges and responsibilities do those of the great crowd enjoy?

7, 8. What responsibility toward secular authority does Christian freedom entail, and in this regard, what wrong attitude must we avoid?

9. What are two good reasons for being obedient to secular authority?

by [God] to inflict punishment on evildoers but to praise doers of good." The fear of punishment is reason enough for obeying authority. What a disgrace it would be for one of Jehovah's Witnesses to be fined or imprisoned for assault, theft, or some other crime! Imagine how some would delight to publicize such a thing! On the other hand, as we develop a reputation for civil obedience, we receive praise from fair-minded administrators. We may be given more freedom to go about our work of preaching the good news. Further, 'by doing good we muzzle the ignorant talk of the unreasonable men.' (1 Peter 2:15b) This is a second reason for obeying authority.—Romans 13:3.

[10] But there is a stronger reason. The authorities exist by Jehovah's permission. As Peter says, the political rulers are "sent by" Jehovah, and it is "the will of God" that Christians remain subject to them. (1 Peter 2:15a) Similarly, the apostle Paul says: "The existing authorities stand placed in their relative positions by God." Hence, our Bible-trained conscience moves us to obey the authorities. If we refuse to subject ourselves to them, we have "taken a stand against the arrangement of God." (Romans 13:1, 2, 5) Who among us would willingly want to take a stand against God's arrangement? What a misuse of Christian freedom that would be!

10. What is the strongest reason for obeying secular authority?

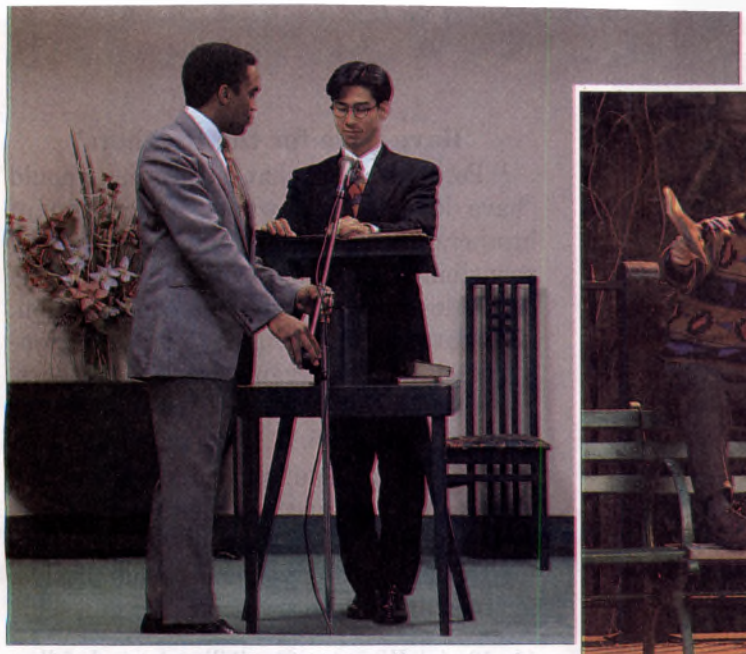
'Have Love for the Brothers'

[11] Peter also said that a Christian should "have love for the whole association of brothers." (1 Peter 2:17) This is another responsibility that comes with Christian freedom. Most of us belong to a congregation. Indeed, all of us belong to the international association, or organization, of brothers. Showing love for these is a wise use of our freedom.—John 15:12, 13.

[12] The apostle Paul singled out a group of Christians that especially deserve our love. He said: "Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls

11, 12. (a) What responsibility toward fellow believers comes with our Christian freedom? (b) Who especially deserve our loving consideration, and why?

The elders are especially deserving of our love and cooperation



A Christian's dress should be well arranged, modest, and appropriate for the occasion

as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you." (Hebrews 13:17) Those taking the lead in the congregation are the elders. True, these men are not perfect. Nevertheless, they are appointed under the supervision of the Governing Body. They lead by example and with considerateness, and they are assigned to keep watch over our souls. What a weighty assignment! (Hebrews 13:7) Happily, most congregations have a fine, cooperative spirit, and it is a joy for elders to work with them. It is more difficult when individuals do not wish to cooperate. The elder still does his work, but as Paul says, he does it with "sighing." Surely, we do not want to make the elders sigh! We want them to find joy in their work so that they can build us up.

[13] What are some ways in which we can cooperate with the elders? One is in helping with the upkeep and cleaning of the Kingdom Hall. Another is by cooperating in the work of visiting the sick and helping the disabled. Again, we can strive to remain spiritually strong, so as not to become a burden. An important area of cooperation is in the maintaining of the moral and spiritual cleanness of the congregation, both by our own conduct and by reporting cases of serious sin that come to our attention.

[14] Sometimes, in order to keep the congregation clean, elders have to disfellowship an unrepentant wrongdoer. (1 Corinthians 5:1-5) This protects the congregation. It may also help the wrongdoer. Often, such discipline has helped to bring a sinner to his senses. What, though, if the one disfellowshipped is a close friend or a relative? Suppose the individual is our father or mother or our son or daughter. Do we nevertheless respect the action taken by the elders? True, it may be difficult. But what an abuse

13. What are some ways in which we can cooperate with the elders?

14. How should we cooperate with disciplinary action taken by the elders?

of our freedom it would be to question the decision of the elders and continue to associate spiritually with one who has proved to be a corrupting influence in the congregation! (2 John 10, 11) Jehovah's people as a whole are to be commended because of the way they cooperate in such matters. As a result, Jehovah's organization remains undefiled in this unclean world.—James 1:27.

15 What if *we* commit a serious sin? King David described those whom Jehovah favors when he said: "Who may ascend into the mountain of Jehovah, and who may rise up in his holy place? Anyone innocent in his hands and clean in heart, who has not carried My soul to sheer worthlessness, nor taken an oath deceitfully." (Psalm 24:3, 4) If for some reason we are no longer 'innocent in our hands and clean in heart,' we must act with urgency. Our everlasting life is in jeopardy.

16 Some have been tempted to hide serious sins, perhaps reasoning: 'I have confessed to Jehovah and repented. So why involve the elders?' The wrongdoer may be embarrassed or fear what the elders might do. He should, however, remember that although Jehovah alone can cleanse us of sin, He has made the elders primarily responsible for the purity of the congregation. (Psalm 51:2) They are there for healing, for "the readjustment of the holy ones." (Ephesians 4:12) Not to go to them when we need spiritual help is like not going to a doctor when we are sick.

17 Some who try to handle matters alone find that months or years later, their conscience is still severely troubling them. Even worse, others who hide a serious error fall into sin a second and even a third time. When the matter finally comes to the attention of the elders, it is a case of repeated wrongdoing. How much better to follow the counsel of James! He wrote: "Is there anyone sick among you? Let him call the older men of the congregation to him, and let them pray over him, greasing him with oil in the name of Jehovah." (James 5:14) Go to the elders while it is still a time for healing. If we wait too long, we might become hardened in a course of sin.—Ecclesiastes 3:3; Isaiah 32:1, 2.

15. If an individual commits a serious sin, what should he immediately do?

16, 17. Why should one guilty of serious sins not try to resolve the matter on his own?

Appearance and Recreation

18 Five years ago, in a parish magazine, a Catholic priest in Italy spoke warmly about Jehovah's Witnesses.* He said: "Personally, I like Jehovah's Witnesses; I frankly admit it. . . . The ones I know are impeccably mannered, soft-spoken . . . [and] most persuasive. When will we understand that truth needs an acceptable presentation? That those announcing the truth needn't be halfhearted, foul-smelling, disheveled, sloppy?"

19 According to these words, the priest was impressed, among other things, by the way the Witnesses dressed and presented themselves. Obviously, those whom he met had listened to the counsel given by "the faithful and discreet slave" over the years. (Matthew 24:45) The Bible says that dress for women should be 'well arranged and modest.' (1 Timothy 2:9) In this decadent time, that counsel is necessary for men also. Is it not logical that representatives of God's Kingdom should present themselves decently to outsiders?

* The priest later withdrew this commendation, apparently under pressure.

18, 19. Why did a priest comment favorably about Jehovah's Witnesses?

[20] Some may agree that at meetings and in field service, they should be careful about how they dress, but they may feel that Bible principles do not apply at other times. Do we, though, ever cease to be representatives of God's Kingdom? True, circumstances vary. If we are helping to construct a Kingdom Hall, we will dress differently from when we attend a meeting in that same Kingdom Hall. When we are at leisure, we will likely dress in a more relaxed fashion. But whenever we are seen by others, our clothing should always be well arranged and modest.

[21] Another area that has received much attention is recreation. Humans—particularly young people—need recreation. It is not a sin or a waste of time to schedule relaxation for the family. Even Jesus invited his disciples to "rest up a bit." (Mark 6:31) But be careful that recreation does not open the door to spiritual contamination. We are living in a world where recreation highlights sexual immorality, gross violence, horror, and spiritism. (2 Timothy 3:3; Revelation 22:15) The faithful and discreet slave is alert to such dangers and constantly warns us against them. Do you feel that these reminders are an infringement of your freedom? Or are you grateful that Jehovah's organization cares enough about you to draw such dangers constantly to your attention?—Psalm 19:7; 119:95.

[22] Never forget that though our freedom comes from Jehovah, we are responsible for how we use it. If we ignore good counsel and make wrong decisions, we cannot blame someone else. The apostle Paul says: "Each of us will render an account for himself to God."—Romans 14:12; Hebrews 4:13.

20. Why should a Christian be conscious of his dress at all times?
21, 22. How have we been protected against harmful recreation, and in what way should we view counsel on such matters?

Look for the Freedom of the Children of God

[23] We are indeed a blessed people. We are free from false religion and superstition. Thanks to the ransom sacrifice, we can approach Jehovah with a cleansed conscience, free in a spiritual way from enslavement to sin and death. And soon will come "the revealing of the sons of God." At Armageddon, Jesus' brothers in their heavenly glory will be revealed to humans as destroyers of Jehovah's enemies. (Romans 8:19; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8; Revelation 2:26, 27) Thereafter, these sons of God will be revealed as channels for blessings flowing from the throne of God to mankind. (Revelation 22:1-5) Eventually, this revealing of the sons of God will result in the blessing of faithful mankind with the glorious freedom of the children of God. Do you long for that time? Then use your Christian freedom wisely. Slave for God now, and you will enjoy that wondrous freedom for all eternity!

23. (a) What blessings with regard to freedom do we now enjoy? (b) What blessings do we eagerly await?

Review Box

- ☐ How have the anointed and the other sheep glorified Jehovah?
- ☐ Why should Christians honor the secular authority?
- ☐ In what ways can a Christian cooperate with the elders?
- ☐ As regards dress, why do Jehovah's Witnesses stand out as different from many in the world?
- ☐ What should we avoid when it comes to recreation?

Gilead Graduates Accept the Gift of Missionary Service

ON MARCH 1, 1992, the 22 members of the 92nd graduating class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead accepted a gift—the gift of missionary service. When addressing the class, Lloyd Barry of the Governing Body stated: "May you receive that wonderful gift with great joy, and may you use it in bringing joy to others."

Some 4,662 invited guests and members of the Bethel family gathered at the Jersey City Assembly Hall, in New Jersey, for the graduation program. Another 970 at the New York facilities of the Watchtower Society in Brooklyn, Wallkill, and Patterson were tied in by telephone line. All listened carefully as the graduates were given some parting counsel that would help them to value highly the gift of missionary service and to use it wisely.

The program had opened with enthusiastic singing of song number 155, "'Welcome One Another'!" Afterward, all were moved as Frederick W. Franz, the 98-year-old president of Gilead School, offered a heartfelt prayer. Then, the chairman, Carey Barber of the Governing Body, welcomed all to the graduation program and said: "There has never been a greater need for Gilead missionaries than today." Following his remarks, he introduced a series of short, helpful talks.

Curtis Johnson of the Bethel Home Committee spoke first, developing the theme "Take Good Care of Your Garden." Brother Johnson noted that when these new missionaries get to their assignments, each of them will have a *spiritual* garden to cultivate. (1 Corinthians 3:9) Jehovah's people worldwide are a spiritual garden sprouting righteousness and praise before all the nations. (Isaiah 61:11) 'How you care for your spiritual garden in the future,' the speaker emphasized, 'will vitally affect your success in your missionary assignment.' What will help them to take good care of their spiritual garden? 'Jehovah can be a wall of protection around your spiritual garden. If you are determined to cultivate right works, keep close to him in prayer, and then work in harmony with your prayers.'

Next, Lloyd Barry spoke on the theme "Always Rejoice in the Lord." (Philippians 4:4) With over 25 years of missionary experience in Japan to draw on, he had some practical suggestions to help the graduates to enjoy the gift of missionary service. He observed: 'You are going to find that the joy you have in God's service helps you to overcome many of the stresses and perhaps some of the physical problems that you meet up with.' (Proverbs 17:22) He reminded the graduates that they may encounter conditions and situations that are quite different from what they have been used to. They may have to learn a new language. 'You will have to work hard at learning the language. But when you are able to communicate freely with the people in their own language, this too will add to your joy.'

Developing the theme "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize," Eldor Timm of the Factory Committee spoke next. What is the prize? Everlasting life! To gain it we must keep our eyes focused on it. The speaker discussed some of the similarities and differences between Christians in the race for life and runners in athletic competitions of the first century. Like the runners, Christians must train vigorously, observe the rules, and strip themselves of cumbersome weights. But unlike literal runners, Christians are in a lifelong race and seek a prize that is everlasting. Instead of there being one winner, *all* who run the race for life to the finish will receive the prize. Brother Timm concluded: 'To gain the prize of life,

we must be at peace with Jehovah, the Giver of the prize. And to be at peace with Jehovah, we have to be at peace with our brothers.'

Milton Henschel of the Governing Body spoke next on the theme "Through the Comfort From the Scriptures, We Have Hope." (Romans 15:4) 'For the last five months,' the speaker began, 'you have been busy with the Bible. A great closeness has been built up. You have strong hope. As you go out to your assignments, please remember why your hope is so strong. It is because you have stayed close to the Scriptures.' To show an example of a Bible account that inspires hope, the speaker referred to Judges chapters 6 to 8, which recount how Gideon was commissioned to deliver Israel from Midianite oppression. After discussing the account and its significance for our day, he noted: 'When you have the opportunity to get close to the Scriptures and think about these things, it refreshes you. You get courage.'

All were anxious to hear what parting counsel the school's two principal instructors would have for the students. Jack Redford spoke first on the theme "Do the Right Thing." He reminded the graduates: 'At Gilead you were thoroughly trained in what is right according to the Scriptures. Now you go out to challenging missionary assignments. And we know that you will probably find difficult problems along the way. Despite this, and despite your own feelings, we know that you can do the right thing.' What will help? For one thing, having the right view of others. The speaker said: 'Do not expect perfection from imperfection.' Having the right view of trialsome situations can also help. 'We all have our ups and downs in life,' he noted. 'Anybody can handle the ups. It is how you handle the downs that will determine whether you endure in the missionary service.'—James 1:2-4.

The registrar of the school, Ulysses Glass, selected the theme "What Hope for the Future?" In a fatherly tone, he encouraged the graduates to keep their hope burning brightly. (Proverbs 13:12) 'The start of the loss of hope may hardly be noticeable,' he explained. 'Circumstances may cause us to become preoccupied with ourselves instead of our relationship with God. We might get sick or feel mistreated by others. Some may have more material things than we have or may get better results in the ministry, and we may become somewhat jealous. If we ever allow such things gradually to overtake us, soon the reality of the Kingdom hope will fade in our heart and mind, and we may even stop enduring in the race for life.' What can be done? 'Positive action must be taken if we are to revive our hope. We must fill our minds and hearts with the sure promises of God and turn our full attention to the reality of God's Kingdom. And we must restore our communication with Jehovah, for this will surely lead to joy.'

Karl Klein of the Governing Body delivered the graduation address. His theme was "Why Be Humble?" And what is the answer to that question? 'Because it is the right and just thing to do, the wise and loving thing to do,' he explained in his opening words. The audience was intrigued as he discussed four examples of humility that we do well to imitate: (1) Jehovah God, who certainly was humble when dealing with Abraham and Moses (Genesis 18:22-33; Numbers 14:11-21; Ephesians 5:1); (2) Jesus Christ, who 'humbled himself and became obedient as far as death on a torture stake' (Philippians 2:5-8; 1 Peter 2:21); (3) the apostle Paul, who 'slaved for the Lord with the greatest lowliness of mind' (Acts 20:18, 19; 1 Corinthians 11:1); and

Class Statistics

Number of countries represented: 7
Number of countries assigned to: 11
Total number of students: 22
Average age: 33.4
Average years in truth: 16.7
Average years in full-time ministry: 11.8

92nd Graduating Class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead

In the list below, rows are numbered from front to back and names are listed from left to right in each row. (1) Chan Chin Wah, M.; Bouancheaux, N.; Chapman, B.; Östberg, A.; Cole, L.; Jackson, K.; Meerwijk, A. (2) Smith, J.; Wollin, K.; Chapman, R.; Gabour, N.; Chan Chin Wah, J.; Smith, C.; Edvik, L. (3) Bouancheaux, E.; Östberg, S.; Cole, K.; Jackson, R.; Gabour, S.; Edvik, V.; Meerwijk, R.; Wollin, G.

(4) 'those taking the lead among us,' such as the first president of the Society, Brother Russell, who once wrote: "The work in which the Lord has been pleased to use our humble talents has been less a work of origination than of reconstruction, adjustment, harmonization." (Hebrews 13:7) Brother Klein outlined further powerful reasons for being humble. Surely, heeding the counsel to be humble will help the graduates to make wise use of the gift of missionary service!

Following those remarks, the chairman shared the greetings received from various parts of the earth. The time had now arrived for the graduates to receive their diplomas. They had come from seven countries—Canada, Finland, France, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United States. But their missionary assignments take them to 11 countries—Bolivia, Estonia, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Mauritius, Peru, Togo, Turkey, and Venezuela.

After an intermission, the afternoon program began with an abbreviated *Watchtower* Study conducted by Joel Adams of the Service Department Committee. After that, the graduates enacted some of the field-service experiences they had enjoyed during the school term. Finally, the drama *Why Respect Theocratic Order?* was presented for the edification of the entire audience, including the graduates.

Truly, these graduates left for their foreign assignments with counsel and encouragement that will help them to use the gift of missionary service to bring joy not only to themselves but to others as well.

Jehovah Your Acquaintance or Your Friend?

"JOHN, may I introduce you to my friend? This is—excuse me, what was the name again?"

Have you ever heard this kind of conversational faux pas? It provides an example of how some people misuse the word "friend." In reality they mean only "acquaintance" or sometimes not even that. Being acquainted with Mr. Smith from across the street is one thing; being his friend is quite another.

One dictionary defines "acquaintance" as "a person with whom one has had some social contact but for whom one has no strong personal attachment." It indicates "less familiarity, closeness, fellowship, and well-wishing than FRIEND."

This lack of strong personal attachment helps explain why we often pay little attention to what is happening to acquaintances, while we are amiably involved in the lives of our friends. We share their joys and their sorrows, allowing them to touch us deeply. Of course, we must be careful not to let emotional involvement mislead us into meddling in their private affairs.—1 Peter 4:15.

Having a strong personal attachment to our friends also explains why we normally try to please them. If an acquaintance finds our conduct distasteful or improper, his displeasure is not so likely to move us to change. But a friend can exercise a powerful influence indeed, be it in matters of dress, conduct, or attitude.

As regards trust, affection, respect, and loyalty, friendship demands a higher degree of responsibility than acquaintanceship does. He who asks for friendship with, as it were, no strings attached, in reality wants only an acquaintance, not a friend. Close friends are happy to fulfill the responsibilities entailed by a strong personal attachment, realizing that these give them an opportunity to prove their friendship.

Friendship With God

As the Creator, Jehovah is humankind's heavenly Father and deserves to be loved, obeyed, and respected. But he wants humans to do this because of a strong personal attachment, not simply out of a sense of duty. (Matthew 22:37) He also wants them to love him as a Friend. (Psalm 18:1) Since "he first loved us," he himself has laid the perfect foundation for such a friendship. —1 John 4:19.

Our first parents, Adam and Eve, were acquainted with Jehovah. The question was: Would they accept his offer of friendship? Sad to say, they did not. Their selfishly grasping for independence from God suggested no feeling of strong personal attachment. Willing to accept the blessings of the friendship he was offering, they were unwilling to fulfill its responsibilities. It was as though they wanted to enjoy the comforts and security of their cozy Para-

dise home without being willing to pay the rent.

All of us, some to a greater degree than others, have inherited this unappreciative and independent spirit. (Genesis 8:21) Some young people, for example, have allowed their natural desire for independence to make them unappreciative of their parents. This has resulted in a breakdown of the most precious friendship that should exist between them and their parents throughout life. Sad as this is, however, a breakdown in our friendship with our heavenly Father is much more serious. In fact, it can be fatal!

Requirements for Friendship

Without trust, no relationship, be it with humans or with God, can last for long. The patriarch Abraham understood this, and that is why he repeatedly manifested implicit trust in God. Read Genesis 12:1-5 and 22:1-18, and see two outstanding examples of his trust in Jehovah. Yes, "Abraham put faith in Jehovah, and it was counted to him as righteousness." That is why "he came to be called 'Jehovah's friend.'"—James 2:23.

A further requirement for friendship with God is meeting the obligations that this friendship entails. Because of our lowly position in relation to Jehovah, these obligations are logically much greater than they would be in a human friendship. They go beyond our wanting to please him in *some* things —as we would with a human friend. They include our wanting to please him in *all* things. Jesus, God's Son and most intimate friend, showed this when he said of Jehovah: "I always do the things pleasing to him."—John 8:29.

Thus, friendship with Jehovah, or with his Son, is not available on a no-strings-attached basis; it is dependent on our living up to the prerequisites for friendship that they have set. (See Psalm 15:1-5.) Jesus showed this plainly in conversation with his disciples. "You are my friends," he told them, "*if* you do what I am commanding you." —John 15:14.

Another requirement for friendship is open and frank communication. On the day of his death, Jesus told his faithful apostles: "I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master does. But I have called you friends, because all the things I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." (John 15:15) In sharing his thoughts with his friends, Jesus was

Abraham trusted God and therefore came to be called Jehovah's friend

following the example of his heavenly Father, about whom Amos 3:7 says: "The Sovereign Lord Jehovah will not do a thing unless he has revealed his confidential matter to his servants the prophets."

Is this not the normal thing among friends? We may feel no urge to share our experiences with Mr. Smith from across the street. And most assuredly we would not want to tell him our innermost thoughts and feelings. After all, he is only an acquaintance. But with our friends, why, often we can hardly wait to tell them such things!

It is likewise in our friendship with God. We can hardly wait to approach him in prayer, revealing to him our needs, our desires, and our innermost feelings. Of course, if communication is one-sided, friendship will soon die. So we must also be willing to let God talk to us. This we do by carefully listening to his written Word, meditating upon his counsel, and then applying it as best we can.

How Important to You Is Jehovah's Friendship?

To help you answer this question, consider a special kind of human friendship. If you are a young person, perhaps you are interested in a friendship that could lead to marriage. Of course, you realize that just being acquainted with a prospective mate is hardly the proper basis for marriage. Acquaintanceship must first be turned into friendship. This friendship can then be developed and molded into a more intimate relationship that will ultimately form the proper basis for a happy marriage.

Now, consider. How much effort do most people put into developing this type of friendship? How much time and money do they spend in establishing and then maintaining it? How much time do they spend thinking about it? To what extent do they make plans—or show willingness to change plans—for the purpose of improving or maintaining this relationship?

Then ask yourself: 'How does this compare with my efforts to develop friendship with my Creator or to improve and strengthen it? How much time am I spending in doing so? To what extent does friendship with Jehovah occupy my thoughts? To what extent am I making plans—or showing a willingness to change plans—for the purpose of improving and then maintaining this relationship?'

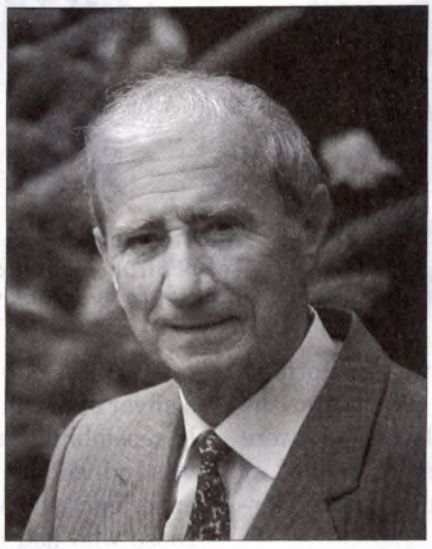
Young Christians should be fully aware that all human friendships, including the one that eventually leads to marriage, are second in importance to the friendship they need to have with their Creator. That is why they are urged at Ecclesiastes 12:1: "Remember, now, your Grand Creator in the days of your young manhood." Many are doing this by publicly serving as God's ministers, an ever-increasing number of them as full-time preachers, or pioneers.

Despite the growing cynicism and irreligiousness around them, these boldly defend Jehovah when they hear false taunts and charges made against him. Is this not what Jehovah should rightfully be able to expect of his friends? Is this not what we would also expect of *our* friends? And would it not make our hearts rejoice when we discovered our friends doing it zealously and with conviction?—Compare Proverbs 27:11.

Yes, friendship with God—even as with humans—brings responsibilities that must be fulfilled if the friendship is to last. A person unwilling to accept these responsibilities, or unready to make a dedication to God and then to carry it out, may indeed be acquainted with Jehovah. He has yet to experience, however, the joys of having Him as a Friend.

After Buchenwald I Found the Truth

I GREW up in Grenoble, France, in the 1930's. My German-language teacher, a Frenchman, was a fanatic Nazi. At school he would always insist that German would "become useful" some day. However, the majority of our teachers, veterans of World War I, were worried about the rise of Nazism in Germany. I too felt concerned as it became more and more evident that war was approaching.



In 1940, at the beginning of World War II, I lost a beloved uncle in the heavy fighting on the river Somme. I became very bitter but was too young to enlist in the French Army. Three years later, though, during the occupation of France by the Germans, I was given the opportunity to use my skills as a draftsman for the French Resistance. I excelled in copying signatures and also worked at faking German rubber stamps. I got so much satisfaction from fighting the occupying enemy forces in this way that the Communist opinions of my associates were of little importance to me at the time.

Arrested

On November 11, 1943, the local Resistance called for a demonstration in commemoration of the World War I armistice. But French mobile guards had blockaded access to the bridge leading to the war memorial, and they encouraged us to go back home. Our procession decided instead to march on to another war monument inside the town. But we forgot one thing. The monument was a mere stone's throw from the Gestapo offices.

Our group was quickly surrounded by armed soldiers, who lined us up against a wall. When the soldiers moved us, they found several revolvers on the ground. As no one wanted to confess to owning them, the soldiers released only the women and the youths 16 years of age and younger. Thus, at the age of 18, I was imprisoned, along with 450 other prisoners. A few days later, we were transferred to a transit camp near Compiègne, in northern France.

En Route to Germany

On January 17, 1944, I had my first—but unfortunately not last—contact with German soldiers whose helmets were decorated with a swastika on the left and the initials SS (*Schutzstaffel*) on the right. They gathered hundreds of prisoners, and we had to walk to the Compiègne station. We were literally kicked into railway boxcars. In my boxcar alone, there were 125 prisoners. For

Above: Roll call in the camp
Left: Entrance gate to Buchenwald. The inscription reads: "To everyone what he deserves"

three days and two nights, we had nothing to eat or drink. Within a few hours, the weaker ones had already collapsed and were trampled on. Two days later we arrived at Buchenwald, near Weimar, deep inside Germany.

After being disinfected and having my head shaved, I was given the registration number 41,101 and classified as a "Communist Terrorist." During a quarantine period, I met the Dominican priest Michel Riquet, who was to become famous after the war for his sermons in Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris. Along with other young men of my age, I asked him why God allowed such horrors. He replied: "You have to go through much suffering to deserve to go to heaven."

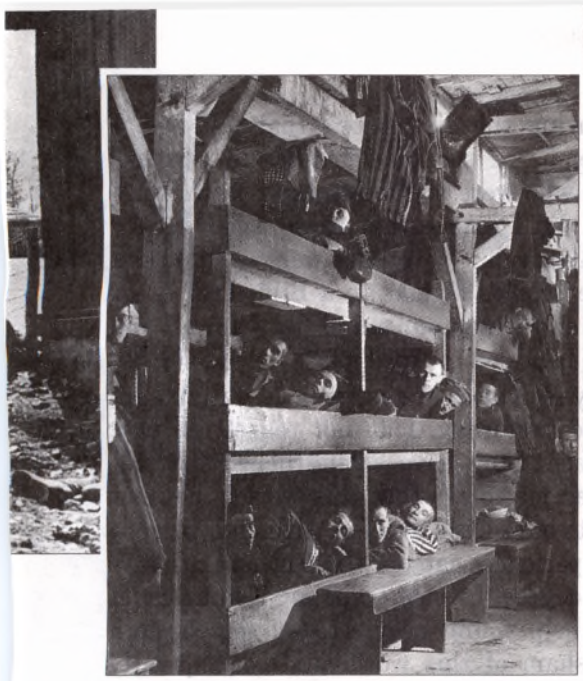
Everyday Life

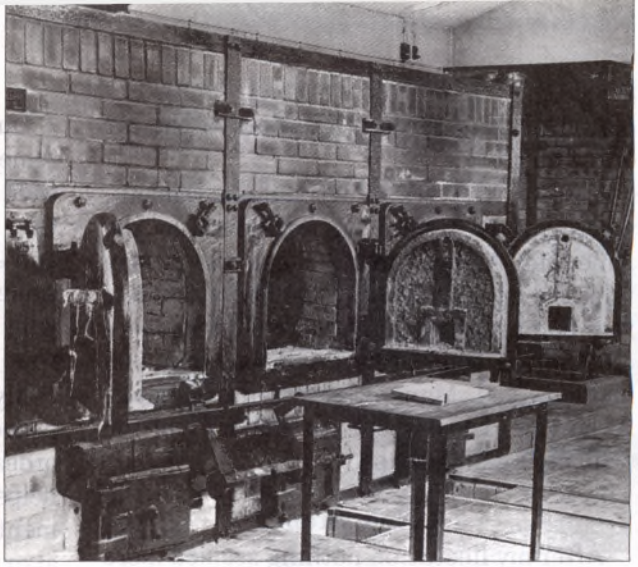
The occupants of all 61 blocks had to get up at about four thirty in the morning. We came out stripped to the waist and often had to break the ice to wash. Whether in good health or bad, everyone had to comply. Next came the bread distribution—from 7 to 11 ounces per day of tasteless bread, with a sliver of margarine and something vaguely resembling jam. At 5:30 a.m., everyone was rounded up for roll call. What a terrible experience it was to carry out on our backs those who had died during the night! The acrid smell of smoke as the corpses burned reminded us of our companions. We were overcome with feelings of revulsion, despair, and hatred, for we knew that we could well end up the same way.

My work at the *BAU II Kommando* consisted of digging trenches for no purpose. No sooner was the seven-foot-deep trench dug than we had to fill it in again just as carefully. Work started at 6:00 a.m., with a half hour break at midday, after which we continued working until 7:00 p.m. Evening roll call often seemed never-ending. Whenever there were heavy German losses on the Russian front, it could last till midnight.

A Different Group

Any who tried to escape from the camp could easily be recognized because all of us





Above: Crematorium at Buchenwald

Left: Sixteen prisoners to each tier

had an uneven hairstyle. Our hair was cut with a strip shaved or clipped very short down the middle or at the sides. Some prisoners, though, had an ordinary haircut. Who were they? The head of our block satisfied our curiosity. "They are *Bibelforscher* (Bible Students)," he said. "But what were Bible Students doing in a concentration camp?" I wondered. "They are here because they worship Jehovah," I was informed. Jehovah! That was the first time I had ever heard the name of God.

I eventually got to know a little more about the Bible Students. They were mostly Germans. Some of them had been in concentration camps since the mid-1930's for refusing to obey Hitler. They could have gone free, but they refused to capitulate. The SS used them as their personal barbers, and they were given special tasks requiring trustworthy personnel, such as work in administrative posts. What intrigued us most was their serenity, a complete lack of hatred or spirit of protest and revenge. I could not understand it. Unfortunately, I did not know enough German to converse with them at the time.

The Train of Death

As the Allies advanced, prisoners were sent to camps farther inland, but these were becoming terribly overcrowded. On the morning of April 6, 1945, the SS took 5,000 of us, and forced us onto the road to Weimar for a six-mile walk. Those who could not keep up the pace were coldbloodedly shot in the neck. When we finally reached Weimar station, we climbed into open freight cars, and the train left. For 20 days it rambled along from one railway station to another across Germany and then on into Czechoslovakia.

One morning, part of our train was shunted off onto a siding. Soldiers unlimbered machine guns, opened a freight car's doors, and massacred all the Russian prisoners inside. The reason? A dozen prisoners had killed their guards and escaped during the night. Even today I can still see the

blood trickling through the floor of the car onto the track.

Finally, the train arrived at Dachau, where two days later we were freed by the American Army. During the whole 20-day trip, the only sustenance we had was a few raw potatoes and some water. There were 5,000 of us when we started, but only 800 had survived. Many others died days later. As for me, I had spent the majority of the trip sitting on a corpse.

A New Step

After my liberation nothing seemed more natural than actively to support the French Communist Party, since I had associated closely with many of its members—including prominent ones—in Buchenwald. I became assistant cell secretary in Grenoble and was encouraged to go through a training course for executives in Paris.

However, I was soon disappointed. On November 11, 1945, we were invited to take part in a parade in Paris. The *camarade* in charge of our group received a certain sum of money for our accommodations, but he did not seem willing to use it in our behalf. We were obliged to remind him of the principles of honesty and friendship that were supposed to unite us. I also came to realize that the many prominent men I had known simply did not have the solution to the world's problems. Moreover, for the most part, they were atheists, and I believed in God.

I later moved to Lyons, where I continued to work as a draftsman. In 1954, I was visited by two of Jehovah's Witnesses, and I subscribed to the *Awake!* magazine. Two days later, a man came to visit me with one of the women who had knocked on my door. My wife and I suddenly realized that we were both interested in spiritual things.

During the discussions that followed, I remembered the *Bibelforscher* in Buchenwald who were so true to their faith. Only then did I realize that these *Bibelforscher* and Jehovah's Witnesses were one and the same people. Thanks to a Bible study, my wife and I took our stand for Jehovah and were baptized in April 1955.

My memories are as fresh as if it all happened yesterday. I do not regret my past ordeals. They have strengthened me and helped me to see that this world's governments have little to offer. Although personal experiences can only help others to a certain degree, I would be happy if mine could just help young people today see through the sham of this world and consequently seek good, upright values in true Christianity, as taught by Jesus.

Today, suffering and injustice are a part of everyday life. Like the *Bibelforscher* in the concentration camps, I too am looking forward to a better world to come, where brotherly love and justice will prevail instead of violence and fanatical idealism. In the meantime, I am trying to serve God and Christ as best I can as an elder in the Christian congregation, along with my wife, children, and grandchildren. (Psalm 112:7, 8) —*As related by René Séglat.*

In Our Next Issue

Is There a Way Out Of Man's Sinful State?

What Do the Dragnet and Fish Mean for You?

Diocletian Attacks Christianity

QUESTIONS FROM READERS

Does the Bible support the existence of unicorns, which are mentioned in some versions?

Treasury of Fantastic and Mythological Creatures: 1,087 Renderings from Historic Sources, by Richard Huber/Dover Publications, Inc.

The King James, Douay, and other versions, mention unicorns. But that is not so with modern versions that accurately render the Hebrew.—Psalm 22:21; 29:6; 92:10 (21:22; 28:6; 91:11, *Douay*).

Over the centuries many myths have developed about an animal with the body and head of a horse but having the legs of a deer and the tail of a lion. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of this legendary creature is the single twisted horn on its forehead.*

"People once believed that the unicorn's horn contained an antidote for poison, and during the Middle Ages, powders supposedly made from such horns sold for extremely high prices. Most scholars believe the image of the unicorn was derived from hearsay European accounts of the rhinoceros." (*The World Book Encyclopedia*) Certain Assyrian and Babylonian monuments showed one-horned animals. These are now recognized as stags, ibex, cows, and bulls depicted from the side, a view that did not show both horns.

This is of some interest to Bible students because nine times the Scriptures refer to an animal by the Hebrew term *re'em'*. (Numbers 23:22; 24:8; Deuteronomy 33:17; Job 39:9, 10; Psalm 22:21; 29:6; 92:10; Isaiah 34:7) Translators were long uncertain as to what animal was meant. The Greek *Septuagint* rendered *re'em'* with the sense 'of one horn,' or unicorn. The Latin *Vulgate* often translates it as "rhinoceros." Other versions use 'wild ox,' 'wild beasts,' or 'buffalo.' Robert Young simply transliterates the Hebrew into English as "Reem," basically leaving the reader in the dark.

Modern scholars, though, have eliminated much confusion over the *re'em'*. Lexicographers Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner show that it means "wild oxen," with the scientific identification *Bos primigenius*. This is a "subfamily of the large horned ungulate family." *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* explains:

"Certain poetical passages of the Old Testament refer to a strong and splendid horned animal called *re'em'*. This word is translated 'unicorn' or 'rhinoceros' in many versions, but many modern translations prefer 'wild ox' (aurochs), which is the correct meaning of the Hebrew *re'em'*."

Since in current English "ox" has the sense of a castrated male, the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* consistently and correctly renders *re'em'* "wild bull." The aurochs (wild ox, or bull) seems to have become extinct by the 17th century, but scientists have deduced that it was quite different from the unicorn of legend. The ancient aurochs had a body height of about six feet, and a length of some ten feet. It might weigh 2,000 pounds, and each of its two horns could be over 30 inches long.

This certainly accords with the Biblical mention of the *re'em'*, or wild bull. It was noted for its strength and intractable disposition (Job 39:10, 11) as well as its swiftness. (Numbers 23:22; 24:8) Evidently it had two horns, not one horn like the legendary unicorn. Moses referred to its horns when illustrating the two powerful tribes that would spring from Joseph's two sons.—Deuteronomy 33:17.

So the Bible does not support the idea of unicorns as renowned in legend. It does draw an accurate, though limited, picture of the massive and fear-inspiring aurochs, or wild bull, that existed in Biblical times and down into the not-too-distant past.

* Professor Paul Haupt explains: 'In medieval collections horns of the rhinoceros or tusks of the narwhal (also called *unicorn fish* or *unicorn whale*) figured as horns of the unicorn.'

You Will Not Be Disappointed

ONE couple in the Philippines took two days to get there. They hiked 40 miles, carrying two young children through leech-infested jungles and over rivers swollen by typhoon rains. But they were determined not to miss it.

Two women in Zaire walked more than 300 miles, spending 14 days on the road, in order to be there. Also in Zaire, a 70-year old man got there by riding his bicycle 160 miles. He was undeterred by the distance or the inconvenience. The important thing was not to miss it.

Where were all of them going? To one of the large-scale gatherings of Jehovah's Witnesses organized in their countries. And however difficult the journey, all felt that their efforts were worthwhile.