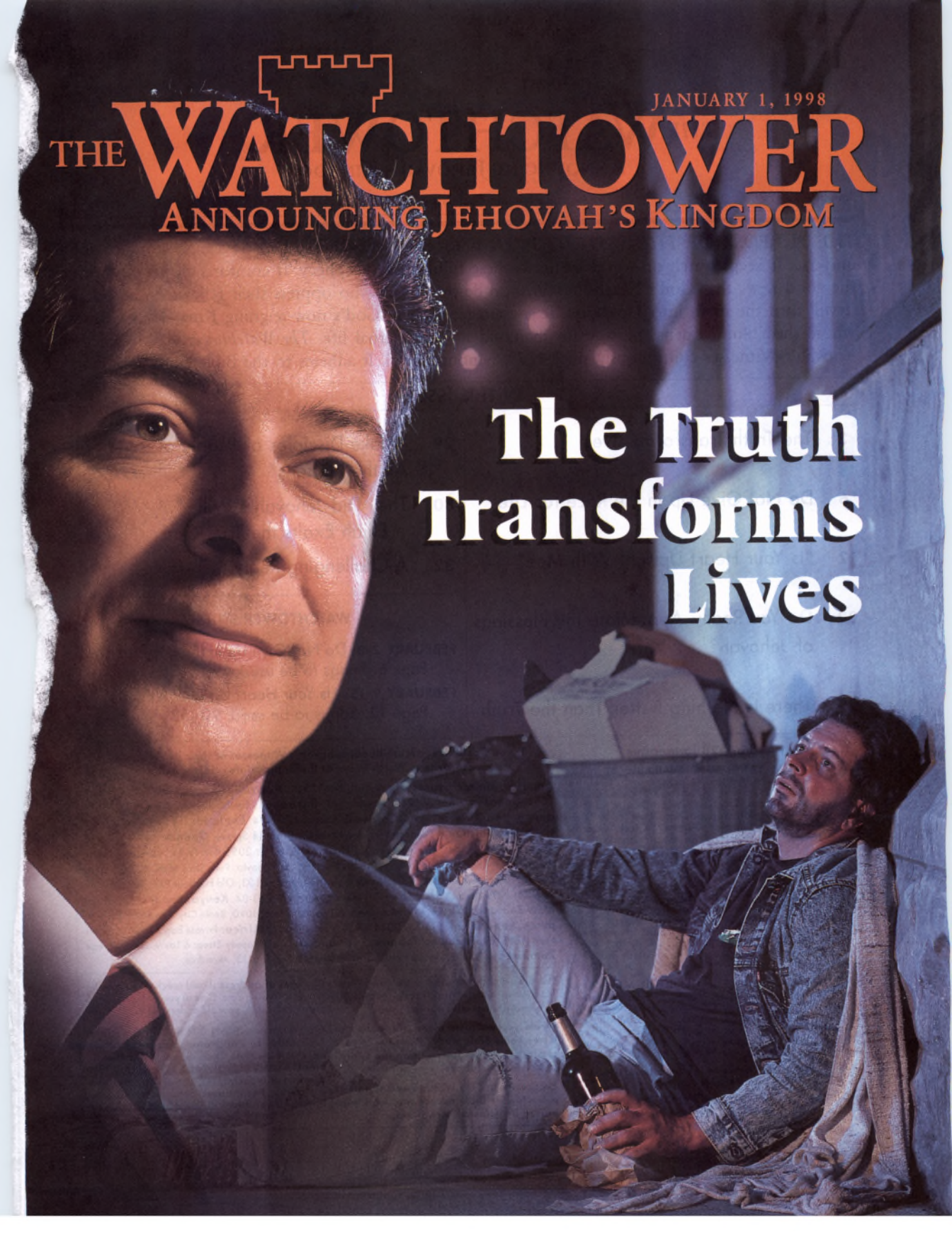




JANUARY 1, 1998

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

**The Truth
Transforms
Lives**

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

January 1, 1998

Average Printing Each Issue: 22,103,000

Vol. 119, No. 1

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.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 The Truth Transforms Lives
- 6 Do Not Give Up in the Race for Life!
- 12 "Is Your Heart Upright With Me?"
- 22 Do You Really Appreciate the Blessings of Jehovah?
- 25 There Is Nothing Better Than the Truth

- 29 "Make Disciples of People of All the Nations"
- 30 They Did Jehovah's Will
Elijah Exalts the True God
- 32 A Challenging Reply

WATCHTOWER STUDIES

- FEBRUARY 2-8:** Do Not Give Up in the Race for Life!
Page 6. Songs to be used: 199, 206.
- FEBRUARY 9-15:** "Is Your Heart Upright With Me?"
Page 12. Songs to be used: 90, 53.

Now published in 128 languages.

SEMICMONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL: Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Bicol, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Cibemba, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Efik, English, Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish, French, Ga, Georgian, German, Greek, Gujarati, Gun, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hiri Motu, Hungarian, Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese (also Braille), Kananda, Kinyarwanda, Korean (also Braille), Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Marathi, Myanmar, Nepali, New Guinea Pidgin, Norwegian, Pangasinan, Papiamentu, Polish, Portuguese (also Braille), Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian, Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Sinhalese, Slovak, Slovenian, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Spanish, Srantongo, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Tahitian, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Tongan, Tshiluba, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Venda, Vietnamese, Wallisian, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

MONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL: Armenian, Cambodian, Chitongo, East Armenian, Gilbertese, Greenlandic, Hausa, Icelandic, Isoko, Kiluba, Kirghiz, Kirundi, Kwanyama/Ndonga, Luganda, Luvale, Marshallese, Monokutuba, Moore, Niiuean, Ossetian, Osetela, Palauan, Persian, Ponapean, Punjabi, Sango, Silozi, Trukese, Tuvaluan, Urdu, Yapese

* Study articles also available in large-print edition.
* Audiocassettes also available.

© 1998 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved. Milton G. Henschel, President

If you would like to learn about Jehovah's Witnesses or their publications, please write to Watch Tower at the appropriate address below.

America, United States of: Wallkill, NY 12589. **Australia:** Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565. **Bahamas:** Box N-1247, Nassau, N.P. **Barbados:** Fontabelle Rd., Bridgetown. **Canada:** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. **England:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **Germany:** Niederselters, Am Steinfels, D-65618 Selters. **Ghana:** Box 760, Accra. **Guyana:** 50 Brickdam, Georgetown 16. **Hawaii 96819:** 2055 Kam IV Rd., Honolulu. **Hong Kong:** 4 Kent Road, Kowloon Tong. **India:** Post Bag 10, Lonavla, Pune Dis., Mah. 410 401. **Ireland:** Newcastle, Greystones, Co. Wicklow. **Jamaica:** Box 103, Old Harbour P.O., St. Catherine. **Japan:** 1271 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa Pref., 243-04. **Kenya:** Box 47788, Nairobi. **New Zealand:** P.O. Box 142, Manurewa. **Nigeria:** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City, Edo State. **Philippines, Republic of:** P.O. Box 2044, 1060 Manila. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of:** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe. **Zambia:** Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. **Zimbabwe:** P. Bag A-6113, Avondale.

The Bible translation used is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*, unless otherwise indicated.

Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Watch Tower, using the appropriate address above.

Publication of "The Watchtower" is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589.

Printed in U.S.A.

IT IS sad but true that the lives of so many people today are difficult, even desperate. Is it possible for such people to find happiness? Some are criminals and prey on their neighbors. Can they ever become honest members of society? The answer to both these questions is yes. People can change. Lives can be transformed. The apostle Paul showed how when he wrote: "Be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."—Romans 12:2.

The mention of the "perfect will of God" may call to mind what Jesus said to his disciples more than 20 years before Paul wrote the above words. Jesus said: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:32) By "the truth," Jesus meant the divinely inspired information—especially information regarding God's will—that is preserved for us in the Bible. (John 17:17) Does Bible truth really make people free? Does living in harmony with God's will really transform lives? Indeed it does. Consider a few examples.

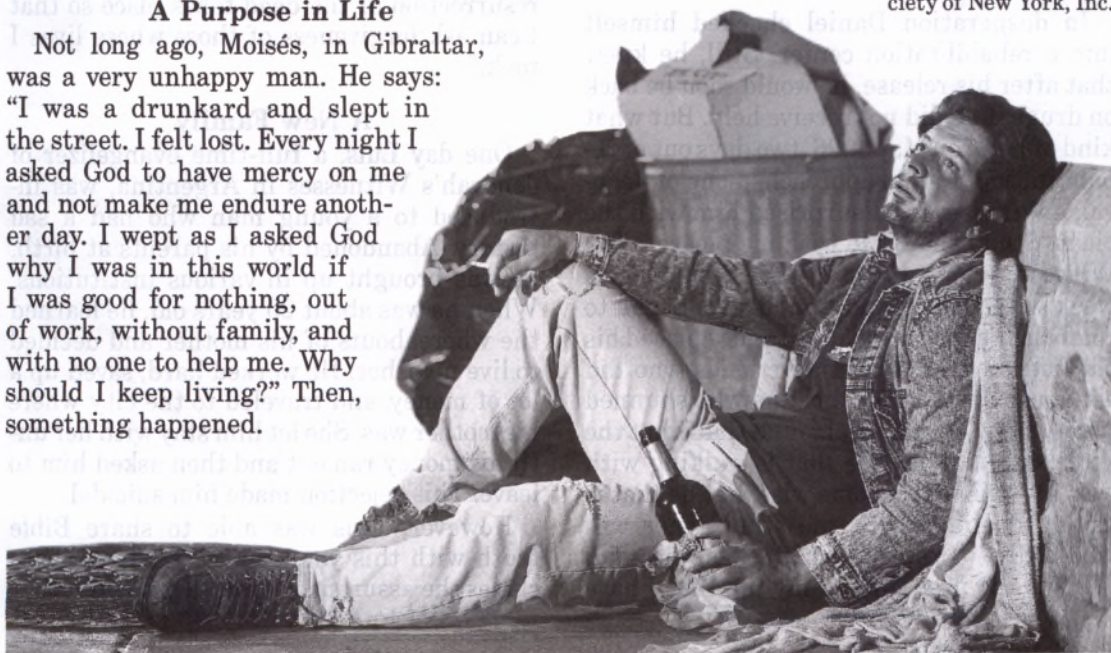
A Purpose in Life

Not long ago, Moisés, in Gibraltar, was a very unhappy man. He says: "I was a drunkard and slept in the street. I felt lost. Every night I asked God to have mercy on me and not make me endure another day. I wept as I asked God why I was in this world if I was good for nothing, out of work, without family, and with no one to help me. Why should I keep living?" Then, something happened.

The Truth Transforms Lives

Moisés continues: "I knew that God had heard my prayer when I met Roberto, one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Roberto gave me a Bible and a copy of the Bible study aid *What Does God Require of Us?** Every day we studied the Bible together on the bench where I slept at night. After a month Roberto took me to a meeting in the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. Soon, Bible truth had completely altered my outlook. I no longer sleep outdoors; nor do I drink or smoke. My life has changed, and I am

* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.



happy. I hope to get baptized soon and serve Jehovah as one of his Witnesses."

What a transformation! When people are without hope, the reason is often lack of knowledge. They do not know about God or his wonderful purposes. In the case of Moisés, when he gained that knowledge, it gave him the strength and courage to turn his life around. The psalmist's prayer to God was answered in Moisés' case: "Send out your light and your truth. May these themselves lead me. May they bring me to your holy mountain and to your grand tabernacle." —Psalm 43:3.

In Belize, Daniel had a comparable experience. Daniel was not sleeping in the streets—he had a prestigious job. But for 20 years he battled drug and alcohol addiction and led an immoral life. Although raised a Catholic, Daniel could see no meaning in life, and he doubted the existence of God. He went to different churches seeking help but found that many of his churchgoing friends and even some of his clergymen friends abused drugs or alcohol. Meanwhile, his wife was about to divorce him.

In desperation Daniel checked himself into a rehabilitation center. Still, he knew that after his release, he would soon be back on drugs if he did not receive help. But what kind of help? In May 1996, two days out of rehabilitation, Daniel approached one of Jehovah's Witnesses and surprised him with the plea, "Study the Bible with me please." The Witness arranged to study the Bible twice a week with Daniel, and Daniel soon began to conform his life to God's will and replaced his old friends with Christian friends who did not abuse drugs or alcohol and who shunned immorality. Thus Daniel found that what the Bible says is true: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly." (Proverbs 13:20) Soon, he said: "This is the first time in my life that I have

known what it is to have a clean conscience." Daniel's life too was transformed.

In Puerto Rico, another man experienced a notable transformation. He was in prison and was viewed as very dangerous, since he had killed a number of people. Could Bible truth change him? Yes. One of Jehovah's Witnesses was able to give him some copies of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines, and he quickly asked for more. A Bible study was started with him, and as Bible truth began to affect his heart, the changes he made were visible to all. One of the first evidences of his change was that he cut short his long hair and shaved off his straggly beard.

The Bible says that God forgives sinners who truly repent and change their lifestyles. Paul wrote: "Do you not know that unrighteous persons will not inherit God's kingdom? . . . And yet that is what some of you were. But you have been washed clean." (1 Corinthians 6:9, 11) Doubtless, these words comforted this man, as did the words of Acts 24:15: "There is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." He said: "I want to be there when the resurrection of the dead takes place so that I can ask forgiveness of those whose lives I took."

A New Family

One day Luis, a full-time evangelizer of Jehovah's Witnesses in Argentina, was introduced to a young man who had a sad history. Abandoned by his parents at birth, he was brought up in various institutions. When he was about 20 years old, he learned the whereabouts of his mother and decided to live near her. He worked hard, saved up a lot of money, and traveled to the city where his mother was. She let him stay with her until his money ran out and then asked him to leave. This rejection made him suicidal.

However, Luis was able to share Bible truth with this young man. That truth includes the assurance: "In case my own father

and my own mother did leave me, even Jehovah himself would take me up.” (Psalm 27:10) The young man found that he had a heavenly Father who would never abandon him. He is now happy to be part of a new family, Jehovah’s family.

Another man in the same country told one of Jehovah’s Witnesses that he liked the *Watchtower* magazine. Why? Because it had saved his marriage. It seems that one day this man, as he left work, saw in the garbage a *Watchtower* magazine with the title “Divorce” in large letters. Since his marriage was in trouble and he and his wife had begun proceedings for a legal separation, he retrieved the magazine and began to read it. He took it home and read it with his wife. The couple tried to apply the Bible-based counsel in the magazine. (Ephesians 5:21-6:4) Soon, their relationship improved. They stopped the separation proceedings and are now studying the Bible as a united married couple.

In Uruguay, another man named Luis was far from happy. Drug addiction, spiritism, idol worship, alcohol abuse—these were some of the things that made his life chaotic. Finally, Luis, completely frustrated, became an atheist. A friend gave him the book *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?** This resulted in brief contact with Jehovah’s Witnesses, but Luis soon returned to alcohol and drugs. When, in a moment of great anguish, he found himself sitting in a pit full of garbage, he prayed, offering his prayer to “the father of Jesus Christ,” since he was not sure about God’s name.

He asked God to show him if there was any reason for his being in the world. “The very next day,” reports Luis, “an acquaintance gave me a book that he had no more use for. Its title? *Revelation—Its Grand Climax At*

Hand!”* The book helped him to answer his question. Luis prayed again for help in finding the religion that would show him how to serve God. What a surprise! The doorbell rang, and standing outside were two of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Luis immediately started to study the Bible with them. He made rapid progress and now feels blessed to be a baptized Witness. He lives a clean life and helps others also to find a purpose for their lives. For him, the words of Psalm 65:2 have come true: “O Hearer of prayer, even to you people of all flesh will come.”

In the Philippines, Allan used to be a student activist. He belonged to an organization whose purpose was “to bring down the government so that future generations could enjoy equality.” One day, though, he was contacted by Jehovah’s Witnesses and learned from the Bible God’s purpose for mankind. That purpose includes the inspired promise: “Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more . . . But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.” (Psalm 37:10, 11) Allan said: “I soon discovered that what our movement was fighting for was long ago promised in the Bible. All the things we so ardently desired will be granted under God’s Kingdom.” Allan now supports God’s Kingdom and helps others to have faith in Bible truth.

Yes, lives *are* transformed when people heed the truth of God’s Word, the Bible. Indeed, the time is coming when all surviving humankind will have harmonized their lives with God’s will. What a transformation that will be! Then, the prophecy will be fulfilled: “They will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy mountain; because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea.”—Isaiah 11:9.

* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

DO NOT GIVE UP IN THE RACE FOR LIFE!

"Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."—HEBREWS 12:1.

WE LIVE in exciting and challenging times. More than 80 years ago, in 1914, Jesus was enthroned as King of God's heavenly Kingdom. "The Lord's day" and with it "the time of the end" of this system of things began. (Revelation 1:10; Daniel 12:9) Since then the Christian's race for life has taken on increasing urgency. God's servants have exerted themselves vigorously to keep up with Jehovah's celestial chariot, his heavenly organization, which is moving unstopably to fulfill Jehovah's purposes.—Ezekiel 1:4-28; 1 Corinthians 9:24.

² Have God's people found joy as they 'run the race' toward everlasting life? Yes, indeed! They have thrilled to see the gathering of the remaining ones of Jesus' brothers, and they rejoice to realize that the final sealing of the remaining ones of the 144,000 is well along. (Revelation 7:3, 4) Moreover, they are excited to discern that Jehovah's appointed King has thrust his sickle in to reap "the harvest of the earth." (Revelation 14:15, 16) And what a harvest it is! (Matthew 9:37) So far, more than five million souls have been gathered in—"a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues." (Revelation 7:9) No one can say how great that crowd will finally be, since no man is able to number it.

1, 2. What exciting events have thrilled Jehovah's servants during these last days?

³ True, Satan tries to trip us or slow us down as we speed along in the race. (Revelation 12:17) And it has not been easy to keep running through the wars, the famines, the pestilences, and all the other hardships that mark the time of the end. (Matthew 24:3-9; Luke 21:11; 2 Timothy 3:1-5) Still, our hearts leap with joy as the end of the race draws closer. We strive to reflect the spirit that Paul urged fellow Christians in his day to have: "Always rejoice in the Lord. Once more I will say, Rejoice!"—Philippians 4:4.

⁴ There is no doubt that the Christians to whom Paul addressed those words were finding joy in their faith, for Paul said to them: "Continue rejoicing in the Lord." (Philippians 3:1) The Philippians were a generous, loving congregation who served with zeal and enthusiasm. (Philippians 1:3-5; 4:10, 14-20) But not all first-century Christians had that spirit. For example, some of the Jewish Christians to whom Paul wrote the book of Hebrews were a cause for concern.

"Pay More Than the Usual Attention"

⁵ The first Christian congregation in world

3. Despite what must we always try to cultivate a joyful spirit?

4. What kind of spirit was manifested by the Philippian Christians?

5. (a) What spirit did Hebrew Christians have when the first Christian congregation was formed? (b) Describe the spirit of some Hebrew Christians about 60 C.E.

history was made up of natural Jews and proselytes and was established in Jerusalem in 33 C.E. What kind of spirit did it have? One only has to read the early chapters of the book of Acts to learn of its enthusiasm and joy, even in the face of persecution. (Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-34; 5:41; 6:7) As the decades passed, however, things changed, and many Jewish Christians evidently slowed down in the race for life. One reference work says this about their situation as it existed about 60 C.E.: "A condition of languor and weariness, of disappointed expectations, deferred hopes, conscious failure and practical unbelief. They were Christians but had slender appreciation of the glory of their calling." How could anointed Christians get into such a state? A consideration of parts of Paul's letter to the Hebrews (written about 61 C.E.) helps us to answer that question. Such a consideration will help all of us today to avoid sinking into a similarly weak spiritual state.

⁶ Hebrew Christians came out of Judaism, a system that claimed to obey the Law that Jehovah gave through Moses. That Law seems to have continued to hold an attraction for many Jewish Christians, perhaps because for many centuries it had been the only way of approach to Jehovah, and it was an impressive system of worship, with a priesthood, regular sacrifices, and a world-famous temple in Jerusalem. Christianity is different. It demands a spiritual vision, like that of Moses, who "looked intently toward the payment of the [yet future] reward" and "continued steadfast as seeing the One who is invisible." (Hebrews 11:26, 27) Many Jewish Christians evidently lacked such spiritual vision. They were limping along instead of running in a purposeful manner.

6. What are some differences between worship under the Law of Moses and worship based on faith in Jesus Christ?

⁷ Is there a similar situation today? Well, things are not exactly the same. Still, Christians come out of a system of things that makes great boasts. The world offers exciting opportunities, but at the same time, it places heavy demands on people. In addition, many of us live in lands where a skeptical attitude is common and where people have a selfish, me-first approach to things. If we allow ourselves to be influenced by such a system, the 'eyes of our heart' could easily be dulled. (Ephesians 1:18) How will we run well in the race for life if we can no longer clearly discern where we are going?

⁸ In order to stimulate Jewish Christians, Paul reminded them of the superiority of the Christian system over the Mosaic Law. True, when the nation of fleshly Israel was Jehovah's people under the Law, Jehovah spoke to it through inspired prophets. But, says Paul, today he speaks "by means of a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the systems of things." (Hebrews 1:2) Further, Jesus is greater than all the kings of the line of David, his "partners." He is even higher than the angels.—Hebrews 1:5, 6, 9.

⁹ Therefore, Paul counseled Jewish Christians: "It is necessary for us to pay more than the usual attention to the things heard by us, that we may never drift away." (Hebrews 2:1) Although learning about the Christ was a wonderful blessing, more was needed. They needed to pay close attention to God's Word to counteract the influence of the Jewish world surrounding them. We too need to pay "more than the usual attention" to what Jehovah says in view of the

7. How might the system we have come out of affect the way we run in the race for life?

8. What are some ways in which Christianity is superior to worship under the Law?

9. Why do we, like Jewish Christians of Paul's day, need to pay "more than the usual attention" to what Jehovah says?

constant propaganda that we are exposed to from this world. This means developing good study habits and maintaining a good Bible-reading schedule. As Paul says later in his letter to the Hebrews, it also means being regular at meetings and in proclaiming our faith to others. (Hebrews 10:23-25) Such activity will help us to remain spiritually alert so that we do not lose sight of our glorious hope. If we fill our minds with Jehovah's thoughts, we will not be overwhelmed or thrown off balance by anything this world can do to us.—Psalm 1:1-3; Proverbs 3:1-6.

“Keep On Exhorting One Another”

¹⁰ If we do not pay close attention to spiritual things, God's promises may well come to seem unreal. This even happened in the first century when congregations were entirely made up of anointed Christians and some of the apostles were still alive. Paul warned the Hebrews: “Beware, brothers, for fear there should ever develop in any one of you a wicked heart lacking faith by drawing away from the living God; but keep on exhorting one another each day, as long as it may be called ‘Today,’ for fear any one of you should become hardened by the deceptive power of sin.” (Hebrews 3:12, 13) Paul's expression “beware” emphasizes the need to be alert. Danger threatens! A lack of faith —“sin”—might develop in our hearts, and we could draw away from God instead of closer to him. (James 4:8) Paul reminds us to “keep on exhorting one another.” We need the warmth of brotherly association. “One isolating himself will seek his own selfish longing; against all practical wisdom he will break forth.” (Proverbs 18:1) The need for such association moves Christians today to

10. (a) What can happen to one who does not pay more than the usual attention to Jehovah's Word? (b) How can we “keep on exhorting one another”?



be regular in attending congregation meetings, assemblies, and conventions.

¹¹ Later in his letter, Paul gives this further invaluable counsel: “Although you ought to be teachers in view of the time, you again need someone to teach you from the beginning the elementary things of the sacred pronouncements of God; and you have become such as need milk, not solid food. . . . Solid food belongs to mature people, to those who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong.” (Hebrews 5:12-14) Evidently, some Jewish Christians had failed to move ahead

11, 12. Why should we not be satisfied with knowing merely basic Christian doctrines?



in understanding. They had been slow to accept increased light regarding the Law and circumcision. (Acts 15:27-29; Galatians 2:11-14; 6:12, 13) Some may still have valued such traditional practices as the weekly Sabbath and the solemn annual Atonement Day.—Colossians 2:16, 17; Hebrews 9:1-14.

¹² Hence, Paul says: “Now that we have left the primary doctrine about the Christ, let us press on to maturity.” (Hebrews 6:1) A marathon runner who pays close attention to his diet is better able to endure the long, grueling race. Similarly, a Christian who pays close attention to spiritual nutrition—not limiting himself to basic, ‘primary doctrines’—will be better able to stay on

the course and finish it. (Compare 2 Timothy 4:7.) This means developing an interest in “the breadth and length and height and depth” of the truth, thus progressing to maturity.—Ephesians 3:18.

“You Have Need of Endurance”

¹³ In the period immediately following Pentecost 33 C.E., Jewish Christians stood firm despite fierce opposition. (Acts 8:1) Perhaps Paul had this in mind when he wrote: “Keep on remembering the former days in which, after you were enlightened, you endured a great contest under sufferings.” (Hebrews 10:32) Such faithful endurance demonstrated their love of God and gave them freeness of speech before him. (1 John 4:17) Paul exhorts them not to throw that away because of a lack of faith. He urges them: “You have need of endurance, in order that, after you have done the will of God, you may receive the fulfillment of the promise. For yet ‘a very little while,’ and ‘he who is coming will arrive and will not delay.’”—Hebrews 10:35-37.

¹⁴ What about us today? Most of us were zealous when we first learned the Christian truth. Do we still have that zeal? Or have we ‘left the love we had at first’? (Revelation 2:4) Have we cooled down, perhaps become a little disillusioned or tired of waiting for Armageddon? Stop, though, and consider. The truth is no less wonderful than it was before. Jesus is still our heavenly King. We still hope for everlasting life on a paradise earth, and we still have our relationship

13. How had the Hebrew Christians demonstrated their faith in times past?

14. What facts should help us to endure even after many years of serving Jehovah?



Nothing can prevent Jehovah's great celestial chariot from accomplishing God's purpose

with Jehovah. And never forget: "He who is coming will arrive and will not delay."

¹⁵ Hence, Paul's words recorded at Hebrews 12:1, 2 are very appropriate: "Let us also put off every weight and the sin [lack of faith] that easily entangles us, and 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, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." There are many things that God's servants have endured in these last days. Like Jesus, who was faithful to the point of an agonizing death, some of our brothers and sisters have faithfully endured the harshest

15. Like Jesus, how have some Christians endured bitter persecution?

persecution—prison camps, torture, rape, even death. (1 Peter 2:21) Does our heart not swell with love for them when we consider their integrity?

¹⁶ To most, however, Paul's further words apply: "In carrying on your contest against that sin you have never yet resisted as far as blood." (Hebrews 12:4) Nevertheless, in this system the way of the truth is not easy for any of us. Some are discouraged by "contrary talk by sinners" at secular work or at school, enduring mockery or resisting pressure to sin. (Hebrews 12:3) Strong temptation has eroded the determination of some to maintain God's high standards. (Hebrews 13:4, 5) Apostates have affected the spiritu-

16, 17. (a) What challenges to their faith do most Christians contend with? (b) Remembering what will help us to keep running in the race for life?

al balance of a few who listen to their poisonous propaganda. (Hebrews 13:9) Personality problems have robbed others of joy. Overemphasis on entertainment and leisure activities has weakened some Christians. And most feel pressured by the problems of living in this system of things.

¹⁷ True, none of these situations constitute 'resistance as far as blood.' And some may be traceable to wrong decisions that we ourselves make. But all of them pose a challenge to our faith. That is why we should keep our eye on Jesus' magnificent example of endurance. May we never forget how wonderful our hope is. May we never lose our conviction that Jehovah "becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Hebrews 11:6) Then, we will have the spiritual strength to keep running in the race for life.

We Can Endure

¹⁸ How did Jewish Christians respond to Paul's letter? Some six years after the letter to the Hebrews was written, Judea was at war. In 66 C.E., the Roman army besieged Jerusalem, fulfilling Jesus' words: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then know that the desolating of her has drawn near." (Luke 21:20) However, for the benefit of Christians who would be in Jerusalem at that time, Jesus said: "Then let those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains, and let those in the midst of her withdraw, and let those in the country places not enter into her." (Luke 21:21) Hence, the war with Rome posed a test: Would those Jewish Christians abandon Jerusalem, the center of Jewish worship and the site of the glorious temple?

¹⁹ Suddenly, and for no known reason, the Romans withdrew. Likely, religious Jews

18, 19. What historical events suggest that Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem heeded Paul's inspired counsel?

viewed this as proof that God was protecting their holy city. What about Christians? History tells us that they fled. Then, in 70 C.E., the Romans came back and totally destroyed Jerusalem with appalling loss of life. The "day of Jehovah" foretold by Joel had arrived on Jerusalem. But faithful Christians were no longer there. They 'got away safe.' —Joel 2:30-32; Acts 2:16-21.

²⁰ Today, we know that another great "day of Jehovah" will soon affect this whole system of things. (Joel 3:12-14) We do not know when that day will come. But God's Word assures us that come it will! Jehovah says it will not be late. (Habakkuk 2:3; 2 Peter 3:9, 10) Hence, let us "pay more than the usual attention to the things heard." Avoid a lack of faith, "the sin that easily entangles us." Be determined to endure for as long as it takes. Remember, Jehovah's great chariot-like heavenly organization is on the move. It will accomplish its purpose. So may we all keep running and not give up in the race for life!

20. Knowing that the great "day of Jehovah" is close should move us in what ways?

Do You Remember?

- ☐ Heeding what exhortation of Paul to the Philippians will help us endure in the race for life?
- ☐ What will help us to counteract the tendency of this world to distract us?
- ☐ How can we help one another to endure in the race?
- ☐ What are some things that could slow a Christian down?
- ☐ How can Jesus' example help us to endure?

“IS YOUR HEART UPRIGHT WITH ME?”

“Do go along with me and look upon my toleration of no rivalry toward Jehovah.”—2 KINGS 10:16.

THE year 905 B.C.E. was a time of great change in Israel. Almost 100 years earlier, Jehovah had caused the united kingdom of Israel to be divided because of Solomon's apostasy. (1 Kings 11:9-13) The southern kingdom, Judah, was then ruled by Solomon's son Rehoboam while the northern kingdom, Israel, came under King Jeroboam, an Ephraimite. Unhappily, the northern kingdom had a disastrous start. Jeroboam did not want his subjects to travel down to the southern kingdom to worship at the temple, fearing that they would get the idea of returning to the house of David. So he set up calf worship in Israel and thus established a pattern of idolatry that lasted to some extent throughout the history of the northern kingdom.—1 Kings 12:26-33.

² Things got worse when Ahab, son of Omri, became king. His foreign wife, Jezebel, promoted Baal worship and killed Jehovah's prophets. Despite the prophet Elijah's frank warnings, Ahab did nothing to stop her. In 905 B.C.E., however, Ahab was dead, and Jehoram, his son, ruled. It was now time for the land to be cleansed. Elijah's successor, Elisha, informed the military commander, Jehu, that Jehovah was anointing him to be the next king of Israel. His commission? To strike down the sinful house of Ahab

and avenge the prophets' blood that had been shed by Jezebel!—2 Kings 9:1-10.

³ Obedient to God's command, Jehu had the evil Jezebel killed, and thereafter he set out to cleanse Israel by striking down the house of Ahab. (2 Kings 9:15-10:14, 17) Then he met up with a supporter. “He got to encounter Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him. When he blessed him, he accordingly said to him: ‘Is your heart upright with me, just as my own heart is with your heart?’ To this Jehonadab said: ‘It is.’ ‘If it is, do give me your hand.’ So he gave him his hand. At that he made him get up into the chariot with him. Then he said: ‘Do go along with me and look upon my toleration of no rivalry toward Jehovah.’ And they kept him riding with him in his war chariot.”—2 Kings 10:15, 16.

⁴ Jehonadab (or, Jonadab) was not an Israelite. Nevertheless, in harmony with his name (meaning “Jehovah Is Willing,” “Jehovah Is Noble,” or “Jehovah Is Generous”) he was a worshiper of Jehovah. (Jeremiah 35:6) Certainly, he had an uncommon interest in seeing Jehu's “toleration of no rivalry toward Jehovah.” How do we know? Well, his meeting with Israel's anointed king was no accident. Jehonadab was “coming to meet him,” and this at a time when Jehu had already slaughtered Jezebel and others in the

1, 2. (a) How did Israel's religious situation go from bad to worse? (b) In 905 B.C.E., what dramatic changes were about to happen in Israel?

3, 4. How did Jehonadab show that his heart was ‘upright with Jehu's heart’?

house of Ahab. Jehonadab knew what was happening when he accepted Jehu's invitation to get up into his chariot. He was unmistakably on Jehu's—and Jehovah's—side in this conflict between false and true worship.

A Modern-Day Jehu and a Modern-Day Jehonadab

⁵ Today, things will soon change as radically for all mankind as they did for Israel back in 905 B.C.E. The time is now close when Jehovah will cleanse the earth of all the bad results of Satan's influence, including false religion. Who is the modern-day Jehu? None other than Jesus Christ, to whom are addressed the prophetic words: "Gird your sword upon your thigh, O mighty one, with your dignity and your splendor. And in your splendor go on to success; ride in the cause of truth and humility and righteousness." (Psalm 45:3, 4) Jesus is represented on earth by "the Israel of God," anointed Christians "who observe the commandments of God and have the work of bearing witness to Jesus." (Galatians 6:16; Revelation 12:17) Since 1922 these anointed brothers of Jesus have fearlessly warned of Jehovah's coming judgment acts.—Isaiah 61:1, 2; Revelation 8:7-9:21; 16:2-21.

⁶ Anointed Christians have not been alone. Just as Jehonadab came out to meet Jehu, many from the nations have come out to support Jesus, the Greater Jehu, and his earthly representatives in their stand for true worship. (Zechariah 8:23) Called by Jesus his "other sheep," in 1932 they were recognized as a modern-day equivalent of Jehonadab of old and were invited to 'get into the chariot' of the modern-day Jehu. (John 10:16)

5. (a) What changes will soon take place for all mankind? (b) Who is the Greater Jehu, and who represent him on earth?

6. Who came out from the nations to support anointed Christians, and how have they entered the chariot, as it were, of the Greater Jehu?

How? By 'observing the commandments of God' and sharing with the anointed in "the work of bearing witness to Jesus." In modern times, this includes preaching the good news of God's established Kingdom under Jesus as King. (Mark 13:10) In 1935 these "Jonadabs" were identified as the "great crowd" of Revelation 7:9-17.

⁷ Since the 1930's, the great crowd and their anointed brothers have courageously proved their support of true worship. In certain lands in Eastern and Western Europe, the Far East, and Africa, many of them have died for their faith. (Luke 9:23, 24) In other lands, they have been imprisoned, mobbed, or otherwise persecuted. (2 Timothy 3:12) What a record of faith they have made! And the 1997 Service Year Report shows that they are still determined to serve God, no matter what. Their 'heart is still upright' with Jesus' heart. This was demonstrated during 1997, when 5,599,931 Kingdom publishers, almost all of them "Jonadabs," spent a total of 1,179,735,841 hours in the work of bearing witness to Jesus.

Still Preaching With Zeal

⁸ Jehu had a reputation for driving his chariot furiously—an evidence of his zeal to accomplish his task. (2 Kings 9:20) Jesus, the Greater Jehu, is described as being 'eaten up' with zeal. (Psalm 69:9) Not surprisingly, then, true Christians today are noted for their zeal. Both within the congregation and to the public, they "preach the word . . . urgently in favorable season, in troublesome season." (2 Timothy 4:2) Their zeal was especially evidenced during the early part of 1997 after an article in *Our Kingdom Ministry* encouraged as many as possible

7. How have Christians today shown that their 'heart is still upright' with Jesus' heart?

8. How do Jehovah's Witnesses show their zeal for true worship?

to share in the auxiliary pioneer service. In each country a target number of auxiliary pioneers was set. What was the response? Outstanding! Many branches exceeded the target figure. Ecuador set a goal of 4,000 but in March reported 6,936 auxiliary pioneers. Japan reported a total of 104,215 during those three months. In Zambia, where 6,000 was the target, 6,414 auxiliary pioneers reported in March; 6,532 in April; and 7,695 in May. Globally, the peak of auxiliary and regular pioneers together was 1,110,251, a 34.2-percent increase over 1996!

⁹ The apostle Paul told elders from Ephesus: "I did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you publicly and from house to house." (Acts 20:20) Jehovah's Witnesses today imitate Paul's example and zealously preach the good news from house to house. However, it may not be easy to find people in their homes. Hence, "the faithful and discreet slave" encourages Kingdom publishers to approach people at their places of business, in the streets, on the beaches, in the public parks—wherever people are to be found. (Matthew 24:45-47) The results have been excellent.

¹⁰ In Copenhagen, Denmark, a small group of publishers have been witnessing in the streets outside railway stations. From January to June, they placed 4,733 magazines, had excellent conversations, and made many return visits. Several publishers in that land have established magazine routes in stores. One town has a big market every Friday, with thousands of visitors. So the

9. In addition to the house-to-house work, in what other ways do Jehovah's Witnesses find people to tell them the good news?

10, 11. How have publishers in two countries shown fine initiative in locating interested ones who cannot normally be contacted at home?

congregation has arranged regular market witnessing. In one area the schools are visited with an information package containing publications that are especially appropriate for schoolteachers.

¹¹ In Hawaii too efforts have been made to reach those who cannot be found at home. Special territories include public areas (streets, parks, parking lots, and bus stops), downtown areas, shopping centers and airports, telephone witnessing, public transportation (preaching on buses), and college campuses. Care is taken to ensure that the right number of Witnesses are assigned to each territory and that those assigned are properly trained. Well-organized endeavors similar to these are reported in many lands. As a result, interested people are being contacted who would likely never have been found in the house-to-house ministry.

Standing Firm

¹² In a number of lands in 1997, Jehovah's Witnesses were the victims of vicious, false propaganda promoted with the apparent objective of taking possible legal action against them. But they did not flinch! (Psalm 112:7, 8) They remembered the psalmist's prayer: "The presumptuous have smeared me with falsehood. As for me, with all my heart I shall observe your orders." (Psalm 119:69) Such lying publicity is merely an evidence of true Christians' being hated as prophesied by Jesus. (Matthew 24:9) And sometimes it has backfired. A man in Belgium read a disparaging article about Jehovah's Witnesses in a well-known daily newspaper. Shocked by the slanderous remarks, he attended a meeting at a Kingdom Hall

12, 13. (a) What tactic did Satan use against Jehovah's Witnesses during 1997? (b) In what way did false propaganda backfire in one country?



The outstanding attendance at the Memorial shows fine prospects for future growth

the following Sunday. He arranged to study the Bible with the Witnesses and went on to make rapid progress. Previously, this man had been a member of a gang. His Bible study helped him to clean up his life, something noted by people around him. Surely, the writer of the slanderous article did not have such a result in mind!

¹³ Some honesthearted people in Belgium have spoken out against the deceitful propaganda. Among them was a former prime minister who admitted to being filled with admiration for what Jehovah's Witnesses have accomplished. And a deputy wrote: "Contrary to the insinuations circulated on certain occasions, [Jehovah's Witnesses] do not appear to me to represent the slightest danger to the State's institutions. They are citizens who are peace-loving, conscientious, and respectful toward the authorities." Wise, indeed, are the words of the apostle Peter: "Maintain your conduct fine among the nations, that, in the thing in which they are speaking against you as evildoers, they may as a result of your fine works of which they are eyewitnesses glorify God in the day for his inspection."—1 Peter 2:12.

An Outstanding Memorial Celebration

¹⁴ It is fitting that those who bear witness to Jesus should view the Memorial of his death as a high point in their year. In 1997, 14,322,226 were present on March 23 to celebrate the event. That was over 1,400,000 more than in 1996. (Luke 22:14-20) In many lands the Memorial attendance was far in excess of the number of Kingdom publishers, showing fine prospects for future increase. For example, in Haiti, 1997 saw a peak of 10,621 publishers, while 67,259 attended the Memorial. You may check the annual report on pages 18 to 21 and see how many other countries had similar high attendances compared with the number of publishers.

¹⁵ For some, attending the Memorial was not easy. In Albania there was a 7:00 p.m. curfew because of civil unrest. In 115 small groups around the country, the Memorial began at 5:45 p.m. The sun set at 6:08 p.m., marking the beginning of Nisan 14.

14. What were some exciting reports of Memorial attendances in 1997?

15. In some lands, how did our brothers overcome serious problems in order to celebrate the Memorial?



As Jehonadab supported Jehu, so the "great crowd" today supports the Greater Jehu, Jesus Christ, and his anointed brothers

The emblems were passed at approximately 6:15 p.m. In most cases the final prayer was said by 6:30 p.m., and those attending hurried home before the curfew. Still, the Memorial attendance was 3,154 compared with a peak in publishers of 1,090. In one African country, civil unrest made the Kingdom Hall inaccessible, so two elders decided to meet in the home of a third elder to arrange to have the celebration in smaller groups. In order to reach the house, the two elders had to cross a drainage ditch. However, there was fighting in the area, and snipers shot at anyone trying to cross the ditch. One elder raced across without incident. The second was crossing when he heard a shot. He threw himself on the ground and crawled to safety as bullets whizzed over his head. The meeting of the elders was successfully held, and the needs of the congregation were cared for.

"Out of All Nations and Tribes . . . and Tongues"

¹⁶ The apostle John said that the great crowd would come "out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues." (Revelation 7:9) Hence, the Governing Body arranges for literature to be made available in more and more languages—including those spoken by remote tribes and small groups of people. In Mozambique, for example, the tract *Life in a Peaceful New World* was released in five additional languages. In Nicaragua, the brochure *Enjoy Life on Earth Forever!* was made available in the Miskito language—the Watch Tower Society's first publication in that tongue. Many Miskito Indians accepted the brochure with glee upon seeing something in their own language. In

16. How has the faithful and discreet slave class arranged for the good news to be spread among small language groups?

1997 the Society approved literature in 25 additional languages and printed more than one billion magazines.

¹⁷ In Korea another language group was helped. The year 1997 saw the first convention in Korean sign language. There are 15 sign language congregations in Korea with 543 publishers, but 1,174 attended the convention, and 21 were baptized. To help the deaf who cannot easily understand the spoken or written word, publications are being produced on videotape in 13 different sign languages. Thus, the deaf are being helped to “read” and even study the good news, with fine results. In the United States, it could formerly take up to five years for a deaf person to progress to the point of baptism. Now, with a number of videos available in American Sign Language, for some of the deaf, that has been reduced to about one year.

‘Staying in the Chariot’

¹⁸ Back in 905 B.C.E., after being joined by Jehonadab, Jehu set about destroying false worship. He issued an invitation to all Baal worshipers: “Sanctify a solemn assembly for Baal.” Then he sent through the whole land to ensure that no Baal worshiper was left out. As the crowds poured into the false god’s great temple, care was taken to see that no worshiper of Jehovah was there. Finally, Jehu and his army cut down the Baal worshipers. “Thus Jehu annihilated Baal out of Israel.”—2 Kings 10:20-28.

¹⁹ Today, the final judgment of all false religion lies just ahead. Under angelic guidance Christians are proclaiming good news to all mankind, encouraging them to fear God and to separate themselves from false religion.

17. What language group was helped in Korea, and how have videotapes greatly assisted this section of the population?

18. After meeting Jehonadab, what did Jehu set about doing?

19. In view of what lies ahead for mankind, what spirit should we show, and at what task should we be diligently occupied?

(Revelation 14:6-8; 18:2, 4) Meek ones are encouraged to submit themselves to God’s Kingdom under Jehovah’s enthroned King, Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12:10) At this exciting time, we must not allow our zeal to weaken as we stand for true worship.

²⁰ Once, when King David was under great pressure, he prayed: “My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast. I will sing and make melody. I shall laud you among the peoples, O Jehovah.” (Psalm 57:7, 9) May we too be steadfast. During the 1997 service year, in the face of many difficulties, a loud shout of praise was lifted up to the glory of Jehovah God. May a similar, even greater, shout be heard during the current service year. And may this be true no matter what Satan may try to do to discourage us or oppose us. Thus, we will show that our heart remains upright with the heart of the Greater Jehu, Jesus Christ, and we will respond with our whole soul to the inspired exhortation: “Rejoice in Jehovah and be joyful, you righteous ones; and cry out joyfully, all you who are upright in heart.”—Psalm 32:11.

20. What will you be determined to do during the 1998 service year?

Can You Explain?

- ☐ What changes took place in Israel in 905 B.C.E.?
- ☐ Who is the modern-day Jehu, and how has the “great crowd” shown that their ‘heart is upright’ with his heart?
- ☐ What statistics from the annual report illustrate the zeal that Jehovah’s Witnesses showed during the 1997 service year?
- ☐ Whatever Satan may do against us, what spirit will we show during the 1998 service year?

1997 SERVICE YEAR REPORT OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES WORLDWIDE

Country or Territory	Population	1997 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, One Pub- lisher to:	1997 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 1996	1996 Av. Pubs.	1997 No. Bptzd.	Av. Pho. Pubs.	No. of Congs.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Atten- dance
Alaska	635,007	2,179	291	2,124	0	2,122	74	175	28	324,409	771	4,756
Albania	3,262,000	1,090	2,993	994	31	759	309	341	22	493,427	2,197	3,154
American Samoa	59,600	196	304	182	1	180	20	30	3	46,749	202	659
Andorra	64,479	153	421	138	-1*	140	2	20	2	31,973	63	258
Angola	12,262,000	34,337	357	31,497	16	27,189	4,844	4,183	478	9,214,444	67,333	160,414
Anguilla	7,000	26	269	24	-8*	26		1	1	3,695	20	138
Antigua	65,952	343	192	331	7	309	16	48	5	77,832	366	1,190
Argentina	32,615,528	116,151	281	113,903	2	111,468	7,489	13,340	1,663	23,450,258	77,423	245,935
Aruba	83,651	559	150	548	6	518	19	30	8	85,630	483	1,832
Australia	18,426,900	60,946	302	59,892	-1*	60,216	2,313	5,037	770	10,708,941	21,904	111,770
Austria	8,063,000	20,842	387	20,611	0	20,664	570	1,588	298	3,674,117	8,269	34,023
Azores	243,190	587	414	557	0	557	31	60	16	112,556	357	1,256
Bahamas	255,055	1,419	180	1,341	1	1,334	64	172	23	301,365	1,316	3,670
Bangladesh	129,661,600	79	1,641,286	63	40	45	8	10	1	15,731	92	204
Barbados	253,000	2,243	113	2,183	2	2,140	109	230	24	406,073	1,775	5,750
Belarus	10,163,000	1,962	5,180	1,806	29	1,395	228	234	17	455,988	1,825	5,667
Belau	17,456	64	273	58	4	56	4	18	1	22,467	124	300
Belgium	10,105,226	27,102	373	26,328	-1*	26,654	858	1,881	376	4,417,532	8,297	49,000
Belize	216,500	1,292	168	1,100	5	1,048	88	142	25	248,818	1,169	5,042
Benin	4,915,555	5,204	945	5,021	9	4,619	614	700	107	1,292,337	7,309	25,155
Bermuda	62,569	445	141	409	0	410	21	56	5	94,153	242	1,028
Bolivia	7,767,059	13,464	577	13,007	9	11,887	1,645	2,528	214	3,931,551	18,181	50,238
Bonaire	14,218	68	209	62	3	60	2	1	1	7,740	50	252
Bosnia & Herzegovina	3,500,000	796	4,397	725	25	578	95	200	9	309,843	588	1,943
Botswana	1,533,392	1,098	1,397	1,022	14	899	110	118	24	231,186	1,311	3,535
Brazil	159,279,120	459,522	347	435,032	6	410,599	37,894	41,421	6,960	80,318,709	443,028	1,214,774
Britain	58,155,940	129,288	450	123,318	-1*	124,623	4,161	10,937	1,439	20,775,842	41,102	223,301
Bulgaria	8,428,006	916	9,201	843	17	723	136	112	15	227,075	1,025	2,251
Burkina Faso	10,352,000	861	12,023	770	8	710	92	170	21	267,377	1,307	2,524
Burundi	6,500,000	2,273	2,860	1,614	0	1,616	231	203	40	461,204	3,203	6,048
Cambodia	10,547,535	20	527,377	18	-5*	19	2	11	1	13,409	84	164
Cameroon	14,044,000	26,042	539	25,014	6	23,667	2,692	2,102	534	4,747,674	25,430	84,399
Canada	30,104,319	113,763	265	109,880	0	110,235	3,671	10,571	1,388	20,270,252	35,757	187,940
Cape Verde	453,291	1,295	350	1,247	11	1,123	165	225	23	372,770	2,487	4,914
Cayman Islands	32,000	110	291	101	5	96	4	9	1	18,972	89	315
Central Afr. Rep.	3,691,900	2,086	1,770	2,063	5	1,962	236	300	47	552,127	3,155	11,842
Chad	6,670,000	535	12,467	500	10	454	79	92	15	162,166	689	2,982
Chile	14,622,354	55,679	263	51,495	4	49,587	3,977	7,319	591	12,358,929	52,520	143,897
Chuuk	67,650	54	1,253	47	4	45	1	14	3	21,083	161	482
Colombia	37,422,721	90,192	415	81,061	9	74,108	9,205	10,147	989	18,796,511	123,001	333,263
Comoros	450,000	6	75,000	6	0	6	1			1,004	8	26
Congo, Dem. Rep. of	48,000,000	104,134	461	89,346	-1*	90,063	7,034	13,699	2,492	25,039,602	217,480	574,736
Congo, Rep. of	2,700,000	3,935	686	3,032	-9*	3,331	352	577	112	1,064,782	11,648	20,144
Cook Islands	18,000	142	127	127	-7*	137	13	15	3	26,146	136	429
Costa Rica	3,432,665	18,913	181	17,897	6	16,943	1,230	1,747	237	3,346,934	17,149	51,413
Côte d'Ivoire	14,401,000	5,592	2,575	5,433	6	5,128	508	989	140	1,632,843	9,334	20,092
Croatia	4,784,265	5,133	932	4,991	6	4,716	343	642	66	1,182,036	2,180	9,790
Cuba	11,038,602	76,250	145	73,478	11	66,006	8,605	14,653	1,100	17,883,619	137,489	164,565

Curaçao	151,448	1,555	97	1,539	-1*	1,553	62	120	20	253,355	1,476	4,232
Cyprus	651,800	1,749	373	1,730	2	1,693	77	236	19	383,122	901	3,339
Czech Republic	10,304,000	16,537	623	16,318	1	16,209	722	925	246	2,403,717	7,171	32,965
Denmark	5,251,027	15,491	339	15,155	-1*	15,351	285	1,021	222	2,220,797	4,126	23,675
Dominica	71,794	346	207	330	2	322	16	42	6	87,512	429	905
Dominican Rep.	7,293,390	21,007	347	20,120	8	18,678	1,767	3,966	320	5,852,173	35,362	81,237
Ecuador	11,936,858	36,208	330	33,642	9	30,975	2,911	5,683	493	8,899,854	48,710	138,806
El Salvador	5,908,460	26,010	227	24,497	4	23,446	2,083	2,579	439	5,224,439	23,456	73,157
Equatorial Guinea	406,151	485	837	423	29	327	83	61	4	126,720	1,310	2,049
Estonia	1,462,130	3,591	407	3,351	14	2,947	388	443	40	795,698	3,249	8,871
Ethiopia	55,000,000	5,649	9,736	5,292	5	5,036	548	916	79	1,570,141	3,674	15,716
Faeroe Islands	43,784	80	547	75	-7*	81	2	24	4	22,267	45	110
Falkland Islands	2,221	9	247	8	-20*	10		1	1	1,052	5	15
Fiji	796,000	1,873	425	1,708	12	1,522	140	241	30	399,192	1,771	6,323
Finland	5,116,826	19,441	263	19,191	0	19,134	580	1,914	304	3,143,009	7,414	28,812
France	58,500,000	124,860	469	120,490	-2*	123,208	3,928	7,708	1,685	19,067,704	36,197	220,467
French Guiana	147,283	1,468	100	1,440	4	1,380	111	201	20	369,748	2,167	5,506
Gabon	1,014,976	1,821	557	1,725	12	1,546	169	206	27	416,286	4,186	7,951
Gambia, The	1,150,000	84	13,690	72	26	57	15	13	1	24,106	108	250
Germany	82,012,162	169,988	482	166,780	0	166,468	5,807	10,856	2,052	26,973,779	67,168	286,126
Ghana	18,803,990	54,234	347	51,133	7	47,705	4,179	5,827	847	11,378,405	108,720	197,055
Gibraltar	27,086	117	232	103	-6*	110		8	2	17,584	30	158
Greece	10,259,900	26,980	380	26,704	1	26,352	773	2,897	428	5,064,346	9,406	44,426
Greenland	55,971	158	354	153	1	151	7	33	7	42,600	120	345
Grenada	91,150	605	151	583	4	562	19	76	7	129,317	607	1,662
Guadeloupe	410,000	7,886	52	7,584	2	7,458	361	432	96	1,166,479	6,581	18,605
Guam	150,000	621	242	584	7	544	37	127	9	173,134	748	1,833
Guatemala	9,056,000	17,304	523	16,738	7	15,666	1,595	1,822	253	3,525,002	16,382	55,973
Guinea	6,756,800	824	8,200	805	11	725	100	168	21	277,212	1,550	3,769
Guinea-Bissau	1,200,000	63	19,048	56	17	48	11	25	1	36,724	259	407
Guyana	777,468	2,048	380	1,898	-1*	1,925	134	252	36	399,413	2,082	8,455
Haiti	7,300,000	10,621	687	10,248	4	9,851	769	1,409	207	2,495,750	14,281	67,259
Hawaii	1,183,723	7,650	155	7,389	0	7,392	313	1,167	93	1,703,725	4,824	17,476
Honduras	5,900,004	10,532	560	9,696	11	8,705	1,160	1,226	145	2,363,724	12,858	38,534
Hong Kong	6,502,100	4,145	1,569	4,035	8	3,743	350	827	38	1,249,571	3,884	7,704
Hungary	10,174,442	19,457	523	18,387	6	17,342	1,914	1,598	234	3,480,493	11,788	41,922
Iceland	269,735	324	833	314	2	309	11	28	8	56,938	173	624
India	998,012,000	17,534	56,919	17,183	8	15,970	1,636	1,825	485	3,339,309	12,435	44,634
Ireland	5,289,387	4,537	1,166	4,454	1	4,412	172	646	114	1,093,280	1,848	8,093
Israel	7,910,600	826	9,577	775	20	647	84	79	10	175,348	772	1,833
Italy	57,282,824	224,726	255	220,945	2	216,231	9,509	30,378	3,003	52,176,423	83,699	413,914
Jamaica	2,502,030	10,614	236	10,034	2	9,800	674	1,076	183	1,853,124	10,038	32,903
Japan	125,257,061	220,663	568	217,970	4	210,290	10,962	89,513	3,771	99,600,126	197,570	376,853
Kazakhstan	17,027,000	10,585	1,609	9,808	25	7,848	2,718	967	81	2,188,939	9,891	29,710
Kenya	28,000,000	12,142	2,306	11,445	11	10,285	1,641	2,058	220	3,572,443	15,148	35,236
Kiribati	79,653	83	960	68	15	60	19	15	1	23,833	182	239
Korea, Republic of	45,991,257	84,543	544	83,273	2	81,537	4,543	29,354	1,512	34,263,864	57,118	133,362
Kosrae	8,707	25	348	17	-19*	21	2	2	1	2,911	27	141
Latvia	2,500,000	1,681	1,487	1,463	26	1,157	281	195	18	372,706	1,597	3,956
Lebanon	3,776,317	3,600	1,049	3,494	2	3,433	153	291	70	639,082	1,864	6,846
Lesotho	2,112,500	2,354	897	2,149	5	2,038	221	356	53	595,622	2,371	6,848
Liberia	2,500,000	1,961	1,275	1,648	16	1,419	244	359	39	619,466	4,486	10,376
Libya	4,899,000	17	288,176	6	0	6				686	5	19
Liechtenstein	31,143	60	519	53	-9*	58		2	1	7,616	20	115

Country or Territory	Population	1997 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, One Pub- lisher to:	1997 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 1996	1996 Av. Pubs.	1997 No. Bptd.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Cong.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Atten- dance
Lithuania	3,717,700	2,306	1,612	2,022	14	1,770	334	218	14	463,005	1,762	6,808
Luxembourg	487,000	1,893	257	1,853	1	1,840	72	147	33	332,523	859	3,648
Macao	470,000	122	3,852	116	12	104	5	28	2	38,489	112	280
Macedonia	1,936,877	808	2,397	750	19	629	144	91	13	189,872	614	2,605
Madagascar	13,670,500	8,655	1,579	8,307	13	7,339	1,461	1,437	157	2,304,440	20,165	45,300
Madeira	258,536	1,039	249	978	5	934	60	78	14	168,549	632	2,066
Malawi	11,018,944	40,924	269	39,779	11	35,765	7,915	5,447	584	10,020,174	29,236	125,415
Malaysia	21,665,500	1,895	11,433	1,827	6	1,725	153	293	40	485,515	2,461	4,846
Mali	11,300,000	178	63,483	159	5	151	9	61	6	90,644	422	710
Malta	360,000	533	675	511	2	502	13	58	6	96,324	170	823
Marshall Islands	50,345	224	225	189	6	179	14	43	4	67,201	581	1,130
Martinique	359,570	4,001	90	3,922	2	3,861	98	391	46	791,085	3,219	9,357
Mauritius	1,082,972	1,278	847	1,254	2	1,231	121	86	19	213,137	988	3,102
Mayotte	131,320	54	2,432	49	9	45	5	9	1	16,105	72	144
Mexico	93,873,720	488,264	192	479,247	5	458,059	36,913	60,863	11,099	105,057,709	563,681	1,601,817
Moldova	4,320,000	14,415	300	13,481	18	11,439	1,671	870	128	1,891,287	7,898	39,761
Montserrat	4,000	23	174	20	-31*	29	1	2	1	3,659	11	85
Mozambique	18,496,363	25,667	721	23,460	15	20,486	3,113	4,487	576	6,955,377	32,560	103,423
Myanmar	46,000,000	2,470	18,623	2,352	4	2,253	96	296	99	533,680	1,660	6,325
Namibia	1,683,518	926	1,818	817	-1*	823	43	73	19	169,234	813	2,681
Nauru	6,560	9	729	7	17	6	1	1	1	1,538	17	83
Nepal	22,901,600	287	79,797	262	20	218	59	48	3	75,909	429	1,001
Netherlands	15,567,107	32,550	478	30,536	-1*	30,887	832	1,814	420	4,384,551	9,053	53,794
Nevis	10,080	43	234	41	11	37	3	5	1	11,443	52	157
New Caledonia	200,000	1,688	118	1,532	0	1,533	117	150	23	296,814	1,164	4,398
New Zealand	3,681,546	12,926	285	12,496	0	12,545	468	1,304	164	2,353,520	5,857	26,196
Nicaragua	4,625,000	14,104	328	12,733	6	12,065	1,183	1,518	230	3,093,078	20,842	60,432
Niger	7,490,000	241	31,079	225	1	222	38	46	7	77,058	409	1,187
Nigeria	103,900,000	203,110	512	197,532	3	191,558	17,304	28,346	3,944	43,983,273	301,221	598,717
Niue	2,076	32	65	29	-3*	30	1	1	1	3,694	23	96
Norfolk Island	1,912	18	106	15	7	14	1	1	1	2,665	9	28
Norway	4,404,149	9,921	444	9,449	-2*	9,600	221	535	174	1,230,895	2,682	16,597
Pakistan	137,000,000	410	334,146	376	7	352	49	43	9	83,351	364	1,729
Panama	2,718,686	9,338	291	8,651	4	8,289	524	1,220	187	2,062,979	10,237	28,185
Papua New Guinea	4,411,060	3,256	1,355	2,944	0	2,950	230	347	55	656,321	2,946	15,020
Paraguay	5,085,325	6,221	817	5,536	10	5,012	402	851	84	1,362,888	6,693	13,551
Peru	24,371,043	59,291	411	54,019	6	51,063	5,335	10,830	679	16,266,560	69,466	193,440
Philippines	70,000,000	126,211	555	122,727	3	119,709	9,624	21,325	3,491	26,308,192	85,650	388,130
Pohnpei	38,522	70	550	65	-4*	68	1	17	1	19,313	145	599
Poland	38,649,914	124,955	309	123,704	1	122,982	6,161	7,544	1,714	16,742,761	50,433	246,485
Portugal	9,439,180	46,746	202	45,635	2	44,752	2,319	3,339	648	7,716,594	22,057	94,659
Puerto Rico	3,755,000	26,404	142	25,589	1	25,397	1,194	2,541	326	4,759,256	15,530	61,451
Réunion	675,700	2,760	245	2,701	4	2,601	189	227	33	508,134	1,654	5,827
Rodrigues	34,678	38	913	35	0	35	4	3	1	7,737	25	85
Romania	22,700,000	36,405	624	35,588	4	34,368	2,387	2,628	459	5,529,876	15,034	93,306
Rota	2,524	10	252	9	29	7	3	3	1	3,979	14	39
Russia	148,366,000	89,043	1,666	78,868	28	61,843	15,669	8,546	626	18,928,270	84,154	231,176
Rwanda	7,828,000	5,073	1,543	4,679	32	3,539	1,160	1,095	69	1,968,714	12,226	20,121

Saba	1,000	1	1,000	1	0	1	1	1,057	9	10
St. Eustatius	1,500	18	83	17	6	16	4	4,579	22	55
St. Helena	5,131	154	33	142	0	142	1	12,894	62	354
St. Kitts	31,800	157	203	151	6	143	16	34,843	177	449
St. Lucia	151,300	677	223	649	1	640	37	180,416	884	1,775
St. Maarten	24,000	261	92	242	12	217	26	61,118	347	932
St. Pierre & Miquelon	6,300	15	420	13	0	13	1	1,309	4	19
St. Vincent	107,600	325	331	304	2	297	28	85,623	348	1,049
Saipan	53,681	179	300	169	-8*	183	8	48,917	212	489
Samoa	165,195	369	448	352	5	335	34	101,993	335	1,406
San Marino	25,058	179	140	169	6	159	18	37,446	60	289
São Tomé & Príncipe	124,206	229	542	217	19	183	29	76,031	556	837
Senegal	8,700,000	826	10,533	794	6	749	79	262,985	1,223	2,272
Seychelles	76,417	178	429	154	22	126	18	38,253	158	393
Sierra Leone	4,510,000	863	5,226	750	-2*	768	91	231,679	1,364	3,616
Slovakia	5,383,469	12,587	428	12,361	1	12,231	613	1,677,833	4,684	25,577
Slovenia	1,986,448	1,839	1,080	1,786	3	1,740	82	392,188	658	3,201
Solomon Islands	384,057	1,363	282	1,306	12	1,171	175	313,836	1,557	5,442
South Africa	37,859,000	64,258	589	60,736	3	59,243	4,400	7,129	1,292	13,087,220
Spain	39,652,742	106,071	374	98,724	-1*	99,240	3,240	11,184	1,287	21,141,179
Sri Lanka	18,500,000	2,687	6,885	2,468	12	2,203	470	334	52	613,915
Suriname	404,800	1,828	221	1,789	3	1,740	85	217	28	389,729
Swaziland	937,747	1,987	472	1,843	4	1,766	205	280	69	502,599
Sweden	8,847,578	24,246	365	23,692	-1*	23,896	651	2,196	362	3,794,911
Switzerland	7,081,346	18,634	380	18,186	-1*	18,295	617	1,140	313	2,942,925
Tahiti ^a	219,521	1,918	114	1,867	3	1,861	134	135	33	327,432
Taiwan	21,300,000	3,475	6,129	3,325	11	2,996	319	913	52	1,270,528
Tanzania	29,000,000	7,130	4,067	6,469	11	5,806	750	1,186	154	1,919,959
Thailand	60,116,182	1,696	35,446	1,666	4	1,603	129	273	48	422,677
Togo	4,269,500	10,221	418	9,861	7	9,174	1,070	1,404	153	2,458,441
Tokelau	1,487	5	297	4	-20*	5			1	345
Tonga	97,466	89	1,095	81	19	68	10	20	3	27,948
Trinidad & Tobago	1,269,155	7,489	169	7,350	3	7,127	420	1,208	82	1,678,171
Turkey	65,000,000	1,468	44,278	1,408	9	1,291	117	186	21	363,093
Turks & Caicos Isls.	14,631	121	121	112	2	110	1	13	3	29,319
Tuvalu	9,043	49	185	45	5	43	2	7	3	11,065
Uganda	20,400,000	2,083	9,794	1,887	17	1,610	287	294	32	531,599
Ukraine	50,893,500	85,242	597	78,264	20	65,385	13,612	7,217	710	15,943,103
U.S. of America	266,776,000	974,719	274	929,471	1	921,123	45,220	107,792	10,883	182,994,613
Uruguay	3,030,000	10,395	291	10,242	2	10,061	714	953	132	1,720,485
Vanuatu	190,000	257	739	212	16	182	16	22	3	50,396
Venezuela	23,700,000	80,172	296	75,261	6	71,298	6,887	13,246	1,079	20,374,997
Virgin Isls. (Brit.)	17,000	147	116	139	0	139	22	18	2	28,786
Virgin Isls. (U.S.)	101,800	643	158	600	2	587	18	84	9	130,011
Wallis & Futuna Isls.	15,000	26	577	20	5	19	4	1	1	4,201
Yap	10,759	30	359	28	0	28		9	1	12,133
Yugoslavia, F. R.	10,566,745	3,883	2,721	3,699	11	3,329	481	589	48	1,043,416
Zambia	9,780,133	96,686	101	87,747	4	84,772	5,281	10,953	2,058	18,387,500
Zimbabwe	12,293,953	25,878	475	25,063	4	24,181	2,576	3,122	803	5,504,539
33 Other Lands		42,185		37,846	14.0	33,204	4,785	3,883	632	8,318,487
GRAND TOTAL (232 lands)		5,599,931		5,353,078	3.6	5,167,258	375,923	706,270	85,256	1,179,735,841
										4,552,589
										14,322,226

During the 1997 service year, the Watch Tower Society spent \$63,914,602.00 in caring for special pioneers, missionaries, and traveling overseers in their field service assignments.

MEMORIAL PARTAKERS WORLDWIDE: 8,795

* Percentage of decrease

Includes Marquesas Islands

Do You Really Appreciate the Blessings of Jehovah?

KENICHI, a middle-aged gentleman, visited a pharmacy to obtain medicine for a slight cold. When he took the medicine, he developed an allergic reaction causing an itchy rash and watery blisters over his entire body. Not surprisingly, Kenichi began to doubt whether the pharmacist had paid enough attention to his needs.

Some might think of Jehovah God in the same way that Kenichi viewed the pharmacist. They doubt that the almighty God, Jehovah, is really interested in us as individuals. Although they recognize that God is good, they are not convinced that he cares for us personally. Especially is this true when things do not go well for them or when their adherence to Bible principles is followed by difficult problems. Because of lack of discernment, they view their problems like the itchy rash and blisters that Kenichi unexpectedly developed, as if somehow they are God's fault.—Proverbs 19:3.

Jehovah is not to be compared to imperfect humans. Humans are limited in knowledge and ability. They fail to discern fully the real needs of others, as did Kenichi's pharmacist. On the contrary, nothing escapes Jehovah's eyes. Jehovah often helps us without our discerning and appreciating that fact because we have a tendency to focus on what we do not have and to overlook the many blessings we do have. Rather than being quick to blame Jehovah for any problems we face, we should try to discern the blessings from Jehovah that we enjoy.

According to *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, a "blessing" can be defined as "a thing conducive to happiness or welfare." Do you appreciate that this is especially true of blessings from Jehovah?

Matchless as a Provider

When a wife says that her husband is a good provider, she generally means that he cares adequately for the needs of the family, providing sufficient food, shelter, and clothing for the family's happiness and welfare. How good is Jehovah as our Provider? Take a closer look at our planet Earth, man's home. It is situated 93,000,000 miles from the sun, just the right distance for the moderate temperatures that make life possible on earth. The 23.5-degree tilt of our globe is designed perfectly, resulting in the varying seasons that contribute to abundant harvests. As a result, the earth feeds more than five billion people. Jehovah is indeed a wonderful Provider!

Moreover, the Bible assures us that Jehovah is deeply interested in us as individuals and in our welfare. Just think, Jehovah knows each of the billions of stars by name, and not even one sparrow falls to the earth without his knowledge. (Isaiah 40:26; Matthew 10:29-31) How much more does he care for humans who love him and were bought with the precious blood of his beloved Son, Jesus Christ! (Acts 20:28) Well did the wise man proclaim: "The blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich, and he adds no pain with it."—Proverbs 10:22.

Blessings That Make Us Rich

We have in our possession something of great value for which we should be deeply grateful. What is it? The Bible identifies it when it says: "The law of your mouth is good for me, more so than thousands of pieces of gold and silver." (Psalm 119:72; Proverbs 8:10) Valuable as choice gold may be, the law of Jehovah is much more to be desired. An accurate knowledge of his law together with the insight and discernment that Jehovah imparts to sincere truth seekers are things to be treasured. They equip us to protect ourselves, to cope with difficult situations, to deal with problems successfully, and thus to be content and happy.

This is true of even the very young. Consider how a little girl worked out her problems by following the law of Jehovah. The girl, Akemi, lives near Tokyo. Her father and mother applied Bible principles in training her and by word and example helped their daughter to develop a love for Jehovah and for neighbor. Foreseeing the problems she would encounter at school, they tried to prepare her as best they could. When Akemi entered elementary school, however, she was viewed by some of her classmates as being "different" because she prayed before meals and conscientiously abstained from certain unscriptural activities. Soon she became the target of a group of bullies who would corner her

after school and slap her on the face, twist her arms, and make fun of her.

Little Akemi did not retaliate, neither did she cower before her tormentors. Rather, she tried to apply what she had learned.

As a result of her fine conduct and courage, she won the respect of many of her fellow pupils. They brought the matter to the teacher's attention, and since that day, Akemi has experienced no further abuse at school.

What helped Akemi to deal successfully with a difficult situation? The accurate knowledge, insight, and wisdom from Jehovah that her parents had inculcated in her. She was well acquainted with Jesus' endurance, and that moved her to imitate his example. The Bible helped her to discern that some people do wrong things out of ignorance, and it encouraged her to hate the wrong those bullies did while not hating the people themselves.—Luke 23:34; Romans 12:9, 17-21.

Of course, no parents would want to see their child subjected to ridicule and abuse. Still, you can imagine how proud Akemi's parents felt when they heard all the details of what had happened. Such children are truly a blessing from Jehovah.—Psalm 127:3; 1 Peter 1:6, 7.

Patiently Waiting on Jehovah

Before you receive Jehovah's blessings, though, sometimes you must wait for his time. Jehovah knows your situation and provides for each need when it will do you



*Jehovah's blessing
is more precious than gold*

the most good. (Psalm 145:16; Ecclesiastes 3:1; James 1:17) You may be fond of fruit, but what would you think of a host who served you fruit before it was ready to be eaten? Whether an apple, an orange, or something else, you would prefer your fruit ripe, juicy, and sweet. Similarly, Jehovah provides what you need at the right time—not too early and not too late.

Recall the experience of Joseph. Through no fault of his own, he found himself in an Egyptian dungeon. A fellow prisoner, the cupbearer of Pharaoh, hoped to be released and promised to bring Joseph's case to the attention of Pharaoh. But after his release he forgot all about Joseph. It seemed as if Joseph were forsaken. However, two full years later, he was finally released from prison and was eventually made the second ruler in Egypt. Rather than being impatient, Joseph waited on Jehovah. For this, he was blessed in a manner that meant preservation of life both to Israelites and to Egyptians.—Genesis 39:1-41:57.

Masashi was an elder in a congregation in northern Japan. He was not in a dungeon, but he had to wait on Jehovah. Why? Ever since the Ministerial Training School, a school for training qualified Christian ministers, was instituted in Japan, he made it his fervent goal to attend. He prayed in-

tensely about the privilege. His pioneer partner was invited, but despite his eager desire, Masashi was not. He was extremely disappointed.

Nevertheless, he took steps to cope with his feelings. He studied the Bible and publications published by the Watch Tower Society, focusing on such subjects as being humble and controlling one's emotions. He readjusted his thinking and thus experienced more satisfaction in his assignment. Then, when least expecting it, he received an invitation to attend the school.

Having developed such qualities as patience and humility, he benefited much more from the school. Later, Masashi was given the privilege of serving his brothers as a traveling overseer. Yes, Jehovah knew what Masashi needed and provided it just when it would accomplish the most good.

Seek His Blessings

Hence, Jehovah is not like the pharmacist. Although we may fail to discern Jehovah's care and concern, his kindnesses come in various forms—at times and in ways that do us the most good. So continue to seek his blessings. Remember that you already have many reasons for being thankful. You have been blessed with basic provisions to continue living on earth. You have been given a knowledge of Jehovah and of his perfect ways. You have been given insight. And you have acquired discernment. These all contribute to your welfare and happiness.

To experience even more fully the blessing of Jehovah, continue to study the Bible regularly. Petition Jehovah to help you to understand and apply the jewellike teachings in his inspired Word. They will make you truly rich, so that you will lack nothing. Yes, they will mean your happiness and contentment now and life in abundance in the new world to come.—John 10:10; 1 Timothy 4:8, 9.

In Our Next Issue

"Walking by Faith, Not by Sight"

**Strengthening Our
Faith in God's Word**

**Philemon and Onesimus—United in
Christian Brotherhood**

THERE IS NOTHING BETTER THAN THE TRUTH

AS TOLD BY G. N. VAN DER BIJL



In June 1941, I was handed over to the Gestapo and taken to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp near Berlin, Germany. There, as prisoner number 38190, I remained until the infamous death march in April 1945. But before I describe those events, let me explain how I came to be a prisoner.

I WAS born in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, shortly after the beginning of World War I, in 1914. Father worked for the railroad, and our small apartment was situated near the railway track. Toward the end of the war in 1918, I saw many so-called crisis trains roar past. No doubt they were filled with wounded soldiers who were being taken home from the front.

When I was 12, I left school to get a job. Eight years later I signed on as a steward aboard a passenger ship, and for the next four years, I sailed between the Netherlands and the United States.

When we docked in New York harbor in the summer of 1939, another world war threatened. So when a man came aboard

our ship and offered me the book *Government*, which told of a righteous government, I gladly accepted it. Upon returning to Rotterdam, I began to look for work on land, since life at sea no longer appeared to be safe. On September 1, Germany invaded Poland and the nations were plunged into World War II.

Learning Bible Truth

One Sunday morning in March 1940, I was visiting my married brother when one of Jehovah's Witnesses rang the doorbell. I told him that I already had the *Government* book and asked him about heaven and who go there. I received such a clear and reasonable answer that I said to myself,

'This is the truth.' I gave him my address and invited him to call on me at my home.

After only three visits, during which we had in-depth Bible discussions, I began accompanying the Witness in the house-to-house preaching work. When we reached the territory, he showed me where to start, and I was on my own. That is how many new ones were introduced to the preaching work in those days. I was advised that, so as not to be seen in the street, I should always be inside a hallway when I made a presentation of the literature. There was need for caution in the early days of the war.

Three weeks later, on May 10, 1940, the German army invaded the Netherlands, and on May 29, *Reich* commissioner Seyss-Inquart proclaimed that the organization of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned. We met only in small groups, and care was exercised to keep our meeting places a secret. Especially strengthening to us were the visits of traveling overseers.

I was a heavy smoker, and when I offered a cigarette to the Witness who studied with me and found out that he did not smoke, I said: "I could never quit smoking!" Shortly afterward, however, as I was walking down the street, I thought, 'If I am going to be a Witness, I want to be a real Witness.' So I never smoked again.

Taking a Stand for the Truth

In June 1940, less than three months after I met the Witness at my brother's door, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah and was baptized. A few months later, in October 1940, I entered the full-time ministry as a pioneer. At that time, I was given what was called a pioneer jacket. It had many pockets for books and booklets, and it could be worn under a coat.

Practically from the beginning of the



**With my wife shortly
after our marriage in 1958**

German occupation, Jehovah's Witnesses were systematically hunted down and arrested. One morning in February 1941, I was in the field ministry with a few other Witnesses. While they called on people on one side of a block of houses, I worked around the other side of the block to meet them. In time, I went to see what was delaying them and met a man who asked, "Do you have any of these little books too?"

"Yes," I replied. At that he arrested me and took me to the police station. I was kept in custody for almost four weeks. Most of the officers were friendly. As long as a person was not handed over to the Gestapo, he could secure his release simply by signing a written declaration that he would no longer distribute Bible literature. When I was asked to sign such a declaration, I replied: "Even if you offered me one or two million guildens, I still wouldn't sign."

After being held a while longer, I was handed over to the Gestapo. Then I was taken to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Germany.

Life in Sachsenhausen

When I arrived in June 1941, there were already some 150 Witnesses—mostly Germans—in Sachsenhausen. We new prisoners were taken to a section of the camp called Isolation. There our Christian brothers took us under their wing and prepared us for what to expect. A week later another shipment of Witnesses from the Netherlands arrived. At first we were assigned to stand on the same spot in front of the barracks from seven o'clock in the morning until six o'clock in the evening. At times prisoners had to do that every day for a week or more.

Despite the harsh treatment, the brothers realized the urgent need to remain organized and to take in spiritual nourishment. Every day someone was assigned to prepare thoughts on a Bible text. Later, in the assembly yard, individual Witnesses approached that one and listened to what he had prepared. In one way or another, literature was regularly smuggled into the camp, and we actually assembled every Sunday and studied this Bible literature together.

Somehow a copy of the book *Children*, which had been released at the St. Louis convention in the United States in the summer of 1941, was smuggled into Sachsenhausen. In order to minimize the risk of the book being discovered and destroyed, we took it apart, and the sections were circulated among the brothers so that everyone could take turns reading it.

After a while, the camp management found out about the meetings we were holding. So the Witnesses were split up and put into different barracks. That presented us with an excellent opportunity to preach to other prisoners, and as a result, many Poles, Ukrainians, and others accepted the truth.

The Nazis made no secret of their intention to break or kill the *Bibelforscher*, as Jehovah's Witnesses were called. Consequently, the pressure exerted upon us was severe. We were told that we could be set free if we signed a declaration denouncing our faith. Some brothers began to rationalize, "If I am free, I can do more in Jehovah's service." Although a few signed, most of our brothers remained faithful despite all the privation, humiliation, and mistreatment. Some of those who compromised were never heard of again. Happily, though, others later recovered and are still active Witnesses.

We were regularly forced to look on as prisoners were subjected to brutal corporal punishment, such as 25 strokes with a stick. Once, we were made to watch the execution by hanging of four men. Those experiences have a real effect on a person. One brother, a tall, handsome man who lived in the same barrack as I did, said to me: "Before I came here, I couldn't stand seeing blood without fainting on the spot. But now I have become hardened." Still, although we may have become hardened, we did not become callous. I must say, I never bore malice or felt hate for our persecutors.

After working with a *kommando* (work crew) for some time, I was admitted to the hospital with a high fever. A kind Norwegian doctor and a Czechoslovakian nurse helped me, and their kindness probably saved my life.

The Death March

By April 1945, it was clear that Germany was losing the war. The western allies were advancing rapidly from the west, and the Soviets, from the east. It was impossible for the Nazis to liquidate the hundreds of thousands in the concentration camps and

dispose of their bodies within a few days without leaving behind any trace. So they decided to kill off the sick and to move the rest of the prisoners to the closest seaports. There they planned to load them on ships and sink the ships at sea.

The march of some 26,000 prisoners from Sachsenhausen began the night of April 20. Before we left the camp, our sick brothers were rescued from the infirmary. A cart was obtained on which they could be transported. Altogether, there were 230 of us from six different countries. Among the sick was Brother Arthur Winkler, who had contributed greatly to the expansion of the work in the Netherlands. We Witnesses brought up the rear of the march, and we continually encouraged one another to keep going.

To start with, we marched for 36 hours without a break. While I was walking, I actually fell asleep from sheer misery and fatigue. But staying behind or resting was out of the question because one risked getting shot by the guards. At night we slept in open fields or in the woods. There was little or no food. When hunger pangs became too great, I licked the toothpaste that the Swedish Red Cross had given us.

At one point, because German guards were confused as to where the Russian and U.S. troops were, we camped in the woods for four days. This was providential because, as a result, we did not reach Lübeck Bay in time to board the ships that were supposed to take us to our watery grave. Finally, after 12 days and a march of over 100 miles, we reached Crivitz Wood. This was not far from Schwerin, a city about 30 miles from Lübeck.

The Soviets were to our right, and the Americans, to our left. From the boom-

ing of the big guns and the incessant rifle fire, we knew that we were near the front lines. The German guards panicked; some fled, and others switched their military uniforms for prison garb that they had stripped from the dead, hoping not to be recognized. Amid the confusion, we Witnesses assembled to pray for guidance.

The brothers in charge decided that we should leave in the early hours of the next day and go in the direction of the U.S. lines. Even though nearly half of the prisoners who had started the death march died or were killed off along the way, all the Witnesses survived.

I received a ride from some Canadian military personnel to the city of Nijmegen, where a sister of mine used to live. But when I reached the place, I found that she had moved. So I set out to walk to Rotterdam. Fortunately, along the way I was offered a ride in a privately owned vehicle that took me straight to my destination.

The Truth Has Been My Life

The very day I arrived in Rotterdam, I applied again for the pioneer work. Three weeks later I was in my assignment in the city of Zutphen, where I served for the next year and a half. During that time, I regained some of my physical strength. Then I was appointed a circuit overseer, as traveling ministers are called. A few months later, I was invited to the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead in South Lansing, New York. After graduating from the 12th class of that school in February 1949, I was assigned to Belgium.

I have served in various aspects of the ministry in Belgium, including almost eight years at the branch office and decades in the traveling work as both a circuit

overseer and a district overseer. In 1958, I married Justine, who became my traveling companion. Now, as the years begin to weigh heavily upon me, I still have the joy of being able to serve in a limited way as a substitute traveling overseer.

When I look back on my ministry, I can truly say: "There is nothing better than the truth." Of course, it has not always been easy. I have discovered the need to learn from my mistakes and shortcomings. So when I speak with young people, I often tell them: "You too will make mistakes and perhaps even transgress seriously, but don't lie about it. Discuss the matter with your

parents or with an elder, and then make the needed corrections."

In my almost 50 years in the full-time ministry in Belgium, I have been privileged to see ones whom I once knew as children serve as elders and circuit overseers. And I have seen the 1,700 or so Kingdom proclaimers in the country grow to more than 27,000.

I ask, "Could there be a more blessed way to live than to serve Jehovah?" There never was, there is not now, and there never will be. I pray that Jehovah may continue to guide and bless my wife and me so that we can keep on serving him forever.

"Make Disciples of People of All the Nations"

"GO THEREFORE and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit." This is how the *New World Translation* renders Jesus' command at Matthew 28:19. This rendering has, however, been criticized. One religious pamphlet, for example, claims: "The only translation allowed by the Greek text is: 'Make disciples of all the nations!'" Is this true?

This rendering, "Make disciples of all nations," appears in many Bible versions and is a literal translation of the Greek. So, what basis is there for the reading, "Make disciples of *people of* all the nations, baptizing them"? The context. The expression "baptizing them" clearly refers to individuals, not nations. German scholar Hans Bruns states: "The [word] 'them' does not refer to the na-

tions (the Greek makes a clear distinction), but to the people in the nations."

Further, the way Jesus' command was carried out should be considered. Regarding the ministry of Paul and Barnabas in Derbe, a city in Asia Minor, we read: "After declaring the good news to that city and making quite a few disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch." (Acts 14:21) Note that Paul and Barnabas made disciples, not of the city of Derbe, but of some of the people of Derbe.

Similarly, concerning the time of the end, the book of Revelation foretold, not that whole nations would serve God, but that "a great crowd . . . out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues" would do so. (Revelation 7:9) Thus, the *New World Translation* stands vindicated as a reliable translation of 'all Scripture, inspired of God.' —2 Timothy 3:16.

Elijah Exalts the True God

HE WAS the most wanted man in Israel. He would almost certainly be put to death if the king could find him. Who was this hunted man? Jehovah's prophet Elijah.

King Ahab and his pagan wife, Jezebel, had caused Baal worship to flourish in Israel. As a result, Jehovah had brought a drought upon the land, which was now in its fourth year. An enraged Jezebel set out to have Jehovah's prophets put to death, but Ahab wanted Elijah in particular. It was Elijah who had said to Ahab more than three years previously: "There will occur during these years neither dew nor rain, except at the order of my word!" (1 Kings 17:1) And the resultant drought still continued.

In this dangerous situation, Elijah was told by Jehovah: "Go, show yourself to Ahab, as I am determined to give rain upon the surface of the ground." At great personal risk, Elijah obeyed Jehovah's command.—1 Kings 18:1, 2.

Two Opponents Meet

"Is this you, the bringer of ostracism upon Israel?" asked Ahab, upon seeing Elijah. "I have not brought ostracism upon Israel," Elijah boldly replied, "but you and the house of your father have, because you men have left the commandments of Jehovah, and you went following the Baals." Then Elijah directed that all Israel should gather at Mount Carmel, including "the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of the sacred pole." Then Elijah addressed the crowd: "How long will you be limping upon two different opinions?*" If Jehovah

* Some scholars suggest that Elijah may have alluded to the ritual dance of Baal worshipers. The same use of the word "limping" is found at 1 Kings 18:26 to describe the dance of the Baal prophets.

is the true God, go following him; but if Baal is, go following him."—1 Kings 18:17-21.

The people were silent. Perhaps they recognized their guilt in failing to render exclusive devotion to Jehovah. (Exodus 20:4, 5) Or it may be that their consciences were so seared that they saw no sin in dividing their loyalties between Jehovah and Baal. In any case, Elijah instructed the people to produce two young bulls—one for the Baal prophets and the other for him. Both bulls would be prepared for sacrifice, but no fire was to be lit. "You must call upon the name of your god," Elijah said, "and I, for my part, shall call upon the name of Jehovah; and it must occur that the true God that answers by fire is the true God."—1 Kings 18:23, 24.

Jehovah Is Exalted

The Baal prophets began "limping around the altar that they had made." All morning they cried out: "O Baal, answer us!" But Baal did not answer. (1 Kings 18:26) Then Elijah began taunting them: "Call at the top of your voice, for he is a god." (1 Kings 18:27) The Baal prophets even began cutting themselves with daggers and lances—a practice often employed by pagans to arouse the pity of their gods.*—1 Kings 18:28.

It was now past noon, and the worshipers of Baal continued "behaving as prophets"—a phrase that in this context conveys the idea of carrying on in a frenzied fashion and with a loss of self-control. Well into the afternoon, Elijah finally said to all the people: "Approach me." All watched intently as Elijah rebuilt the altar of Jehovah, dug a trench around it, cut the young bull

* Some suggest that self-mutilation was related to the practice of human sacrifice. Both acts implied that bodily affliction or the shedding of blood can invoke a god's favor.



in pieces, and placed it on the altar with wood for burning. Afterward, the bull, the altar, and the wood were thoroughly soaked with water, and the trench was filled with water (no doubt seawater obtained from the Mediterranean Sea). Then, Elijah prayed to Jehovah: "Today let it be known that you are God in Israel and I am your servant and it is by your word that I have done all these things. Answer me, O Jehovah, answer me, that this people may know that you, Jehovah, are the true God and you yourself have turned their heart back."—1 Kings 18:29-37.

Suddenly, fire came down from heaven "and went eating up the burnt offering and the pieces of wood and the stones and the dust, and the water that was in the trench it licked up." The people who were watching immediately prostrated themselves, saying: "Jehovah is the true God! Jehovah is the true God!" At Elijah's command, the Baal prophets were seized and brought to the torrent valley of Kishon, where they were executed.—1 Kings 18:38-40.

Lesson for Us

Elijah displayed what may seem like superhuman boldness. Yet, the Bible writer James assures us that "Elijah was a man with feelings like ours." (James 5:17) He was not immune to a degree of fear and anxiety. For example, when Jezebel later vowed revenge for the loss of the Baal prophets, Elijah fled and then cried out to Jehovah in prayer: "It is enough! Now, O Jehovah, take my soul away."—1 Kings 19:4.

Jehovah did not take Elijah's soul away in death. Instead, he mercifully provided assistance. (1 Kings 19:5-8) Servants of God today can be assured that Jehovah will do the same when they face periods of intense anxiety, perhaps because of opposition. Indeed, if they pray for Jehovah's help, he can supply them with "power beyond what is normal," so that even if they are "pressed in every way," they will not be "cramped beyond movement." Thus, they will be helped to endure, as Elijah was.—2 Corinthians 4:7, 8.

A Challenging Reply

THE *Catholic Herald*, a British Roman Catholic newspaper, recently published the following letter from a reader in Wales: "One night, two Jehovah's Witnesses came to my door. I managed to say that it was the Catholic Church that guaranteed the authenticity of the New Testament they quoted. To my surprise, one of them agreed. 'Yes,' he said, 'you guarantee it but you don't follow it. Jesus said, "love one another as I have loved you," but you kill one another.

In the last war, Catholics killed Catholics, but no Jehovah's Witness killed a [fellow] Witness.'



What could I do but agree? How can we pray for unity with our 'separated brethren' when there is no real unity among ourselves? Should we not first correct this scandal?" —John 15:12.

The two world wars of this 20th century both started in Christendom and claimed some 50 million to 60 million lives. It can truthfully be said, though, that Jehovah's Witnesses took no part in those wars, nor are they involved in any of the conflicts currently taking place. How is this possible? You owe it to yourself to find out more about the powerful bonds of Christian love and unity that over five million Jehovah's Witnesses have worldwide.—Compare Isaiah 2:4.

U.S. National Archives photo

