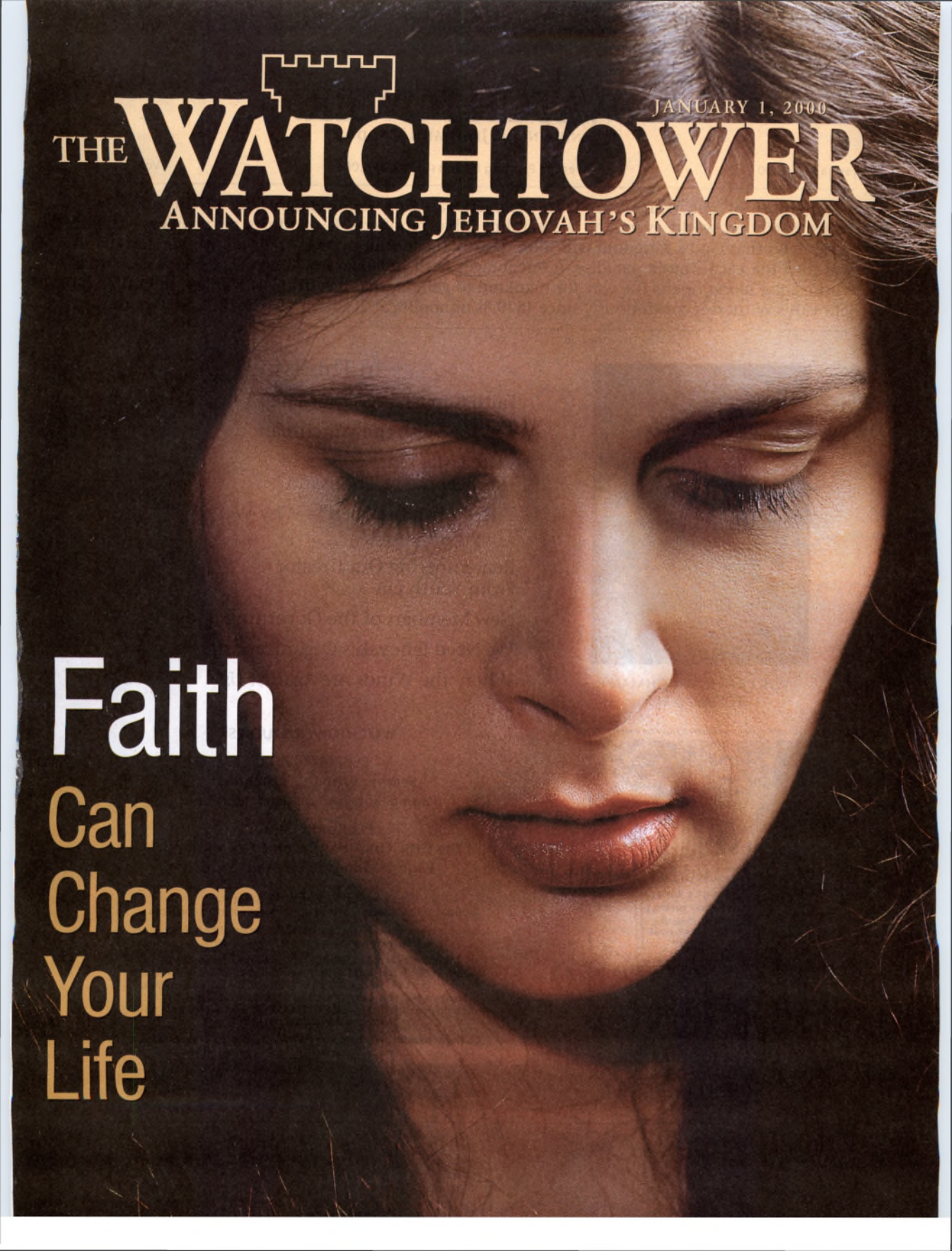




JANUARY 1, 2000

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

Faith
Can
Change
Your
Life

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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



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TODAY? 6-11

Title card of *Biblia nieświeża* by Szymon Budny, 1572



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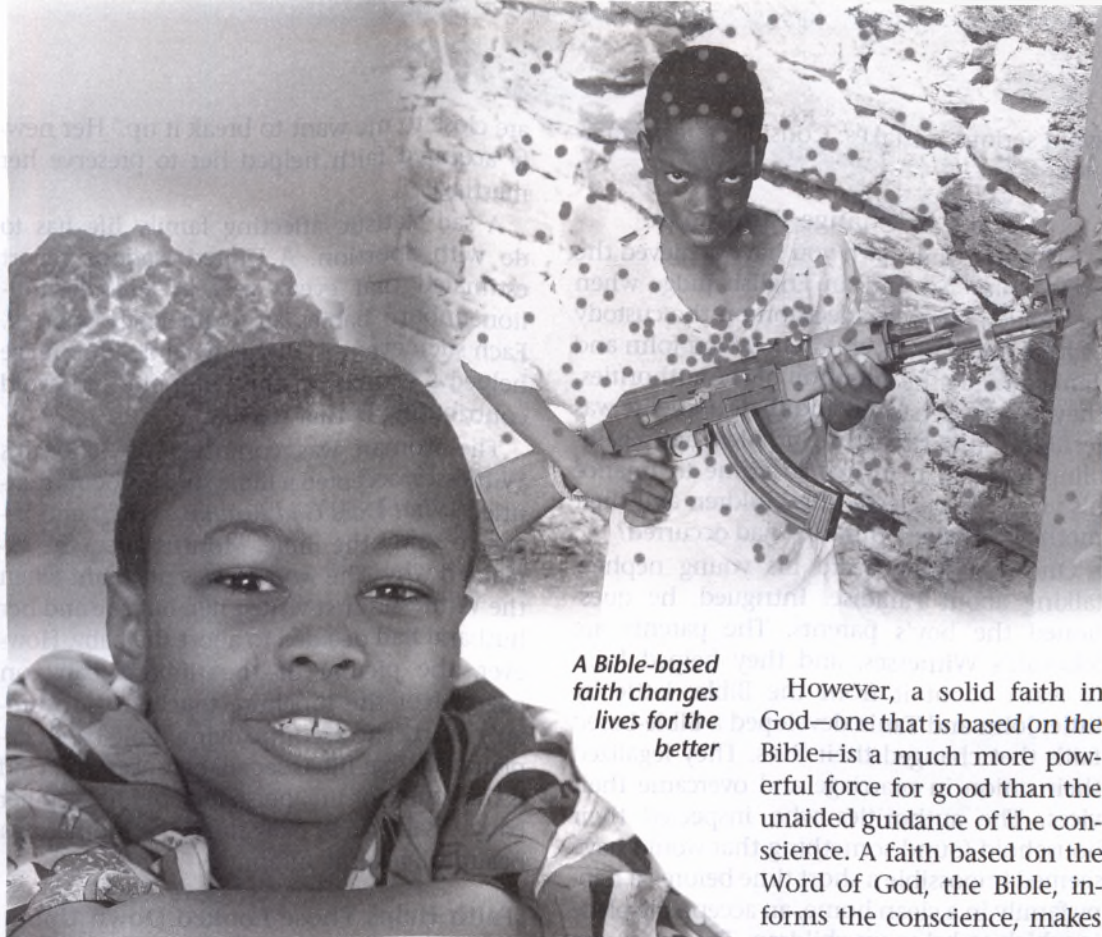
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Semimonthly

ENGLISH



*A Bible-based
faith changes
lives for the
better*

Faith Can Change Your Life

"IT MOST certainly is possible to have good values without a God." This was the assertion of an agnostic. She said that she had raised her children with high moral values, and they, in turn, had brought up their children with similar high standards—all without faith in God.

Does this mean that faith in God is unnecessary? Evidently, this person thought so. And it is true that everyone who does not believe in God is not necessarily a bad person. The apostle Paul spoke of "people of the nations" who do not know God but "do by nature the things of the law." (Romans 2:14) All—including agnostics—were born with a conscience. Many try to follow the dictates of their conscience even if they do not believe in the God who gave them that innate sense of right and wrong.

However, a solid faith in God—one that is based on the Bible—is a much more powerful force for good than the unaided guidance of the conscience. A faith based on the Word of God, the Bible, informs the conscience, makes it keener in discerning right from wrong. (Hebrews 5:14) Moreover, faith strengthens people to maintain high standards in the face of enormous pressure. For example, during the 20th century, many countries came under the power of corrupt political regimes, which forced apparently decent people to commit terrible atrocities. However, those with true faith in God refused to compromise their principles, even at the risk of their lives. In addition, a Bible-based faith can change people. It can redeem lives that seem lost and help people

avoid serious mistakes. Consider a few examples.

Faith Can Change Family Life

"Through your faith you have achieved the impossible." So said an English judge when he handed down his decision on the custody of John and Tania's children. When John and Tania came to the attention of the authorities, they were not married and their homelife was terrible. John, with a drug problem and a gambling habit, had turned to crime to finance his vices. He neglected his children and their mother. So, what "miracle" had occurred?

One day, John heard his young nephew talking about Paradise. Intrigued, he questioned the boy's parents. The parents are Jehovah's Witnesses, and they helped John to learn about it from the Bible. Little by little, John and Tania developed a Bible-based faith that changed their lives. They legalized their union in marriage and overcame their vices. The authorities who inspected their household found something that would have seemed impossible a short time before—a happy family in a clean home, an acceptable place in which to bring up children. The judge was correct in crediting this "miracle" to the newfound faith of John and Tania.

Thousands of miles from England, a young wife in the Near East was about to become part of a very sad statistic. She was planning to join the millions each year whose marriages end in divorce. She had a child, but her husband was much older than she was. For this reason, her relatives were urging her to get a divorce, and she had actually started to make arrangements to do so. However, she was studying the Bible with one of Jehovah's Witnesses. When the Witness learned of the situation, she explained what the Bible says about marriage—for example, that marriage is a gift from God and not something to be thrown away lightly. (Matthew 19:4-6, 9) The woman thought to herself, 'It is odd that this woman, a stranger, is trying to save our family while those who

are close to me want to break it up.' Her newly acquired faith helped her to preserve her marriage.

A sad statistic affecting family life has to do with abortion. A United Nations report estimated that every year at least 45 million unborn babies are deliberately aborted. Each such event is a tragedy. Bible knowledge helped a woman in the Philippines to avoid contributing to that statistic.

The woman was contacted by Jehovah's Witnesses, accepted a Bible study brochure entitled *What Does God Require of Us?*,* and began to study the Bible. Months later, she explained why. The woman was pregnant when the Witnesses first visited her, but she and her husband had decided to abort the baby. However, the picture of the unborn baby on page 24 of the brochure touched the woman's heart. The accompanying Bible-based explanation that life is sacred because 'with God is the source of life' persuaded her to keep her baby. (Psalm 36:9) Now she is the mother of a beautiful, healthy infant.

Faith Helps Those Looked Down Upon

In Ethiopia, two poorly dressed men came to a meeting for worship conducted by Jehovah's Witnesses. At the end of the meeting, a Witness introduced himself to them in a friendly manner. The men asked for a hand-out. The Witness gave them, not money, but something better. He encouraged them to develop faith in God, which is "of much greater value than gold." (1 Peter 1:7) One of them responded and began to study the Bible. This changed his life. As he grew in faith, he gave up smoking, heavy drinking, immorality, and the use of khat (an addictive stimulant). He learned how to support himself instead of begging and now lives a clean, productive life.

In Italy a 47-year-old man had been sentenced to ten years in prison and was detained

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

in a judicial psychiatric hospital. One of Jehovah's Witnesses who is authorized to enter prison institutions to give spiritual assistance studied the Bible with him. The man made rapid progress. Faith changed his life so much that other prisoners now turn to him for counsel on how to deal with their problems. His Bible-based faith has won him respect, esteem, and the trust of the prison authorities.

In recent years newspapers have reported on civil wars in Africa. Particularly horrifying are accounts of young boys who are trained as soldiers. These children are drugged, brutalized, and forced to engage in dehumanizing behavior against their relatives in order to ensure that their sole loyalty is to the faction for which they are fighting. Is a Bible-based faith strong enough to change the lives of such youngsters? In at least two cases, it was.

In Liberia, Alex served as an altar boy in the Catholic Church. But at the age of 13, he joined a warring faction and became a notorious child soldier. To make himself brave in battle, he turned to witchcraft. Alex saw many of his companions killed, but he survived. In 1997 he met Jehovah's Witnesses and found that they did not look down on him. Rather, they helped him to learn what the Bible says about violence. Alex left the army. As his faith began to grow, he followed the Bible command: "Let him turn away from what is bad and do what is good; let him seek peace and pursue it."—1 Peter 3:11.

Meanwhile, a former child soldier named Samson came through the town where Alex now lived. He had been a choirboy but in 1993 became a soldier and got involved in drug abuse, spiritism, and immorality. In 1997 he was demobilized. Samson was heading for Monrovia to join a special security force when a friend persuaded him to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, and as a result, he developed a Bible-based faith. This gave him the courage to abandon his warlike ways. Both Alex and Samson now live peaceful and moral lives. Could anything but Bible-based faith

make changes in lives that had been so brutalized?

The Right Kind of Faith

These are just a few of the many, many examples that could be cited to illustrate the power of genuine faith based on the Bible. Of course, not everyone who merely claims to believe in God lives up to the Bible's high standards. Indeed, some atheists may live better lives than some professed Christians. That is because Bible-based faith involves more than merely claiming to believe in God.

The apostle Paul called faith "the assured expectation of things hoped for, the evident demonstration of realities though not beheld." (Hebrews 11:1) Hence, faith includes a strong belief—based on irrefutable evidence—in unseen things. It especially involves having no doubt whatsoever that God exists, that he is interested in us, and that he will bless those who do his will. The apostle also said: "He that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him."—Hebrews 11:6.

It was this kind of faith that changed the lives of John, Tania, and the others mentioned in this article. It led them to look in full confidence to God's Word, the Bible, for guidance in making decisions. It helped them to make temporary sacrifices so as not to take a convenient, but wrong, course. Different as each experience was, all began in the same way. One of Jehovah's Witnesses studied the Bible with these individuals, and they came to experience the truth of what the Bible says: "The word of God is alive and exerts power." (Hebrews 4:12) The power of God's Word helped each individual to build the strong faith that changed his life for the better.

Jehovah's Witnesses are active in more than 230 lands and islands of the sea. They invite you to have a Bible study. Why? Because they are convinced that a Bible-based faith can bring about great improvements in your life too.

SERVING WITH THE WATCHMAN

"Upon the watchtower, O Jehovah, I am standing constantly by day, and at my guardpost I am stationed all the nights."—ISAIAH 21:8.

JEHOVAH is the Great Purposer. The rebel angel who became Satan the Devil can do nothing to thwart His grand purpose to sanctify His own name and establish a glorious Kingdom rule over a paradisaic earth. (Matthew 6:9, 10) Under that rule, mankind will be truly blessed. God "will actually swallow up death forever, and the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces." Happy, united humans will enjoy peace and prosperity for all eternity. (Isaiah 25:8; 65:17-25) Jehovah is his own witness to these grand promises!

² However, the Grand Creator also has human witnesses. In pre-Christian times "a cloud of witnesses," beginning with Abel, ran the race of endurance, often in the face of overwhelming odds. Their sterling examples encourage loyal Christians today. Christ Jesus is the superlative example of a courageous witness. (Hebrews 11:1-12:2) Recall, for example, his final testimony before Pontius Pilate. Jesus declared: "For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." (John 18:37) From 33 C.E. down to this year 2000 C.E., zealous Christians have followed Jesus' example and have continued to witness, courageously declaring "the magnificent things of God." —Acts 2:11.

1. To what grand promises is Jehovah himself a witness?
2. What human witnesses has Jehovah raised up?

Babylonian Sectarianism

³ Over the millenniums the great Adversary, Satan the Devil, has wickedly sought to discredit the testimony of God's witnesses. As "the father of the lie," this "great dragon . . . , the original serpent," has been "misleading the entire inhabited earth." He has been relentless in his warfare against those who "observe the commandments of God," especially in these last days.—John 8:44; Revelation 12:9, 17.

⁴ Some 4,000 years ago, after the Flood of Noah's day, Satan raised up Nimrod, "a mighty hunter in opposition to Jehovah." (Genesis 10:9, 10) Nimrod's greatest city, Babylon (Babel), became a center of demonistic religion. When Jehovah confused the language of Babel's tower builders, the people were scattered around the earth, and they carried their false religion with them. Thus Babylon became the source of a worldwide empire of false religion, named Babylon the Great in the book of Revelation. That book foretells the doom of this ancient religious system.—Revelation 17:5; 18:21.

A Nation of Witnesses

⁵ About 500 years after Nimrod's time, Jehovah organized the descendants of faithful

3. How has Satan opposed the witness given about Jehovah and his will?
4. How did Babylon the Great come to be?
5. What nation did Jehovah organize to be his witness, but why did he allow it to go into exile?



*"Upon the watchtower, O Jehovah,
I am standing constantly"*

Abraham into the nation of Israel to serve as His witness on earth. (Isaiah 43:10, 12) Many individuals of that nation served Jehovah loyally. Over the centuries, however, the false beliefs of neighboring nations corrupted Israel, and Jehovah's covenant people turned away from him to the worship of false gods. Hence, in 607 B.C.E., the armies of Babylon, led by King Nebuchadnezzar, destroyed Jerusalem and its temple and carried most of the Jews off into exile in Babylon.

⁶ What a triumph that was for false religion! However, Babylon's ascendancy was short-lived. Some 200 years before the event, Jehovah commanded: "Go, post a lookout that he may tell just what he sees." What news did this watchman have to announce? "She has fallen! Babylon has fallen, and all the graven images of her gods he has broken to the earth!" (Isaiah 21:6, 9) Sure enough, in 539 B.C.E., the prophetic declaration came true. Mighty Babylon fell, and God's covenant people were soon able to return to their homeland.

6. What good news did Jehovah's prophetic watchman declare, and when was it fulfilled?

⁷ The returning Jews had learned enough to abandon idolatry and spiritistic religion. However, over the years, they fell into other traps. Some were ensnared by Greek philosophy. Others came to stress human tradition over God's Word. Still others were seduced by nationalism. (Mark 7:13; Acts 5:37) By the time Jesus was born, the nation had again turned away from pure worship. While individual Jews responded to the good news declared by Jesus, the nation as a whole rejected him and was thus rejected by God. (John 1:9-12; Acts 2:36) Israel was no longer God's witness, and in the year 70 C.E., Jerusalem and its temple were again devastated, this time by the Roman army.—Matthew 21:43.

⁸ Meanwhile, a Christian "Israel of God" had been born, and this now served as God's witness to the nations. (Galatians 6:16) Very quickly, Satan schemed to corrupt this new, spiritual nation. By the end of the first century, sectarian influences were seen in the congregations. (Revelation 2:6, 14, 20) Paul's warning was timely: "Look out: perhaps there may be someone who will carry you off as his prey through the philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ."—Colossians 2:8.

⁹ Eventually, Greek philosophy, Babylonian religious ideas, and later such human "wisdom" as the theory of evolution and higher criticism contaminated the religion of many who claimed to be Christian. It was as Paul had foretold: "I know that after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness, and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples

7. (a) What did the Jews learn from Jehovah's discipline? (b) Into what traps did the postexilic Jews fall, and with what result?

8. Who became Jehovah's witness, and why was Paul's warning to this witness timely?

9. Just as Paul had warned, what developments led to the existence of Christendom?

after themselves." (Acts 20:29, 30) As a result of this apostasy, Christendom came into existence.

¹⁰ Those truly devoted to pure worship had to "put up a hard fight for the faith that was once for all time delivered to the holy ones." (Jude 3) Would the witness to pure worship and to Jehovah vanish from the earth? No. As the time approached for the destruction of the rebel Satan and all his works, it became evident that not everyone had surrendered to the apostate worship practiced in Christendom. In the latter part of the 19th century, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., a group of sincere Bible students was organized and became the nucleus of God's modern-day witness class. These Christians drew attention to the Scriptural evidence that the conclusion of the present world system was at hand. True to Bible prophecy, this world's "conclusion" began in 1914 and was marked by the outbreak of the first world war. (Matthew 24:3, 7) There is strong evidence that Satan and his demonic hordes were cast out of heaven following that year. The trouble-filled 20th century has provided clear proof of Satan's activity and of a remarkable fulfillment of the sign of Jesus' royal presence in heavenly Kingdom power.—Matthew, chapters 24 and 25; Mark, chapter 13; Luke, chapter 21; Revelation 12:10, 12.

¹¹ In June 1918, Satan frantically tried to wipe out those Bible students, who by then were preaching in several countries. He also sought to destroy their legal corporation, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. Responsible officers of the Society were imprisoned, falsely charged with sedition, as Jesus had been in the first century. (Luke 23:2) But in 1919, these officers were released, enabling them to continue their ministry. Later, they were fully exonerated.

10. What developments made it evident that not everyone had surrendered to the corrupt worship practiced in Christendom?

11. What did Satan attempt to do, but how did his attempt fail?

A "Lookout" on the Watch

¹² When "the time of the end" began, therefore, Jehovah again had a watchman on the scene, alerting people to events having to do with the fulfillment of His purposes. (Daniel 12:4; 2 Timothy 3:1) Until this day, that watchman class—anointed Christians, the Israel of God—has been acting in harmony with Isaiah's description of the prophetic watchman: "He paid strict attention, with much attentiveness. And he proceeded to call out like a lion: 'Upon the watchtower, O Jehovah, I am standing constantly by day, and at my guardpost I am stationed all the nights.'" (Isaiah 21:7, 8) This is a watchman who takes his task seriously!

¹³ What did this watchman see? Again, Jehovah's watchman, his witness class, announced: "She has fallen! Babylon has fallen, and all the graven images of her gods he [Jehovah] has broken to the earth!" (Isaiah 21:9) This time, following World War I, it is Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, that is toppled from its perch of authority. (Jeremiah 50:1-3; Revelation 14:8) No wonder! The Great War, as it was then called, started in Christendom, where the clergy on both sides fueled the conflagration by preaching the cream of their youth into the trenches. What a disgrace! In 1919, Babylon the Great could not prevent the Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known, from escaping from their inactive state and embarking on a worldwide witnessing campaign that still continues. (Matthew 24:14) That signaled a fall for Babylon the Great, just as the release of Israel in the sixth century B.C.E. signaled a fall for ancient Babylon.

¹⁴ The watchman class has always performed its task with zeal and a strong de-

12. Who today make up Jehovah's watchman class, or "lookout," and what attitude have they had?

13. (a) What message has Jehovah's watchman proclaimed? (b) How can it be said that Babylon the Great has fallen?

14. What magazine has Jehovah's watchman class used prominently, and how has Jehovah blessed its use?

sire to do what is right. In July 1879, the Bible Students started publication of this magazine, then known as *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*. Each issue from 1879 until December 15, 1938, carried on its front cover the words "'Watchman, What of the Night?'—Isaiah 21:11."* Faithfully, for 120 years *The Watchtower* has kept watch on world events and their prophetic import. (2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13) God's watchman class and its "other sheep" companions have used this magazine in vigorously proclaiming to mankind that the vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty by Christ's Kingdom is at hand. (John 10:16) Has this witness been blessed by Jehovah? Well, from the first issue of 6,000 copies in 1879, *The Watchtower* has grown to a worldwide circulation of more than 22,000,000 copies in 132 languages—121 of these being published simultaneously. How appropriate that the most widely distributed religious magazine on earth should be the one that magnifies the name of the true God, Jehovah!

A Progressive Cleansing

¹⁵ During some 40 years up until Christ's heavenly rule began in 1914, the Bible Students had been freed from many of the non-Biblical doctrines of Christendom, such as infant baptism, immortality of the human soul, purgatory, hellfire torment, and a Trinitarian God. But it took additional time to purge all wrong ideas. For example, in the 1920's many Bible Students wore a pin featuring a cross-and-crown emblem, and they celebrated Christmas and other pagan holidays. However, for worship to be pure, all vestiges of idolatry must be discarded. God's Word, the Holy Bible, must be the sole basis of the Christian's faith and way of life. (Isaiah 8:19, 20; Romans

* From January 1, 1939, this was changed to "'They shall know that I am Jehovah.'—Ezekiel 35:15."

15. What progressive cleansing began even before 1914?

15:4) It is wrong to add to God's Word or to take anything away from it.—Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18, 19.

¹⁶ One example will underline how important this principle is. In 1886 when C. T. Russell published a book that came to be called *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, this volume contained a chart linking the ages of mankind with the Great Pyramid of Egypt. It was thought that this memorial of Pharaoh Khufu was the pillar referred to at Isaiah 19:19, 20: "In that day there will prove to be an altar to Jehovah in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to Jehovah beside its boundary. And it must prove to be for a sign and for a witness to Jehovah of armies in the land of Egypt." What relationship could the pyramid have with the Bible? Well, as an example, the length of certain passages in the Great Pyramid was said to indicate the time for the beginning of the "great tribulation" of Matthew 24:21, as it was then understood. Some Bible Students became engrossed with measuring different features of the pyramid to determine such matters as the day they would be going to heaven!

¹⁷ This so-called Bible in Stone was held in esteem for some decades, until the *Watchtower* issues of November 15 and December 1,

16, 17. (a) What false idea did the watchman class hold for some decades? (b) What is the correct explanation of the "altar" and the "pillar" in "Egypt"?

Do You Recall?

- What witnesses has Jehovah raised up through the years?
- What is the origin of Babylon the Great?
- Why did Jehovah allow Jerusalem, the capital city of his nation of witnesses, to be destroyed in 607 B.C.E.? in 70 C.E.?
- What spirit have Jehovah's watchman class and their companions shown?

1928, made clear that Jehovah needed no stone monument built by pagan pharaohs and containing demonic signs of astrology to confirm the witness given in the Bible. Rather, Isaiah's prophecy was seen to have a spiritual application. As at Revelation 11:8, "Egypt" is symbolic of Satan's world. The "altar to Jehovah" reminds us of the acceptable sacrifices made by anointed Christians while they are temporary residents in this world. (Romans 12:1; Hebrews 13:15, 16) The pillar "beside [Egypt's] boundary" points to the congregation of anointed Christians, which is "a pillar and support of the truth" and which stands as a witness in "Egypt," the world that they are about to leave. —1 Timothy 3:15.

¹⁸ As the years pass, Jehovah continues to give us further clarification of truth, including a clearer understanding of his prophetic word. (Proverbs 4:18) In recent years, we have been encouraged to look again with deeper understanding at—among other things—the generation that will not pass away before the end comes, the parable of the sheep and the goats, the disgusting thing and when it will stand in a holy place, the new covenant, the transfiguration, and the temple vision of the book of Ezekiel. It may be difficult at times to understand such updated explanations, but the reasons for them become clear in due course. If a Christian does not fully understand a new explanation of a scripture, he does well humbly to echo the words of the prophet Micah: "I will show a waiting attitude for the God of my salvation." —Micah 7:7.

18. (a) How has Jehovah continued to clarify matters for sincere Bible students? (b) If a Christian finds a Scriptural clarification difficult to understand, what is a wise attitude to have?



Jehovah's watchman class take their task seriously



¹⁹ Recall that the watchman “proceeded to call out like a lion: ‘Upon the watchtower, O Jehovah, I am standing constantly by day, and at my guardpost I am stationed all the nights.’” (Isaiah 21:8) The anointed remnant have shown lionlike courage in exposing false religion and showing people the way to freedom. (Revelation 18:2-5) As “the faithful and discreet slave,” they have provided Bibles, maga-

19. How have the anointed remnant and their other sheep companions shown lionlike courage in these last days?

“THE LITTLE ONE” HAS BECOME “A THOUSAND”

“The little one himself will become a thousand, and the small one a mighty nation.”—ISAIAH 60:22.

“**D**ARKNESS itself will cover the earth, and thick gloom the national groups; but upon you Jehovah will shine forth, and upon you his own glory will be seen.” (Isaiah 60:2) These words well describe the situation on earth since 1919. Christendom has rejected the sign of the royal presence of Jesus Christ, “the light of the world.” (John 8:12; Matthew 24:3) Because of the “great anger” of Satan, chief of “the world rulers of this darkness,” the 20th century was the cruelest, most destructive time of man’s history. (Revelation 12:12; Ephesians 6:12) Most people live in spiritual darkness.

² Still, light does shine today. Jehovah ‘shines forth’ upon his servants, the anointed remnant, who are the earthly representatives

zines, and other publications in a multitude of languages—“food at the proper time.” (Matthew 24:45) They have taken the lead in gathering the “great crowd . . . out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.” These too are cleansed by the ransoming blood of Jesus and show themselves lionhearted in rendering God “sacred service day and night.” (Revelation 7:9, 14, 15) What has been the fruitage this past year of the small surviving group of anointed Witnesses of Jehovah and their companions, the great crowd? Our next article will tell.

of his heavenly “woman.” (Isaiah 60:1) Especially since their release from Babylonish captivity in 1919, these have reflected God’s glory and have ‘let their light shine before men.’ (Matthew 5:16) From 1919 through 1931, Kingdom light shone brighter and brighter as these ones cast off the remaining shackles of Babylonish thinking. They increased in number to tens of thousands as Jehovah fulfilled his promise: “I shall without fail collect the remaining ones of Israel together. In unity I shall set them, like a flock in the pen, like a drove in the midst of its pasture; they will be noisy with men.” (Micah 2:12) In 1931, Jehovah’s glory upon his people became even more evident when they accepted the name Jehovah’s Witnesses.—Isaiah 43:10, 12.

³ Would Jehovah shine forth on only the

1, 2. (a) Why does darkness cover the earth today?
(b) How has Jehovah’s light progressively shone on his people?

3. How did it become evident that Jehovah’s light would shine on others besides the anointed?

remaining ones of the “little flock”? (Luke 12:32) No. The September 1, 1931, issue of *The Watch Tower* pointed to another group. In a fine explanation of Ezekiel 9:1-11, it showed that the man with the writer’s inkhorn mentioned in those verses represents the anointed remnant. Who are marked on the forehead by that “man”? “Other sheep,” ones who have the hope of living eternally on a paradise earth. (John 10:16; Psalm 37:29) In 1935 this group of “other sheep” were discerned to be the “great crowd . . . out of all nations” seen in vision by the apostle John. (Revelation 7:9-14) From 1935 until now, much attention has been focused on the gathering in of the great crowd.

⁴ This gathering work is alluded to in Isaiah’s prophecy when it says: “Nations will certainly go to your light, and kings to the brightness of your shining forth.” (Isaiah 60:3) Who are the “kings” referred to here? The remaining ones of the 144,000 who, along with Jesus Christ, are joint heirs of the heavenly Kingdom and have taken the lead in the witness work. (Romans 8:17; Revelation 12:17; 14:1) Today, the few thousand remaining ones of the anointed remnant are greatly outnumbered by the “nations,” those with an earthly hope who come to Jehovah for instruction and invite others to do the same. —Isaiah 2:3.

Jehovah’s Zealous Servants

⁵ What zeal Jehovah’s modern-day Witnesses showed throughout the 20th century! And despite increasing pressures, their zeal did not diminish as the year 2000 approached. They still took very seriously Jesus’ command: “Make disciples of people of all the nations.” (Matthew 28:19, 20) The number of active

publishers of the good news in the last service year of the 20th century reached a new peak of 5,912,492. They spent the remarkable total of 1,144,566,849 hours talking to others about God and his purposes. They made 420,047,796 return visits on interested ones and conducted 4,433,884 free home Bible studies. What a wonderful record of zealous service!

⁶ Last January, the Governing Body announced an adjustment in the hour requirement for pioneers. Many took advantage of this to enter the ranks of regular or auxiliary pioneers. For example, during the first four calendar months of 1999, the Netherlands branch office received four times as many regular pioneer applications as during the same period a year before. Ghana reports: “Since the new pioneer hour goal went into effect, the ranks of our regular pioneers have steadily gone up.” In the 1999 service year, the number of pioneers worldwide reached 738,343 —a wonderful demonstration of ‘zeal for fine works.’ —Titus 2:14.

⁷ Has Jehovah blessed this zealous activity? Yes. Through Isaiah he says: “Raise your eyes all around and see! They have all of them been collected together; they have come to you. From far away your own sons keep coming, and your daughters who will be taken care of on the flank.” (Isaiah 60:4) Anointed “sons” and “daughters” who have been gathered in are still zealously serving God. And now, Jesus’ other sheep are being gathered to the side of Jehovah’s anointed “sons” and “daughters” in 234 lands and islands of the sea.

“Every Good Work”

⁸ Christians have the responsibility to

4. Who are the “kings” and the “nations” referred to at Isaiah 60:3?

5. (a) What facts show that the zeal of Jehovah’s people has not diminished? (b) Which countries had outstanding increases in 1999? (See chart on pages 17-20.)

6. What new arrangement was made for pioneers, and what response was there?

7. How has Jehovah blessed the zealous activity of his servants?

8. In what ‘good works’ are Jehovah’s Witnesses active?

preach the good news of the Kingdom and to help interested ones to become disciples. But they are “equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:17) Thus, they lovingly care for their families, show hospitality, and visit the sick.

(1 Timothy 5:8; Hebrews 13:16)

And volunteers are involved in such projects as building Kingdom Halls—a work that also gives a witness. In Togo, after the construction of one hall, the responsible ones of a local charismatic church wanted to know why Jehovah’s Witnesses were able to construct their own buildings while the church had to hire people for this purpose! Togo reports that the construction of good-quality Kingdom Halls has such a positive effect on the neighborhood that some people try to rent or build houses in localities where halls are going to be built.

⁹ Sometimes, another kind of good work is called for. Many lands during the last service year were struck by disasters, and frequently the first on the scene to render aid were Jehovah’s Witnesses. For example, much of Honduras was devastated by Hurricane Mitch. Quickly, the branch formed emergency committees to organize relief efforts. Witnesses in Honduras and many other lands donated clothes, food, medicine, and other basic items. Regional Building Committees used their skills to rebuild houses. Soon, our brothers who were victims of the disaster were being helped to return to their regular activities. In Ecuador, Jehovah’s Witnesses came to the aid of their brothers when serious flooding destroyed some homes. After watching the efficient way they had dealt with the situation, a government official said: “If I had this group, I would do marvels! People like you should be in all parts of the world.” Such good work brings praise to Jehovah God and

9. How have Jehovah’s Witnesses responded when disasters have struck?



is evidence of our “godly devotion [that] is beneficial for all things.”—1 Timothy 4:8.

They “Come Flying Just Like a Cloud”

¹⁰ Jehovah now asks: “Who are these that come flying just like a cloud, and like doves to their birdhouse holes? For in me the islands

themselves will keep hoping, the ships of Tarshish also as at the first, in order to bring your sons from far away . . . Foreigners will actually build your walls, and their own kings will minister to you.” (Isaiah 60:8-10) First to respond to Jehovah’s ‘shining forth’ were his “sons,” anointed Christians. Then came the “foreigners,” the great crowd, who loyally minister to their anointed brothers, following their lead in preaching the good news. Thus, although the number of the anointed is dwindling, Jehovah’s name is being declared around the earth as never before.

¹¹ As a result, millions are flocking “like doves to their birdhouse holes,” finding refuge within the Christian congregation. Hundreds of thousands are added each year, and the way is open for yet more. Isaiah says: “Your gates will actually be kept open constantly; they will not be closed even by day or by night, in order to bring to you the resources of the nations.” (Isaiah 60:11) Last year 323,439 were baptized in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah, and he has not yet closed the gates. “The desirable things of all the nations,” members of the great crowd, are still crowding through them. (Haggai 2:7) None who want to leave the darkness are turned away. (John 12:46) May all such ones never lose their appreciation for the light!

10. Despite the dwindling number of the anointed, why is Jehovah’s name being declared as never before?

11. (a) What is still continuing and with what result in 1999? (b) Which countries had outstanding baptism figures for 1999? (See chart on pages 17-20.)

Fearless in the Face of Opposition

¹² Those who love the darkness hate Jehovah's light. (John 3:19) Some even try to extinguish that light. This is not unexpected. Even Jesus, "the true light that gives light to every sort of man," was ridiculed, opposed, and finally killed by his countrymen. (John 1:9) Throughout the 20th century, Jehovah's Witnesses too have been mocked, imprisoned, banned, even killed, as they faithfully reflected Jehovah's light. In recent years, opponents have resorted to spreading lies in the media about those who reflect God's light. Some want to make people believe that Jehovah's Witnesses are dangerous and should be restricted or banned. Have such opposers succeeded?

¹³ No. Where appropriate, Jehovah's Witnesses have gone to the media to explain the facts. As a result, Jehovah's name has been widely published in newspapers and magazines and on radio and television. This has had good results in the preaching work. In Denmark, for example, a program on national TV dealt with the subject "Why the faith of the Danes is declining." Along with others, Jehovah's Witnesses were interviewed. Afterward, a lady who had seen the program commented: "It was so clear who had the spirit of God." A study was started with her.

¹⁴ Jehovah's Witnesses know that many in this world will oppose them. (John 17:14) Still, they are strengthened by Isaiah's prophecy: "To you the sons of those afflicting you must go, bowing down; and all those treating

you disrespectfully must bend down at the very soles of your feet, and they will have to call you the city of Jehovah, Zion of the Holy One of Israel." (Isaiah 60:14) To their chagrin, opposers will soon have to recognize that they have, in effect, been fighting against God himself. Who can win such a battle?

¹⁵ Jehovah further promises: "I will even set you as a thing of pride to time indefinite . . . You will actually suck the milk of nations, and the breast of kings you will suck; and you will be certain to know that I, Jehovah, am your Savior." (Isaiah 60:15, 16) Yes, Jehovah is the Savior of his people. If they rely on him, they will last "to time indefinite." And they will "suck the milk of nations," using certain available resources for the advance-

ment of true worship. For example, wise use of computer and communications technology facilitates the simultaneous publication of *The Watchtower* in 121 languages and *Awake!* in 62. A specific computer software program has been designed to help in rendering the *New World Translation* into new languages, and such translation brings much joy. When the Croatian version of the Christian Greek Scriptures was released in 1999, thousands gave way to tears of joy. One elderly brother said: "I have waited for this Bible for so long. Now I can die in peace!" The circulation of the *New World Translation*, in whole or in part, has passed 100 million in 34 languages.

High Moral Standards

¹⁶ Jesus said: "He that practices vile things

15. How do Jehovah's Witnesses "suck the milk of nations," and how has this been reflected in their teaching and evangelizing work?

16, 17. (a) Although difficult, why is it vital to maintain Jehovah's high standards? (b) What experience illustrates that young people can avoid pollution by the world?



12. How have those who love the darkness tried to extinguish the light?

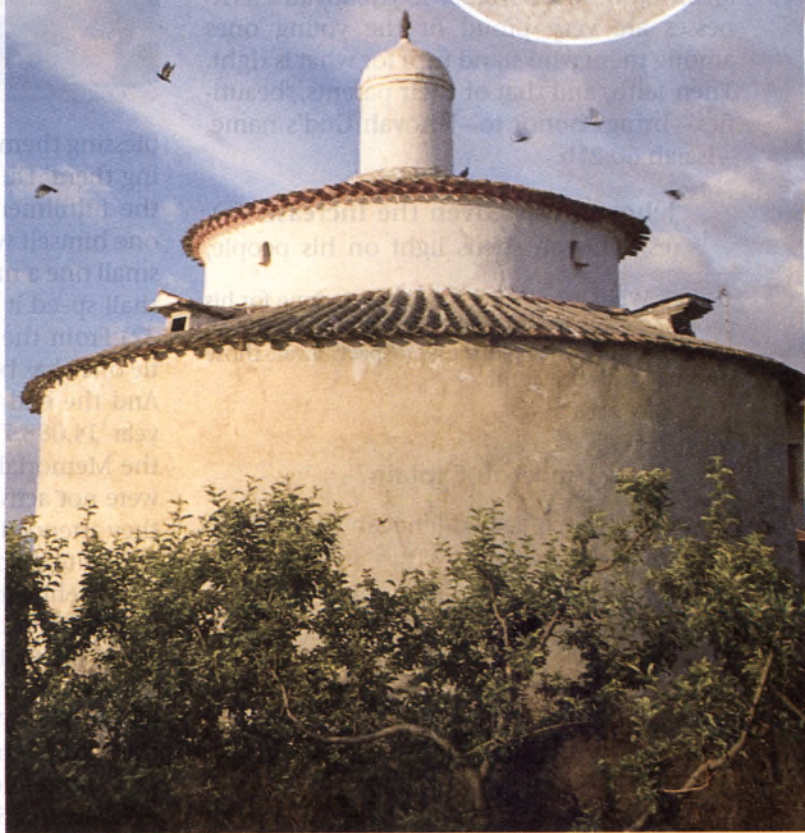
13. What has resulted from discreetly presenting facts concerning our work to the media?

14. To their chagrin, what will opposers soon be forced to recognize?

**People are still
flocking to
Jehovah's
organization**

hates the light." (John 3:20) On the other hand, those who remain in the light love Jehovah's high standards. Jehovah, through Isaiah, says: "As for your people, all of them will be righteous." (Isaiah 60:21a) It can be a challenge to maintain righteous standards in a world where sexual immorality, lying, greed, and pride are so prevalent. For example, in some lands, economies are booming and it is easy to get sidetracked into a single-minded pursuit of wealth. However, Paul warned: "Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin." (1 Timothy 6:9) How tragic it is when someone gets so deeply involved in business enterprises that he sacrifices the truly important things, such as Christian association, sacred service, moral principles, and family responsibilities!

¹⁷ Maintaining righteous standards can be especially



*We are happy that Jehovah has left
the door wide open for ones who
love the light*

difficult for the young, when so many of their peers are involved in drug abuse and immorality. In Suriname, a 14-year-old girl was approached by a good-looking boy at school and invited to have sexual relations. She refused, explaining that the Bible forbids such things outside marriage. Other girls at school mocked her and tried to pressure her to change her mind, saying that everyone wanted to sleep with that particular boy. Still, the young girl stood firm. A few weeks later, the boy was diagnosed HIV positive and became very ill. The girl was happy that she had obeyed Jehovah's command to 'abstain from fornication.' (Acts 15:28, 29) Jehovah's Witnesses are very proud of the young ones among them who stand firm for what is right. Their faith, and that of their parents, 'beautifies'—brings honor to—Jehovah God's name.—Isaiah 60:21b.

Jehovah Has Given the Increase

¹⁸ Yes, Jehovah sheds light on his people,

18. (a) What great thing has Jehovah done for his people? (b) What evidence is there that growth will continue, and what glorious prospects await those who stay with the light?

Can You Explain?

- Who have reflected Jehovah's glory in these last days?
- What indicates that the zeal of Jehovah's people has not diminished?
- What are some good works in which Jehovah's Witnesses are busy?
- Despite fierce opposition, of what are we confident?



blessing them, guiding them, and strengthening them. During the 20th century, they saw the fulfillment of Isaiah's words: "The little one himself will become a thousand, and the small one a mighty nation. I myself, Jehovah, shall speed it up in its own time." (Isaiah 60: 22) From the handful back in 1919, "the little one" has become more than "a thousand." And the end of such growth is not yet! Last year 14,088,751 attended the celebration of the Memorial of Jesus' death. Many of these were not active Witnesses. We are happy that they attended that important observance, and we invite them to keep on moving toward the light. Jehovah still shines brightly upon his people. The door to his organization is still open. Let all, then, be determined to stay with Jehovah's light. What blessings that results in for us now! And what joy that will bring in the future when all creation will praise Jehovah and rejoice in the splendor of his glory!—Revelation 5:13, 14.

1999 SERVICE YEAR REPORT OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES WORLDWIDE

Country or Territory	Population	1999 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, One Pub- lisher to:	1999 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 1998	1998 Av. Pubs.	1999 No. Bptd.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Cong.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Atten- dance
Alaska	653,000	2,248	290	2,037	-1*	2,068	71	189	29	311,068	723	4,586
Albania	3,262,000	1,805	1,807	1,641	27	1,294	400	526	38	718,745	3,124	8,971
American Samoa	62,900	203	310	193	6	182	6	27	3	40,813	176	597
Andorra	65,877	168	392	141	2	138	1	19	2	27,323	54	255
Angola	13,009,000	40,272	323	38,395	8	35,536	4,293	5,262	678	9,922,307	72,536	155,031
Anguilla	10,000	38	263	29	7	27	3	4	1	5,889	30	140
Antigua	65,952	380	174	342	2	335	15	47	5	72,845	354	1,037
Argentina	36,124,931	120,849	299	117,809	1	116,584	5,895	14,158	1,690	22,688,046	70,111	252,412
Armenia	3,774,000	5,254	718	4,874	20	4,061	543	889	39	1,472,081	6,317	16,027
Aruba	95,650	643	149	609	7	567	25	33	8	87,111	474	1,914
Australia	19,000,000	61,273	310	59,768	-1*	60,226	1,822	5,126	770	9,768,738	18,920	109,040
Austria	8,102,000	20,577	394	20,335	-1*	20,498	494	1,584	299	3,362,061	7,696	33,099
Azores	244,968	538	455	517	-1*	521	19	57	15	103,222	287	1,187
Bahamas	255,055	1,456	175	1,363	1	1,350	40	168	26	278,500	1,211	3,254
Bangladesh	127,609,000	97	1,315,557	85	4	82	9	12	2	17,786	92	190
Barbados	260,490	2,320	112	2,260	1	2,231	60	213	25	361,840	1,485	5,172
Belarus	10,298,000	2,550	4,038	2,412	10	2,187	283	332	26	568,029	2,042	6,413
Belau	18,467	73	253	69	13	61	6	18	1	21,920	127	341
Belgium	10,213,752	26,048	392	25,395	-2*	26,007	529	1,837	377	3,921,708	7,236	46,193
Belize	230,000	1,153	199	1,110	-2*	1,134	73	158	27	237,954	1,077	4,552
Benin	5,532,000	5,825	950	5,758	6	5,453	483	826	118	1,394,395	8,107	23,768
Bermuda	62,472	429	146	396	-3*	410	11	57	5	85,334	219	949
Bolivia	8,137,113	15,388	529	14,596	4	13,996	1,398	2,864	238	4,111,302	17,279	53,312
Bonaire	14,763	69	214	63	5	60	9	2	1	9,060	145	229
Bosnia & Herzegovina	4,204,300	983	4,277	925	10	841	76	241	11	337,540	633	2,090
Botswana	1,611,021	1,127	1,429	1,045	2	1,027	48	106	26	208,181	1,202	3,002
Brazil	163,670,000	528,034	310	483,113	4	462,395	43,098	48,339	7,730	84,576,869	462,170	1,260,961
Britain	59,093,450	126,535	467	121,723	-1*	123,191	2,844	10,686	1,454	18,894,151	37,383	215,423
Bulgaria	8,329,000	1,012	8,230	982	4	946	86	118	17	216,847	826	2,268
Burkina Faso	10,352,000	998	10,373	884	8	816	79	159	22	272,728	1,293	2,557
Burundi	6,194,220	2,778	2,230	2,541	22	2,078	491	343	49	698,284	4,947	8,857
Cambodia	11,400,000	43	265,116	33	32	25	5	17	1	15,725	90	213
Cameroon	14,859,000	27,021	550	26,295	4	25,396	1,535	2,134	621	4,575,483	25,697	81,696
Canada	30,452,144	111,032	274	108,437	-1*	109,664	2,467	10,666	1,384	18,694,308	31,821	182,327
Cape Verde	405,748	1,415	287	1,384	3	1,347	146	229	24	352,589	2,516	5,020
Cayman Islands	32,000	139	230	124	13	110	5	14	1	22,477	87	324
Central Afr. Rep.	3,915,000	2,305	1,698	2,270	2	2,235	228	399	52	628,119	3,634	12,789
Chad	7,000,000	604	11,589	550	3	533	51	109	17	173,862	836	3,420
Chile	15,017,760	59,519	252	55,415	3	53,643	3,318	8,133	645	12,219,671	46,426	142,591
Chuuk	70,381	56	1,257	52	2	51	21	3	3	26,245	169	663
Colombia	40,826,816	102,873	397	96,452	10	87,457	9,782	11,877	1,480	20,732,452	139,477	385,645
Comoros	630,000	8	78,750	6	0	6	1	1	1	1,592	8	27
Congo, Dem. Rep. of	50,000,000	113,248	442	95,319	1	94,475	12,721	12,855	2,618	23,115,196	177,119	446,362
Congo, Rep. of	2,900,000	4,001	725	3,155	-1*	3,198	224	601	107	1,029,675	11,628	15,085
Cook Islands	19,103	144	133	136	12	121	6	19	2	30,193	117	377
Costa Rica	3,558,697	19,257	185	18,587	1	18,343	1,506	1,540	239	2,932,848	12,956	46,494
Côte d'Ivoire	15,903,078	6,078	2,616	5,818	3	5,636	654	1,008	149	1,632,808	10,562	21,638
Croatia	4,784,265	5,357	893	5,257	1	5,188	227	692	70	1,169,245	2,157	9,753
Cuba	11,157,000	85,714	130	83,940	5	79,775	6,114	13,089	1,252	17,211,604	134,286	174,142

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Curaçao	139,650	1,514	92	1,474	-3*	1,517	40	126	20	234,007	1,328	3,825
Cyprus	663,300	1,796	369	1,778	1	1,759	64	246	22	365,851	805	3,229
Czech Republic	10,283,245	16,301	631	16,058	-1*	16,188	437	1,054	243	2,300,575	6,150	31,435
Denmark	5,319,111	15,071	353	14,700	-2*	14,987	261	1,166	221	2,127,613	3,649	22,898
Dominica	71,794	354	203	334	-1*	338	13	42	8	80,174	395	1,102
Dominican Rep.	8,359,556	22,906	365	21,684	3	21,075	1,177	4,137	342	5,604,737	34,380	72,679
Ecuador	12,411,232	40,037	310	37,960	6	35,866	4,011	6,401	526	9,362,570	52,519	155,714
El Salvador	6,154,311	27,990	220	26,183	4	25,222	1,608	2,538	474	5,021,749	24,760	76,124
Equatorial Guinea	462,107	645	716	563	10	510	57	82	11	144,166	1,402	3,497
Estonia	1,445,580	3,745	386	3,600	1	3,569	246	462	45	728,824	2,594	8,103
Ethiopia	60,000,000	6,118	9,807	5,790	3	5,623	470	927	95	1,512,871	3,363	15,987
Faeroe Islands	44,958	76	592	71	-1*	72		23	4	20,315	37	123
Falkland Islands	2,221	8	278	7	0	7		1	1	842	2	12
Fiji	775,077	2,009	386	1,928	1	1,900	137	244	31	396,316	1,616	6,676
Finland	5,159,646	19,557	264	19,269	0	19,254	415	1,803	304	2,815,093	6,967	27,935
France	58,416,500	118,079	495	114,918	-3*	118,572	2,245	7,494	1,626	17,007,808	28,660	204,312
French Guiana	157,274	1,511	104	1,477	1	1,465	84	185	22	333,008	2,128	5,077
Gabon	1,014,976	2,226	456	1,977	14	1,740	78	275	45	485,098	4,745	7,978
Gambia, The	1,200,000	132	9,091	110	25	88	14	21	3	35,132	143	296
Georgia	5,441,000	14,085	386	13,209	8	12,177	1,304	1,811	132	2,629,498	5,935	36,669
Germany	82,037,011	167,497	490	164,263	-1*	166,136	3,751	10,534	2,114	24,455,539	58,455	270,956
Ghana	19,755,942	61,176	323	58,860	7	55,257	4,816	5,953	988	12,091,331	129,117	202,167
Gibraltar	27,025	113	239	101	-4*	105		10	2	17,651	27	179
Greece	10,259,900	27,327	375	27,214	1	27,007	566	2,986	425	4,971,495	9,430	42,879
Greenland	56,087	158	355	146	-5*	153	3	32	7	36,096	91	309
Grenada	110,000	631	174	607	3	592	21	69	8	120,378	566	1,277
Guadeloupe	422,000	7,675	55	7,483	-2*	7,630	243	442	103	1,055,983	5,496	16,595
Guam	163,517	619	264	602	-1*	607	38	134	11	176,104	876	1,984
Guatemala	9,526,000	20,323	469	18,613	4	17,981	1,380	2,040	271	3,655,210	15,861	55,330
Guinea	6,960,000	692	10,058	619	-13*	709	55	136	19	215,691	1,141	2,182
Guinea-Bissau	1,300,000	111	11,712	65	-4*	68	1	27	1	34,100	204	316
Guyana	777,648	2,073	375	1,980	3	1,925	99	262	36	397,456	2,189	8,462
Haiti	7,300,000	12,070	605	11,053	3	10,745	740	1,261	214	2,243,706	13,431	47,214
Hawaii	1,193,001	7,673	155	7,409	-1*	7,464	215	1,160	95	1,627,892	4,765	17,865
Honduras	6,260,000	12,002	522	11,074	5	10,546	828	1,399	163	2,436,633	12,372	38,933
Hong Kong	6,600,000	4,450	1,483	4,335	2	4,235	257	886	43	1,200,830	3,872	7,307
Hungary	10,135,000	20,762	488	19,818	3	19,268	1,222	1,835	240	3,452,784	10,364	41,064
Iceland	275,264	328	839	321	2	314	3	31	8	51,633	136	552
India	989,227,236	21,212	46,635	19,614	6	18,510	1,608	1,876	494	3,388,536	12,758	47,081
Ireland	5,379,900	4,582	1,174	4,483	0	4,493	82	607	113	955,118	1,579	7,996
Israel	9,095,000	992	9,168	950	10	863	96	96	12	198,890	753	2,162
Italy	57,563,000	228,566	252	225,104	0	224,504	5,847	30,674	3,031	48,542,936	77,958	395,497
Jamaica	2,502,030	11,030	227	10,509	2	10,292	545	1,114	188	1,786,417	9,811	31,443
Japan	125,860,006	222,857	565	222,078	0	222,347	5,343	81,125	3,732	81,773,468	152,198	357,053
Kazakhstan	16,471,000	12,585	1,309	11,794	5	11,229	1,415	1,380	109	2,539,090	10,303	31,941
Kenya	29,500,000	14,238	2,072	13,403	8	12,381	1,927	2,550	251	3,978,662	17,951	34,539
Kiribati	78,300	89	880	80	19	67	5	16	1	30,674	200	246
Korea, Republic of	46,858,453	87,179	537	86,256	2	84,946	4,997	32,084	1,502	33,036,553	53,150	136,671
Kosrae	8,989	19	473	16	0	16		3	1	4,204	37	140
Kyrgyzstan	4,576,000	3,637	1,258	3,482	6	3,287	355	380	32	654,155	2,208	8,400
Latvia	2,432,200	1,965	1,238	1,836	8	1,698	205	321	26	477,722	1,710	4,193
Lebanon	3,505,794	3,529	993	3,474	-1*	3,516	100	281	70	596,379	1,608	6,459
Lesotho	2,109,080	2,573	820	2,369	8	2,203	156	330	58	597,153	2,884	6,806
Liberia	2,880,000	2,899	993	2,754	19	2,308	373	615	46	989,276	7,878	14,079

Libya	5,648,000	3	1,882,667	2	-67*	6				110		19
Liechtenstein	31,320	59	531	52	4	50				6,386	15	89
Lithuania	3,704,000	2,347	1,578	2,175	9	1,988	224	319	24	500,396	1,456	5,091
Luxembourg	498,200	1,917	260	1,869	0	1,865	48	141	33	300,275	694	3,451
Macao	500,000	139	3,597	127	0	127	5	29	2	39,739	100	256
Macedonia	1,965,018	960	2,047	916	9	840	83	119	16	202,839	580	2,606
Madagascar	14,750,244	10,411	1,417	10,117	8	9,362	1,183	1,881	225	2,674,919	21,755	46,392
Madeira	260,427	1,080	241	1,048	1	1,036	61	79	16	162,525	517	2,072
Malawi	11,500,000	43,767	263	42,020	2	41,205	4,354	5,459	638	8,761,723	31,272	115,475
Malaysia	22,711,900	2,046	11,101	2,010	5	1,920	146	339	46	517,710	2,727	5,245
Mali	11,500,000	208	55,288	174	4	167	12	57	7	88,004	394	763
Malta	376,340	532	707	523	-2*	532	20	56	6	90,048	175	901
Marshall Islands	63,319	205	309	198	1	196	17	51	4	67,419	561	1,239
Martinique	380,460	4,031	94	3,912	-2*	3,988	113	338	47	685,417	2,589	8,648
Mauritius	1,131,943	1,317	859	1,284	1	1,269	73	103	19	231,112	1,026	3,146
Mayotte	137,320	59	2,327	53	6	50	2	12	2	16,745	62	116
Mexico	97,637,919	526,478	185	515,785	2	503,406	30,622	62,359	11,329	103,478,091	522,162	1,589,906
Moldova	4,293,700	16,739	257	16,013	8	14,865	1,608	1,377	163	2,311,237	8,720	38,924
Mongolia	2,579,000	18	143,278	15	88	8		4	1	5,924	25	83
Montserrat	3,000	8	375	7	17	6		2	1	999	2	36
Mozambique	17,299,184	30,696	564	28,923	5	27,444	2,063	5,121	691	6,996,273	38,927	104,922
Myanmar	47,500,000	2,571	18,475	2,516	3	2,451	148	314	101	540,254	1,633	6,076
Namibia	1,749,953	963	1,817	858	1	851	65	76	19	161,505	814	2,345
Nauru	10,600	9	1,178	7	-22*	9		1	1	975	14	87
Nepal	23,698,000	385	61,553	362	9	331	40	58	4	86,155	408	1,208
Netherlands	15,760,225	31,420	502	29,596	-2*	30,200	554	1,848	419	4,000,863	7,727	52,078
Nevis	10,080	54	187	51	11	46	1	7	1	10,964	44	143
New Caledonia	200,000	1,578	127	1,489	-3*	1,541	57	128	23	249,930	1,141	4,326
New Zealand	3,781,300	13,022	290	12,548	0	12,582	455	1,271	164	2,171,517	5,407	25,489
Nicaragua	4,900,000	14,410	340	13,632	1	13,536	963	1,745	239	3,023,130	18,170	61,205
Niger	7,490,000	232	32,284	212	-2*	216	14	44	7	69,280	343	1,179
Nigeria	107,129,469	226,353	473	216,173	4	207,546	17,449	30,936	4,229	45,176,604	336,511	558,595
Niue	2,088	31	67	28	-13*	32		3	1	4,950	22	49
Norfolk Island	1,887	21	90	16	23	13		1	1	2,055	4	29
Norway	4,459,565	9,800	455	9,458	-1*	9,523	164	582	175	1,211,134	2,675	16,173
Pakistan	133,191,600	501	265,851	460	12	409	58	71	10	116,787	489	1,869
Panama	2,809,280	9,695	290	9,085	1	8,957	477	1,346	195	1,971,381	8,837	28,835
Papua New Guinea	4,616,302	3,434	1,344	3,065	2	2,999	285	315	52	606,788	2,913	15,973
Paraguay	5,335,842	6,883	775	6,145	5	5,872	540	953	90	1,432,737	6,549	13,864
Peru	24,800,768	69,965	354	62,690	8	58,122	5,908	14,515	750	18,637,851	86,911	235,770
Philippines	73,000,000	132,496	551	128,106	2	125,720	8,836	22,706	3,486	25,629,903	85,280	407,094
Pohnpei	40,078	67	598	63	-5*	66		13	1	17,897	151	600
Poland	38,665,000	124,074	312	123,052	-1*	123,952	4,070	6,659	1,756	14,335,650	40,324	232,374
Portugal	9,473,299	47,206	201	46,591	0	46,428	1,589	3,516	650	7,333,229	18,220	88,715
Puerto Rico	3,800,000	25,578	149	25,142	-3*	25,964	1,152	2,529	328	4,198,529	12,616	61,293
Réunion	705,072	2,701	261	2,604	-4*	2,703	75	219	37	445,202	1,250	5,515
Rodrigues	35,332	40	883	33	3	32		5	1	9,329	59	76
Romania	22,488,595	37,915	593	37,332	2	36,680	1,691	3,016	527	5,529,802	15,922	83,095
Rota	2,625	9	292	9	0	9		1	1	975	9	58
Russia	147,739,000	107,111	1,379	102,513	11	92,722	12,341	12,843	904	23,187,402	86,625	259,093
Rwanda	7,883,000	6,828	1,155	5,969	16	5,163	760	1,156	92	2,133,423	11,903	20,875
Saba	1,000	1	1,000	1	0	1		1		753	5	7
St. Eustatius	1,500	16	94	15	-17*	18		1	1	1,908	12	33
St. Helena	4,971	153	32	145	-4*	151	1	2	3	12,754	33	340
St. Kitts	31,800	156	204	141	-10*	157	13	15	3	24,527	148	402

Country or Territory	Population	1999 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, One Pub- lisher to:	1999 Av. Pubs.	% Inc. Over 1998	1998 Av. Pubs.	1999 No. Bptd.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Cong.	Total Hours	Av. Bible Studies	Memorial Atten- dance
St. Lucia	138,150	721	192	665	0	665	46	109	9	157,396	789	1,758
St. Maarten	24,000	282	85	276	3	269	21	41	3	61,137	297	876
St. Pierre & Miquelon	6,300	17	371	16	0	16	2	2	1	2,841	8	26
St. Vincent	107,600	307	350	286	-4*	299	7	42	7	68,724	305	760
Saipan	69,421	176	394	163	-6*	174	8	24	2	41,257	228	559
Samoa	169,371	399	424	377	2	370	44	71	7	102,240	366	1,294
San Marino	25,600	184	139	180	2	177	8	20	2	37,633	54	284
São Tomé & Príncipe	150,123	275	546	250	3	242	50	54	6	78,490	493	1,014
Senegal	9,100,000	863	10,545	827	1	817	44	145	21	254,269	1,134	2,132
Seychelles	76,181	213	358	194	11	174	32	20	3	41,871	246	517
Sierra Leone	4,510,000	806	5,596	734	5	696	79	123	15	198,255	1,182	2,359
Slovakia	5,395,100	12,416	435	12,263	-1*	12,411	385	564	183	1,525,450	3,606	24,016
Slovenia	1,979,680	1,866	1,061	1,836	0	1,833	56	226	30	410,562	648	3,089
Solomon Islands	442,404	1,562	283	1,487	3	1,400	141	232	39	334,158	1,658	5,895
South Africa	40,583,573	67,069	605	64,388	6	62,408	4,541	7,734	1,331	13,620,331	64,531	157,131
Spain	39,852,651	102,853	387	96,259	-1*	97,384	1,897	10,542	1,313	18,650,335	23,412	156,532
Sri Lanka	18,600,000	3,171	5,866	2,931	7	2,735	299	383	69	634,697	2,400	8,196
Suriname	438,026	1,978	221	1,932	3	1,875	141	251	35	404,380	1,948	5,923
Swaziland	980,722	2,029	483	1,924	3	1,871	134	277	63	491,421	2,310	5,604
Sweden	8,857,361	23,559	376	22,869	-2*	23,366	461	2,097	344	3,340,781	7,034	36,599
Switzerland	7,114,600	18,077	394	17,638	-2*	18,023	407	1,074	300	2,586,357	6,578	29,882
Tahiti	219,521	1,874	117	1,837	-3*	1,897	48	146	34	299,035	1,490	5,106
Taiwan	21,500,000	3,964	5,424	3,775	6	3,576	223	970	56	1,296,832	4,504	9,142
Tajikistan	5,927,000	309	19,181	241	10	220	29	21	1	52,309	365	653
Tanzania	30,000,000	8,408	3,568	7,457	8	6,914	859	1,308	188	2,039,185	9,026	22,667
Thailand	61,466,178	1,827	33,643	1,775	2	1,744	130	293	54	428,291	1,610	4,032
Tinian	5,000	20	250	14	New	10,233	741	5	1	6,733	26	40
Togo	4,406,000	11,011	400	10,502	3	5	5	1,319	157	2,343,346	22,613	44,322
Tokelau	1,500	5	300	5	0	98	10	23	1	431	2	20
Tonga	97,784	128	764	111	13	98	10	23	3	36,282	202	332
Trinidad & Tobago	1,274,799	8,010	159	7,860	4	7,576	417	1,316	91	1,650,029	8,325	20,112
Turkey	68,000,000	1,559	43,618	1,536	3	1,498	52	209	23	357,065	855	2,619
Turks & Caicos Isls.	16,863	131	129	117	13	104	6	9	3	24,931	171	411
Tuvalu	9,403	45	209	35	-13*	40	5	5	3	7,507	49	192
Uganda	21,345,000	2,370	9,006	2,210	6	2,081	185	274	34	517,440	3,252	6,702
Ukraine	50,105,600	107,045	468	99,998	11	90,076	12,320	11,259	937	19,983,139	62,324	247,193
U.S. of America	271,724,159	980,419	277	940,650	0	944,218	32,585	112,182	11,257	174,594,349	403,557	2,073,368
Uruguay	3,030,000	10,550	287	10,385	1	10,310	385	841	137	1,489,895	6,774	23,096
Vanuatu	185,000	280	661	264	6	248	14	23	6	48,199	420	1,401
Venezuela	24,500,000	84,958	288	79,390	3	77,323	4,973	12,745	1,185	18,902,017	87,787	261,878
Virgin Isls. (Brit.)	17,000	169	101	154	4	148	4	24	2	31,790	126	516
Virgin Isls. (U.S.)	104,000	628	166	614	-3*	630	36	80	9	122,628	564	1,859
Wallis & Futuna Isls.	15,000	46	326	40	11	36	1	7	1	12,001	67	197
Yap	11,174	30	372	27	-7*	29	9	9	1	12,188	61	217
Yugoslavia, F. R.	10,546,983	4,026	2,620	3,888	0	3,883	198	541	52	902,803	1,656	6,296
Zambia	10,347,116	107,233	96	96,544	5	92,298	7,654	11,046	2,089	18,452,974	122,812	399,302
Zimbabwe	12,684,679	26,976	470	26,126	1	25,848	1,741	3,160	856	5,262,896	34,053	65,521
29 Other Lands		25,221		23,112	6.7	21,653	1,544	2,261	493	4,823,174	24,219	56,527
GRAND TOTAL (234 lands)		5,912,492		5,653,987	2.0	5,544,059	323,439	738,343	89,985	1,144,566,849	4,433,884	14,088,751

During the 1999 service year, the Watch Tower Society spent \$64,475,225.00 in caring for special pioneers, missionaries, and traveling overseers in their field service assignments.

MEMORIAL PARTAKERS WORLDWIDE: 8,755

* Percentage of decrease

The “Polish Brethren” Why Were They Persecuted?

In 1638 the Polish parliament dealt a severe blow to a small religious group known as the Polish Brethren. A church and a printing press belonging to the group were destroyed. The University of Raków was closed down, and the professors who had taught there were sent into exile.

Twenty years later, the parliament went a step further. It ordered every member of the group, which may have numbered 10,000 or more, to leave the country. How did the situation become so critical in a country that, at the time, was considered one of the most tolerant in all of Europe? What had the Polish Brethren done to deserve such severe treatment?

IT ALL started when a serious breach developed within Poland’s Calvinist Church. A major point of contention was the doctrine of the Trinity. Leaders of a progressive movement within the church rejected the doctrine as unscriptural. This angered church leadership and caused the progressive movement to break away.

Calvinists called the dissidents Arians,* but the adherents of the new group preferred to call themselves Christians or the Polish Brethren. They are also known as Socinians, after Laelius Socinus, an Italian who was influenced by Servetus and whose nephew Faustus Socinus traveled to Poland and became prominent in the movement.

At that time a Polish nobleman, Jan Sienieński, sought to give the new church what he called “a quiet, secluded place” in which to grow. Exercising a special privilege that had

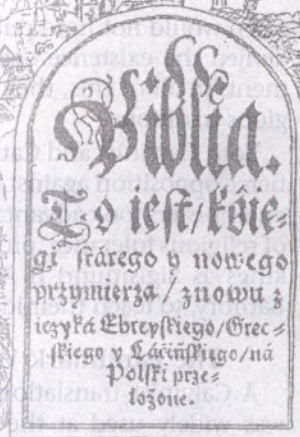
* Arius (250-336 C.E.) was an Alexandrian priest who argued that Jesus is inferior to the Father. The Council of Nicaea rejected his view in 325 C.E.—See June 22, 1989, *Awake!* page 27.

been granted by the king of Poland, Sienieński founded the town of Raków, which later became the center of Socinianism in Poland. Sienieński granted the citizens of Raków a number of rights, including the right to worship freely.

Craftsmen, doctors, pharmacists, townsfolk, and gentry of different denominations were attracted to the new town. In addition, ministers flocked there from Poland, Lithuania, Transylvania, France, and even England. However, not all these new arrivals shared the Socinians’ beliefs; so for the next three years, from 1569 to 1572, Raków became a site of endless theological discussions. With what result?

A House Divided

The Socinian movement itself became divided, with those who embraced more radical views taking one side and those whose ideas were more moderate taking the other. Despite their differences, however, the beliefs they held in common were distinctive. They rejected the Trinity; they refused to practice infant baptism; they generally did not bear arms and



Title card of *Biblia nieszweska* by Szymon Budny, 1572

often would not hold public office.* They also denied the existence of hell as a place of torment. In all of this, they ignored popular religious traditions.

Both Calvinist and Catholic clergy mounted fierce opposition against the group, but Socinian ministers took advantage of the atmosphere of religious tolerance, promoted by such Polish kings as Sigismund II Augustus and Stephen Báthory, to teach their ideas.

The Landmark Work of Budny

A Calvinist translation of the Bible, which was widely used at the time, was not meeting the needs of many readers. The translation was rendered, not from the original languages, but from the Latin *Vulgate* and a contemporary French translation. "Faithfulness and accuracy of thought were lost in the quest for beautiful style," says one authority. Many errors were introduced. Therefore, a well-known scholar named Szymon Budny was invited to correct the translation. He decided that it would be easier to produce a completely new translation than to correct the old one. Budny set to work on the project about 1567.

When translating, Budny thoroughly analyzed every word and its variants in a way no one in Poland had done before. Where the Hebrew text posed difficulties, he indicated the literal translation in marginal notes. When necessary, he coined new words and tried to use the simple, everyday Polish of his time. His goal was to present the reader with a faithful and accurate translation of the Bible.

Budny's translation of the entire Bible was published in 1572. However, the publishers of the work corrupted his translation of the Greek Scriptures. Undeterred, Budny set to work on a revised version, which was completed two years later. Budny's brilliant translation of the Greek Scriptures was superior to the previous Polish translations. Additionally, in many places he restored the divine name, Jehovah.

* See *Awake!*, November 22, 1988, page 19, "The Socinians—Why Did They Reject the Trinity?"

During the final part of the 16th century and the first three decades of the 17th century, Raków, the capital of the movement, became a religious and an intellectual center. There the leaders and writers of the Polish Brethren published their tracts and works.

They Promoted Education

The Polish Brethren's publishing work began to gain momentum about 1600 when a printing press was set up in Raków. The press was capable of producing both small treatises and large books in several languages. As a printing center, Raków soon rivaled the best in Europe. It is believed that as many as 200 publications were printed on that press during the next 40 years. A nearby paper mill, owned by the Polish Brethren, supplied high-quality paper for this literature.

The Polish Brethren soon saw the need to educate their fellow believers and others. To that end, the University of Raków was founded in 1602. Sons of the Polish Brethren, as well as Catholic and Protestant boys, attended classes there. Although the university was a theological seminary, religion was not the only subject taught. Foreign languages, ethics, economics, history, law, logic, natural sciences, mathematics, medicine, and gymnastics were also part of the curriculum. The university had a large library, which continued to grow, thanks to the local printing press.

As the 17th century got under way, it seemed that the Polish Brethren would continue to flourish. Yet, that was not to be.

Church and State Fight Back

Zbigniew Ogonowski of the Polish Academy of Sciences explains: "At the end of the third decade of the 17th century, the situation of the Arians in Poland began to deteriorate quickly." This was due to the increasingly bold activity of the Catholic clergy. The clergy used every possible means, including slander and libel, to discredit the Polish Brethren. The attack was



A house that had belonged to a Socinian minister

Above: Raków today; to the right is the monastery founded in 1650 to eradicate any trace of "Arianism"; below: At this site the Catholic clergy set up a cross to provoke conflict with the Polish Brethren



made easier by a changed political situation in Poland. The new Polish king, Sigismund III Vasa, was an enemy of the Polish Brethren. His successors, especially John II Casimir Vasa, likewise supported the efforts of the Catholic Church to thwart the Polish Brethren.

Matters came to a head with the alleged deliberate profanation of a cross by a few students from Raków. This incident became a pretext for the destruction of the capital of the Polish Brethren. The owner of Raków was accused before a parliamentary court of 'spreading wickedness' by supporting the University of Raków and its printing press. The Polish Brethren were accused of subversive activity, of engaging in orgies, and of living immoral lives. Parliament decided that Raków University should be closed and that the printing press and the church belonging to the Polish Brethren should be destroyed. The believers were ordered to leave town. The university professors were banished from the country under penalty of death. Some Polish Brethren moved to safer havens, like Silesia and Slovakia.

In 1658 parliament decreed that the Polish Brethren were to sell their property and move abroad within three years. Later, that deadline was shortened to two years. Anyone professing their beliefs after that would be executed.

Some Socinians settled in the Netherlands, where they continued their printing activity. In Transylvania a congregation functioned till the beginning of the 18th century. At their meetings, which were conducted up to three times a week, they sang psalms, listened to sermons, and read from a catechism that had been prepared to explain their teachings. In order to preserve the purity of the congregation, fellow believers were corrected, exhorted and, if necessary, expelled.

The Polish Brethren were students of God's Word. They discovered some precious truths, and they unhesitatingly shared them with others. Eventually, however, they were scattered across Europe and found it more and more difficult to maintain their unity. In time, the Polish Brethren disappeared.



REMEMBERING OUR CREATOR FROM YOUTH ON

AS TOLD BY
DAVID Z. HIBSHMAN

"If I have come to the end of my life, I truly hope I have been faithful to Jehovah. I beg him to take care of my David. Thank you for him, Jehovah, and for our marriage. So wonderful, so happy!"

IMAGINE my emotions when after burying my wife in March 1992, I found this last entry in her diary. Just five months earlier, we had celebrated Helen's 60th anniversary in the full-time ministry.

I remember clearly the day in 1931 when Helen and I sat side by side at the convention in Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A. Helen was not quite 14 years old, but she appreciated the significance of that event even more than I did. Helen's enthusiasm for the ministry was manifested shortly afterward when she and her widowed mother became pioneers, as full-time evangelizers among Jehovah's Witnesses are called. They gave up their comfortable home to preach in rural areas of the southern United States.

My Christian Heritage

In 1910 my parents moved with their two small children from eastern Pennsylvania to Grove City, in the western part of the state. There they made a down payment on a modest home and became active members of the Reformed Church. Shortly thereafter they were visited by William Evans, a Bible Student, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then called. Father, who was by then only in his mid-20's, and Mother, who was five years younger, listened to this friendly Welshman and invited him for a meal. Soon they embraced the Bible truths they were learning.

To be closer to the congregation, Father moved the family about 25 miles to the

town of Sharon. Some months later, in 1911 or 1912, Father and Mother were baptized. Charles Taze Russell, the first president of the Watch Tower Society, gave the baptism discourse. I was born on December 4, 1916, when my parents already had four children. At the time of my birth, it was announced: "Another brother to be loved." Hence my name, David, meaning "Beloved."

When I was four weeks old, I was taken to my first convention. In those early days, my father and my older brothers walked several miles to congregation meetings while Mother took my sister and me on the streetcar. Meetings consisted of morning and afternoon sessions. At home, conversation often centered on articles in *The Watchtower* and *The Golden Age*, an earlier name for *Awake!*

Benefiting From Fine Examples

Many pilgrims, as traveling speakers were then called, visited our congregation. They usually spent a day or two with us. One speaker who stands out in my memory was Walter J. Thorn, who had remembered his Grand Creator in 'the days of his young manhood.' (Ecclesiastes 12:1) When I was a boy, I accompanied Father to show the "Photo-Drama of

Creation," a four-part visual and recorded presentation on the history of mankind.

Although Brother Evans and his wife, Miriam, had no children, they became spiritual parents and grandparents to our family. William always addressed Father as "Son," and he and Miriam instilled in our family the evangelizing spirit. In the early part of the 20th century, Brother Evans had made trips back to Wales to introduce Bible truth to the area around Swansea. There he was known as the preacher from America.

In 1928, Brother Evans gave up his employment and began preaching in the hills of West Virginia. My two older brothers, 21-year-old Clarence and 19-year-old Carl, accompanied him. All four of us boys spent many years in the full-time ministry. In fact, all of us served as traveling overseers of Jehovah's Witnesses in our youth. Not long ago Mother's youngest sister, Mary, who is now well into her 90's, wrote me: "How grateful we all are that Brother Evans had zeal for the ministry and visited Grove City!" Aunt Mary is another one who has remembered her Creator since her youth.

Attending Conventions

Only Father and Clarence were able to attend the history-making Cedar Point, Ohio, convention in 1922. By 1924, however, we had an automobile, and our whole family went to the convention in Columbus, Ohio. We children were expected to use our own savings to pay for our meals during the eight-day convention. My parents' view was that all members of the family must learn to support themselves. So we raised chickens and rabbits and maintained beehives, and we boys all had newspaper routes.

When the time came for the Toronto, Canada, convention in 1927, we had a six-month-old baby brother, Paul. I was assigned to stay at home and care for Paul with a married aunt's help while my parents went to Toronto with the other children. I was rewarded

Clockwise from top left: Mom, Dad, Aunt Eva, and brothers Carl and Clarence, 1910



with ten dollars, which I used toward buying myself a new suit. We were always trained to dress well for the meetings and to care for our clothing.

By the time of the memorable convention in 1931 in Columbus, Ohio, Clarence and Carl were married and were pioneering with their wives. They each lived in a home-made mobile home. Carl had married Claire Houston of Wheeling, West Virginia, and that is why I was sitting next to Claire's younger sister, Helen, at the Columbus convention.

The Full-Time Ministry

I graduated from high school in 1932 when I was 15, and the following year delivered a used car to my brother Clarence, who was pioneering in South Carolina. I applied for the pioneer service and began working along with Clarence and his wife. Helen was then pioneering in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, and I wrote her for the first time. In her reply, she inquired: "Are you a pioneer?"

In my letter—Helen kept it until her death nearly 60 years later—I answered: "I am, and I hope I always may be." In that letter, I told Helen about distributing the booklet *The Kingdom, the Hope of the World* to clergymen and to judicial officials in my preaching assignment.

In 1933, Father made me a tent on wheels—an eight-foot-long, six-and-a-half-foot-wide trailer with walls made of canvas stretched around slender uprights and a window both in front and in back. That was my humble abode for the next four years of pioneering.

In March 1934, Clarence and Carl, their wives, Helen and her mother, Clarence's sister-



With Helen in 1947
and in 1992

in-law and I—eight of us—headed west to attend the convention in Los Angeles, California. Some rode and slept in my trailer. I slept in the car, while the rest rented lodging. Since we had car problems, we

arrived in Los Angeles on the second day of the six-day convention. There, on March 26, Helen and I were finally able to symbolize our dedication to Jehovah by water baptism.

At the convention Joseph F. Rutherford, then president of the Watch Tower Society, met personally with all the pioneers. He encouraged us, saying that we were valiant fighters for Bible truth. On that occasion, provision was made to give pioneers monetary help so that they could continue in their ministry.

An Education for Life

When we returned from the convention in Los Angeles, we all shared the Kingdom message with people in entire counties of South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky. Years later Helen wrote of that time: "There was no congregation to lean on, nor friends to help, because we were indeed strangers in a strange land. But I know now that I was getting an education. I was becoming rich."

She asked: "What does a young girl do with her time when away from friends and her roots? Well it wasn't so bad. I can't remember ever being bored. I read a lot. Never did we fail to keep up with reading our Bible literature and studying. I stayed close to my mother, learning to manage the money we had, do the shopping, change flat tires, cook, sew, and preach. I have no regrets and would gladly do it all over again."

Helen and her mother were content to live in a small trailer in those years, although her mother owned a nice home. After the Columbus, Ohio, convention in 1937, the health of Helen's mother worsened, and she was hospitalized. She died in her assignment at Philippi, West Virginia, in November 1937.

Marriage and Continued Service

On June 10, 1938, Helen and I were married in a simple ceremony in the home in which she had been born in Elm Grove, near Wheeling, West Virginia. Our dear Brother Evans, who had introduced my family to the truth several years before I was born, gave the wedding talk. After the wedding, Helen and I planned to return to the pioneer work in eastern Kentucky, but to our great surprise, we were invited to do zone work. This work involved visiting groups of Jehovah's Witnesses in western Kentucky and parts of Tennessee to help them in their ministry. There were then only about 75 of such Kingdom proclaimers in all the places we visited.

At the time, nationalism warped the thinking of many, and I expected to be imprisoned soon because of my Christian neutrality. (Isaiah 2:4) However, thanks to my record of preaching activity, I received a classification from the draft board that permitted me to continue in the full-time ministry.

When we began the traveling ministry, almost everyone remarked about our youthfulness. In Hopkinsville, Kentucky, a Christian sister greeted Helen with a big hug and asked: "Do you remember me?" In 1933, Helen had witnessed to her at the country store run by her husband. She was a Sunday-school teacher, but after reading the book Helen left with her, she stood up before her class and apologized for having taught them unbiblical teachings. After resigning from the church, she began proclaiming Bible truths in her community. Helen and I served in western Kentucky for three years, and that sister and her husband made their home our home.

In those days we had small local assemblies, and A. H. Macmillan served one of these. He had stayed in the home of Helen's parents when Helen was a child, so during the convention, he chose to stay with us in our 16-foot-long mobile home, where we had an extra bed. He too had remembered his Grand Creator in the days of his young manhood, having dedicated his life to Jehovah in 1900, when he was 23 years of age.

In November 1941 the work of the traveling brothers was temporarily suspended, and I was assigned as a pioneer in Hazard, Kentucky. Once again we worked with my brother Carl and his wife, Claire. Here Joseph Houston, Helen's nephew, joined us and began pioneering. He continued in the full-time ministry for nearly 50 years, dying suddenly of a heart attack in 1992 while faithfully serving at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York.

In 1943 we were assigned to Rockville, Connecticut. This was, as it were, a different world to Helen and me because we were used to preaching in the south. In Rockville, Helen regularly conducted more than 20 home Bible studies a week. Eventually, we rented a modest room for a Kingdom Hall, and the nucleus of a small congregation was organized.

While serving in Rockville, we were invited to attend the fifth class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead in South Lansing, New York. Happily, we discovered that Aubrey and Bertha Bivens, friends from our pioneer days in Kentucky, would be our classmates.

School and Our New Assignment

Although we were still quite young, most of our classmates were even younger. Yes, they were remembering their Grand Creator in their youth. Our graduation was in July 1945, just as World War II was drawing to a close. While waiting for our missionary assignments, we worked with the Flatbush Congregation in Brooklyn, New York. Finally, on

October 21, 1946, along with six other classmates including the Bivenses, we flew to our new home in Guatemala City, Guatemala. At the time, there were fewer than 50 Witnesses of Jehovah in that entire Central American country.

In April 1949 a few of us missionaries were moved to Quetzaltenango, the second city of size and importance in the country. This city is located over 7,500 feet above sea level, and the mountain air is crisp and clear. Helen summarized our activity here, writing: "It was our privilege to preach in dozens of towns and villages. We would rise at about four in the morning and take a bus (which often had roll-down canvas in place of windows) to a distant town. There we would preach for about eight hours before returning in the evening." Today there are congregations in many of these places, including six in Quetzaltenango.

Soon there was a call for missionaries to serve in Puerto Barrios on the Caribbean Coast, the third largest city in Guatemala. Our beloved companions the Bivenses, with whom we had served for five years in Guatemala, were among those moved to this new assignment. The parting was painful and caused a hole in our lives. With just Helen and me left in the missionary home, we moved to a small apartment. In 1955, Helen and I accepted a new assignment to the more tropical city of Mazatenango. My youngest brother, Paul, and his wife, Dolores, who graduated from Gile-

ad in 1953, had served there shortly before we arrived.

By 1958 we had over 700 Witnesses, 20 congregations, and three circuits in Guatemala. Helen and I again shared in the traveling work, visiting small groups of Witnesses and several of the congregations, including the one in Quetzaltenango. Then, in August of 1959, we were invited to return to Guatemala City, where we lived at the branch office. I was assigned to work at the branch, while Helen continued in missionary service for another 16 years. Then she also began working in the branch office.

Further Blessings

Years ago it seemed I was always the youngest of those serving Jehovah. Now I am often the oldest, as was the case when I attended the branch school at Patterson, New York, in 1996. Just as I received so much help in my youth from older ones, it has been my privilege in recent decades to help many young ones who desire to remember their Creator in their youth.

Jehovah continues to shower blessings upon his people here in Guatemala. In 1999 there were over 60 congregations in Guatemala City. And to the north, south, east, and west, there are many more congregations and thousands of proclaimers of the good news of God's Kingdom. The fewer than 50 Kingdom proclaimers when we arrived about 53 years ago have increased to well over 19,000!

Much for Which to Be Grateful

No one goes through life without problems, but we can always throw our "burden upon Jehovah himself." (Psalm 55:22) He often sustains us through the support of loving companions. For example, a few years before her death, Helen presented me with a small framed plaque inscribed with the Bible text at Hebrews 6:10: "God is not unjust so as to be unmindful of your labour and of the love which you have manifested towards Himself

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

You Can Know the Future!

"Keep on the Watch"

Cultivate Intimacy With Jehovah

in having rendered services to His people and in still rendering them.”—*Weymouth*.

Her attached note read in part: “My precious one, there is so little I can give you, except ALL MY LOVE . . . This text is so appropriate for you, and I ask you to put it on your desk, not because I gave it to you, but because it applies to you in your long years of service.” Till this day, the plaque sits on my office desk in the Guatemala branch.

I have served Jehovah from my youth, and now in my advanced years, I thank Jehovah for my good health that permits me to handle my assigned duties. As I do regular Bible read-

ing, I often come across scriptures that I think my beloved Helen would have underlined in her Bible. This occurred to me when I reread Psalm 48:14: “This God is our God to time indefinite, even forever. He himself will guide us until we die.”

It is my pleasure to share with others the vision of the resurrection day when people of all former nations will be welcoming their loved ones back from the dead into a new world. What a prospect! What tears of joy will be shed then as we recall that Jehovah is indeed the God “who comforts those laid low”! —2 Corinthians 7:6.

New Members of the Governing Body

ON Saturday, October 2, 1999, the Annual Meeting of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania was concluded with a surprise announcement. The 10,594 in attendance or connected by tie line were thrilled to hear that four new members had been added to the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses. The new members, all anointed Christians, are Samuel F. Herd; M. Stephen Lett; Guy H. Pierce; and David H. Splane.

- Samuel Herd started pioneering in 1958, and from 1965 to 1997, he was in the circuit and district work. Thereafter, he and his wife, Gloria, have been part of the United States Bethel family, where Brother Herd has been working in the Service Department. He was also serving as a helper to the Service Committee.

- Stephen Lett started pioneering in December 1966, and from 1967 to 1971, he served at Bethel in the United States. In October 1971, he married his wife, Susan, and went into the special pioneer service. From 1979 to 1998, he served as a circuit overseer. Since April 1998, he and Susan have been part of the United States Bethel family. There he has worked in the Ser-

vice Department and was a helper to the Teaching Committee.

- Guy Pierce raised a family and then with his wife started pioneering in April 1982. He served as a circuit overseer from 1986 until 1997, when he and his wife, Penny, became part of the United States Bethel family. Brother Pierce had been serving as a helper to the Personnel Committee.

- David Splane started pioneering in September 1963. A graduate of the 42nd class of Gilead, he served as a missionary in Senegal, Africa, then for 19 years in the circuit work in Canada. He and his wife, Linda, have been at Bethel in the United States since 1990, where Brother Splane has worked in the Service and Writing departments. Since 1998, he had been a helper to the Writing Committee.

In addition to the four new members, the Governing Body now consists of C. W. Barber, J. E. Barr, M. G. Henschel, G. Lösch, T. Jaracz, K. F. Klein, A. D. Schroeder, L. A. Swingle, and D. Sydlik. It is the prayer of all that Jehovah will continue to bless and strengthen the Governing Body, now enlarged, as it continues to oversee the activities of God’s people around the world and serve their spiritual interests.

We Need Jehovah's Organization

HAVE you ever heard someone say, "I believe in God but not in organized religion"? Similar viewpoints are often expressed by individuals who were once enthusiastic churchgoers but who became disillusioned by the failure of their religion to meet their spiritual needs. Although disappointed by religious organizations in general, many insist that they still want to worship God. They believe, however, that it is better to worship him in their own way than to do so in association with a church or other organization.

What does the Bible say? Does God want Christians to be associated with an organization?

Early Christians Benefited by Being Organized

At Pentecost 33 C.E., Jehovah poured out his holy spirit, not upon a few isolated believers, but upon a group of men and women who came together "at the same place," namely, in an upper room in the city of Jerusalem. (Acts 2:1) At that time, the Christian congregation, which became an international organization, was formed. This proved to be a real blessing for those early disciples. Why? For one thing, they had been given an important as-

signment—that of preaching the good news of God's Kingdom eventually "in all the inhabited earth." (Matthew 24:14) In the congregation new converts could learn from experienced fellow believers how to carry on the preaching work.

Soon the Kingdom message spread far beyond the walls of Jerusalem. Between 62 and 64 C.E., the apostle Peter wrote his first letter to Christians who were "scattered about in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," all in modern-day Turkey. (1 Peter 1:1) There were also believers in Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Cyprus, Greece, Crete, and Italy. As Paul wrote to the Colossians in 60-61 C.E., the good news had been "preached in all creation that is under heaven."—Colossians 1:23.

A second benefit of associating with an organization was the encouragement Christians could give to one another. In association with the congregation, Christians could hear inspiring discourses, study the Sacred Scriptures together, share faith-strengthening experiences, and join fellow believers in prayer. (1 Corinthians, chapter 14) And mature men could "shepherd the flock of God."—1 Peter 5:2.

As members of the congregation, Christians

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**Christians
today form
“one flock, one
shepherd”**

also got to know one another and came to love one another. Far from feeling burdened by their association with the congregation, the early Christians were built up and strengthened by it.—Acts 2:42; 14:27; 1 Corinthians 14:26; Colossians 4:15, 16.

Another reason that the united worldwide congregation, or organization, was needed was to promote unity. Christians learned to “speak in agreement.” (1 Corinthians 1:10) This was vital. Members of the congregation came from a variety of educational and social backgrounds. They spoke different languages, and they had obvious differences in personality. (Acts 2:1-11) At times, there were honest differences of opinion. However, Christians were helped to resolve such differences within the congregation.—Acts 15:1, 2; Philippians 4:2, 3.

Serious questions that could not be handled by local elders were referred to mature traveling overseers, such as Paul. Vital doctrinal matters were referred to a central governing body located in Jerusalem. The governing body was initially made up of the apostles of Jesus Christ but was later extended to include older men of the congregation in Jerusalem. Each congregation recognized the God-given authority of the governing body and its representatives to organize the ministry, appoint men to positions of service, and make decisions on doctrinal matters. When an issue was settled by the governing body, the congregations accepted the decision and “rejoiced over the encouragement.”—Acts 15:1, 2, 28, 30, 31.

Yes, Jehovah used an organization in the first century. But what about today?

We Need an Organization Today

Like their first-century counterparts, Jehovah’s Witnesses today take seriously the com-

mission to preach the good news of the Kingdom. One way they carry out this work is by distributing Bibles and Bible study aids, which calls for organization.

Christian publications must be carefully prepared, checked for accuracy, printed, and then shipped to the congregations. In turn, individual Christians must volunteer to bring the literature to those who want to read it. The Kingdom message has reached millions in this way. Publishers of the good news endeavor to carry out their preaching activity in an orderly fashion, ensuring that no part of the territory is overworked while other parts are neglected. All of this calls for organization.

Since “God is not partial,” Bibles and Bible literature must be translated. (Acts 10:34) Currently, this magazine is available in 132 languages, and its companion, *Awake!*, is published in 83 languages. That requires well-organized teams of translators around the world.

Members of the congregation receive encouragement when they attend Christian meetings and assemblies. There they hear stimulating Bible discourses, study the Scriptures together, share upbuilding experiences, and join with fellow worshipers in prayer. And as their brothers in the first century, they enjoy faith-strengthening visits from loving traveling overseers. Thus, Christians today form “one flock, one shepherd.”—John 10:16.

Of course, Jehovah’s Witnesses are not perfect, any more than were their early counterparts. Still, they work together in unity. As a result, the Kingdom-preaching work is being accomplished throughout the earth.—Acts 15:36-40; Ephesians 4:13.

When 'the Winds Are Against Us'

In describing the real-life experience of Jesus' disciples as they struggled to cross the Sea of Galilee in a boat, the Gospel writer Mark says that they were "hard put to it in their rowing, for the wind was against them." While still on the shore, Jesus saw their plight and miraculously walked on the sea to reach them. When he got up into the boat with them, the wind abated.—Mark 6:48-51.

The same Bible writer reported that on an earlier occasion, a "violent wind-storm broke out." At that, Jesus "rebuked the wind . . . , and the wind abated, and a great calm set in."—Mark 4:37-39.

Although we today are not privileged to witness such miraculous events, we can learn much from them. As imperfect humans living in perilous times, we are not immune to the winds of adversity. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) In fact, at times we may feel that the distress associated with personal trials reaches windstorm intensity. But relief is available! Jesus extends the invitation: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you."—Matthew 11:28.

When it appears that 'the winds are against us,' we can experience "a great calm" of heart. How? By trusting in Jehovah God's unfailing promises.—Compare Isaiah 55:9-11; Philippians 4:5-7.