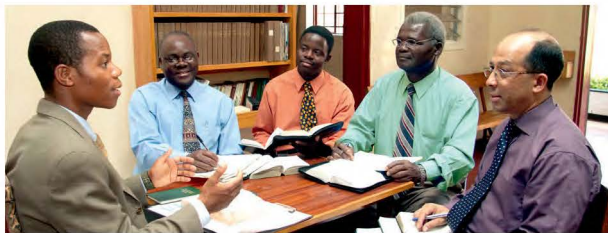


ORGANIZED TO DO JEHOVAH'S WILL









ORGANIZED

TO DO JEHOVAH'S WILL

“To do your will,
O my God, is my delight.”
—Ps. 40:8.

This book issued to _____

Date _____

Place of baptism _____

Date _____

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Organized to Do Jehovah's Will

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Dear Fellow Publishers of the Good News:

What an amazing privilege we have to be united in the worship of the only true God, Jehovah! We are his “fellow workers,” entrusted with the sacred and lifesaving work of preaching and teaching the good news of his established Kingdom. (1 Cor. 3:9; Matt. 28:19, 20) To accomplish this worldwide work in peace and unity, we must be well-organized.—1 Cor. 14:40.

This book will help you to understand how the Christian congregation functions today. It discusses the privileges and responsibilities that you have as a member of the congregation. If you value your privileges and fulfill your responsibilities, you will be “made firm in the faith.”—Acts 16:4, 5; Gal. 6:5.

Therefore, we encourage you to study this book carefully. Look for ways that you can apply the information in your own life. For example, if you have recently become an unbaptized publisher, what steps must you take to get baptized as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses? On the other hand, if you are baptized, what can you do to grow spiritually and

expand your service to Jehovah? (1 Tim. 4:15) How can you contribute to the peace of the congregation? (2 Cor. 13:11) Look for the answers to these questions in this book.

If you are a baptized male, what can you do to qualify to serve as a ministerial servant and later as an elder? As thousands of new ones continue to flock to God's organization, there is an urgent need for qualified brothers to take the lead. This book will help you to see what is involved in "reaching out" for these spiritual goals.—1 Tim. 3:1.

We earnestly pray that this book will help you to see your place in Jehovah's arrangement and to treasure it. We love all of you very much and continue to pray that you will be among those who eternally rejoice in worshipping our heavenly Father, Jehovah.—Ps. 37:10, 11; Isa. 65:21-25.

Your brothers,

Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses

CHAPTER 1

Organized to Do Jehovah's Will

THROUGHOUT the world, there are numerous religious, political, commercial, and social organizations with varying characteristics, objectives, viewpoints, and philosophies. But one organization is noticeably different from all the rest. God's Word clearly identifies that organization as Jehovah's Witnesses.

² Happily, you have become associated with Jehovah's organization. Having proved to yourself what God's will is, you are now doing it. (Ps. 143:10; Rom. 12:2) You are an active minister serving with a loving, worldwide association of brothers. (2 Cor. 6:4; 1 Pet. 2:17; 5:9) As promised in God's Word, this brings you rich blessings and much happiness. (Prov. 10:22; Mark 10:30) By faithfully doing Jehovah's will now, you are being prepared for a lasting, glorious future.—1 Tim. 6:18, 19; 1 John 2:17.

³ Our Grand Creator has a unique worldwide organization that is ruled theocratically. This means that it is ruled by Jehovah, who is Head over all. We have complete confidence in him. He is our Judge, our Lawgiver, and our King. (Isa. 33:22) Being a God of order, he has coordinated arrangements for our “working together with him” in serving the divine purpose.—2 Cor. 6:1, 2.

⁴ As the end of the present system of things draws ever nearer, we move ahead under the leadership of the appointed King, Christ Jesus. (Isa. 55:4; Rev. 6:2; 11:15) It was none other than Jesus who foretold that his followers

would do works greater than those he accomplished during his earthly ministry. (John 14:12) That would be true because over a longer period of time and in increasing numbers, Jesus' followers would cover a widening territory. They would proclaim the Kingdom good news to the ends of the earth.—Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8.

⁵ This has already proved to be a reality, as has been documented in *Yearbooks of Jehovah's Witnesses*. However, as Jesus clearly stated, the activity of declaring the good news will end at Jehovah's appointed time. All indications in God's prophetic Word are that Jehovah's great and awe-inspiring day has drawn close.—Joel 2:31; Zeph. 1:14-18; 2:2, 3; 1 Pet. 4:7.

⁶ As we perceive what the will of Jehovah is at this late hour, we need to intensify our efforts in doing what God requires. This calls for us to become well-acquainted with the way God's organization functions and to cooperate fully with it. The operation of the organization is based on Scriptural principles, including the commandments, laws, orders, regulations, and teachings set out in God's inspired Word.—Ps. 19:7-9.

⁷ When Jehovah's people adhere to such Bible-based direction, they dwell and work together in peace and unity. (Ps. 133:1; Isa. 60:17; Rom. 14:19) What strengthens bonds among our brothers everywhere? Love. We are motivated by and clothed with love. (John 13:34, 35; Col. 3:14) In this divinely favored way, we keep pace with the heavenly part of Jehovah's organization.

THE HEAVENLY PART OF JEHOVAH'S ORGANIZATION

⁸ The prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel saw visions of the heavenly part of Jehovah's organization. (Isa., chap. 6;

Ezek., chap. 1; Dan. 7:9, 10) Likewise, the apostle John had a vision of this heavenly arrangement and provided us a glimpse of it in the book of Revelation. He saw Jehovah on a glorious throne accompanied by angelic creatures, who proclaim: “Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is coming.” (Rev. 4:8) John also saw “standing in the midst of the throne . . . a lamb,” the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.—Rev. 5:6, 13, 14; John 1:29.

⁹ This vision of Jehovah sitting on a throne indicates that he is the Head of this organization. Regarding him and his superior position, 1 Chronicles 29:11, 12 states: “Yours, O Jehovah, are the greatness and the mightiness and the beauty and the splendor and the majesty, for everything in the heavens and on the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Jehovah. You are the One exalting yourself as head over all. The riches and the glory are from you, and you rule over everything, and in your hand there are power and mightiness, and your hand is able to make great and to give strength to all.”

¹⁰ As Jehovah’s fellow worker, Jesus Christ occupies an elevated position in the heavens, and much authority has been given to him. Indeed, God “subjected all things under his feet and made him head over all things with regard to the congregation.” (Eph. 1:22) The apostle Paul said of Jesus: “God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name, so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend—of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the ground—and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God

the Father.” (Phil. 2:9-11) Thus, we can have full confidence in the righteous leadership of Jesus Christ.

¹¹ The prophet Daniel saw in vision the Ancient of Days on His heavenly throne and angels numbering “a thousand thousands [who] kept ministering to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.” (Dan. 7:10)

The Bible refers to this army of angels as “spirits for holy service, sent out to minister for those who are going to inherit salvation.” (Heb. 1:14) All these spirit creatures are organized into ‘thrones, lordships, governments, and authorities.’—Col. 1:16.

¹² When we take time to contemplate these features of the heavenly part of Jehovah’s organization, we can understand Isaiah’s reaction to the vision in which he “saw Jehovah sitting on a lofty and elevated throne,” and “seraphs were standing above him.” Isaiah stated: “Woe to me! I am as good as dead, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of armies himself!” Indeed, Isaiah was awestruck and humbled when he grasped the scope of Jehovah’s organization. He was so deeply affected by this experience that when a call went out from heaven regarding a special work of proclaiming Jehovah’s judgments, Isaiah’s reaction was: “Here I am! Send me!”—Isa. 6:1-5, 8.

¹³ Recognizing and appreciating Jehovah’s organization motivates His people in a similar way. As the organization

We need to intensify our efforts in doing what God requires. This calls for us to become well-acquainted with the way God’s organization functions

moves forward, we endeavor to keep up with it. We strive to demonstrate our confidence in Jehovah's organization today.

JEHOVAH'S ORGANIZATION ON THE MOVE

¹⁴ In chapter 1 of Ezekiel's prophecy, Jehovah is pictured as riding on a colossal heavenly chariot. This resplendent vehicle represents the invisible part of Jehovah's organization. He rides this chariot in the sense of benevolently directing it and using it according to his purpose.—Ps. 103:20.

¹⁵ Each wheel of this chariot has a wheel inside it—one of the same diameter that fits crosswise into the base wheel. Only in this way can the wheels be said to “go in any of the four directions.” (Ezek. 1:17) The wheels can instantly change course. However, this chariot is not without control or intelligent supervision. Jehovah does not let his organization go in just any direction that it might be inclined to go. Ezekiel 1:20 says: “They would go where the spirit inclined them to go.” Thus, it is Jehovah who causes his organization to move to wherever his spirit impels it to move. The question we must ask ourselves is, ‘Am I in step with it?’

¹⁶ Keeping pace with Jehovah's organization involves more than just attending meetings and participating in the field ministry. Primarily, our keeping pace has to do with progress and spiritual growth. We “make sure of the more important things” and stay up-to-date with the spiritual feeding program. (Phil. 1:10; 4:8, 9; John 17:3) We must remember, too, that where there is organization, there is good coordination and cooperation. So we must see the

importance of making the best use of the spiritual and material assets that Jehovah has entrusted to us in order to accomplish his work. As we keep pace with Jehovah's heavenly chariot, our lives are consistent with the message we proclaim.

¹⁷ With the help of Jehovah's organization, we are moving forward in doing God's will. Remember that the Rider of this heavenly chariot is Jehovah. Therefore, keeping pace with his chariot shows that we have respect for Jehovah and confidence in our Rock. (Ps. 18:31) The Bible promises: "Jehovah will give strength to his people. Jehovah will bless his people with peace." (Ps. 29:11) Being a part of Jehovah's organization today, we share in the strength that he gives and enjoy the peace with which he blesses his organized people. Yes, there is no question about it, rich blessings will continue to be ours as we do Jehovah's will now and forever.

CHAPTER 2

Recognizing Christ's Role in God's Arrangement

“IN THE beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” and everything he made was “very good.” (Gen. 1: 1, 31) Jehovah made humans with wonderful prospects for the future. However, the rebellion in Eden temporarily interrupted mankind's happy state. Yet, Jehovah's purpose for the earth and for mankind remained unchanged. God indicated that there would be deliverance for obedient descendants of Adam. There would be a restoration of true worship, and God would destroy the wicked one together with all his evil works. (Gen. 3:15) Once again, things would be “very good.” Jehovah would accomplish this through his Son, Jesus Christ. (1 John 3:8) Therefore, it is imperative that we recognize Christ's role in God's arrangement. —Acts 4:12; Phil. 2:9, 11.

WHAT CHRIST'S ROLE IS

² When thinking of Christ's role in God's arrangement, we recognize that his role has many facets. Jesus serves as mankind's Redeemer, as High Priest, as Head of the Christian congregation, and now as King of God's Kingdom. Meditating on these roles heightens our appreciation for God's arrangement and deepens our love for Christ Jesus. The Bible describes some of his varied roles.

³ During Christ's earthly ministry, it became clear that the reconciliation of obedient mankind to God would be accomplished through Jesus. (John 14:6) As mankind's Redeemer, Jesus gave himself as a ransom in exchange for

many. (Matt. 20:28) So Jesus is more than just an example of godly conduct. He is the key figure in the outworking of Jehovah's purpose for mankind. He is our only means of being restored to God's favor. (Acts 5:31; 2 Cor. 5:18, 19) Jesus' sacrificial death and his resurrection have opened the way for obedient mankind to experience eternal blessings under the rule of God's heavenly Kingdom.

⁴ As High Priest, Jesus is able to "sympathize with our weaknesses" and make atonement for the sins of his dedicated followers here on earth. The apostle Paul explained: "We do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tested in all respects as we have, but without sin." Paul then encouraged those who exercise faith in Jesus Christ to take full advantage of this arrangement for reconciliation to God, saying: "Let us, then, approach the throne of undeserved kindness with freeness of speech, so that we may receive mercy and find undeserved kindness to help us at the right time."—Heb. 4:14-16; 1 John 2:2.

⁵ Jesus is also Head of the Christian congregation. As was true of his followers in the first century, we today have no need of a human leader. Jesus gives direction through holy spirit and through qualified undershepherds, who are accountable to him and to his heavenly Father for the care of the flock of God. (Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3) Speaking prophetically of Jesus, Jehovah said: "Look! I made him a witness to the nations, a leader and commander to the nations." (Isa. 55:4) Jesus confirmed the fulfillment of this prophecy when he told his disciples: "Neither be called leaders, for your Leader is one, the Christ."—Matt. 23:10.

⁶ As an expression of his mental attitude and willingness to help us, Jesus extends the invitation: "Come to me, all

you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for yourselves. For my yoke is kindly, and my load is light.”

Jesus is the key figure in the outworking of Jehovah’s purpose for mankind

(Matt. 11:28-30) By administering the affairs of the Christian congregation with mildness and in a way that brings us refreshment, Jesus Christ has proved himself to be “the fine shepherd” in imitation of his heavenly Father, Jehovah God.—John 10:11; Isa. 40:11.

⁷ In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul explained another facet of Jesus Christ’s role in these words: “He must rule as king until God has put all enemies under his feet. But when all things will have been subjected to him, then the Son himself will also subject himself to the One who subjected all things to him, that God may be all things to everyone.” (1 Cor. 15:25, 28) Before coming to earth, Jesus was God’s “master worker,” being the first of God’s creation. (Prov. 8:22-31) When God sent Jesus to earth, he did God’s will at all times. He endured the supreme test and died faithful to his Father. (John 4:34; 15:10) Because his Son was loyal even to death, God resurrected him to heaven and gave him the right to be King of the heavenly Kingdom. (Acts 2:32-36) As such, Christ Jesus has the awesome assignment from God to lead myriads of powerful spirit creatures in removing human rule from the earth and ridding our globe of all wickedness. (Prov. 2:21, 22; 2 Thess. 1:6-9; Rev. 19:11-21; 20:1-3) Then God’s heaven-

ly Kingdom under Christ will be the only ruling authority over the entire earth.—Rev. 11:15.

WHAT RECOGNITION OF HIS ROLE MEANS

⁸ Jesus Christ, our Exemplar, is perfect. He has been commissioned to care for us. In order to benefit from his loving, watchful care, we need to remain loyal to Jehovah and keep in step with Jehovah's progressive organization.

⁹ Jesus' followers in the first century fully recognized the role of Christ in God's arrangement. They showed this by working together in unity under the headship of Christ, submitting themselves to his direction, as given by means of holy spirit. (Acts 15:12-21) The apostle Paul made reference to the unity of the anointed Christian congregation when he wrote: "Speaking the truth, let us by love grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ. From him all the body is harmoniously joined together and made to cooperate through every joint that gives what is needed. When each respective member functions properly, this contributes to the growth of the body as it builds itself up in love."—Eph. 4:15, 16.

¹⁰ Like the human body, the congregation of anointed ones and the "other sheep" is made up of many different members. When each member of the congregation cooperates with the others and all work in harmony under Christ's headship, there is growth and a warm spirit of love, which is "a perfect bond of union."—John 10:16; Col. 3:14; 1 Cor. 12:14-26.

¹¹ World events in fulfillment of Bible prophecy prove beyond doubt that since 1914, Jesus Christ has been entrusted with Kingdom power. He is now ruling in the midst of his enemies. (Ps. 2:1-12; 110:1, 2) What does this signify

for those now living on earth? Jesus will soon demonstrate his role as King of kings and Lord of lords when he executes divine judgment against his enemies. (Rev. 11:15; 12:10; 19:16) Then, Jehovah's promise of deliverance expressed at the beginning of man's rebellion will be fulfilled toward those at Christ's right hand of favor. (Matt. 25:34) How happy we are to have recognized Christ's role in God's arrangement! May we remain unified in accomplishing a worldwide ministry under Christ's leadership during these last days.

CHAPTER 3

“Remember Those Who Are Taking the Lead Among You”

THESE words of the apostle Paul, recorded at Hebrews 13:7, can also be translated: “Remember those who are governors of you.” From Pentecost 33 C.E. onward, the faithful apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled this role as a governing body that took the lead in providing direction for the newly founded Christian congregation. (Acts 6:2-4) By about the year 49 C.E., this governing body had been enlarged to include more than Jesus’ apostles. When the circumcision issue was decided, the governing body included “the apostles and elders in Jerusalem.” (Acts 15:1, 2) It was their responsibility to consider matters affecting Christians everywhere. They sent out letters and decrees, all of which strengthened the congregations and made it possible for the disciples to remain united in thought and action. The congregations were obedient and submissive to the direction of the governing body, and as a result, they received Jehovah’s blessing and prospered. —Acts 8:1, 14, 15; 15:22-31; 16:4, 5; Heb. 13:17.

² After the death of the apostles, the great apostasy set in. (2 Thess. 2:3-12) As Jesus foretold in his parable about the wheat and the weeds, the wheat (anointed Christians) was oversown with weeds (imitation Christians). Down through the centuries, the groups were allowed to grow side by side until the harvest, “a conclusion of a system of things.” (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43) Individual anointed Christians continued to enjoy Jesus’ favor during this time, but there was no governing body, no clear channel on earth

that Jesus was using to give direction to his followers. (Matt. 28:20) However, he foretold that a change would occur during the harvest.

³ “Who really is the faithful and discreet slave?” With that question, Jesus Christ introduced a parable, or illustration, as part of “the sign” he gave regarding “the conclusion of the system of things.” (Matt. 24:3, 42-47) Jesus indicated that this faithful slave would be busy providing God’s people with spiritual food “at the proper time.” Just as Jesus used a *group* of men—rather than an individual—to take the lead in the first century, the faithful slave that Jesus uses during the conclusion of the system of things is not one man.

IDENTIFYING “THE FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE”

⁴ Whom did Jesus appoint to feed his followers? It is only fitting that he would use anointed Christians on earth. The Bible refers to them as “a royal priesthood” who have been commissioned to “‘declare abroad the excellencies’ of the One who called [them] out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (1 Pet. 2:9; Mal. 2:7; Rev. 12:17) Do *all* anointed ones on earth make up the faithful slave? No. When Jesus miraculously provided physical food to a crowd of some 5,000 men, besides women and young children, he distributed it to the disciples, the disciples in turn to the crowds. (Matt. 14:19) He fed many through the hands of a few. Today, he is providing spiritual food in a similar way.

⁵ So “the faithful steward, the discreet one,” is made up of a small group of anointed brothers who are directly involved in preparing and dispensing spiritual food during Christ’s presence. (Luke 12:42) Throughout the last days, the anointed brothers who constitute “the faithful and

discreet slave” have served together at headquarters. Today, these anointed brothers make up the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

It is vital for us to be submissive to those who keep watch over us for our spiritual well-being

⁶ Christ uses this body to publish information about the fulfillment of Bible prophecies and to give timely direction regarding the application of Bible principles in daily life. This spiritual food is distributed through the local congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses. (Isa. 43:10; Gal. 6:16) In Bible times, a trusted slave, or steward, was a house manager. Likewise, the faithful and discreet slave has been charged with the responsibility of managing the household of faith. So the faithful slave also oversees material assets, the preaching activity, assembly and convention programs, the appointment of overseers to serve in various capacities in the organization, and the production of Bible literature, all of which benefit the “domestics.”—Matt. 24:45.

⁷ Who, then, are the “domestics”? Simply put, they are those who are fed. Initially, all the domestics were anointed ones. Later, the domestics came to include the great crowd of “other sheep.” (John 10:16) Both groups feed on the spiritual food that is dispensed by the faithful slave.

⁸ During the great tribulation, when Jesus comes to pronounce and execute judgment on this wicked system, he will appoint the faithful slave “over all his belongings.” (Matt. 24:46, 47) Those who make up the faithful slave will receive their heavenly reward. Along with the rest of the 144,000, they will share Christ’s heavenly authority. Although there will no longer be a faithful and discreet slave

on earth, Jehovah and Jesus will provide direction to the earthly subjects of the Messianic Kingdom through those appointed to serve as “princes.”—Ps. 45:16.

WHY “REMEMBER THOSE WHO ARE TAKING THE LEAD”?

⁹ There are many reasons for us to “remember those who are taking the lead” and to demonstrate our trust in them. Why is doing this to our advantage? The apostle Paul stated: “They are keeping watch over you as those who will render an account, so that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you.” (Heb. 13:17) It is vital for us to be obedient and submissive to direction from those taking the lead because they keep watch over us for our spiritual protection and well-being.

¹⁰ As recorded at 1 Corinthians 16:14, Paul said: “Let everything you do be done with love.” Decisions made in behalf of God’s people are based on this superior quality of love. Regarding love, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 states: “Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous. It does not brag, does not get puffed up, does not behave indecently, does not look for its own interests, does not become provoked. It does not keep account of the injury. It does not rejoice over unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.” Because love is the basis of all the decisions that are made for the benefit of Jehovah’s servants, we have every reason to feel secure under such direction. Moreover, this is simply a reflection of Jehovah’s love.

¹¹ As was true in the first century, those whom Jehovah is using to govern his people are imperfect men. However, Jehovah has used imperfect humans in the past to accom-

plish his will. Noah built an ark and preached about the coming destruction of his day. (Gen. 6:13, 14, 22; 2 Pet. 2:5) Moses was appointed to lead Jehovah's people out of Egypt. (Ex. 3:10) Imperfect men were inspired to write the Bible. (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21) Jehovah's use of imperfect men today to direct the preaching and disciple-making work does not weaken our confidence in God's organization. Rather, we are strengthened because we know that without Jehovah's backing, the organization could never accomplish all that it does. Through much hardship and experience, the faithful slave has demonstrated that God's spirit is directing matters. Abundant blessings have been poured out on the visible part of Jehovah's organization today. Therefore, we wholeheartedly give it our full support and put our trust in it.

HOW WE DEMONSTRATE OUR TRUST

¹² Those who are appointed to responsible positions in the congregation demonstrate their trust by gladly accepting and faithfully discharging the obligations of their appointments. (Acts 20:28) As Kingdom proclaimers, we zealously engage in the house-to-house work, make return visits, and conduct home Bible studies. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) In order to benefit fully from the rich spiritual food being dispensed by the faithful slave, we prepare for and attend our Christian meetings, including assemblies and conventions. We greatly benefit from the interchange of encouragement that takes place when we associate with our brothers at these Christian gatherings.—Heb. 10:24, 25.

¹³ When we support the organization with our material contributions, we give evidence of our trust in it. (Prov. 3:

9, 10) When we see that our brothers are in need materially, we respond without delay. (Gal. 6:10; 1 Tim. 6:18) We do this in a spirit of brotherly love, always on the alert for opportunities to show Jehovah and his organization that we appreciate the goodness bestowed on us.—John 13:35.

¹⁴ We also show that we put our trust in the organization by supporting its decisions. This includes humbly following the direction of those who have been placed in positions of oversight, such as circuit overseers and congregation elders. These brothers are included among “those who are taking the lead,” to whom we should be obedient and submissive. (Heb. 13:7, 17) Even if we do not fully understand the reasons behind certain decisions, we know that upholding them will be for our lasting good. As a result, Jehovah blesses us for our obedience to his Word and his organization. We thus show our subjection to the Master, Jesus Christ.

¹⁵ Yes, we have every reason to put our trust in the faithful and discreet slave. Satan, the god of this system of things, is making an all-out effort to bring reproach on Jehovah’s name and organization. (2 Cor. 4:4) Do not fall prey to Satan’s wicked tactics! (2 Cor. 2:11) He knows that he has only “a short period of time” before his abyssing, and he is determined to turn as many of Jehovah’s people away from God as possible. (Rev. 12:12) However, as Satan intensifies his efforts, may we draw ever closer to Jehovah. May we put our trust in Jehovah and in the channel that he is using to direct his people today. Our doing so results in a united brotherhood.

CHAPTER 4

How the Congregation Is Organized and Governed

IN HIS first letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul expressed an important truth about God. Paul wrote: “God is a God not of disorder but of peace.” Then commenting further with regard to congregation meetings, he said: “Let all things take place decently and by arrangement.” —1 Cor. 14:33, 40.

² At the very beginning of the same letter, the apostle gave admonition concerning dissensions that existed within the Corinthian congregation. Paul exhorted the brothers there to “speak in agreement” and to be “completely united in the same mind and in the same line of thought.” (1 Cor. 1:10, 11) He then gave them counsel with regard to various matters that were affecting the unity of the congregation. Using the illustration of a human body, he showed the need for unity and cooperation. He urged all in the Christian congregation, regardless of their role, to care for one another in a loving way. (1 Cor. 12:12-26) Such harmonious cooperation among the members of the congregation implies that it would be organized.

³ But how was the Christian congregation to be organized? Who would organize it? What kind of structure would it have? Who would serve in appointed positions? By letting the Bible be our guide, we get clear answers to these questions.—1 Cor. 4:6.

ORGANIZED THEOCRATICALLY

⁴ The Christian congregation was established on the day of Pentecost 33 C.E. What can we learn about the congregation in the first century? It was organized and governed theocratically, that is, under God (Greek, *the-os'*) rule (*kra'tos*). These two words appear at 1 Peter 5:10, 11. The inspired account of what took place in Jerusalem nearly 2,000 years ago leaves no doubt that the congregation of anointed Christians was established by God. (Acts 2: 1-47) It was his building, his household. (1 Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:19) The pattern of organization and operation that was set during the first century is followed by the Christian congregation today.

⁵ The early congregation began with about 120 members. Holy spirit was poured out on these first, in fulfillment of Joel 2:28, 29. (Acts 2:16-18) But that same day, about 3,000 others were baptized in water and brought into the congregation of spirit-begotten ones. They had embraced the word about the Christ and “continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles.” After that, “Jehovah continued to add to them daily those being saved.”—Acts 2:41, 42, 47.

⁶ The growth of the congregation in Jerusalem was such that the Jewish high priest complained that the disciples had filled Jerusalem with their teaching. The new disciples in Jerusalem came to include many Jewish priests who became part of the congregation.—Acts 5:27, 28; 6:7.

⁷ Jesus said: “You will be witnesses of me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the most distant part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) And so it was that when great persecution arose in Jerusalem following the death of Stephen, the disciples living there were scattered throughout

Judea and Samaria. But wherever they went, they continued declaring the good news and making more disciples, including some from among the Samaritans. (Acts 8:1-13) Still later, the good news was preached successfully among the uncircumcised, non-Jewish people of the nations. (Acts

10:1-48) All this preaching activity resulted in the making of many disciples and in new congregations being formed outside of Jerusalem.—Acts 11:19-21; 14:21-23.

⁸ What arrangements were made to ensure that each newly established congregation was organized and governed God's way—theocratically? Through the operation of God's spirit, provision was made for undershepherds to care for the flock. In congregations that Paul and Barnabas visited during their first missionary journey, they made appointments of elders. (Acts 14:23) The Bible writer Luke relates information about Paul's meeting with the elders of the congregation in Ephesus. Paul said to them: "Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son." (Acts 20:17, 28) They qualified to be elders because they met the Scriptural requirements. (1 Tim. 3:1-7) Paul's fellow worker Titus was authorized to make appointments of elders in the congregations of Crete.—Titus 1:5.

⁹ As more congregations were formed, the apostles and elders in Jerusalem continued to serve as the principal

The pattern of organization and operation that was set during the first century is followed by the Christian congregation today

overseers of the expanded international Christian congregation of the first century. They served as its governing body.

¹⁰ Writing to the congregation in Ephesus, the apostle Paul explained that by working in accord with God's spirit, the Christian congregation could maintain unity through adherence to the headship of Jesus Christ. The apostle urged Christians there to cultivate humility and to maintain "the oneness of the spirit" in peaceful association with all members of the congregation. (Eph. 4:1-6) Then he quoted Psalm 68:18 and applied it to Jehovah's provision for spiritually qualified men to serve the needs of the congregation as apostles, prophets, evangelizers, shepherds, and teachers. Such men, as gifts from Jehovah, would build up the entire congregation to a spiritual fullness that would be pleasing to God.—Eph. 4:7-16.

CONGREGATIONS TODAY FOLLOW THE APOSTOLIC PATTERN

¹¹ Today, a similar pattern of organization is followed in all congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. Collectively, these form a united worldwide congregation built around the nucleus of spirit-anointed ones. (Zech. 8:23) Jesus Christ makes this possible. True to his promise, he has loyally remained with his anointed disciples "all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." People brought into the growing congregation embrace the good news of God, dedicate their life unreservedly to Jehovah, and get baptized as disciples of Jesus. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 1:14; Acts 2:41) They recognize "the fine shepherd," Jesus Christ, as Head of the entire flock, which is made up of the anointed members of the congregation as well as the "oth-

er sheep.” (John 10:14, 16; Eph. 1:22, 23) That “one flock” maintains its unity by loyally recognizing the headship of Christ and by submitting to the organizational channel, “the faithful and discreet slave,” that Christ appointed. May we continue to put our full confidence and trust in this channel today.—Matt. 24:45.

THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS CORPORATIONS

¹² In order to provide spiritual food at the proper time and to get the good news of the Kingdom preached before the end comes, certain corporations have been established. These legal entities are recognized by the laws of various countries, and they cooperate with one another. They facilitate the preaching of the good news worldwide.

STRUCTURE OF BRANCH ORGANIZATION

¹³ Whenever a branch office is established, a Branch Committee of three or more elders is appointed to look after the work in the country or countries under the jurisdiction of that particular branch. One member of the committee serves as the Branch Committee coordinator.

¹⁴ Local congregations under each branch are organized into circuits. These vary in size, depending on geographic and language considerations as well as the number of congregations within the area assigned to the branch. A circuit overseer is appointed to serve the congregations in each circuit. His duties are set out from time to time in correspondence directed to circuit overseers by the branch office.

¹⁵ The congregations acknowledge organizational arrangements, which are outlined for the benefit of all. They

accept the appointment of elders, who oversee the work in branches, circuits, and congregations. They look to the faithful and discreet slave for spiritual food at the proper time. The faithful slave today, in turn, adheres strictly to the headship of Christ, holds to Bible principles, and responds to the direction of the holy spirit. As all of us work together in unity, we enjoy results similar to those experienced by Christians in the first century: “Indeed, the congregations continued to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number day by day.”—Acts 16:5.

CHAPTER 5

Overseers to Shepherd the Flock

DURING his earthly ministry, Jesus proved himself to be “the fine shepherd.” (John 10:11) On viewing the crowds who eagerly followed him, “he felt pity for them, because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd.” (Matt. 9:36) Peter and the other apostles took note of his loving concern. How different Jesus was from the false shepherds of Israel, who neglected the flock so much that the sheep were scattered and spiritually starved! (Ezek. 34:7, 8) Jesus’ fine example of teaching and caring for the sheep, even to the point of laying down his life for them, taught the apostles how to help those with faith to return to Jehovah, “the shepherd and overseer of [their] souls.”—1 Pet. 2:25.

² When speaking to Peter on one occasion, Jesus emphasized the importance of feeding and shepherding the sheep. (John 21:15-17) Peter was no doubt deeply moved by this and later admonished the elders in the early Christian congregation: “Shepherd the flock of God under your care, serving as overseers, not under compulsion, but willingly before God; not for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; not lording it over those who are God’s inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock.” (1 Pet. 5:1-3) Peter’s words also apply to overseers in the congregation today. In imitation of Jesus, elders serve willingly and eagerly as examples to the flock, taking the lead in Jehovah’s service.—Heb. 13:7.

³ We can be grateful for the spirit-appointed overseers in the congregation. The benefits we receive from their care are many. For example, overseers give encouragement and personal attention to members of the congregation. Each week, they preside diligently at congregation meetings, where all in the faith are nourished. (Rom. 12:8) Their efforts to protect the flock from harmful elements, such as wicked men, contribute to our security. (Isa. 32:2; Titus 1:9-11) Their lead in the field ministry encourages us to keep active in preaching the good news regularly each month. (Heb. 13:15-17) Through these “gifts in men,” Jehovah has provided for the building up of the congregation.—Eph. 4:8, 11, 12.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR OVERSEERS

⁴ To make sure that the congregation is cared for properly, men appointed to serve as overseers must meet the requirements set out in God’s Word. Only if they qualify can it be said that they are appointed by holy spirit. (Acts 20:28) Admittedly, the Scriptural standards for Christian overseers are high, since being an overseer is a serious responsibility. But the standards are not so high that they cannot be met by Christian men who have real love for Jehovah and are willing to be used by him. It should be obvious to all that the overseers are individuals who apply Bible counsel in the everyday affairs of life.

⁵ The apostle Paul listed the basic Scriptural requirements for overseers in his first letter to Timothy and in his letter to Titus. At **1 Timothy 3:1-7**, we read: “If a man is reaching out to be an overseer, he is desirous of a fine work. The overseer should therefore be irreprehensible, a husband of one wife, moderate in habits, sound in mind,

orderly, hospitable, qualified to teach, not a drunkard, not violent, but reasonable, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money, a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having his children in subjection with all seriousness (for if any man does not know how to preside over his own house-

hold, how will he care for the congregation of God?), not a newly converted man, for fear that he might get puffed up with pride and fall into the judgment passed on the Devil. Moreover, he should also have a fine testimony from outsiders so that he does not fall into reproach and a snare of the Devil.”

⁶ Paul wrote to Titus: “I left you in Crete so that you would correct the things that were defective and make appointments of elders in city after city, as I instructed you: if there is any man free from accusation, a husband of one wife, having believing children who are not accused of debauchery or rebelliousness. For as God’s steward, an overseer must be free from accusation, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not a drunkard, not violent, not greedy of dishonest gain, but hospitable, a lover of goodness, sound in mind, righteous, loyal, self-controlled, holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of teaching, so that he may be able both to encourage by the teaching that is wholesome and to reprove those who contradict.”—**Titus 1:5-9.**

⁷ Although the Scriptural requirements for overseers may at first seem overwhelming, Christian men should not hold

In imitation of Jesus, elders serve willingly and eagerly as examples to the flock, taking the lead in Jehovah’s service

back from reaching out. When they manifest the fine Christian qualities required of overseers, they encourage other members of the congregation to do the same. Paul wrote that such “gifts in men” are provided “with a view to the readjustment of the holy ones, for ministerial work, to build up the body of the Christ, until we all attain to the oneness of the faith and of the accurate knowledge of the Son of God, to being a full-grown man, attaining the measure of stature that belongs to the fullness of the Christ.”—Eph. 4:8, 12, 13.

⁸ Overseers are **not** mere boys or **newly converted** men. Rather, they are individuals with experience in Christian living, having a broad knowledge of the Bible, a deep understanding of the Scriptures, and a genuine love for the congregation. They have the courage to speak up and correct wrongdoers, thus protecting the sheep from any who would selfishly exploit them. (Isa. 32:2) The overseers are readily recognized by all in the congregation as spiritually mature men, having genuine concern for the flock of God.

⁹ Those qualifying for appointment as overseers demonstrate practical wisdom in their lives. If married, an overseer would be adhering to the Christian standard for marriage, namely, being the **husband of one wife** and **presiding over his own household in a fine manner**. If the overseer has **believing children** who are **in subjection with all seriousness** and are **not accused of debauchery or rebelliousness**, other members of the congregation can confidently approach him for counsel and advice on family life and Christian living. The overseer is also **irreprehensible** and **free from accusation** and has **a fine testimony even from outsiders**. No valid charge of improper conduct can be brought against him to mar the reputation of the con-

gregation. He would not recently have been reproved for serious wrongdoing. Others in the congregation are moved to imitate his fine example and are happy to entrust their spiritual life to his care.—1 Cor. 11:1; 16:15, 16.

¹⁰ Such qualified men are able to serve the Christian congregation in a role similar to that of the elders of Israel who were described as “wise, discreet, and experienced.” (Deut. 1:13) Christian elders are not without sin, but they are known in the congregation and in the community as upright and God-fearing men who have demonstrated over a period of time that they conduct their lives in harmony with godly principles. Their blamelessness gives them freedom of speech before the congregation.—Rom. 3:23.

¹¹ Men qualifying for appointment as overseers show ***moderation in personal habits*** and in their dealings with others. They are not fanatics. Instead, their way of life is characterized by balance and ***self-control***. Their moderation is demonstrated in such things as eating, drinking, recreation, hobbies, and entertainment. They are moderate in the use of alcoholic beverages so as ***not*** to leave themselves open to charges of drunkenness or of being a ***drunkard***. One whose senses have been dulled by intoxicating drink easily loses self-control and is not in a position to watch over the spiritual interests of the congregation.

¹² Exercising oversight of the congregation requires that a man have a measure of ***orderliness***. His good habits are reflected in his personal appearance, his home, and his everyday activities. Such a man avoids procrastination; he sees what is required and plans accordingly. He adheres to godly principles.

¹³ An overseer must be **reasonable**. He must be able to work in unity with others within the body of elders and co-operate with them. He should have a proper view of himself and not be overly demanding of others. As a reasonable person, the overseer is not opinionated, considering his views to be superior to those of his fellow elders. Others may excel in qualities or abilities that he may lack. An elder shows reasonableness when he bases his conclusions solidly on the Scriptures and strives to imitate the example of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 2:2-8) An elder is **not quarrelsome or violent** but shows proper respect for others, considering them to be superior. He is **not self-willed**, always insisting that his way or his point of view be accepted. He is **not quick-tempered**, but he is peaceable in his dealings with others.

¹⁴ Similarly, one qualifying to serve as an overseer in the congregation is **sound in mind**. This means that he is level-headed, not hasty in judgment. He has a good comprehension of Jehovah's principles and their application. Someone who is sound in mind is receptive to counsel and direction. He is not hypocritical.

¹⁵ Paul reminded Titus that an overseer is **a lover of goodness**. He should be **righteous** and **loyal**. These qualities are reflected in his dealings with others and in his firm stand for what is right and good. He is unwavering in his devotion to Jehovah and is consistent in upholding righteous principles. He can keep a confidence. He is also genuinely **hospitable**, freely giving of himself and his belongings for the benefit of others.—Acts 20:33-35.

¹⁶ In order to serve effectively, an overseer needs to be **qualified to teach**. According to Paul's words to Titus, the

overseer would be “holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of teaching, so that he may be able both to encourage by the teaching that is wholesome and to reprove those who contradict.” (Titus 1:9) He is able to use reasoning, produce evidence, overcome objections, and apply the Scriptures in such a way that others are convinced and have their faith strengthened. The overseer exercises such teaching ability in favorable times as well as in difficult times. (2 Tim. 4:2) He has the patience needed to reprove with mildness one who is in error or to convince a doubter and motivate him to do good works on the basis of faith. Being qualified to teach either before an audience or on a one-on-one basis gives evidence that the overseer meets this important requirement.

¹⁷ It is important for elders to have a zealous share in the ministry. It should be apparent that also in this way they are striving to imitate Jesus, who considered the preaching of the good news to be a priority. Jesus took an interest in his disciples, helping them to be effective evangelizers. (Mark 1:38; Luke 8:1) The elders’ determination to spend time in the ministry despite their busy schedule stimulates the entire congregation to have similar zeal. And when the elders preach along with members of their own family as well as others in the congregation, “an interchange of encouragement” results.—Rom. 1:11, 12.

¹⁸ All of this may seem to be a great deal to expect of one who serves as an overseer. Certainly no overseer could measure up perfectly to the high standard set forth in the Bible, but none of the appointed elders in the congregation should be so significantly lacking in any one of these qualities that the deficiency could be considered a

serious flaw. Some elders may have certain outstanding qualities, whereas others may excel in different areas. The result is that the body of elders as a whole will have all the fine qualities that are necessary for exercising proper oversight of the congregation of God.

To make sure that the congregation is cared for properly, men appointed to serve as overseers must meet the requirements set out in God's Word

¹⁹ When the elders as a body recommend men for appointment as overseers, they will want to keep in mind the apostle Paul's words: "I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think, but to think so as to have a sound mind, each one as God has given to him a measure of faith." (Rom. 12:3) Each elder should consider himself a lesser one. No one should prove to be "overly righteous" when examining the qualifications of another. (Eccl. 7:16) Having clearly in mind the Scriptural requirements for overseers, the body of elders would want to determine whether a brother being considered measures up to those standards to a reasonable degree. Allowing for human imperfections and being free of biased leanings and hypocrisy, elders will make their recommendations in a manner that shows due respect for Jehovah's righteous standards and is for the good of the congregation. They will give prayerful consideration to each recommendation and follow the direction of God's holy spirit. This is one of the serious responsibilities they shoulder, and they must do so in accord with Paul's admonition: "Never lay your hands hastily on any man."—1 Tim. 5:21, 22.

FRUITAGE OF THE SPIRIT

²⁰ Spiritually qualified men give evidence that they are directed by holy spirit, and they manifest its fruitage in their life. Paul lists the nine aspects of the fruitage of the spirit as “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control.” (Gal. 5:22, 23) Such overseers are refreshing to the brothers and help to unite the congregation in rendering sacred service. Their course of conduct and the fruits of their labors show that they are appointed by holy spirit.—Acts 20:28.

MEN WHO PROMOTE UNITY

²¹ It is vital that elders work together to promote unity in the congregation. They may have very different personalities, but they preserve the unity of the body by listening respectfully to one another, even though they may not agree on every matter they discuss. As long as no Bible principle is being violated, each should be willing to yield and to support the final decision of the body of elders. Having a yielding spirit shows that one is guided by “the wisdom from above,” which is “peaceable, reasonable.” (Jas. 3:17, 18) No elder should think that he is above the others, and no elder should try to dominate the others. Elders are really cooperating with Jehovah when they cooperate as a body for the good of the congregation.—1 Cor., chap. 12; Col. 2:19.

REACHING OUT

²² Mature Christian men should desire to become overseers. (1 Tim. 3:1) However, serving as an elder requires work and self-sacrifice. It means making oneself available to serve the needs of the brothers, caring for their spiritual

interests. Reaching out to become an overseer means striving to meet the qualifications set out in the Scriptures.

PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES MAY CHANGE

²³ A brother who has served faithfully for a long time may become physically ill or otherwise incapacitated. Perhaps because of advanced age, he may no longer be able to care for the responsibilities of an overseer. Even so, he should still be respected and viewed as an elder as long as he is appointed. There would be no need for him to step aside on account of his limitations. He is still worthy of the double honor given to all hardworking elders who are serving to the best of their abilities in shepherding the flock.

²⁴ But if a brother should feel that it would be best for him to step aside because of changed personal circumstances that limit his ability to serve, he may choose to do so. (1 Pet. 5:2) He should still be respected. He is able to do much good in the congregation, even though he no longer has assignments and duties given to elders.

POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CONGREGATION

²⁵ Elders care for a variety of responsibilities in the congregation. There is a coordinator of the body of elders, a secretary, a service overseer, a *Watchtower* Study conductor, and a Life and Ministry Meeting overseer. Most elders, if not all, serve as group overseers. The elders serve in these positions for an indefinite period of time. Of course, if a brother moves, is unable to care for his responsibilities for health reasons, or becomes disqualified for failure to measure up to the Scriptural requirements, another elder is selected to handle the assignment. In congregations where the number of overseers is limited, it may be nec-

essary for an elder to handle more than one assignment until other brothers qualify to be appointed as elders.

²⁶ The **coordinator of the body of elders** serves as chairman at meetings of the body of elders. As such, he humbly works along with the other elders in caring for the flock of God. (Rom. 12:10; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3) He should be a good organizer and able to preside diligently. (Rom. 12:8) He also arranges for public talks, at times having another elder or a well-qualified ministerial servant assist him if needed.

²⁷ The **secretary** handles congregation records and keeps the elders informed of important communications. If necessary, another elder or a capable ministerial servant may be assigned to assist in caring for some routine matters.

²⁸ Arrangements for field service activity and other service-related matters come under the direction of the **service overseer**. This includes overseeing arrangements for group witnessing. He schedules regular visits to all field service groups so that one weekend each month, he visits a different group. In smaller congregations where there are only a few service groups, he may visit each group twice a year. During his visit, he will conduct the meetings for field service, work with the group in the ministry, and assist publishers with their return visits and Bible studies.

GROUP OVERSEERS

²⁹ One of the outstanding privileges in the congregation is that of serving as a **group overseer**. His responsibilities include (1) taking an active interest in the spirituality of each person in the field service group; (2) helping each one in the group to have a regular, meaningful, and joyful share in the ministry; and (3) assisting and training

ministerial servants in the group to reach out and qualify for congregation responsibilities. The body of elders determines which brothers are most qualified to fulfill all these aspects of the assignment.

³⁰ Because of the nature of the assignment, group overseers should, if possible, be elders. Or a capable ministerial servant can serve until an elder can take over. A ministerial servant working in this capacity is called a group servant, as he does not function as an overseer in the congregation. Rather, he works under the direction of the elders in caring for his responsibility.

³¹ An important feature of the group overseer's work is that of taking the lead in the field ministry. The regularity, zeal, and enthusiasm that he shows will encourage those in his group. Because the publishers appreciate the encouragement and help that come from being together, it would be good to have a group witnessing schedule convenient for the majority. (Luke 10:1-16) The overseer needs to make sure that there is always enough territory. He will generally conduct the meeting for field service and organize the publishers for that day's activity. When he cannot be there, he should arrange for another elder, a ministerial servant or, if neither is available, a qualified publisher to care for these responsibilities so that the publishers have the direction they need.

³² The group overseer should plan ahead for the visit of the service overseer, informing his group of the visit and building anticipation for its benefits. When all in the group are kept fully aware of the arrangement, they can enthusiastically support it.

³³ Each service group is purposely kept small. This allows the group overseer to become well-acquainted with

all assigned to it. As a loving shepherd, he is keenly interested in each one. He tries to give personal help and encouragement for the field ministry and for the support of congregation meetings. He also endeavors to do whatever else is appropriate to help each person keep spiritually strong. Those who become ill or depressed will benefit from a personal visit. An encouraging suggestion or a word of counsel might prompt some to reach out for additional privileges in the congregation and thus be of greater assistance to their brothers. Most of the group overseer's efforts will logically be directed toward helping those in his own group. However, as an elder and a shepherd, he is lovingly concerned about all in the congregation and is ready to help any who are in need.—Acts 20:17, 28.

³⁴ One responsibility of the group overseer is to assist in collecting field service reports from those in his service group. These reports are forwarded to the secretary. Individual publishers can assist the group overseer by turning in their field service reports promptly. This can be done by handing their reports directly to the group overseer at the end of each month or by placing them in the box designated for field service reports at the Kingdom Hall.

CONGREGATION SERVICE COMMITTEE

³⁵ There are certain duties that are cared for by the Congregation Service Committee, which is made up of the coordinator of the body of elders, the secretary, and the service overseer. Members of this committee are involved in handling various forms, such as literature requests, field service reports, and recommendations for appointment or removal of elders and ministerial servants. In addition, the service committee approves the use of

the Kingdom Hall for weddings and funerals and is responsible for assigning publishers to field service groups. The committee also approves applications for regular and auxiliary pioneering and other avenues of service. From time to time, the branch office calls on the service committee to perform other duties. The service committee works under the direction of the body of elders.

As we continue submitting ourselves to overseers charged with shepherding the flock, we are drawn into unity with the Head of the congregation, Christ Jesus

³⁶ The specific duties of these brothers—along with those of the *Watchtower* Study conductor, the Life and Ministry Meeting overseer, and others who make up the body of elders—are from time to time set out in letters from the branch office.

³⁷ The body of elders in each congregation meets periodically to discuss matters related to the spiritual progress of the congregation. Two such meetings are held each year in conjunction with the regular visits of the circuit overseer. An additional meeting should be scheduled about three months after each visit of the circuit overseer. These four meetings during the year are most likely sufficient for resolving any matters requiring the attention of the entire body of elders. Of course, the elders may convene at any time that circumstances make it advisable. But if each elder gives proper attention to his assigned duties and if the work of the elders is being adequately directed through the

coordinator of the body of elders, meetings can be kept to a minimum.

BE SUBMISSIVE

³⁸ The overseers are imperfect men; yet all in the congregation are urged to be submissive to them because it is Jehovah's arrangement. He will hold the overseers accountable for their actions. They are representing him and his theocratic rule. Hebrews 13:17 says: "Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over you as those who will render an account, so that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you." Just as Jehovah uses holy spirit to appoint a man, Jehovah will use that same holy spirit to remove a man from serving as an overseer if he fails to manifest the fruitage of the spirit and his pattern of life falls short of the Scriptural requirements.

³⁹ Do we not truly appreciate the hard work and fine example of the congregation overseers? In writing to the congregation in Thessalonica, Paul urged the brothers: "We request you, brothers, to show respect for those who are working hard among you and presiding over you in the Lord and admonishing you; and to give them extraordinary consideration in love because of their work." (1 Thess. 5:12, 13) Much of the hard work of the congregation overseers makes our service to God easier and more enjoyable. Also, in his first letter to Timothy, Paul makes mention of the attitude that members of the congregation should cultivate toward the overseers, saying: "Let the elders who preside in a fine way be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in speaking and teaching."—1 Tim. 5:17.

OTHER POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE ORGANIZATION

⁴⁰ At times, selected elders are appointed to serve as members of Patient Visitation Groups. Others serve on Hospital Liaison Committees and visit hospitals and doctors to encourage continued and expanded treatment of Jehovah's Witnesses without using blood. Other overseers are able to advance Kingdom interests by helping to build and maintain Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls or by serving as members of Convention Committees. The hard work of these brothers and their willingness to expend themselves in this way are very much appreciated by all in the organization. Indeed, we "keep holding men of that sort dear."—Phil. 2:29.

CIRCUIT OVERSEER

⁴¹ The Governing Body arranges for the appointment of qualified elders to serve as circuit overseers. These are assigned by the branch office to visit the congregations that make up their circuits, usually twice a year. They also periodically visit pioneers in isolated territories. They plan their routing and notify each congregation sufficiently in advance so that the visit will result in the most benefit.

⁴² The coordinator of the body of elders takes the lead in organizing matters so that the visit will prove spiritually refreshing to all. (Rom. 1:11, 12) On receiving notification of the visit and information about the personal needs of the circuit overseer and (if married) his wife, the coordinator of the body of elders through various brothers will make arrangements for accommodations and other necessary things. He makes sure that all, including the circuit overseer, are informed of these arrangements.

⁴³ The circuit overseer will contact the coordinator of the body of elders regarding the scheduling of meetings, including meetings for field service. These will be arranged in accord with the circuit overseer's suggestions and letters from the branch office. All need to be informed in advance concerning the time and place of the meetings with the congregation, with the pioneers, and with the elders and ministerial servants, as well as the time and place of the meetings for field service.

⁴⁴ On Tuesday afternoon, the circuit overseer examines the *Congregation's Publisher Record* cards, meeting attendance records, territory records, and the accounts. This will give him some insight into possible needs of the congregation and how he may be of assistance to those responsible for keeping these records. The coordinator of the body of elders should make arrangements for the circuit overseer to receive the records in advance. Sometime before the Tuesday evening meeting, the circuit overseer meets with the coordinator or another local elder to discuss any questions he has as a result of reviewing the records.

⁴⁵ During his visit, the circuit overseer takes time to speak with the brothers individually as he is able—at meetings, in field service, at mealtimes, and at other times. Additionally, he meets with the elders and ministerial servants, sharing appropriate Scriptural counsel, suggestions, and encouragement that will help them shoulder their responsibilities to shepherd the flock in their care. (Prov. 27:23; Acts 20:26-32; 1 Tim. 4:11-16) He also meets with the pioneers to encourage them in their work and to give personal assistance regarding any problems they may be having in the ministry.

⁴⁶ If there are other matters that need attention, the circuit overseer will assist to the extent possible during the week. For example, if there has been some serious wrongdoing and the elders need his assistance in handling such, he will set aside time for this purpose. If they cannot finish the matter during the week, he can help the elders or individuals involved to do research on the Scriptural direction that applies. If the branch office needs to do any follow-up, he and the elders will provide the branch with a detailed report on the matter.

⁴⁷ While visiting the congregation, the circuit overseer attends the regular congregation meetings. These may be adjusted from time to time in harmony with directions from the branch office. He will give several talks designed to encourage, motivate, instruct, and fortify the congregation. He strives to engender love for Jehovah, Jesus Christ, and the organization.

⁴⁸ One of the objectives of the circuit overseer's visit is to encourage zealous participation in the ministry and provide practical suggestions. Many in the congregation may be able to adjust their schedule so that they can have a full share in field service that week, perhaps by arranging to auxiliary pioneer during the month of his visit. Any who desire to work with him or his wife can make an appointment. Much good can be accomplished by taking the circuit overseer or his wife on Bible studies and return visits. Your extra effort to give full support to this aspect of the week's visit is deeply appreciated.—Prov. 27:17.

⁴⁹ Every year, two circuit assemblies are arranged for each circuit. The circuit overseer is responsible for the operation of the assembly organization on these occasions.

The circuit overseer appoints an assembly overseer and an assistant assembly overseer. They are to work closely with him in caring for the assembly organization. This will enable the circuit overseer to give his primary attention to the assembly program. The circuit overseer also designates other capable men to care for various departments. He also arranges for an audit of the circuit accounts after each assembly. One circuit assembly a year will be served by a brother from the branch office who will be a visiting speaker. Because of distances involved or because the assembly facilities are small, some circuits are divided into sections with a circuit assembly held for each section.

⁵⁰ The circuit overseer submits his field service report directly to the branch office at the end of each month. If certain modest expenses are incurred—such as for travel, food, lodging, and other necessary items required to carry out his work—and they have not been covered by the congregation that he is serving, he may submit these to the branch office. Traveling representatives have confidence that if they put the interests of Jehovah’s Kingdom first, material needs will be cared for, as Jesus promised. (Luke 12:31) The congregations will want to be conscious of their privilege to show hospitality to these devoted elders who serve them.—3 John 5-8.

BRANCH COMMITTEE

⁵¹ In each branch office of Jehovah’s Witnesses throughout the world, three or more spiritually qualified, mature brothers serve as a Branch Committee that oversees the preaching work in the country or countries under its jurisdiction. One of the committee members serves as the Branch Committee coordinator.

⁵² Those serving on the Branch Committee handle matters pertaining to all the congregations in the branch territory. They arrange for the distribution of publications furnished by Jehovah's organization to strengthen all associated with the congregations. The committee oversees the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom throughout the branch territory and ensures that congregations and circuits are set up to give proper oversight to the needs of the field. The Branch Committee also gives attention to the missionary field and to special, regular, and auxiliary pioneer activity. When there are assemblies and conventions, the committee makes arrangements and assignments so that "all things take place decently and by arrangement." —1 Cor. 14:40.

⁵³ A Country Committee is appointed in some lands that come under the oversight of a Branch Committee in another land. This allows for closer supervision of the work where the Country Committee serves. It cares for matters in the Bethel Home and office, handles correspondence and reports, and generally cares for the activities in the field. The Country Committee cooperates with the Branch Committee for the advancement of Kingdom interests.

⁵⁴ The Governing Body makes all appointments of those who serve on Branch Committees and Country Committees.

HEADQUARTERS REPRESENTATIVES

⁵⁵ Periodically, arrangements are made by the Governing Body to have qualified brothers visit each of the branches throughout the earth. A brother serving in this capacity is known as a headquarters representative. His primary work is to encourage the Bethel family and to help the

Branch Committee with problems or questions that may arise in carrying out the preaching and disciple-making work. Wherever practical, this brother also meets with selected traveling overseers and with the field missionaries who work under the branch he visits. He talks with them about their problems and needs, giving necessary encouragement regarding their most important activity, Kingdom preaching and disciple making.

⁵⁶ The headquarters representative is very interested in what is being accomplished in the field as far as the Kingdom-preaching and other congregation activities are concerned. As time allows, he may also visit remote translation offices. When the headquarters representative visits a branch, he also shares to the extent possible in the Kingdom-preaching work.

LOVING OVERSIGHT

⁵⁷ We benefit greatly from the hard work and loving care of mature Christian men. As we continue submitting ourselves to appointed overseers charged with shepherding the flock, we are drawn into unity with the Head of the congregation, Christ Jesus. (1 Cor. 16:15-18; Eph. 1:22, 23) As a result, God's spirit permeates the congregations worldwide, and God's Word serves to guide the work throughout the earth.—Ps. 119:105.

CHAPTER 6

Ministerial Servants Render Valuable Service

TO THE congregation in Philippi, the apostle Paul wrote: “Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the holy ones in union with Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, along with overseers and ministerial servants.” (Phil. 1:1) Note that he greeted the ministerial servants. These men evidently played an important role in assisting the elders in the congregation back then. The same is true in our day. Ministerial servants render services that help the overseers and that contribute to the good order of the congregation.

² Do you know who the ministerial servants are in your congregation? Are you aware of the work they do for your benefit and for the benefit of the entire congregation? The efforts of such men are certainly appreciated by Jehovah. Paul wrote: “The men who minister in a fine manner are acquiring for themselves a fine standing and great freeness of speech in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”—1 Tim. 3:13.

SCRIPTURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MINISTERIAL SERVANTS

³ Ministerial servants are expected to lead a wholesome Christian life, to be responsible men, and to care for assignments properly. This becomes obvious when we consider what Paul had to say about their qualifications in his letter to Timothy: “Ministerial servants should likewise be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in a lot of wine, not greedy of dishonest gain, holding the sacred secret of the faith with a clean conscience. Also, let these be test-

ed as to fitness first; then let them serve as ministers, as they are free from accusation. Let ministerial servants be husbands of one wife, presiding in a fine manner over their children and their own households.” (1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12) Holding to the high standard set for ministerial servants protects the congregation against accusations raised concerning the kind of men to whom special responsibilities are entrusted.

⁴ Whether younger or older, ministerial servants are active in the ministry each month. In imitation of Jesus, they demonstrate zeal for the ministry. By such zeal, they reflect Jehovah’s interest in the salvation of mankind.—Isa. 9:7.

⁵ Men who serve as ministerial servants are also exemplary in their dress, grooming, speech, attitude, and conduct. They are sound in mind, which earns them the respect of others. In addition, they take seriously their relationship with Jehovah and their privileges of service in the congregation.—Titus 2:2, 6-8.

⁶ These men have been “tested as to fitness.” Even before receiving their appointment, they proved to be truly dedicated men. They have demonstrated that they put Kingdom interests first in their life and are reaching out for whatever service privileges may be open to them. They are indeed examples for others in the congregation to imitate.—1 Tim. 3:10.

HOW THEY SERVE

⁷ Ministerial servants render a variety of practical services in behalf of their brothers and sisters, thus allowing the overseers to spend more time caring for teaching and shepherding responsibilities. When giving them

assignments, the body of elders takes into account their individual abilities and the needs of the congregation.

⁸ Just consider some of these services: One ministerial servant may be assigned to care for the literature so that we can obtain it for personal use and for the field ministry. Another may care for the magazines. Others are assigned to

keep congregation accounts or territory records. Some are assigned to handle microphones, to operate sound equipment, to serve as attendants, and to help the elders in other ways. There is much work to be done in maintaining the Kingdom Hall and keeping it clean, so ministerial servants are often called on to assist in caring for these responsibilities.

⁹ In some congregations, it may be possible to assign a different ministerial servant to each of these duties. Elsewhere, a ministerial servant may care for several assignments. In some instances, more than one ministerial servant may care for a certain task. If there are not enough ministerial servants to care for some of these responsibilities, the body of elders may arrange for other exemplary baptized brothers to do this necessary work. Thus they will gain experience that will be useful later when they become qualified to be appointed as ministerial servants. If brothers are not available, an exemplary sister could be asked to assist with some things, even though she would not, of course, be appointed as a ministerial servant. An individ-

Ministerial servants render a variety of practical services, thus allowing the overseers to spend more time caring for teaching and shepherding responsibilities

ual who is exemplary is someone whose conduct and worship are considered worthy of imitation. His or her meeting attendance, share in the ministry, family life, choices of entertainment, dress and grooming, and so forth are good examples for others.

¹⁰ In congregations that have very few elders, capable ministerial servants may be called on to review with individuals the questions for baptism dealing with doctrinal matters. These are found in the Appendix “Part 1—Elementary Bible Teachings” and “Part 3—Jehovah’s Arrangement of Things.” Since “Part 2—Jehovah’s Righteous Requirements” involves sensitive personal matters, an elder should consider this section.

¹¹ If there is good reason, the body of elders may find it beneficial periodically to change some assignments from one ministerial servant to another. However, there is great advantage in having brothers handle the same assignments for some time in order for them to gain experience and proficiency.

¹² Depending on local circumstances, there may be other responsibilities that can be assigned to ministerial servants whose advancement is “plainly seen by all people.” (1 Tim. 4:15) If there are not enough elders, a ministerial servant may be assigned to serve as an assistant to a group overseer or, in some cases, as a group servant, working under the close supervision of the elders. Ministerial servants may be assigned to handle certain parts on the Life and Ministry Meeting, including conducting the Congregation Bible Study if needed, and delivering public talks. Other privileges may be extended to ministerial servants when there is a particular need and if they meet the requirements for the assignment. (1 Pet. 4:10) In assisting

the elders, ministerial servants should give of themselves willingly.

¹³ Though their work differs from that of the elders, it is no less a part of sacred service to God and is important to the smooth functioning of the congregation. In time, if ministerial servants carry out their obligations well and become qualified to serve as shepherds and teachers, they may be recommended to serve as elders.

¹⁴ If you are a brother who is a teenager or is newly baptized, are you reaching out to qualify to become a ministerial servant? (1 Tim. 3:1) With so many people coming into the truth each year, qualified spiritual men are needed to care for congregation responsibilities. You can reach out by cultivating a desire to help others. One way to do this is by meditating on Jesus' fine example. (Matt. 20:28; John 4:6, 7; 13:4, 5) Your desire will grow as you experience the joy that comes from giving to others. (Acts 20:35) Therefore, volunteer to give practical assistance to others, to help with the maintenance of the Kingdom Hall, or to give a substitute presentation during the Life and Ministry Meeting. Reaching out also includes developing spiritual qualities by having a good routine of personal study. (Ps. 1:1, 2; Gal. 5:22, 23) In addition, a brother who is reaching out demonstrates reliability and faithfulness when given congregation assignments.—1 Cor. 4:2.

¹⁵ Ministerial servants are appointed by holy spirit for the good of the congregation. Members of the congregation can show their appreciation for the hard work of the ministerial servants by cooperating with them as they care for their assigned duties. In this way, the congregation will be showing appreciation for Jehovah's provision to maintain an orderly household.—Gal. 6:10.

CHAPTER 7

Meetings That “Incite to Love and Fine Works”

THROUGHOUT the centuries, Jehovah’s people have met together in an organized way. In ancient Israel, all males traveled to Jerusalem for the three great festivals. (Deut. 16:16) In the first century, Christians congregated regularly, often in someone’s home. (Philem. 1, 2) Today, we enjoy meetings, assemblies, and conventions. Why do God’s servants meet together? Primarily because it is an important part of our worship.—Ps. 95:6; Col. 3:16.

² Meetings also benefit those who attend. Regarding every seventh Festival of Booths, the Israelites were told: “Gather the people together, the men, the women, the children, and your foreign resident who is within your cities, in order that they may listen and learn and fear Jehovah your God and take care to carry out all the words of this Law.” (Deut. 31:12) Clearly, an important reason for meeting together is to be “taught by Jehovah.” (Isa. 54:13) Meetings also provide the opportunity to get to know one another, to receive encouragement, and to gain strength through association.

CONGREGATION MEETINGS

³ Disciples who were gathered together after Pentecost 33 C.E. devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles, and “day after day they were in constant attendance in the temple with a united purpose.” (Acts 2:42, 46) Later, when Christians came together for worship, they read from inspired writings, including letters written by the

apostles and other Christian disciples. (1 Cor. 1:1, 2; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 1:1; Jas. 1:1) There was also congregation prayer. (Acts 4:24-29; 20:36) At times, experiences from the missionary field were related. (Acts 11:5-18; 14:27, 28) Bible doctrines and the fulfillment of inspired prophecies were considered. Instruction was given in matters of approved Christian conduct and godly devotion. All were encouraged to be zealous proclaimers of the good news. —Rom. 10:9, 10; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; 15:58; Eph. 5:1-33.

⁴ In our day, Christian meetings follow the pattern set in apostolic times. We heed the inspired exhortation found at Hebrews 10:24, 25: “Let us consider one another . . . , not forsaking our meeting together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you see the day drawing near.” During these difficult last days, we need the added encouragement that comes from meeting together regularly so that we can maintain spiritual strength and Christian integrity. (Rom. 1:11, 12) As Christians, we live among a crooked and twisted generation. We have rejected ungodliness and worldly desires. (Phil. 2:15, 16; Titus 2:12-14) Really, where would we rather be than in association with Jehovah’s people? (Ps. 84:10) And what could be more beneficial than the study and discussion of the Word of God? Consider the various meetings that have been arranged for our benefit.

PUBLIC MEETING

⁵ The Public Meeting is usually held on the weekend in conjunction with the weekly *Watchtower* Study. It is called a public meeting because a Bible discourse is presented that is especially designed for the general public, some of whom may be attending a meeting for the first time.

This meeting plays an important part in filling the spiritual needs of both newly associated ones and members of the congregation.—Acts 18:4; 19:9, 10.

⁶ Christ Jesus, his apostles, and their associates conducted public meetings similar to those enjoyed today by the congregations of Jehovah's people. Without question, Jesus was the greatest public speaker ever on earth. It was said of him: "Never has any man spoken like this." (John 7:46) Jesus spoke with authority, astounding his audiences. (Matt. 7:28, 29) Many were the benefits received by those who took his message to heart. (Matt. 13:16, 17) The apostles followed his example. At Acts 2:14-36, we read Peter's powerful discourse on the day of Pentecost 33 C.E. Thousands were motivated to act as a result of what they heard. Later, individuals became believers after listening to Paul's discourse in Athens.—Acts 17:22-34.

⁷ Similarly in our day, millions have benefited from the weekly Public Meetings held in congregations as well as the public discourses, or talks, presented at assemblies and conventions. Such talks help us to remain alert to Christian teachings and to be steadfast in Kingdom service. By inviting interested ones and the public in general, we may accomplish much to acquaint people with basic Bible teachings.

⁸ The subjects considered at the Public Meeting are varied. Talks cover Bible doctrine and prophecy, Scriptural principles and counsel regarding family life and marital matters, situations confronting youths, and Christian morals. Some talks center on Jehovah's marvelous works of creation. Others highlight the exemplary faith, courage, and integrity of Bible characters, focusing on lessons for our day.

⁹ To benefit fully from the Public Meeting arrangement, it is essential that we pay close attention, look up the scriptures referred to by the speaker, and follow along as he reads and explains them. (Luke 8:18) As we thus make sure of the things discussed, we will be determined to hold fast to what we learn and to apply it.—1 Thess. 5:21.

¹⁰ If speakers are available, the congregation will no doubt have a public talk every week. This is often accomplished by having speakers visit from nearby congregations. If there is a shortage of speakers, these talks are given as often as possible.

THE WATCHTOWER STUDY

¹¹ The public talk is normally followed by the *Watchtower* Study, a question-and-answer discussion of articles published in the study edition of *The Watchtower*. By means of *The Watchtower*, Jehovah provides us with timely spiritual food.

¹² The study articles frequently deal with the application of Bible principles in daily living. They fortify Christians against “the spirit of the world” and unclean conduct. (1 Cor. 2:12) Through the columns of *The Watchtower* comes increased light on Bible doctrine and prophecy, enabling all to keep abreast of the truth and stay on the path of the righteous ones. (Ps. 97:11; Prov. 4:18) Attending the *Watchtower* Study and participating in it can help us to rejoice in the hope of Jehovah’s righteous new world. (Rom. 12:12; 2 Pet. 3:13) Our Christian association helps us to cultivate the fruitage of the spirit and strengthens our desire to serve Jehovah zealously. (Gal. 5:22, 23) We are fortified to endure trials and to build “a fine foundation for

the future” so that we “may get a firm hold on the real life.”—1 Tim. 6:19; 1 Pet. 1:6, 7.

¹³ How can we take full advantage of this provision for spiritual feeding? We should prepare the lesson in advance, either separately or as a family, look up the cited scriptures, and during the meeting comment in our own words. This will sound down the truth into our heart, and others will benefit as they hear our expressions of faith. By listening carefully to the comments of others, we will benefit from the lesson each week.

OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MINISTRY

¹⁴ The congregation meets each week at the Kingdom Hall for a program entitled Our Christian Life and Ministry. This meeting has three parts designed to help us to be “adequately qualified” as ministers of God. (2 Cor. 3:5, 6) The schedule and material will be provided in a monthly *Our Christian Life and Ministry—Meeting Workbook*. The *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook* also contains outlines of sample presentations for the ministry.

¹⁵ The first part of this meeting, called Treasures From God’s Word, will help us to become familiar with the background and context of Bible accounts and to learn how they can be applied. The meeting includes a talk, a reading, and a discussion based on the weekly Bible reading. Visual aids and worksheets to help teach these accounts are included in the *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*. This in-depth consideration of the Bible benefits us in our personal life and in our teaching, so that we “may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work.” —2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

¹⁶ The second part of the meeting, Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry, is designed to provide training for the ministry. Articles about the field ministry—from the *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook* and other sources—as well as videos are considered. In addition, in preparation for the ministry, brothers and sisters present demonstrations by giving a presentation, making a return visit, or conducting a Bible study. This section of the meeting helps us to acquire “the tongue of those taught” so that we “may know how to answer the tired one with the right word.”—Isa. 50:4.

¹⁷ The third part, Living as Christians, considers the practical application of Bible principles in day-to-day life. (Ps. 119:105) A primary feature of this part of the meeting is the Congregation Bible Study. Like the *Watchtower* Study, the Congregation Bible Study is a question-and-answer discussion. Paragraphs are read, questions are asked, comments are given, and scriptures are read. Before concluding the meeting with song and prayer, there is a brief review of the meeting and a preview of the meeting for the following week.

¹⁸ Every month when a new *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook* is received, the coordinator of the body of elders, or someone assisting him, carefully analyzes it and makes a schedule. He should receive input from the Life and Ministry Meeting overseer. Each week, either the Life and Ministry Meeting overseer or another elder who is a capable teacher and approved by the body of elders will serve as the meeting chairman. His duties include ensuring that the meeting begins and ends on time and giving counsel to those who have student assignments.

¹⁹ As we regularly prepare for, attend, and participate in the Life and Ministry Meeting, we gain knowledge of the Scriptures, understanding of Bible principles, confidence to preach the good news, and skill in making disciples. Those attending who are not yet baptized Witnesses also benefit from the warm association and spiritually upbuilding discussions. To help us prepare for this meeting and others, we can make use of *Watchtower Library*, *JW Library*, *Watchtower ONLINE LIBRARY* (if available in your language), and the library at the Kingdom Hall. The Kingdom Hall library contains the available publications of Jehovah's Witnesses, the *Watch Tower Publications Index* or the *Research Guide for Jehovah's Witnesses*, as well as a number of Bible translations, a concordance, a dictionary, and other helpful reference works. This library may be used by anyone before or after the meetings.

MEETINGS FOR FIELD SERVICE

²⁰ At various times during the week and on weekends, groups of publishers will briefly assemble at meetings for field service. These meetings are usually held in private homes or at other convenient places. The Kingdom Hall may also be used for this purpose. Having smaller groups gather in several locations in the territory may make it easier for publishers to travel to the meeting for service and to the territory. Publishers can be organized quickly and head to the territory without delay. The group overseer may also be able to give closer attention to those in his care. While there are advantages to having groups meet separately, circumstances may dictate that several groups meet together. For example, if fewer publishers go in the ministry midweek, it may be advantageous to combine groups

or to have all meet together at the Kingdom Hall or another suitable location. This way, publishers will have someone to work with. The congregation may also find it convenient to meet at the Kingdom Hall on worldly holidays. Or the congregation may choose to have a combined meeting for field service after the *Watchtower* Study.

During these difficult last days, we need the encouragement that comes from meeting together regularly

²¹ If groups meet separately, the group overseer takes the lead in conducting the meeting for field service. Periodically, a group overseer may assign his assistant or another qualified brother to conduct such meetings. Rather than consider the day's text, the conductor should be prepared to discuss something that will be practical and helpful for the field ministry. Field service arrangements are made, and one of the group offers a prayer. The group is then ready to go into the field. Such meetings last from five to seven minutes but should be shorter if they follow a congregation meeting. They should provide encouragement, practical instruction, and direction for those going out in the preaching work. Newer ones or others who may need assistance can work with experienced publishers to receive training.

MEETING ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEW OR SMALL CONGREGATIONS

²² As more become disciples, the number of congregations increases. An application for a new congregation is usually submitted by the circuit overseer. However, in some

cases, small groups may find it more advantageous to be associated with the nearest congregation.

²³ At times, small congregations may be composed entirely of sisters. When that is the case, a sister who prays in the congregation or conducts meetings does so with her head covered, in harmony with the Scriptural arrangement. (1 Cor. 11:3-16) In most cases, she remains seated, facing the group. Sisters do not give discourses at meetings. Instead, they read the material provided by the organization and comment on it, or for variety, they may cover it in discussions or demonstrations. The branch office will ask one of the sisters to handle correspondence with the office and to care for meetings. In time, when brothers qualify to do so, they will care for these responsibilities.

CIRCUIT ASSEMBLIES

²⁴ Each year, arrangements are made for congregations assigned to the same circuit to gather for two one-day circuit assemblies. These joyous occasions afford all in attendance opportunities to “open [their] hearts wide” in Christian association. (2 Cor. 6:11-13) With a special need in mind, Jehovah’s organization prepares the Scriptural themes and various parts of these programs. The information is presented by means of discourses, demonstrations, reenactments, soliloquies, and interviews. Such timely instruction builds up all who attend. These assemblies provide an opportunity for new disciples to get baptized in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah.

REGIONAL CONVENTIONS

²⁵ Once each year, larger gatherings are held. These are usually three-day regional conventions, combining

congregations from a number of circuits. Smaller branches may find it more practical for all congregations in the branch territory to assemble at one location. In some lands, arrangements for these gatherings may vary according to circumstances or on the basis of direction from the organization. Periodically, international or special conventions are held in some countries and may be attended by tens of thousands of Witnesses from a number of different lands. Over the years, many have learned about the good news of the Kingdom because of the publicity given to these large gatherings of Jehovah's Witnesses.

²⁶ For Jehovah's dedicated people, conventions are joyous occasions of united worship. They have provided the setting for revealing increased light on the truth. At some conventions, new publications are released for personal and congregation study or for use in the field ministry. Conventions also feature baptisms. Conventions are of particular importance in promoting spiritual growth. They give evidence that Jehovah's people indeed form an international brotherhood of dedicated Christians who bear the identifying mark of the disciples of Jesus Christ.—John 13:35.

²⁷ By attending local congregation meetings as well as assemblies and conventions of Jehovah's people, we are strengthened to do Jehovah's will. We are also protected against worldly influences that could undermine our Christian faith. Such gatherings all bring glory and praise to Jehovah. (Ps. 35:18; Prov. 14:28) We can be thankful that Jehovah has provided these occasions of spiritual refreshment for his dedicated people in this time of the end.

THE LORD'S EVENING MEAL

²⁸ Once each year on the anniversary of the death of Jesus Christ, congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the world observe the Memorial of Christ's death, or the Lord's Evening Meal. (1 Cor. 11:20, 23, 24) This is the most important meeting of the year for Jehovah's people. We are specifically commanded to observe the Memorial.—Luke 22:19.

²⁹ The date of the Memorial corresponds with the date of the Biblical Passover, which is indicated in the Scriptures. (Ex. 12:2, 6; Matt. 26:17, 20, 26) The Passover was the annual commemoration of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt in the year 1513 B.C.E. At that time, Jehovah marked the 14th day of their first lunar month as the date for them to eat the Passover lamb and to leave their captivity in Egypt. (Ex. 12:1-51) The date is determined by counting 13 days from the appearance of the new moon nearest the spring equinox as visible in Jerusalem. Generally, the Memorial observance falls at the first full moon following the spring equinox.

³⁰ Matthew 26:26-28 outlines in Jesus' own words the way that the Memorial is to be observed. It is not a ritual with mystical overtones but a symbolic meal that is shared by those who have been called to be joint heirs with Jesus Christ in his heavenly Kingdom. (Luke 22:28-30) All other dedicated Christians and interested people are encouraged to attend the Lord's Evening Meal as observers. By their attendance, they show their appreciation for the provision Jehovah God has made for the benefit of all mankind through his Son, Jesus Christ. Soon after the

Memorial, a special public talk is given that is designed to stimulate further interest in Bible study.

³¹ Jehovah's Witnesses joyfully anticipate occasions for assembling together at meetings, where we "consider one another so as to incite to love and fine works." (Heb. 10: 24) The faithful and discreet slave is alert to provide such meetings according to our spiritual need. All of Jehovah's servants as well as interested people are urged to take full advantage of the arrangements for regularly assembling together. By showing heartfelt appreciation for Jehovah's provisions through his organization, God's servants are bound together in unity. More important, we praise and glorify Jehovah.—Ps. 111:1.

CHAPTER 8

Ministers of the Good News

JEHOVAH gave us a perfect model to follow—his Son, Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 2:21) When anyone becomes a follower of Jesus, that person preaches the good news as one of God's ministers. Indicating that this would be spiritually refreshing, Jesus said: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and *learn from me*, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for yourselves." (Matt. 11:28, 29) His promise has not failed any who have responded to that invitation!

² As God's Chief Minister, Jesus called certain individuals to be his followers. (Matt. 9:9; John 1:43) He trained them in the ministry and sent them forth to do the same work he was doing. (Matt. 10:1–11:1; 20:28; Luke 4:43) Later, he sent forth 70 others to share in declaring the good news concerning God's Kingdom. (Luke 10:1, 8–11) When Jesus sent these disciples forth, he said to them: "Whoever listens to you listens to me. And whoever disregards you disregards me also. Moreover, whoever disregards me disregards also him who sent me." (Luke 10:16) In this way, Jesus stressed the seriousness of the responsibility that was given to the disciples. They were to represent Jesus and the Most High God! It would be the same today for all others who respond to Jesus' invitation: "Come be my follower." (Luke 18:22; 2 Cor. 2:17) All who respond have a divine commission to preach the good news of the Kingdom and to make disciples.—Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20.

³ Having responded to Jesus' invitation to follow him, we have been blessed with "coming to know" Jehovah God and Jesus Christ. (John 17:3) We have been taught Jehovah's ways. With his help, we have been able to make our mind over, put on the new personality, and harmonize our conduct with Jehovah's righteous standards. (Rom. 12:1, 2; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9, 10) Our heartfelt appreciation has moved us to dedicate our lives to Jehovah and to symbolize that dedication by water baptism. At our baptism, we are ordained as ministers.

⁴ Always keep in mind that service to God must be rendered with innocent hands and a pure heart. (Ps. 24:3, 4; Isa. 52:11; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1) Through faith in Jesus Christ, we have gained a clean conscience. (Heb. 10:19-23, 35, 36; Rev. 7:9, 10, 14) The apostle Paul admonished Christians to do all things for God's glory so as not to be stumbling others. The apostle Peter pointed out the value of exemplary conduct in winning unbelievers over to the truth. (1 Cor. 10:31, 33; 1 Pet. 3:1) How can you help someone qualify to join us as a minister of the good news?

NEW PUBLISHERS

⁵ From the time you begin conducting a Bible study with an interested person, encourage him to tell others about what he is learning. He could speak with relatives, friends, work associates, and others on an informal basis. This is an important step in teaching new ones to be followers of Jesus Christ as ministers of the good news. (Matt. 9:9; Luke 6:40) As the new one grows spiritually and becomes adept at informal witnessing, he will no doubt express a desire to share in the field ministry.

MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS

⁶ Before inviting a person to go from house to house for the first time, you should be sure that he meets certain qualifications. A person who accompanies us in the field ministry identifies himself publicly with Jehovah's Witnesses. It is therefore understood that he has already brought his life into harmony with Jehovah's righteous standards and can be an unbaptized publisher.

⁷ As you study with a person and discuss Bible principles with him, you have likely become aware of his circumstances. You may have observed that he is living in harmony with what he has learned. But there are some aspects of the student's life that the elders will want to discuss with the two of you together.

⁸ The coordinator of the body of elders will arrange for two elders (one being a member of the service committee) to discuss these matters with you and the Bible student. In congregations that have very few elders, an elder and a capable ministerial servant may do this. The brothers chosen should endeavor to have this discussion without delay. In fact, if they learn of the student's desire at a congregation meeting, it may be possible for them to talk to you and your student after the meeting. The atmosphere should be relaxed. Before the student can be approved as an unbaptized publisher, the following must be true:

- He believes that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.
—2 Tim. 3:16.
- He knows and believes the basic teachings of the Scriptures so that when asked questions, he will answer in harmony with the Bible and not according to false

religious teachings or his own ideas.—Matt. 7:21-23; 2 Tim. 2:15.

- He is heeding the Bible's command to associate with Jehovah's people at congregation meetings if he is able to do so.—Ps. 122:1; Heb. 10:24, 25.
- He knows what the Bible teaches about sexual immorality, including adultery, polygamy, and homosexuality, and is living in harmony with those teachings. If the person is living with one of the opposite sex who is not a relative, the two must be properly married.—Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Heb. 13:4.
- He is heeding the Bible's prohibition against drunkenness and is free from all nonmedical use of addictive or mind-altering natural or synthetic substances.—2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:18; 1 Pet. 4:3, 4.
- He sees the value of avoiding unwholesome association.—1 Cor. 15:33.
- He has definitely broken off membership in all false religious organizations with which he may have been affiliated. He has ceased attending their services and sharing in or supporting their activities.—2 Cor. 6:14-18; Rev. 18:4.
- He is free from all involvement in the political affairs of the world.—John 6:15; 15:19; Jas. 1:27.
- He believes and lives in harmony with what Isaiah 2:4 says about the affairs of the nations.
- He really wants to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses.—Ps. 110:3.

⁹ If the elders are *not sure* how the student feels about any of these matters, they should ask him, perhaps using the scriptures here cited as a basis for the discussion. It

is important that he understand that those who share with Jehovah's Witnesses in their preaching activity must be leading a life that harmonizes with these Scriptural requirements. What he says will help the elders determine whether he knows what is expected of him and whether he is qualified to a reasonable degree to begin participating in the field ministry.

¹⁰ The elders should promptly let the student know whether he qualifies. In most cases, this is possible at the conclusion of the discussion. If he is qualified, the elders can warmly welcome the individual as a publisher. (Rom. 15:7) He should be encouraged to begin sharing in the field ministry as soon as possible and to turn in a field service report at the end of the month. The elders can explain that when a Bible student qualifies as an unbaptized publisher and reports field service for the first time, a *Congregation's Publisher Record* card is made out in his name and included in the congregation file. They can assure him that all the elders take an interest in the field service reports that are turned in each month.

¹¹ Our getting better acquainted with the new publisher and showing a personal interest in what he has accomplished can have a fine effect on the individual. It may move him to turn in field service reports regularly and to make even greater efforts to serve Jehovah.—Phil. 2:4; Heb. 13:2.

¹² Once the elders have determined that the Bible student qualifies to engage in the field ministry, he is eligible to receive his own copy of *Organized to Do Jehovah's Will*. After he reports field service for the first time, a brief announcement that he is a new unbaptized publisher will be made to the congregation.

HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE

¹³ Young children may also qualify as publishers of the good news. Jesus welcomed young children and blessed them. (Matt. 19:13-15; 21:15, 16) Although parents are primarily responsible for their own children, others in the congregation may wish to help young ones who are motivated from the heart to share in the Kingdom-preaching work. If you are a parent, your fine example in the field ministry will do much to encourage your children to be zealous in their service to God. When a child who is exemplary in conduct is moved from the heart to make a personal expression of his faith to others, what further help can be given?

¹⁴ It would be appropriate for the parent to approach one of the elders on the Congregation Service Committee to discuss whether the child is qualified to become a publisher. The coordinator of the body of elders will arrange for two elders (one being a member of the service committee) to meet with the child and his believing parent(s) or guardian. If the child has a basic knowledge of Bible truth and gives evidence of *wanting* to share in the ministry, this would indicate good progress. After considering these and other factors similar to those that apply to adults, the two elders can determine whether the child may be recognized as an unbaptized publisher. (Luke 6:45; Rom. 10:10) When meeting with a young child, there would be no need to discuss some of the matters that are usually considered with an adult but obviously do not apply to a child.

¹⁵ During the meeting, the elders should commend the child for his progress and encourage him to set the goal of baptism. Since the parents have no doubt worked hard to instill the truth in their child, they too deserve commendation. To help the parents further assist their child, the

elders should refer them to “A Message to Christian Parents,” found on pages 165-166.

DEDICATION AND BAPTISM

¹⁶ If you have come to know and love Jehovah by meeting divine requirements and sharing in the field ministry, you need to solidify your personal relationship with him. How? By dedicating your life to him and symbolizing this by water baptism.—Matt. 28:19, 20.

¹⁷ Dedication signifies a setting apart for a sacred purpose. To make a dedication to God means to approach him in prayer and solemnly promise to use your life in his service and to walk in his ways. It means giving him exclusive devotion forever. (Deut. 5:9) This is a personal, private matter. No one can do it for you.

¹⁸ However, you must do more than privately tell Jehovah that you want to belong to him. You need to show others that you have made a dedication to God. You make it known by getting baptized in water, as Jesus did. (1 Pet. 2:21; 3:21) If you have made up your mind to serve Jehovah and want to get baptized, what should you do? You should make your desire known to the coordinator of the body of elders. He will arrange for several elders to talk with you to make sure that you meet the divine requirements for baptism. For further information, please review “A Message to the Unbaptized Publisher,” found on pages 167-169 of this publication, and “Questions for Those Desiring to Get Baptized,” found on pages 170-208.

REPORTING ON THE PROGRESS OF THE MINISTRY

¹⁹ Over the years, reports on the worldwide expansion of pure worship have been a source of encouragement for

Jehovah's people. From the time Jesus Christ first told his disciples that the good news would be preached throughout all the earth, true Christians have been keenly interested in how this would be accomplished.—Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 13:10; Acts 1:8.

²⁰ Early followers of Jesus enjoyed hearing reports about the success of the preaching work. (Mark 6:30) The Bible book of Acts tells us that about 120 were present when holy spirit was poured out on the disciples at Pentecost 33 C.E. Soon the number of disciples grew to about 3,000 and then to about 5,000. The report was made that “Jehovah continued to add to them daily those being saved” and that “a large crowd of priests began to be obedient to the faith.” (Acts 1:15; 2:5-11, 41, 47; 4:4; 6:7) What fine encouragement the news of these increases must have brought to the disciples! How these exciting reports must have impelled them to move ahead with their divinely commissioned work, in spite of severe persecution instigated by the Jewish religious leaders!

²¹ About 60-61 C.E., Paul reported in his letter to the Colossians that the good news was “bearing fruit and increasing in all the world” and had been “preached in all creation under heaven.” (Col. 1:5, 6, 23) The early Christians were obedient to the Word, and holy spirit empowered them to accomplish a tremendous preaching work before the end of the Jewish system of things in 70 C.E. How encouraging it was for those faithful Christians to hear reports of what was being accomplished!

²² In like manner, Jehovah's modern-day organization endeavors to keep records of the work being done in fulfillment of Matthew 24:14, which says: “This good news of the Kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth

for a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.” As dedicated servants of God, we have an urgent work to do. We must be personally interested in seeing that the ministry is thoroughly accomplished before the end comes. Jehovah will see to it that this work is completed, and if we have a share, we will receive Jehovah’s smile of approval.—Ezek. 3:18-21.

Are you personally interested in seeing that the ministry is accomplished before the end comes?

YOUR PERSONAL FIELD SERVICE REPORT

²³ What exactly are we to report? The *Field Service Report* slip provided by the organization indicates what information is to be included. However, the following general comments may prove to be helpful.

²⁴ In the column titled “Placements (Printed and Electronic),” report the total number of publications—whether printed or electronic—that you shared with individuals who are not baptized Witnesses. Under “Video Showings,” report the number of times you were able to show one of our videos.

²⁵ In reporting “Return Visits,” count the total number of calls made for the purpose of furthering interest previously shown by someone who is not a dedicated, baptized Witness. In order to count a return visit, you need to contact the individual who previously showed interest. A parent may count up to one return visit each week when taking the lead during the Family Worship evening with an unbaptized child present. A return visit can be made not only by calling on someone at home but also by writing a

letter, making a telephone call, sending a text message or an e-mail, or delivering some literature, such as the latest issue of a magazine. Each time a home Bible study is conducted, a return visit should be counted.

²⁶ Although a Bible study is usually conducted each week, it is reported as only one study each month. Publishers should list the total number of *different* Bible studies conducted during the month. Bible studies reported may include those conducted with people who are not dedicated, baptized Witnesses. You may also count a Bible study conducted with an inactive brother or sister at the direction of a member of the service committee or with a newly baptized person who has not yet completed the *Bible Teach* and “*God’s Love*” books.

²⁷ It is important to submit an accurate report of “Hours.” Basically, this is the time you spend participating in the house-to-house ministry, making return visits, conducting Bible studies, or otherwise witnessing informally or publicly to people who are not dedicated, baptized Witnesses. If two publishers are working together, both may count the time, but only one would count any return visits that are made or any Bible studies that are conducted. Both parents who share in instructing their children during Family Worship evening may count up to one hour a week. Brothers may count the time spent delivering a public talk. An interpreter for a public talk may count the time as well. There are essential activities for which time is not counted, such as getting ready for field service, attending the meeting for field service, running errands, and so forth.

²⁸ Each publisher must follow his Bible-trained conscience when prayerfully determining what constitutes a witnessing period. Some publishers preach in densely populated

areas, whereas others work territories where there are few inhabitants and considerable travel is required. Territories differ; publishers differ in the way they view their ministry. The Governing Body does not impose its conscience on the worldwide congregation as to how time spent in field service is to be counted, nor has anyone else been appointed to make a judgment in this matter.—Matt. 6:1; 7:1; 1 Tim. 1:5.

²⁹ Time spent in the field service should be reported in full hours. An exception to this is made when a publisher is very limited because of advanced age, is a shut-in, is confined to a nursing home, or is otherwise incapacitated. Such a publisher may report field service in 15-minute increments. Even when he gives a witness for just 15 minutes during a month, he should report this time. He will be counted as a regular Kingdom publisher. This arrangement also applies to a publisher who is temporarily limited, perhaps unable to move about during a month or so because of a serious illness or injury. This provision is only for those who are *very limited* in their activity. The service committee will determine whether a publisher qualifies for this arrangement.

CONGREGATION'S PUBLISHER RECORD CARD

³⁰ Your individual field service report for each month is recorded on a *Congregation's Publisher Record* card. These cards are not personal property. If you plan to move to another congregation, be sure to inform your congregation elders. The secretary of your new congregation will request that your *Congregation's Publisher Record* card(s) be forwarded. If the secretary of your former congregation knows the name of the congregation to which you

relocate, he can take the initiative in sending the record card(s) along with a letter of introduction. Consequently, the elders of your new congregation will be in a better position to welcome you and give you needed spiritual assistance. If you are away from your congregation for less than three months, please continue to send your field service reports to your home congregation.

WHY WE REPORT OUR FIELD SERVICE

³¹ Do you sometimes forget to turn in your field service report? No doubt all of us need occasional reminders. But if we cultivate the right attitude toward reporting and understand why doing so is important, it may be easier for us to remember to report our field service.

³² Some have asked: “Since Jehovah knows what I am doing in his service, why do I need to put in a report to the congregation?” True, Jehovah knows what we are doing, and he knows whether our service is whole-souled or just a token of what we are really able to do. Remember, however, that Jehovah recorded the number of days that Noah spent in the ark and the number of years that the Israelites journeyed in the wilderness. God kept account of the number of those who were faithful and of those who disobeyed. He recorded the progressive conquest of the land of Canaan and the accomplishments of the faithful judges of Israel. Yes, he recorded many details regarding the activities of his servants. He inspired this written record of what took place, making clear to us his view of keeping accurate records.

³³ Historical events recorded in the Bible demonstrate the exactness of reports and records kept by Jehovah’s people. In many cases, the full impact of the Bible account

could not be conveyed without reporting the specific numbers. Consider the following examples: Genesis 46:27; Exodus 12:37; Judges 7:7; 2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chronicles 14:9-13; John 6:10; 21:11; Acts 2:41; 19:19.

³⁴ Although our reports obviously do not include all that we do in our worship of Jehovah, they serve a practical purpose within Jehovah's organization. In the first century, when the apostles returned from a preaching campaign, they reported to Jesus "all the things they had done and taught." (Mark 6:30) At times, reports may indicate that certain aspects of our ministry need particular attention. The figures may show that while there has been progress in some activities, other areas, such as publisher increase or growth, have slowed down. It could be that encouragement is needed or that problems have to be resolved. Responsible overseers will take note of reports and endeavor to rectify any condition that may be hindering the progress of individuals or of the congregation as a whole.

³⁵ Reports are also beneficial to the organization in determining just where there is a greater need for workers in the field. What areas are more productive? Where is little progress being made? What publications are needed to help people learn the truth? Reports enable the organization to project literature needs for the preaching work in different parts of the world and then to keep ahead of those needs.

³⁶ For most of us, reports mean encouragement. Are we not thrilled when we hear about the work our brothers are doing in preaching the good news worldwide? Reports of increases help us to get an overall view of the expansion of Jehovah's organization. Experiences warm our hearts and fill us with zeal, moving us to have a fuller share in the preaching work. (Acts 15:3) Our cooperation in turning in

field service reports is important and shows our concern for the brothers everywhere. In this small way, we demonstrate our submission to Jehovah's organizational arrangement.—Luke 16:10; Heb. 13:17.

SETTING PERSONAL GOALS

³⁷ There is no reason for us to compare *our* field service with that of another person. (Gal. 5:26; 6:4) Individual circumstances vary. On the other hand, we can derive much benefit from setting realistic personal goals as a basis for measuring our progress in the ministry. Attaining these goals can give us the satisfaction that comes with accomplishment.

³⁸ It is obvious that Jehovah is indeed speeding up the ingathering of those whom he will protect through “the great tribulation.” We are living in the time of the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy: “The little one will become a thousand and the small one a mighty nation. I myself, Jehovah, will speed it up in its own time.” (Rev. 7:9, 14; Isa. 60:22) What a privilege it is to be ministers of the good news during these momentous last days!—Matt. 24:14.

CHAPTER 9

Methods of Preaching the Good News

AS A vigorous proclaimer of the good news, Jesus set an example for his followers. He took the initiative to go out among the people, speaking and teaching in their homes and in public places. (Matt. 9:35; 13:36; Luke 8:1) Jesus spoke with individuals, taught his disciples privately, and addressed groups numbering into the thousands. (Mark 4:10-13; 6:35-44; John 3:2-21) He took advantage of every appropriate occasion to speak words of encouragement and hope. (Luke 4:16-19) Even when he was in need of rest and refreshment, he did not pass up opportunities to witness. (Mark 6:30-34; John 4:4-34) When we read the inspired accounts of Jesus' ministry, are we not moved to imitate him? Certainly we are, just as the apostles were. —Matt. 4:19, 20; Luke 5:27, 28; John 1:43-45.

² Consider the opportunities that are open to Christians today to share in the work initiated by Jesus Christ nearly 2,000 years ago.

PREACHING FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE

³ As Jehovah's Witnesses, we recognize the value of preaching the good news of the Kingdom systematically from house to house. We have used this method so extensively that it has become our trademark. The wisdom of using this method to reach millions of people in a short period of time has been confirmed by gratifying results. (Matt. 11:19; 24:14) The house-to-house ministry has proved to

be a practical way for us to demonstrate love for Jehovah and for our neighbor.—Matt. 22:34-40.

⁴ House-to-house preaching is not a modern innovation of Jehovah's Witnesses. The apostle Paul refers to his teaching in the homes of people. Describing his ministry to the overseers in Ephesus, he said: "From the first day I stepped into the province of Asia, . . . I did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you . . . from house to house." In this and other ways, Paul "thoroughly bore witness both to Jews and to Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus." (Acts 20:18, 20, 21) At that time, Roman emperors encouraged idolatry, and many were "given to the fear of the deities." It was urgent that people seek "the God who made the world and all the things in it," the One who was then "declaring to all people everywhere that they should repent."—Acts 17:22-31.

⁵ Today, the need to reach people with the good news is even more urgent. The end of this wicked system of things is rapidly approaching. Seeing this need, we are moved to increase our efforts. No better way has been found than the time-tested method of searching from house to house for those who are hungering for the truth. It is as effective today as it was in the days of Jesus and the apostles.—Mark 13:10.

⁶ Are you able to have a full share in the house-to-house ministry? If so, you can be sure that Jehovah is pleased with you. (Ezek. 9:11; Acts 20:35) The house-to-house ministry may not be easy for you. You may have physical limitations, or you may be preaching in a territory where many people are not inclined to listen. There may even be gov-

ernmental restrictions. Perhaps you are shy, and you find it very difficult to initiate conversations with strangers. Therefore, each time you engage in the house-to-house ministry, you experience a measure of anxiety. Do not be discouraged. (Ex. 4:10-12) Your circumstances are not unlike those of your brothers in many other places.

⁷ Jesus promised his disciples: “Look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things.” (Matt. 28:20) That promise fortifies us in the disciple-making work. We feel like the apostle Paul, who said: “For all things I have the strength through the one who gives me power.” (Phil. 4:13) Take full advantage of congregation arrangements for engaging in the house-to-house witnessing. By working with others, you will receive encouragement and personal assistance. Pray for help to overcome whatever obstacles you may face, and exert yourself vigorously as a preacher of the good news.—1 John 5:14.

⁸ As you speak to others about the good news, you will have opportunities to give them “a reason for the hope you have.” (1 Pet. 3:15) You will become more and more aware of the contrast between those who have the Kingdom hope and those who are without hope. (Isa. 65:13, 14) You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have been obedient to Jesus’ command to “let your light shine,” and you may even be privileged to help others come to know Jehovah and the truth that leads to everlasting life.—Matt. 5:16; John 17:3; 1 Tim. 4:16.

⁹ Arrangements are made for house-to-house activity on weekends as well as during the week. In areas where it is difficult to find people at home during the day, some congregations arrange for evening witnessing. People may be

more inclined to receive visitors in the late afternoon or early evening hours than in the morning.

SEARCHING OUT DESERVING ONES

¹⁰ Jesus instructed his disciples to “search out” deserving ones. (Matt. 10:11) His search for those favorably disposed was not limited to the house-to-house ministry. Indeed, he gave a witness on every appropriate occasion, both formal and informal. (Luke 8:1; John 4:7-15) The apostles also witnessed to people at a variety of locations.—Acts 17:17; 28:16, 23, 30, 31.

¹¹ Likewise today, our objective is to reach *everyone* possible with the Kingdom message. This means imitating Jesus and his apostles in their approach to the disciple-making work as well as keeping abreast of the changing times and the varying circumstances of the people in our territory. (1 Cor. 7:31) Therefore, we also engage in public witnessing within our congregation territory. (Acts 20:20) Publishers have been successful in calling on people at places of business. Street witnessing has proved effective in many countries, as has witnessing in parks, parking lots, or wherever people can be found. Some congregations have set up tables or mobile displays within their territory. In addition, the branch office may organize special metropolitan public witnessing in high pedestrian traffic areas of a city, using participants from several congregations. As a result, individuals who are not at home when publishers call may be contacted elsewhere with the good news.

¹² Presenting *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* is an effective way to do public witnessing. We can approach people in a kind and tactful manner and share with them a timely sub-

ject discussed in one of the magazines. Or we can offer other literature. We can then arrange to call on them at their homes. You may find witnessing to people in public places an enjoyable way to expand your ministry.

¹³ However, proclaiming the good news is not all that is involved in the work assigned to Christians today. If you are to succeed in helping others embrace the truth that leads to life, you will want to make repeated calls on interested ones so that they can progress toward becoming mature Christians.

MAKING RETURN VISITS

¹⁴ Jesus said to his followers: “You will be witnesses of me . . . to the most distant part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) But he also told them: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.” (Matt. 28:19, 20) Making return visits can be a source of joy in Jehovah’s service. People who expressed interest in the good news when you first called on them will likely be happy to see you again. By sharing additional Bible information with them, you may be able to strengthen their faith in God and help them to become aware of their spiritual need. (Matt. 5:3) If you prepare well and arrange to make the return visit at a time convenient for them, you may be able to start a home Bible study. Doing so will usually be your objective in making return visits. We not only plant the seed of truth but also water it.—1 Cor. 3:6.

¹⁵ Making return visits may be a challenge for some. Perhaps you have become quite proficient in making a brief presentation of the good news, and you enjoy that particular feature of the ministry. But when you think of returning

to engage the householder in a discussion of the Bible, the challenge may seem overwhelming. You need not feel that way. Very likely, you placed some Bible literature with the interested person on the first call. Why not discuss something contained in that publication? You can prepare for this ahead of time. If you do not feel comfortable, arrange to have a more experienced publisher accompany you.

Our objective is to reach *everyone* possible with the Kingdom message

CONDUCTING HOME BIBLE STUDIES

¹⁶ When speaking to a Jewish proselyte who was reading God's Word, the evangelizer Philip asked him: "Do you actually know what you are reading?" The man responded: "Really, how could I ever do so unless someone guided me?" The Bible account in Acts chapter 8 then tells us that starting with the passage of Scripture that the man had been reading, Philip "declared to him the good news about Jesus." (Acts 8:26-36) We do not know how much time Philip spent with the man, but Philip explained the good news to the point that the man became a believer and asked to get baptized. He became a disciple of Jesus Christ.

¹⁷ Many today are not familiar with the Bible, so it may require a number of return visits and a detailed study over a period of weeks, months, or even a year or more before they are able to build faith and qualify for baptism. But your patient and loving assistance in helping honesthearted ones become disciples has its own reward, even as Je-

sus said: “There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.”—Acts 20:35.

¹⁸ You will no doubt want to conduct a home Bible study using one of the publications that is especially designed for that purpose. By following the example of the one who studied with you, you will be able to conduct productive studies, helping others to become disciples of Jesus Christ.

¹⁹ If you need assistance in starting and conducting a home Bible study, feel free to speak with one of the overseers or with a fellow Witness who is effective in the Bible study work. The suggestions that appear in the *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook* and are demonstrated at the meeting will also help you. Rely on Jehovah, and make your desire a matter of prayer. (1 John 3:22) So if at all possible, make it your aim to conduct a home Bible study in addition to any study that you may conduct with your family. By conducting Bible studies, you will increase your joy in the ministry.

DIRECTING INTERESTED ONES TO JEHOVAH’S ORGANIZATION

²⁰ When we help people to come to know Jehovah God and become disciples of Jesus Christ, they become a part of the congregation. Bible students will make spiritual progress and grow to maturity if they recognize Jehovah’s organization and cooperate with it. Teaching them how to do so is important. Videos and the brochure *Who Are Doing Jehovah’s Will Today?* have been specifically prepared for this purpose. Some of the information in Chapter 4 of this publication may also be helpful.

²¹ From the very beginning of your Bible discussions, help the student to see that Jehovah is using an organization

to get the preaching work done on earth today. Point out the value of our Bible study aids, and explain how they are produced and distributed worldwide by volunteer workers who are dedicated to God. Invite your Bible student to accompany you to the meetings at the Kingdom Hall. Explain how the meetings are conducted, and introduce him to the friends there. You will also want to help him get acquainted with other Witnesses at assemblies and conventions. On these and other occasions, let the new one observe for himself how Jehovah's people display love, the identifying mark of true Christians. (John 13:35) As the interested one grows in appreciation for Jehovah's organization, he will draw closer to Jehovah.

USING BIBLE LITERATURE

²² The early Christians became zealous publishers of the Word of God. They made copies of the Scriptures for their personal use and for congregation study. They recommended God's Word of truth to others. Their handwritten copies were few in number and highly treasured. (Col. 4:16; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:14-17; 4:13; 1 Pet. 1:1) Today, Jehovah's Witnesses use modern printing methods to publish millions of Bibles and hundreds of millions of Bible study aids. These include tracts, brochures, books, and magazines in several hundred languages.

²³ As you share the good news with others, be sure to make use of the Bible study aids provided by Jehovah's organization. Various publications will be featured during the month. In addition, you will be able to offer magazines at different times each month, including on magazine days. Knowing how much you have personally benefited from reading and studying the publications of Jehovah's Wit-

nesses will motivate you to share them with others.—Heb. 13:15, 16.

²⁴ More and more people are using the Internet as their primary source of information. Therefore, in addition to Bible literature, our official website, jw.org, is an effective tool for spreading the good news. Individuals around the world can use the computer to read or listen to audio recordings of the Bible and Bible literature in hundreds of languages. Those who hesitate to converse with us or who live in areas where they have few opportunities to talk to Jehovah's Witnesses are able to investigate our beliefs by using jw.org in the privacy of their home.

²⁵ Therefore, we publicize jw.org at every appropriate opportunity. If a householder asks a question about our beliefs, we can use a mobile device or a computer to show him the answer right then and there. If we meet someone who speaks another language, including a sign language, we can direct him to our website to find the Bible and Bible literature in his language. Many publishers have used one of the videos on the website to start a Bible discussion.

INFORMAL WITNESSING

²⁶ To those who were paying attention to his word, Jesus said: "You are the light of the world. . . . Let your light shine before men, so that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens." (Matt. 5:14-16) Those disciples reflected God's ways by imitating Jesus, who said of himself: "I am the light of the world." Jesus set the example for Christians in letting "the light of life" shine for the benefit of all who would listen.—John 8:12.

²⁷ The apostle Paul likewise set an example for us to follow. (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1) While in Athens, he witnessed every

day in the marketplace to those who happened to be on hand. (Acts 17:17) The Christians in Philippi followed his example. For that reason, Paul could write to them that they were living “in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation,” among whom they were “shining as illuminators in the world.” (Phil. 2:15) We today can let the Kingdom truth shine forth by our words and actions whenever there is an opportunity for us to tell others about the good news. True, our good example as honest and upright people may in itself draw attention to the fact that we are different from the world. However, if we talk to them about the good news, they will get to know *why* we are different.

²⁸ Many of Jehovah’s people present the good news to those whom they meet at work, in school, on public transportation, or elsewhere while going about their daily activities. When on a journey, we may have the opportunity to talk with fellow travelers. Individually, we must be alert to opportunities to turn ordinary conversation into a witness. Let us be prepared to speak with others on every appropriate occasion.

²⁹ We will be motivated to do so if we keep in mind that we are praising our Creator and bringing honor to his name. In addition, we may be able to help honesthearted ones come to know Jehovah so that they too can serve him and gain the hope of life that comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Jehovah is pleased by such efforts and considers it sacred service.—Heb. 12:28; Rev. 7:9, 10.

TERRITORY

³⁰ It is Jehovah’s will that the Kingdom message be preached worldwide, both in cities and in rural areas. To this end, congregations as well as individuals who serve

in isolated places receive territory assignments from the branch office. (1 Cor. 14:40) This is consistent with the God-directed arrangement in the first century. (2 Cor. 10:13; Gal. 2:9) With the rapid expansion of the Kingdom work in these last days, much is accomplished when the arrangement for working congregation territory is well-organized.

³¹ This arrangement comes under the direction of the service overseer. A ministerial servant may do the actual assigning of territory and keep the records up-to-date. There are two types of territories, group territories and personal territories. Where territory is limited, group overseers will have group territories in which publishers in the group can preach. On the other hand, where territory is plentiful, individual publishers may obtain personal territories.

³² A publisher who has a personal territory will have somewhere to preach at times when no meetings for field service have been arranged or when it is impractical to meet the group. For example, some publishers obtain a territory near their place of work and preach there during lunch breaks or after work. Some families obtain a personal territory in the neighborhood where they live, and they preach in it on some evenings. Having a conveniently located personal territory may help a publisher to make the most of the time he can devote to field service. Of course, personal territories may also be used for group witnessing. If you wish to have a personal territory, you may request one from the territory servant.

³³ Whether it is a group territory obtained by the group overseer or a personal territory obtained by a publisher, the person who obtained the territory will make sure that it is worked thoroughly. This entails making sure that

reasonable effort is made to contact someone at every residence. Perhaps some householders can be reached by other means, such as by letter, telephone, or street witnessing. Any group overseer or publisher who obtains a territory should endeavor to cover it within four months. Once it is completed, he should inform the territory servant that the territory has been worked, so that the records can be updated. The group overseer or publisher can either keep the territory and work it again or return it to the territory servant.

³⁴ When all those associated with the congregation cooperate, the territory can be covered thoroughly. We can also avoid simultaneous coverage of the same area by two or more publishers, something that could irritate the householders. Thus we show consideration for our brothers and for the people in the territory.

COOPERATING TO PREACH TO PEOPLE OF ALL LANGUAGES

³⁵ Everyone needs to learn about Jehovah God, his Son, and the Kingdom. (Rev. 14:6, 7) We are interested in helping people of all languages to call on the name of Jehovah for salvation and to put on the Christian personality. (Rom. 10:12, 13; Col. 3:10, 11) What are some challenges that arise when presenting the good news in multilingual areas? How can these be handled in a way that gives as many as possible the opportunity to hear the Kingdom message in the language they understand best?—Rom. 10:14.

³⁶ The territory assignment for each congregation is according to language. Therefore, in multilingual areas, publishers from different congregations preach in the same neighborhoods. In such cases, it is best for the publishers from each congregation to concentrate on finding

and preaching to the people of their own specific language. Generally, this means that when going from house to house, they will offer literature only in the language of their congregation. They will skip residences that belong to the territory of other-language congregations. This also applies during annual invitation campaigns. When engaging in public and informal witnessing, however, publishers may speak with anyone and offer literature in any language.

³⁷ In some cases, other-language congregations cannot cover their more distant territory regularly and may prefer that the congregations working those areas not skip any homes. Publishers can do their best to convey the Kingdom message to people who speak another language. When an interested person is found, it is usually best for the congregation that holds meetings in his language to cultivate his interest. Circumstances vary, so the service overseers of the congregations involved should communicate with one another to work out a mutually acceptable system of covering the territory. This will give everyone an opportunity to hear the Kingdom message and will prevent unnecessary overlapping of efforts, which may irritate the householders.—Prov. 15:22.

³⁸ What should we do if the person who answers the door speaks a language different from ours? We should not assume that publishers who speak his language will call on him. Therefore, we should use the booklet *Good News for People of All Nations* to determine his language and give him a witness. Some publishers have learned a simple presentation in a language that they often encounter in their territory. We can show a person how he may read or

download literature in his language from our official website, jw.org, or we can offer to bring him literature in his language.

³⁹ If the individual shows genuine interest, we should try to find someone who is qualified to help him in a language he understands. We can also tell him where nearby meetings are held in his language. If he wishes to be contacted by someone who speaks his language, we can show him how to enter his contact information on jw.org. In turn, the branch office will endeavor to locate a nearby publisher, group, or congregation that can assist him further.

⁴⁰ Until the interested person tells us that he has been contacted by someone who speaks his language, we should continue calling on him. In some cases, the branch office will inform the elders that someone who speaks the person's language could not be located. When this occurs, we should do our best to continue cultivating the householder's interest. If possible, we can study the Bible with him, perhaps with the aid of a publication in his language. If we make good use of the pictures and have the person read the cited scriptures, he will get some basic Bible understanding. A member of his family who knows enough of his language and the local language may be willing to serve as an interpreter.

⁴¹ In order to direct the interested person to God's organization, we should invite him to our meetings, even though he will not fully understand the program. When scriptures are read, we can help him find them by using a Bible in his language if one is available. Associating with others in the congregation can in itself be upbuilding and will help him make further spiritual progress.

⁴² If a sizable number of people in the congregation territory speak another language, the body of elders may request approval from the branch office to host a pregroup. A pregroup consists of a number of publishers who are preaching in a foreign language but have no qualified elder or ministerial servant who can conduct a weekly meeting in that language. From time to time, the elders can find out what possible support there might be for meetings in that language by having a public talk or a *Watchtower* Study or by arranging a tie-in to a meeting of a congregation that holds meetings in the language.

⁴³ There are four basic requirements for forming a group: (1) Sufficient interest and potential for growth exists in a particular language field. (2) At least a small number of publishers know the language or are learning it. (3) A qualified elder or ministerial servant is available to take the lead and conduct at least one weekly meeting in that language. (4) A body of elders is willing to host the group. When these requirements are met to a reasonable degree, the body of elders will write to the branch office about the particulars of the group and will request formal recognition as a congregation hosting a foreign-language group. The elder or ministerial servant taking the lead would be considered the group overseer or group servant responsible for taking care of the group.

⁴⁴ Generally, one of the first parts of the Life and Ministry Meeting that a foreign-language group will hold each week is the Congregation Bible Study. It is usually held in an auxiliary room at the Kingdom Hall. In time, student assignments on the Life and Ministry Meeting may be presented in the auxiliary room if an elder or a ministerial

servant conversant with the language can serve as the chairman. The elders may approve the holding of other meetings, such as the Public Meeting and the *Watchtower* Study. Meetings for field service may also be arranged for the group. All in the group work under the oversight of the body of elders hosting the group. The elders will provide balanced direction and show initiative in caring for the needs of the group. When a circuit overseer works with the group during the week of his visit to the host congregation, he will provide the branch office with a brief report on the group's progress and mention any specific needs. In due course, it may be possible for the group to become a congregation. If all involved in working the foreign-language field apply theocratic direction, Jehovah will be pleased. —1 Cor. 1:10; 3:5, 6.

GROUP WITNESSING

⁴⁵ Dedicated Christians have a personal responsibility to share the good news with others. There are many ways to do this, but most of us appreciate being able to go out in field service with others. (Luke 10:1) For this reason, congregations meet for field service on weekends as well as during the week. Holidays also provide fine opportunities for group witnessing, since many brothers have time off from work. The service overseer should take the lead by working with the body of elders in arranging meetings for field service at convenient times and locations during the day and in the evenings.

⁴⁶ Group witnessing enables publishers to work together and experience “an interchange of encouragement.” (Rom. 1:12) Newer publishers can work along with skilled, experienced publishers and receive training. In some areas, it

may be advisable for two or more publishers to work together for safety reasons. Even if you are planning to work by yourself in the territory, meeting with the group can be encouraging for all concerned. Just knowing that others are out in the ministry, working in the same general area, can give you confidence. Pioneers and others should not feel obliged to support *every* meeting for field service organized by the congregation, especially if such are held each day. However, it will likely be possible for them to support at least some meetings for service each week.

⁴⁷ May all of us follow the pattern set by Jesus and his apostles! We can be certain of Jehovah's blessing on our endeavors to have a full share in the vital work of preaching this good news of the Kingdom.—Luke 9:57-62.

CHAPTER 10

Ways to Expand Your Ministry

WHEN the time came for Jesus to send his disciples out as Kingdom preachers, he said to them: “The harvest is great, but the workers are few.” There was much work to be done, so he added: “Beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.” (Matt. 9:37, 38) Jesus told the disciples how to carry out their ministry. There was a sense of urgency in his words: “You will by no means complete the circuit of the cities of Israel until the Son of man arrives.”—Matt. 10:23.

² Today, too, there is much to be done in the field ministry. This good news of the Kingdom must be preached before the end comes, and time is running out! (Mark 13:10) Since the field is the world, we are faced with a situation quite similar to that of Jesus and his disciples but on a much larger scale. We are few in number compared with the billions in the world of mankind, but we can be sure that Jehovah will help us. The Kingdom good news *will be preached* throughout the earth, and in Jehovah’s due time, the end *will come*. Will we put God’s Kingdom first in our life in order to accomplish our ministry fully? What theocratic goals can we pursue to that end?

³ Expressing what Jehovah asks of His dedicated servants, Jesus said: “You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength.” (Mark 12:30) We are required to be whole-souled in our service to God. This means that we demonstrate the depth of our devotion and the genuineness of our dedication by doing our

utmost in Jehovah's service. (2 Tim. 2:15) There are opportunities open to each of us, according to our individual circumstances and abilities. Just consider what some of these opportunities are, and decide what theocratic goals you will pursue in fulfilling your ministry.

SERVING AS A CONGREGATION PUBLISHER

⁴ All who embrace the truth have the privilege of publishing the good news. This is the basic work that Jesus gave his disciples to do. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) A disciple of Jesus Christ usually begins speaking to others about the good news as soon as he hears it. That is what Andrew, Philip, Cornelius, and others did. (John 1:40, 41, 43-45; Acts 10:1, 2, 24; 16:14, 15, 25-34) Does this mean that a person may tell others about the good news even before he gets baptized? Yes! As soon as an individual qualifies as an unbaptized publisher in the congregation, the opportunity to participate in house-to-house witnessing is open to him. Also, according to his ability and circumstances, he may share in other features of the field ministry.

⁵ After a publisher gets baptized, he is no doubt interested in doing all he can to help others learn the good news. Men and women alike have the privilege of sharing in the preaching work. We are blessed to have even a small part in advancing the interests of God's Kingdom. Anyone who can expand his ministry to include additional features of service will be happy indeed.

SERVING WHERE THE NEED IS GREATER

⁶ It may be that your congregation territory is frequently worked and a fine witness is being given. If so, you may feel that you could expand your ministry by moving to an area where there is a greater need in the field. (Acts 16:9)

If you are presently an elder or a ministerial servant, there may be another congregation that would appreciate having your assistance. Your circuit overseer may have suggestions about how you can assist another congregation in the circuit. If you wish to serve in another area of the country, the branch office can provide helpful information.

⁷ Would you like to serve in a foreign country? If so, you need to consider such a move carefully. Why not discuss the matter with the elders in your congregation? Such a move will certainly have an impact on you and any who accompany you. (Luke 14:28) However, if you do not plan to stay for a long time, it may be best to consider serving in an area within your home country.

⁸ In some lands, brothers who are being used in positions of oversight are relatively new in the truth. Humble local brothers are willing to let more experienced elders who move into the congregation take the lead. If you are an elder and are contemplating a move to such a country, keep in mind that your objective is not to serve *in place* of the local brothers. Instead, serve *with* them. Encourage them to reach out and accept congregation responsibilities. (1 Tim. 3:1) Be patient if some things are not done as they would be done in your home country. Use your experience as an elder to be a real help to the brothers. Then, if at some point you must leave and return to your home country, the local elders will be in a better position to care for the congregation.

⁹ Before the branch office can provide you with names of congregations that could benefit from your assistance, your Congregation Service Committee will need to provide a letter of recommendation. This letter is required whether you are serving as an elder, a ministerial servant, a pio-

neer, or a publisher. The service committee will send the letter of recommendation along with your inquiry directly to the branch office of the country where you desire to serve.

PREACHING IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE

¹⁰ In order to expand your ministry, you may wish to consider learning another language, including a sign language. If you have the goal of learning to preach in another language, why not speak with the elders and the circuit overseer? They can offer suggestions and give you needed encouragement. Under the direction of the branch office, some circuits have organized language classes to train capable publishers and pioneers to preach in another language.

PIONEER SERVICE

¹¹ All publishers should be acquainted with the general requirements for auxiliary, regular, and special pioneer service as well as other types of full-time service. A pioneer must be an exemplary baptized Christian whose personal circumstances allow him or her to spend the specified number of hours each month in preaching the good news. The Congregation Service Committee approves applications for auxiliary and regular pioneer service, whereas special pioneers are appointed by the branch office.

¹² *Auxiliary pioneers* may be appointed for a minimum of one month, for any number of consecutive months, or continuously for an unspecified length of time, according to their circumstances. Many Kingdom publishers enjoy serving as auxiliary pioneers on special occasions, such as during the Memorial season or during the month of the circuit

overseer's visit. Some choose vacation months. Baptized, school-age publishers may wish to enroll as auxiliary pioneers when they have time off from school. Publishers can choose to auxiliary pioneer with a reduced hour requirement each March and April and during the month of the circuit overseer's visit. Whatever your personal circumstances, if you are of good moral standing and habits, can arrange to meet the specified hour requirement, and believe that you can spend one or more months as an auxiliary pioneer, the elders will be pleased to consider your application for this privilege of service.

¹³ To qualify as a *regular pioneer*, you must currently be in a position to reach the yearly hour requirement. As a regular pioneer, you will want to work closely with your congregation. Zealous pioneers are a blessing to a congregation, generating enthusiasm for the field ministry and even encouraging others to take up the pioneer service. Before you can apply to be a regular pioneer, however, you must be an exemplary publisher who has been baptized for at least six months.

¹⁴ *Special pioneers* are usually selected from among regular pioneers who have demonstrated their effectiveness in the ministry. They must be able to serve wherever the branch office chooses to assign them. Often, this is an isolated area where they can find interest and form new congregations. At times, special pioneers are assigned to congregations that need help in covering their territory. Some special pioneers who are also elders have been assigned to help small congregations, even when there is no particular need for more workers in the field. Special pioneers receive a modest allowance for living expenses. Some special pioneers are appointed on a temporary basis.

FIELD MISSIONARIES

¹⁵ The Service Committee of the Governing Body appoints field missionaries, who are then assigned by the local Branch Committee to serve in densely populated areas. They accomplish much good in stabilizing and strengthening the preaching work and congregation activities. Very often, field missionaries have received training at the School for Kingdom Evangelizers or the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. They are provided housing and receive a modest allowance for living expenses.

CIRCUIT WORK

¹⁶ Those who are appointed as circuit overseers by the Governing Body receive training and gain experience first by serving as substitute circuit overseers. Such men love the ministry and love their brothers. They are zealous pioneers, diligent students of the Bible, and effective speakers and teachers. They are outstanding in manifesting the fruitage of the spirit, and they demonstrate balance, reasonableness, and discernment. If a brother is married, his pioneer wife is exemplary in her conduct and dealings with others. She is an effective preacher. She also understands her role as a submissive Christian wife, not speaking for her husband or dominating conversations. Circuit overseers and their wives have a rigorous schedule, so those reaching out for this service must be in good health. Pioneers do not apply for the circuit work. Rather, they make their desire to be in the circuit work known to their circuit overseer, who will provide them with suggestions.

THEOCRATIC SCHOOLS

¹⁷ *School for Kingdom Evangelizers:* There is a need for more Kingdom evangelizers to cover seldom-worked

territories and to give congregations spiritual support. Therefore, single brothers, single sisters, and married couples may apply to receive specialized training at the School for Kingdom Evangelizers. After attending the school, graduates are sent out to serve as regular pioneers where the need is greater in their home country. However, those who can make themselves available may be given other assignments in their home country or in another country. A few may be sent out as temporary or permanent special pioneers. Pioneers who are interested in attending this school may learn of the requirements at the meeting arranged for this purpose at the regional convention.

¹⁸ *Watchtower Bible School of Gilead*: Single brothers, single sisters, and married couples who are selected to attend this school speak English and are serving as special pioneers, field missionaries, circuit overseers, or Bethelites. They have the potential for strengthening and stabilizing the field or the branch organization. They have already demonstrated that they enjoy serving their brothers and can help others in a kind way to learn and adhere to Scriptural and theocratic direction. The local Branch Committee invites potential students to submit an application. Graduates of this school are assigned to the field or to the branch office in a foreign land or in their home country.

BETHEL SERVICE

¹⁹ Serving at Bethel is a special privilege. The name Bethel means “House of God,” and that designation is certainly appropriate for these centers of theocratic activity. Brothers and sisters in Bethel service do a vital work in connection with producing, translating, and distributing

Bible literature. Their service is invaluable to the Governing Body, which provides oversight and direction for congregations throughout the earth. Many Bethelites who are translators live and work in areas of the branch territory where the language they translate is spoken.

This enables them to hear the language spoken in everyday life. They can also see firsthand whether people understand the language as it is used in the translated publications.

²⁰ Much of the work done at Bethel is physically demanding. For this reason, those called to Bethel are mainly dedicated, baptized brothers who are young, in good health, and physically strong. If there is a need in the branch that oversees your country and you would like to serve at Bethel, you can learn more about the requirements by attending the meeting for those interested in Bethel service that is held at regional conventions. You can also ask the circuit overseer about Bethel service.

CONSTRUCTION SERVICE

²¹ The construction of theocratic facilities is a form of sacred service, similar to the work of constructing Solomon's temple. (1 Ki. 8:13-18) Many brothers and sisters show outstanding zeal by volunteering their time and assets to have a part in this work.

²² Are you in a position to assist? If you are a baptized publisher who is willing to share in such activity, the brothers overseeing construction in your area would appreciate

Having spiritual goals will help you to direct your energies and other resources wisely

your help and are willing to train you even if you have limited skills. Why not let the local elders know that you are available to help? Some baptized publishers who qualify have even been in a position to volunteer for construction work on theocratic facilities in other countries.

²³ There are many opportunities to share in construction service. Exemplary baptized publishers with some measure of skill who can support projects near their home may serve as *Local Design/Construction volunteers*. Others are able to support more distant projects for a limited period of time and are appointed by the branch office to serve as *construction volunteers* for from two weeks to three months. Those who are appointed to serve on a long-term basis are called *construction servants*. A construction servant who is given a foreign assignment serves as an *expatriate construction servant*. A *Construction Group* made up of construction servants and construction volunteers takes the lead on each project and is assisted by Local Design/Construction volunteers and volunteers from congregations involved in the project. Construction Groups move from one project to the next within a branch territory.

WHAT ARE YOUR SPIRITUAL GOALS?

²⁴ If you have dedicated your life to Jehovah, your desire is to serve Jehovah forever. But what are your spiritual goals along the way? Having spiritual goals will help you to direct your energies and other resources wisely. (1 Cor. 9:26) Setting such goals promotes spiritual growth and will help you to concentrate on the more important things as you reach out for additional service privileges.—Phil. 1:10; 1 Tim. 4:15, 16.

²⁵ The apostle Paul set a fine example for us to imitate in our service to God. (1 Cor. 11:1) Paul exerted himself vigorously in Jehovah's service. He recognized that Jehovah had provided him with many opportunities. To the brothers in Corinth, Paul wrote: "A large door that leads to activity has been opened to me." Is this not also true in our case? Yes, there are many opportunities for us to serve Jehovah in association with the congregation, especially in preaching the Kingdom good news. But as in Paul's case, going through that "large door" involves contending with "many opposers." (1 Cor. 16:9) Paul was willing to discipline himself. Notice what he said: "I pummel my body and lead it as a slave." (1 Cor. 9:24-27) Are we of that same mind?

²⁶ Each one is encouraged to work toward theocratic goals according to his personal circumstances in life. Many are engaged in some form of full-time service today because they set theocratic goals early in life. Even while they were yet children, they were encouraged by their parents and others to do so. Thus, they have enjoyed a very rich career in Jehovah's service—with no regrets. (Prov. 10:22) Other worthy goals might be that we participate in field service each week, start and conduct a home Bible study, or take more time to prepare for meetings. The important thing is that we remain steadfast and fully accomplish our ministry. If we do, we will honor Jehovah and reach our ultimate goal, that of serving him forever.—Luke 13:24; 1 Tim. 4:7b, 8.

CHAPTER 11

Arrangements for Places of Worship

TRUE worshippers of Jehovah are commanded to assemble together to receive instruction and to encourage one another. (Heb. 10:23-25) The first place of worship for God's chosen people, the Israelites, was "the tabernacle, the tent of meeting." (Ex. 39:32, 40) Later, David's son Solomon built a house, or temple, for God's glory. (1 Ki. 9:3) After that temple was destroyed in 607 B.C.E., the Jews arranged to meet in buildings called synagogues to worship God. In time, the temple was rebuilt, and once again it served as a center of true worship. Jesus taught both in synagogues and in the temple. (Luke 4:16; John 18:20) Jesus even held a meeting on a mountain.—Matt. 5:1-7:29.

² After Jesus' death, Christians assembled in public places and in private homes to teach the Scriptures and to enjoy association with fellow believers. (Acts 19:8, 9; Rom. 16:3, 5; Col. 4:15; Philem. 2) Sometimes it was necessary for the early Christians to meet in isolated places to avoid detection by persecutors. Indeed, faithful servants of God in the past had a sincere desire to assemble in places of worship in order to be "taught by Jehovah."—Isa. 54:13.

³ Today, too, public places and private homes are used for Christian meetings. Private homes often serve as places to meet for field service. Those who offer their home for such gatherings view this as a privilege. Many feel that they have benefited spiritually by opening their home in this way.

KINGDOM HALL

⁴ The principal meeting place of Jehovah's Witnesses is the Kingdom Hall. Generally, property is purchased, and a new Kingdom Hall is constructed or an existing building is renovated. In order to save on costs and optimize the use of our facilities, several congregations may be able to share the use of a Kingdom Hall when practical. In some localities, it is necessary to rent a hall. For new Kingdom Halls and those that have had major renovations, it is appropriate to have a dedication program. However, if only minor renovations are made to an existing Kingdom Hall, there is no need to have a dedication program.

⁵ The Kingdom Hall should not be an elaborate building made to impress others. While the design may vary from place to place, the purpose is always functional. (Acts 17: 24) In accord with local circumstances, it should be a comfortable and convenient place for holding Christian meetings.

⁶ All congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses contribute toward the use, operation, and maintenance of the Kingdom Hall to which they are assigned. No collections are taken; nor are funds solicited. A contribution box is provided so that those attending meetings may contribute for necessary expenses in connection with the use of the hall. They do so willingly and from the heart.—2 Cor. 9:7.

⁷ All in the congregation consider it a privilege to support the Kingdom Hall financially and to volunteer their services in keeping it clean and well-maintained. An elder or a ministerial servant is usually assigned to schedule this work. Generally, cleaning is handled by field service groups, with the group overseer or his assistant taking the lead. Both

inside and out, the Kingdom Hall should properly represent Jehovah and his organization.

⁸ Where more than one congregation meets in a hall, the elders of the congregations involved set up a Kingdom Hall Operating Committee, which will coordinate matters involving the building and property. The bodies of elders choose a brother to be chairman. Working under the direction of the bodies of elders, the operating committee monitors the hall cleaning, making sure that the hall is well-maintained and that sufficient supplies are on hand. This calls for close cooperation among the congregations involved.

⁹ When several congregations use one Kingdom Hall, the schedule of meeting times may involve rotation. The elders will work out this schedule in a spirit of mutual concern and brotherly love. (Phil. 2:2-4; 1 Pet. 3:8) No one congregation would take it upon itself to make decisions on behalf of the other congregations, although only one congregation holds legal title to the hall. When the circuit overseer visits one of the congregations using the Kingdom Hall, the other congregation(s) will adjust their meeting times as needed for that week.

¹⁰ The Kingdom Hall may be used for weddings and funerals with the permission of the Congregation Service Committee. These elders carefully consider what is requested and base their decision on direction provided by the branch office.

¹¹ Those who are granted use of the Kingdom Hall for such purposes are expected to conduct themselves in a way that befits genuine Christians. Nothing should be done at the Kingdom Hall that would offend the congregation or bring reproach on Jehovah and the good name of the con-

gregation. (Phil. 2:14, 15) Under the direction of the branch office, the Kingdom Hall may be used for other spiritual functions, such as the Kingdom Ministry School and the Pioneer Service School.

¹² The congregation will always treat its meeting place with respect. Dress, grooming, and decorum should reflect the dignity associated with the worship of Jehovah. (Eccl. 5:1; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10) By applying counsel in this regard, we show appreciation for our Christian meetings.

¹³ Maintaining order during meetings is important. It is recommended that children sit with their parents. Parents with young children can be encouraged to sit where they will cause the least disturbance if it becomes necessary to take the children out to discipline them or to care for other needs.

¹⁴ Qualified brothers are assigned to serve as attendants at meetings in the Kingdom Hall. They should be alert and friendly and use good judgment. Their responsibilities include greeting newcomers and making them feel welcome, helping latecomers to find seats, recording attendance figures, and giving necessary attention to proper heating and ventilation of the hall. Where necessary, attendants will remind parents to give proper supervision so that children will not run around before and after the meetings or play on the platform. In a kind and tactful way, an attendant might ask the parent of an unruly child to take the child out so that the audience will not be overly distracted. The work of the attendants contributes much to everyone's enjoyment of the meetings. It is preferable that ministerial servants be used as attendants, particularly those who have had experience handling situations that arise in family life. —1 Tim. 3:12.

KINGDOM HALL CONSTRUCTION

¹⁵ In the first century, some Christians were better off materially than were others, so the apostle Paul wrote: “By means of an equalizing, your surplus at the present time might offset their need, so that their surplus might also offset your deficiency, that there may be an equalizing.” (2 Cor. 8:14) Today, a similar “equalizing” takes place. Funds contributed by

congregations worldwide are pooled to provide financial assistance to build and renovate Kingdom Halls. The generous support of the worldwide brotherhood is greatly appreciated by the organization and by the congregations that benefit from these contributions.

¹⁶ Based on a region-wide plan, the branch office assigns congregations to specific Kingdom Halls. The branch also determines when and where to construct new Kingdom Halls and renovate existing halls in the branch territory. When disasters occur, arrangements are made for needed repairs to damaged Kingdom Halls and, on occasion, to the homes of the brothers.

¹⁷ The branch coordinates the use of volunteers to help with property acquisition, Kingdom Hall design, building permits, construction, and maintenance. Because of the great need for Kingdom Halls in most lands, many volunteers are needed. All baptized publishers who qualify and desire to help are encouraged to complete an application

All in the congregation consider it a privilege to support the Kingdom Hall financially and to volunteer their services in keeping it clean and well-maintained

and give it to their local Congregation Service Committee. Even unbaptized publishers may assist with the building or renovating of their own Kingdom Hall.

ASSEMBLY HALLS

¹⁸ Early Christians generally met in small groups. However, sometimes “quite a crowd” assembled. (Acts 11:26) Similarly, Jehovah’s people today meet in large gatherings for circuit assemblies and regional conventions. Local facilities are often rented for this purpose, but where such are not suitable or available, a place of worship called an Assembly Hall may be acquired.

¹⁹ At times, a building is purchased, renovated, and used as an Assembly Hall. More often, though, property is obtained and a new hall is built. Assembly Halls vary in size, depending on local needs. The branch office makes the decision to purchase or construct such a building only after the cost has been carefully analyzed and the amount of use determined.

²⁰ Because of the size of some of these meeting places, full-time servants are appointed by the branch to care for the operation and maintenance of the Assembly Hall. Arrangements are made for the circuits to do the regular cleaning, the semiannual cleaning, and the preventive maintenance. It is beneficial for the brothers to volunteer to do this work. Therefore, congregations are encouraged to support these arrangements wholeheartedly.—Ps. 110:3; Mal. 1:10.

²¹ At times, the Assembly Hall may also be used for other theocratic functions, such as Bible schools and special meetings for circuit overseers. Like the Kingdom Hall, an Assembly Hall is a dedicated place of worship. When we

are meeting at an Assembly Hall, our conduct, dress, and grooming should be dignified, just as when we are meeting at the Kingdom Hall for worship.

²² Many new ones are hastening to be part of God's organization during the final part of these last days. This is evidence of Jehovah's blessing. (Isa. 60:8, 10, 11, 22) Thus, we want to support the arrangements to obtain and maintain clean and comfortable places of worship. In doing so, we show our appreciation for the role that such facilities play in helping us to encourage one another all the more so as we see Jehovah's day drawing near.

CHAPTER 12

Supporting Kingdom Activity Locally and Worldwide

IN FULFILLMENT of Jesus' prophecy concerning the last days, Jehovah's Witnesses have carried the ministry of the good news "to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8; Matt. 24:14) To do this, they have freely given of their time and energy in sharing spiritual things. Trusting in Jehovah to provide for his fellow workers, they continue to put God's Kingdom first in their life. (Matt. 6:25-34; 1 Cor. 3:5-9) The results are clear evidence of Jehovah's approval and blessing.

CARING FOR KINGDOM INTERESTS WORLDWIDE

² When noting our preaching methods and realizing that we distribute Bibles and Bible literature without charge to the public, some will ask: "How is all of this possible?" True, printing and producing Bibles and Bible literature costs money. Constructing and maintaining Bethel homes for ministers who operate printing presses, oversee the preaching work, and serve in other ways to advance the good news also costs money. In addition, circuit overseers, field missionaries, special pioneers, and others in special full-time service are given some material assistance to help them continue in the work. Clearly, the work of preaching the good news in our day, whether locally or worldwide, involves the outlay of large sums of money. Where does it all come from?

³ Many who appreciate the Bible educational work of Jehovah's Witnesses are happy to donate to the worldwide

work. However, our work is primarily supported by the Witnesses themselves, some of whom send voluntary contributions to local branch offices of Jehovah's Witnesses. They demonstrate a willing spirit like that of God's ancient servants who generously supported the building of Jehovah's place of worship. (Ex. 35:20-29; 1 Chron. 29:9) Some gifts are received from estates through wills, while other contributions come from individuals, congregations, and circuits and are usually given in small amounts. Added together, these gifts provide the funds that keep the ministry going.

⁴ Jehovah's Witnesses consider it a privilege to use their money and other resources to advance the preaching work. Jesus and his disciples maintained a money box from which funds were taken to care for expenses. (John 13:29) The Bible tells us of women who ministered to Jesus and his disciples. (Mark 15:40, 41; Luke 8:3) The apostle Paul gratefully accepted material assistance lovingly provided by those who were interested in advancing the good news and who wished to have a share in his ministry. (Phil. 4:14-16; 1 Thess. 2:9) Jehovah's Witnesses continue to follow these ancient patterns of zealous service and generous giving. Thus, it is possible for honesthearted ones everywhere to be offered "life's water free."—Rev. 22:17.

CARING FOR THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

⁵ The expenses of the local congregation are also covered by voluntary contributions. No collections are taken; nor is there an assessment of dues or a solicitation of money. Contribution boxes are provided at meeting places

so that each person can have a part in giving “just as he has resolved in his heart.”—2 Cor. 9:7.

⁶ Money contributed is first of all used to pay for the operation and upkeep of the Kingdom Hall. The body of elders may decide that some of the money could be sent to the local branch office of Jehovah’s Witnesses for use in furthering the worldwide work. A resolution to this effect would be adopted by the congregation. In this way, many congregations make regular contributions to the worldwide work. When all are alert to local needs that arise from time to time, frequent announcements regarding contributions should not be necessary.

HANDLING CONTRIBUTIONS

⁷ After each meeting, two brothers who have been assigned by the body of elders remove any money that has been deposited in the contribution boxes and make a record of it. (2 Ki. 12:9, 10; 2 Cor. 8:20) The body of elders will make appropriate arrangements for safeguarding these funds until they can be forwarded to the branch office or used for congregation needs. This may require the opening of a congregation bank account. The brother handling the congregation accounts prepares a monthly statement to inform the congregation, and every three months the coordinator of the body of elders arranges for an audit of the accounts.

FINANCING CIRCUIT ASSEMBLIES

⁸ Expenses incurred in operating assemblies are covered by contributions from the Witnesses making up the circuit. Contribution boxes are provided at the assembly facility so that voluntary contributions can be made to the circuit. A

brother selected by the circuit overseer handles the circuit accounts.

⁹ Ideally, each assembly pays the expenses incurred, with surplus funds being deposited in the circuit account. If there is a deficit at the end of an assembly and circuit funds can cover it, there is no need to write the congregations regarding the difference. However, if there are not enough funds in the circuit account to pay expenses for the assembly or to meet initial expenses for the next assembly, such as a deposit to secure the use of a facility, the circuit overseer may direct that congregations be advised of the privilege to contribute. Each body of elders will discuss the matter and determine what contribution the congregation would be able to make to the circuit fund. They would then handle this contribution by means of a resolution.

¹⁰ When meeting together in connection with an assembly, the elders decide what should be done with the funds that the circuit has at its disposal. Decisions are made regarding assembly operating expenses, purchase of circuit equipment, and expenses incurred by the circuit overseer or the branch representative. Consideration may be given to making donations to the worldwide work, the worldwide Kingdom Hall construction, a local Assembly Hall, or some other important need.

¹¹ All decisions other than those involving recurring operating expenses should be handled as resolutions adopted by the elders. These resolutions must be written in exact amounts and presented for approval each time circuit funds are dispensed. Funds belonging to the circuit may be sent to the branch office for safekeeping until the circuit

needs them. The circuit overseer will arrange for an audit of the circuit accounts following each circuit assembly.

CARING FOR THE POOR

¹² One purpose of the money box maintained by Jesus and his disciples was to help the poor. (Mark 14:3-5; John 13:29)

That Christian responsibility has continued, for Jesus said: “You always have the poor with you.” (Mark 14:7) How do Jehovah’s Witnesses care for this responsibility today?

¹³ At times, faithful ones in the congregation may be in need of material assistance because of advanced age, infirmity, or some adversity beyond their control. Family members, relatives, and others who become aware of such a need may feel moved to help. This is in harmony with the words of the apostle John: “Whoever has the material possessions of this world and sees his brother in need and yet refuses to show him compassion, in what way does the love of God remain in him? Little children, we should love, not in word or with the tongue, but in deed and truth.” (1 John 3:17, 18; 2 Thess. 3:6-12) True worship includes looking after faithful ones who may be in need of material assistance.—Jas. 1:27; 2:14-17.

¹⁴ In his first letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul explained how material assistance may be provided to deserving ones. You can read his counsel at 1 Timothy 5:3-21. The primary responsibility rests with each Christian to care for the needs of his own household. Older or infirm

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ones should receive assistance from their children, grandchildren, or other close relatives. At times, material assistance is available through governmental or social programs, so relatives or others may help the needy one to apply for such assistance. A situation might arise in which it becomes necessary for the congregation as a whole to consider providing some form of assistance to certain needy brothers and sisters who have a long history of faithful service. If there are no family members or other relatives to assist such ones and no adequate assistance from government agencies is available, the body of elders can make appropriate recommendations to provide some help. Christians consider it a privilege to share their material possessions with those in need.

¹⁵ Many brothers and sisters may come to be in need because of persecution, wars, earthquakes, floods, famines, or other calamitous occurrences that are common in these critical times. (Matt. 24:7-9) Local congregations may not have anything to share with one another, so the Governing Body coordinates the efforts of brothers elsewhere to provide what is needed. This is similar to the way Christians in Asia Minor provided food for the brothers in Judea during a time of famine. (1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 9:1-5) By following their example, we confirm our love for our brothers and show ourselves to be genuine disciples of Jesus Christ.—John 13:35.

LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION

¹⁶ Bibles and Bible literature play an important role in spreading the Kingdom message. Usually a ministerial servant is assigned by the body of elders to look after the congregation's supply of literature, and another is assigned

to care for magazines. The brothers assigned to look after these supplies take their responsibilities seriously. They keep good records so that adequate supplies are on hand to care for the needs of the congregation.

¹⁷ As dedicated Christians, we recognize that our time, mental and physical assets, talents and material possessions, even our very life are gifts from God and intended for use in his service. (Luke 17:10; 1 Cor. 4:7) By making proper use of all our resources, we demonstrate the depth of our love for Jehovah. It is our desire to honor Jehovah with our valuable things, knowing that he is pleased with any gift that is given as an expression of whole-souled devotion. (Prov. 3:9; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 21:1-4; Col. 3:23, 24) Jesus said: “You received free, give free.” (Matt. 10:8) As we give of ourselves and our resources in Jehovah’s service, we in turn receive the greater joy.—Acts 20:35.

CHAPTER 13

“Do All Things for God’s Glory”

AS God’s dedicated servants, we are under obligation to reflect Jehovah’s glory in all that we say and do. The apostle Paul offered a guiding principle when he wrote: “Whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God’s glory.” (1 Cor. 10:31) This involves our holding to Jehovah’s righteous standards, which are a reflection of his own perfect personality. (Col. 3:10) We must become imitators of God, as a holy people.—Eph. 5:1, 2.

² Calling this to the attention of Christians, the apostle Peter wrote: “As obedient children, stop being molded by the desires you formerly had in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, become holy yourselves in all your conduct, for it is written: ‘You must be holy, because I am holy.’” (1 Pet. 1:14-16) As in Israel of old, members of the Christian congregation are required to maintain holiness. This means that they are to remain untarnished, clean from sinful contamination and worldliness. They are thus set apart for sacred service.—Ex. 20:5.

³ Holiness is maintained by adhering to Jehovah’s laws and principles, which are clearly set out in the Holy Scriptures. (2 Tim. 3:16) Through a study of the Bible, we were taught about Jehovah and his ways, and we were drawn to him. Our study convinced us of the need to seek first God’s Kingdom and to make the doing of Jehovah’s will paramount in our life. (Matt. 6:33; Rom. 12:2) This required that we put on the new personality.—Eph. 4:22-24.

SPIRITUAL AND MORAL CLEANNES

⁴ Holding to Jehovah's righteous standards is not always easy. Our adversary, Satan the Devil, seeks to turn us aside from the truth. This world's wicked influences and our own sinful tendencies make things difficult at times. Living up to our dedication requires a spiritual fight on our part. The Scriptures tell us not to be surprised when we encounter opposition or trials. We will have to suffer for the sake of righteousness. (2 Tim. 3:12) We can be happy when undergoing trials, knowing that such trials are proof that we are doing God's will.—1 Pet. 3:14-16; 4:12, 14-16.

⁵ Though Jesus was perfect, he learned obedience by the things he suffered. At no time did he yield to Satan's temptations or develop worldly aspirations. (Matt. 4:1-11; John 6:15) Not once did Jesus even give thought to a compromise. Although his faithful course incurred the world's hatred, he held to Jehovah's righteous standards. Shortly before his death, Jesus warned his disciples that the world would hate them too. From that time forward, Jesus' followers have experienced tribulation, but they have taken courage in knowing that the Son of God conquered the world.—John 15:19; 16:33; 17:16.

⁶ In order to be no part of the world, we need to uphold Jehovah's righteous standards, as our Master did. In addition to avoiding involvement with the world's political and social issues, we must resist its degraded moral climate. We take seriously the counsel found at James 1:21: "Put away all filthiness and every trace of badness, and accept with mildness the implanting of the word that is able to save you." Through study and meeting attendance, we can experience "the implanting of the word" of truth in our

mind and heart, and we will not even begin to desire what the world offers. The disciple James wrote: “Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is making himself an *enemy* of God.” (Jas. 4:4) For this reason, the Bible contains strong admonition that we hold to Jehovah’s righteous standards and remain separate from the world.

⁷ God’s Word warns us against sharing in shameful and immoral conduct. It tells us: “Let sexual immorality and every sort of uncleanness or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as is proper for holy people.” (Eph. 5:3) So we must refuse to allow our mind to dwell on things that are obscene, shameful, or base, and we would certainly not allow such things to creep into our conversation. Thereby we give proof of wanting to hold to Jehovah’s clean and righteous standards of morality.

PHYSICAL CLEANLINESS

⁸ Along with spiritual and moral cleanness, Christians recognize the importance of being physically clean. In ancient Israel, the God of holiness required that the camp be kept clean. We too must be clean so that Jehovah “does not see anything indecent” in us.—Deut. 23:14.

⁹ Holiness and physical cleanliness are closely linked in the Bible. For example, Paul wrote: “Beloved ones, let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Cor. 7:1) Christian men and women, therefore, should strive to keep their bodies clean by regularly bathing and by washing their clothes. While conditions vary from country to country, we can generally find enough soap and water

to keep our bodies clean and to make sure that our children are kept clean.

¹⁰ Because of our witnessing activity, we are usually well-known in the community where we live. Keeping a neat, clean, and orderly home, inside and out, is in itself a witness to the neighbors. This is something in which the whole family can be involved. Brothers should take particular interest in the home and its surroundings, knowing that a tidy yard and well-kept home make a favorable impression on others. This, along with their taking the lead in spiritual matters, is an indication that family heads are presiding well over their own household. (1 Tim. 3:4, 12) Sisters too have a responsibility to care for things, especially inside the home. (Titus 2:4, 5) Well-trained children do their part in keeping themselves as well as their rooms neat and clean. Thus the family works together in developing patterns of cleanliness that will fit in with the new world under God's Kingdom.

¹¹ Many of Jehovah's people today use automobiles for transportation to meetings. In some areas, a car is practically indispensable for the ministry. The car should be kept clean and in good repair. Our homes and automobiles should testify that we are part of Jehovah's clean and holy people. The same principle applies to our witnessing case and Bible.

¹² Our dress and grooming should be in keeping with godly principles. We would not think of appearing before a prominent person if we were slovenly dressed or our

As God's dedicated servants, we are under obligation to reflect Jehovah's glory in all that we say and do

clothes were too casual. How much more concerned we should be when representing Jehovah in the field ministry or on the platform! Our grooming and clothing styles can influence how others view the worship of Jehovah. It would certainly not be fitting to be immodest or inconsiderate of others. (Mic. 6:8; 1 Cor. 10:31-33; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10) Hence, when we are getting ready to go in service or to go to congregation meetings, circuit assemblies, or larger conventions, we should have in mind what the Scriptures say about physical cleanliness and modest appearance. We always want to honor and glorify Jehovah.

¹³ The same would apply when we visit world headquarters or a branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses. Remember, the name Bethel means "House of God." Therefore, we should dress and conduct ourselves as we would when we attend meetings at the Kingdom Hall.

¹⁴ Even when engaging in leisure activities, we want to give attention to our dress and grooming. We might ask ourselves, 'Would I be embarrassed to witness informally because of the way I am dressed?'

WHOLESOME RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

¹⁵ Rest and recreation are necessary for staying balanced and healthy. Once Jesus invited his disciples to come with him to a lonely place to "rest up a little." (Mark 6:31) Rest as well as wholesome recreation or entertainment can provide some pleasant diversion. It can refresh us so that we can press ahead with our normal work.

¹⁶ With so many forms of recreation available today, Christians need to be selective, exercising godly wisdom in what they do. While recreation has its place, it is not the big thing in life. We are warned that in "the last days," men

would be “lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God.” (2 Tim. 3:1, 4) Much of what is called recreation and entertainment is objectionable to those who desire to hold to Jehovah’s righteous standards.

¹⁷ The early Christians had to resist the unwholesome environment in the pleasure-seeking world around them. At the Roman circus, spectators were entertained by viewing the sufferings of others. Violence, bloodshed, and sexual immorality were staged for the amusement of the populace, but the early Christians stayed away from such things. Today, much of the world’s entertainment features similar elements and caters to base human appetites. We need to “keep strict watch” on how we walk, turning away from demoralizing entertainment. (Eph. 5:15, 16; Ps. 11:5) And even if the entertainment itself may not be objectionable, the general atmosphere may be unacceptable.—1 Pet. 4:1-4.

¹⁸ There are wholesome forms of recreation and entertainment that Christians can enjoy. Many have benefited from following the Scriptural counsel and balanced suggestions that can be found in our publications.

¹⁹ At times, several families may be invited to a home for Christian fellowship. Or brothers and sisters may be invited to attend a wedding reception or a similar social occasion. (John 2:2) The hosts should feel personally responsible for what takes place. Clearly, there is need for caution when large groups get together. The relaxed atmosphere at such gatherings has led some to go beyond the limits of proper Christian conduct, becoming involved in excessive eating and drinking and even other serious wrongdoing. With this in mind, discerning Christians have seen the wisdom

of limiting the size and duration of such gatherings. If alcoholic beverages are served, they should be used in moderation. (Phil. 4:5) If every effort is made to ensure that get-togethers are wholesome and spiritually refreshing, food and drink will not be the most important consideration.

²⁰ It is a fine thing to be hospitable. (1 Pet. 4:9) When inviting other Christians to our home for a meal, refreshments, relaxation, and fellowship, we want to keep in mind those who may be disadvantaged. (Luke 14:12-14) If we are guests on such occasions, our conduct should be in line with the counsel found at Mark 12:31. It is always good to show appreciation for the kindness of others.

²¹ Christians rejoice in God's bounteous gifts and in knowing that they can "eat and drink and find enjoyment for all [their] hard work." (Eccl. 3:12, 13) When we "do all things for God's glory," hosts as well as guests can look back on social gatherings with the satisfaction of having been spiritually refreshed.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

²² Children of Jehovah's Witnesses benefit from getting a basic secular education. While attending school, they are interested in learning to read and write well. Other subjects taught in school can be of value to young people as they pursue spiritual goals. During their school years, they will want to make a diligent effort to 'remember their Grand Creator' by putting spiritual things first.—Eccl. 12:1.

²³ If you are a Christian youth attending school, take care not to associate unnecessarily with worldly youths. (2 Tim. 3:1, 2) Because Jehovah has provided the necessary protection, there is much you can do to ward off worldly in-

fluences. (Ps. 23:4; 91:1, 2) So to safeguard yourself, take advantage of Jehovah's provisions.—Ps. 23:5.

²⁴ To keep separate from the world while they are in school, most young Witnesses choose not to participate in extracurricular activities. This may be difficult for classmates and teachers to understand. However, pleasing God is what counts. It means that you will exercise your Bible-trained conscience and be resolved not to become involved in worldly competition or nationalism. (Gal. 5:19, 26) By listening to the Scriptural counsel of godly parents and taking advantage of the good association in the congregation, you young ones can hold to Jehovah's righteous standards.

SECULAR WORK AND ASSOCIATES

²⁵ Family heads have a Scriptural obligation to provide for their household. (1 Tim. 5:8) Even so, as ministers they recognize that their secular work is secondary to the pursuit of Kingdom interests. (Matt. 6:33; Rom. 11:13) By practicing godly devotion and being content with food and clothing, they avoid the anxieties and snares of a materialistic way of life.—1 Tim. 6:6-10.

²⁶ All dedicated Christians who work secularly should have Scriptural principles in mind. Making honest provision for ourselves means that we refuse to engage in practices that violate God's law or the law of the land. (Rom. 13:1, 2; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10) We keep in mind the dangers of bad associations. As soldiers of Christ, we refrain from engaging in commercial endeavors that violate godly standards, compromise our Christian neutrality, or jeopardize our spirituality. (Isa. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:4) And we do not have connections

with God's religious enemy, "Babylon the Great."—Rev. 18: 2, 4; 2 Cor. 6:14-17.

²⁷ Adhering to God's righteous standards will prevent us from using our theocratic association to promote business ventures or other personal interests. The purpose of our association with others at Christian meetings, assemblies, and conventions is exclusively to worship Jehovah. We are feeding at his spiritual table and enjoying "an interchange of encouragement." (Rom. 1:11, 12; Heb. 10:24, 25) Such association should be kept on a spiritual level.

DWELLING IN CHRISTIAN UNITY

²⁸ Jehovah's righteous standards also require that his people "maintain the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace." (Eph. 4:1-3) Rather than seeking to please himself, each one seeks to pursue what is good toward others. (1 Thess. 5:15) This is no doubt the spirit you have found in your congregation. No matter what our racial, national, social, economic, or educational background may be, all of us are governed by the same righteous standards. Even outsiders have observed this outstanding characteristic of Jehovah's people.—1 Pet. 2:12.

²⁹ Further emphasizing the basis for unity, the apostle Paul wrote: "One body there is, and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." (Eph. 4:4-6) This calls for unity in understanding basic Bible doctrines as well as more advanced Bible teachings in recognition of Jehovah's sovereignty. Truly, Jehovah has given his people the pure language of truth, enabling them to serve shoulder to shoulder.—Zeph. 3:9.

³⁰ The unity and peace of the Christian congregation is a source of refreshment for all who worship Jehovah. We have experienced the fulfillment of Jehovah's promise: "In unity I will place them, like sheep in the pen." (Mic. 2:12) We want to maintain that peaceful unity by holding to Jehovah's righteous standards.

³¹ Happy are those who have been accepted into the clean congregation of Jehovah! To be called by Jehovah's name is worth every sacrifice we may have to make. As we maintain our precious relationship with Jehovah, we will diligently strive to hold to his righteous standards and to commend them to others.—2 Cor. 3:18.

CHAPTER 14

Maintaining the Peace and Cleanness of the Congregation

EACH year thousands of people flock to Jehovah's house of pure worship, in fulfillment of Bible prophecy. (Mic. 4: 1, 2) How happy we are to receive them into "the congregation of God"! (Acts 20:28) They appreciate the opportunity to serve Jehovah with us and to enjoy the clean and peaceful environment of our spiritual paradise. God's holy spirit and the wise counsel found in his Word help us to maintain peace and keep the congregation clean.—Ps. 119: 105; Zech. 4:6.

² By applying Bible principles, we put on "the new personality." (Col. 3:10) We put aside petty disputes and personal differences. Viewing matters as Jehovah does, we overcome divisive worldly influences and work unitedly as an international brotherhood.—Acts 10:34, 35.

³ Nevertheless, from time to time, difficulties arise that affect the peace and unity of the congregation. What is the cause? In most cases, it is a failure to apply Bible counsel. We still have to cope with our imperfect human tendencies. Not one of us is without sin. (1 John 1:10) Someone may take a false step that could introduce moral or spiritual uncleanness into the congregation. We may offend someone by our thoughtless words or deeds, or we may be stumbled because of what someone has said or done. (Rom. 3:23) At times like these, what can we do to set matters straight?

⁴ Jehovah has lovingly taken all of this into consideration. His Word provides counsel on what to do when difficulties

arise. Personal assistance is available from loving spiritual shepherds, the elders. By applying their Scriptural counsel, we can regain a fine relationship with others and maintain a good standing with Jehovah. If we receive discipline or reproof because of some wrongdoing on our part, we can be sure that such correction is an expression of our heavenly Father's love for us.—Prov. 3:11, 12; Heb. 12:6.

SETTLING MINOR DIFFERENCES

⁵ There may be times when personal disputes or difficulties of a minor nature arise between members of the congregation. These should quickly be settled in a spirit of brotherly love. (Eph. 4:26; Phil. 2:2-4; Col. 3:12-14) Very likely, you will find that problems of a personal nature involving your relationship with a member of the congregation can be resolved by applying the apostle Peter's counsel to "have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins." (1 Pet. 4:8) The Bible says: "We all stumble many times." (Jas. 3:2) By applying the Golden Rule, doing to others all things that we want them to do to us, we can usually forgive and forget minor offenses. —Matt. 6:14, 15; 7:12.

⁶ If you discern that someone was offended by what you said or did, you should take the initiative to make peace without delay. Remember, your relationship with Jehovah is also affected. Jesus counseled his disciples: "If, then, you are bringing your gift to the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, and go away. First make your peace with your brother, and then come back and offer your gift." (Matt. 5:23, 24) There may have been a misunderstanding. If so, open up the

lines of communication. Good communication among all in the congregation goes a long way toward preventing misunderstandings and solving problems that arise because of human imperfection.

PROVIDING NEEDED SCRIPTURAL COUNSEL

⁷ At times, overseers may find it necessary to give counsel in order to readjust a person's thinking. This is not always easy. To the Christians in Galatia, the apostle Paul wrote: "Brothers, even if a man takes a false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness."—Gal. 6:1.

⁸ By shepherding the flock, overseers can protect the congregation from many spiritual dangers and may prevent serious problems from developing. Elders strive to make their service to the congregation measure up to what Jehovah promised through Isaiah: "Each one will be like a hiding place from the wind, a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water in a waterless land, like the shadow of a massive crag in a parched land."—Isa. 32:2.

MARKING DISORDERLY ONES

⁹ The apostle Paul warned of certain ones who could exert an unhealthy influence on the congregation. Paul said: "We are giving you instructions . . . to withdraw from every brother who is walking disorderly and not according to the tradition that you received from us." He clarified that statement by writing: "If anyone is not obedient to our word through this letter, keep this one marked and stop associating with him, so that he may become ashamed. And yet do not consider him an enemy, but continue

admonishing him as a brother.”—2 Thess. 3:6, 14, 15.

¹⁰ Occasionally, someone not guilty of practicing a grave sin for which he could be expelled from the congregation shows flagrant disregard for God’s standard that should govern Christians. This could include such things as being extremely

lazy, critical, or dirty. He could be “meddling with what does not concern [him].” (2 Thess. 3:11) Or he might be one who schemes to take material advantage of others or indulges in entertainment that is clearly improper. The disorderly conduct is serious enough to reflect badly on the congregation, and it has the potential to spread to other Christians.

¹¹ The elders will first try to help a disorderly person by giving him Bible-based counsel. However, if the individual persists in disregarding Bible principles in spite of repeated admonition, the elders may decide that a warning talk should be given to the congregation. Elders will use discernment in determining whether a particular situation is sufficiently serious and disturbing to others to warrant a warning talk. The speaker will provide appropriate counsel concerning disorderly conduct, but he will not name the disorderly one. Consequently, those who are aware of the situation described in the talk will take care to avoid socializing with such an individual, although they will continue spiritual association, “admonishing him as a brother.”

¹² Hopefully, the firm stand taken by faithful members of the congregation will help the disorderly one to become

By maintaining the peace and cleanness of the congregation, we continue to let our light of Kingdom truth shine

ashamed of his ways and will move him to change. When it is clearly evident that the individual has abandoned his disorderly course, it is no longer necessary to treat him as a marked individual.

RESOLVING CERTAIN SERIOUS WRONGS

¹³ Willingness to overlook offenses and to forgive does not mean that we are unconcerned about wrongdoing or that we approve of it. Not all wrongs can be charged to inherited imperfection; nor is it proper to overlook wrongs that go beyond minor offenses. (Lev. 19:17; Ps. 141:5) The Law covenant recognized that some sins are more serious than others, and the same is true in the Christian arrangement.—1 John 5:16, 17.

¹⁴ Jesus outlined a specific procedure for solving serious problems that may arise between fellow Christians. Note the steps that he set out: “If your brother commits a sin, [1] go and reveal his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, [2] take along with you one or two more, so that on the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter may be established. If he does not listen to them, [3] speak to the congregation. If he does not listen even to the congregation, let him be to you just as a man of the nations and as a tax collector.”—Matt. 18:15-17.

¹⁵ In view of the illustration that Jesus subsequently gave, recorded at Matthew 18:23-35, it appears that one of the sins considered at Matthew 18:15-17 involves financial or property matters, such as failing to repay a loan or committing fraud. Or the offense might be slander, which seriously affects someone’s reputation.

¹⁶ If you have evidence that someone in the congregation has committed such a sin against you, do not be hasty to turn to the elders, asking them to intervene on your behalf. As Jesus counseled, speak *first* with the one against whom you have the complaint. Try to resolve the matter between just the two of you without involving anyone else. Keep in mind that Jesus did not say ‘*go only once* and reveal his fault.’ Therefore, if the person did not admit the wrong and ask forgiveness, it may be good to consider approaching him again later. If the matter can be resolved in this way, the one who sinned will certainly appreciate that you have not told others about his sin or marred his good reputation in the congregation. You will have “gained your brother.”

¹⁷ If the one who committed the offense accepts responsibility, seeks forgiveness, and takes steps to right the wrong, there is no need to carry the matter further. Although the sin was serious, an offense of this kind can be settled between the individuals involved.

¹⁸ If you are not able to gain your brother by revealing his fault “between you and him alone,” then you may do as Jesus said, “take along with you one or two more,” and speak with your brother again. Those whom you take with you should also have the objective of gaining your brother. Preferably, they would be witnesses of the alleged wrongdoing, but if there are no eyewitnesses, you may choose to ask one or two more to be witnesses to the discussion. They may have experience in the matter at issue and may be able to establish whether what occurred was truly a wrong. Elders chosen to act as witnesses do not represent the congregation, since the body of elders has not specifically assigned them to do so.

¹⁹ If the matter has not been resolved after repeated efforts—you spoke with him alone and you went to him with one or two others—and you feel that you cannot let it pass, then you should report the matter to the overseers of the congregation. Remember that their goal is to maintain the peace and cleanness of the congregation. Having approached the elders, you will want to leave the matter in their hands and trust in Jehovah. Never should you allow the conduct of someone else to stumble you or to rob you of your joy in Jehovah's service.—Ps. 119:165.

²⁰ The shepherds of the flock will investigate the matter. If it becomes evident that the person has indeed committed a serious sin against you and is unrepentant and unwilling to make reasonable and appropriate amends, it may be necessary for a committee of overseers to expel the wrongdoer from the congregation. Thus they protect the flock and safeguard the cleanness of the congregation.—Matt. 18:17.

HANDLING CASES OF SERIOUS WRONGDOING

²¹ Some serious offenses, such as sexual immorality, adultery, homosexuality, blasphemy, apostasy, idolatry, and similar gross sins, require more than forgiveness from an offended individual. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:19-21) Because the spiritual and moral cleanness of the congregation are threatened, such serious sins must be reported to the elders and handled by them. (1 Cor. 5:6; Jas. 5:14, 15) Some individuals may approach the elders either to confess their own sin or to report what they know regarding the wrongdoing of others. (Lev. 5:1; Jas. 5:16) Regardless of the manner in which the elders first hear reports of serious wrongdoing on the part of a baptized member of the

congregation, an initial investigation will be made by two elders. If it is established that there is substance to the report and that evidence is available showing that a serious sin has been committed, the body of elders will assign a judicial committee of at least three elders to handle the matter.

²² The elders exercise watchful care over the flock, seeking to protect it from any elements that would be spiritually damaging. They also endeavor to use God's Word skillfully to reprove any who have erred and to restore them to spiritual health. (Jude 21-23) This is in harmony with instructions given to Timothy by the apostle Paul, who wrote: "I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, . . . Reprove, reprimand, exhort, with all patience and art of teaching." (2 Tim. 4: 1, 2) Doing so may take much time, but this is part of the hard work of the elders. The congregation appreciates their efforts and considers them "worthy of double honor." —1 Tim. 5:17.

²³ In every situation where guilt is established, the primary endeavor of the overseers is to restore the wrongdoer to spiritual health. If he is genuinely repentant and they are able to help him, their administering of reproof, either in private or before any possible witnesses who testified during the judicial hearing, will serve to discipline him and instill wholesome fear in the onlookers. (2 Sam. 12:13; 1 Tim. 5:20) In all cases of judicial reproof, restrictions are imposed. Thus the wrongdoer may be helped to make "straight paths" for his feet thereafter. (Heb. 12:13) In due course, the restrictions are removed as the individual's spiritual recovery becomes manifest.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF REPROOF

²⁴ If a judicial committee determines that an individual is repentant but that the matter is likely to become known in the congregation or in the community or if the congregation needs to be on guard concerning the repentant wrongdoer, a simple announcement will be made during the Life and Ministry Meeting. It should read: “[Name of person] has been reproofed.” The coordinator of the body of elders should approve this announcement.

IF THE DECISION IS TO DISFELLOWSHIP

²⁵ In some cases, the wrongdoer will have become hardened in his course of sinful conduct and will thus fail to respond to efforts to help him. Sufficient “works that befit repentance” may not be in evidence at the time of the judicial hearing. (Acts 26:20) What then? In such cases, it is necessary to expel the unrepentant wrongdoer from the congregation, thus denying him fellowship with Jehovah’s clean people. The bad influence of the wrongdoer is removed from the congregation, thereby safeguarding its moral and spiritual cleanness and protecting its good name. (Deut. 21:20, 21; 22:23, 24) Upon becoming aware of the shameful conduct of a member of the congregation in Corinth, the apostle Paul admonished the elders to “hand such a man over to Satan . . . , so that the spirit [of the congregation] may be saved.” (1 Cor. 5:5, 11-13) Paul also reported the disfellowshipping of others who had rebelled against the truth in the first century.—1 Tim. 1:20.

²⁶ When it has been determined that an unrepentant wrongdoer should be disfellowshipped, a judicial committee should let the person know of the decision, clearly stating the Scriptural reason(s) for the disfellowshipping. Upon

informing the wrongdoer of the decision, the judicial committee should tell him that if he believes that a serious error in judgment has been made and he wishes to appeal the decision, he should do so in writing, clearly stating the reasons for his appeal. Counting from the time he was notified of the committee's decision, he will be given seven days for this. If a written appeal is received, the body of elders will contact the circuit overseer, who will select qualified elders to serve on an appeal committee to rehear the case. They will make every effort to conduct the appeal hearing within one week after the written appeal is received. If there is an appeal, announcement of the disfellowshipping will be postponed. In the meantime, the accused person will be restricted from commenting and praying at meetings and from special privileges of service.

²⁷ An appeal is granted as a kindness to the accused and allows him a further hearing of his concerns. Thus, if the wrongdoer deliberately fails to appear at the appeal hearing, the disfellowshipping should be announced after reasonable efforts have been made to contact him.

²⁸ If the wrongdoer does not wish to appeal, the judicial committee will explain to him the need for repentance as well as what steps he can take toward being reinstated in due time. This would be both helpful and kind and should be done in hopes that he will change his ways and in time qualify to return to Jehovah's organization.—2 Cor. 2:6, 7.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF DISFELLOWSHIPING

²⁹ When it is necessary to disfellowship an unrepentant wrongdoer from the congregation, a brief announcement is made, stating: "[Name of person] is no longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses." There is no need to elaborate. This will

alert faithful members of the congregation to stop associating with that person. (1 Cor. 5:11) The coordinator of the body of elders should approve this announcement.

DISASSOCIATION

³⁰ The term “disassociation” applies to the action taken by a person who is a baptized member of the congregation but deliberately repudiates his Christian standing by stating that he no longer wants to be recognized as, or known as, one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Or he might renounce his place in the Christian congregation by his actions, such as by becoming part of a secular organization that has objectives contrary to Bible teachings and therefore is under judgment by Jehovah God.—Isa. 2:4; Rev. 19:17-21.

³¹ Concerning those who renounced their Christian faith in his day, the apostle John wrote: “They went out from us, but they were not of our sort; for if they had been of our sort, they would have remained with us.”—1 John 2:19.

³² When a person is disassociated, his situation before Jehovah is far different from that of an inactive Christian, one who no longer shares in the field ministry. A person may have become inactive because he failed to study God’s Word regularly. Or perhaps he experienced personal problems or persecution and lost his zeal for serving Jehovah. The elders as well as others in the congregation will continue to render appropriate spiritual assistance to an inactive Christian.—Rom. 15:1; 1 Thess. 5:14; Heb. 12:12.

³³ In contrast, if a person who is a Christian chooses to disassociate himself, a brief announcement is made to inform the congregation, stating: “[Name of person] is no longer one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.” Such a person is treated in the same way as a disfellowshipped person. The

coordinator of the body of elders should approve this announcement.

REINSTATEMENT

³⁴ A disfellowshipped person or one who has disassociated himself from the congregation may be reinstated when he gives clear evidence of repentance and over a reasonable period of time demonstrates that he has abandoned his sinful course. He shows that he is desirous of having a good relationship with Jehovah. The elders are careful to allow sufficient time—many months, a year, or even longer, depending on the circumstances—for the disfellowshipped person to prove that his repentance is genuine. When the body of elders receives a written plea for reinstatement, the original judicial committee, if practical, should speak with the individual. The committee will evaluate the evidence of “works that befit repentance” on his part and decide whether to reinstate him at that time or not.—Acts 26:20.

³⁵ If the person requesting reinstatement was disfellowshipped from another congregation, a local judicial committee should meet with the person and consider the plea. Thereafter, the local judicial committee will communicate with the body of elders of the congregation that disfellowshipped the individual, giving them their recommendation. The involved committees will work together to make sure that all the facts are gathered to arrive at a just decision. However, the decision to reinstate is made by the original judicial committee. If some members of the original committee are no longer in the congregation or are not qualified to serve, other elders from the original congregation may be chosen to replace them.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF REINSTATEMENT

³⁶ When the judicial committee is convinced that the disfellowshipped person is genuinely repentant and should be reinstated, an announcement of the reinstatement is made in the congregation where the individual was disfellowshipped. If the person is now in another congregation, the announcement will be made there as well. It should simply state: “[Name of person] is reinstated as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.” The coordinator of the body of elders should approve this announcement.

CASES INVOLVING MINOR BAPTIZED CHILDREN

³⁷ Serious wrongdoing on the part of minor children who are baptized should be reported to the elders. When the elders handle cases of serious sins involving a minor, it is preferable that the baptized parents of the young person be present. They will want to cooperate with the judicial committee, not attempting to shield the erring child from necessary disciplinary action. Just as when dealing with adult offenders, the judicial committee endeavors to reprove and restore the wrongdoer. However, if the young person is unrepentant, disfellowshipping action is taken.

WHEN UNBAPTIZED PUBLISHERS ARE WRONGDOERS

³⁸ What should be done when unbaptized publishers become involved in serious wrongdoing? Since they are not baptized members of the congregation, they cannot be formally disfellowshipped. However, they may not fully understand the Bible’s standards, and kind counsel may help them to make “straight paths” for their feet.—Heb. 12:13.

³⁹ If an unbaptized wrongdoer is unrepentant after two elders have met with him and have tried to help him, then

it is necessary to inform the congregation. A brief announcement is made, stating: “[Name of person] is no longer recognized as an unbaptized publisher.” The congregation will then view the wrongdoer as a person of the world. Although the offender is not disfellowshipped, Christians exercise caution with regard to any association with him. (1 Cor. 15:33) No field service reports would be accepted from him.

⁴⁰ In time, an unbaptized person (adult or minor) who was removed as a publisher may wish to become a publisher again. In that situation, two elders would meet with him and ascertain his spiritual progress. If he qualifies, a brief announcement is made, stating: “[Name of person] is again recognized as an unbaptized publisher.”

JEHOVAH BLESSES PEACEFUL AND CLEAN WORSHIP

⁴¹ All who are associated with the congregation of God today can rejoice in the rich spiritual estate that Jehovah has given to his people. Our spiritual pastures are indeed lush, and we have an abundance of refreshing waters of truth. We also have Jehovah’s protective care through his theocratic arrangement under the headship of Christ. (Ps. 23; Isa. 32:1, 2) Being in the spiritual paradise in these troublesome last days has given us a feeling of security.

⁴² By maintaining the peace and cleanness of the congregation, we continue to let our light of Kingdom truth shine. (Matt. 5:16; Jas. 3:18) With God’s blessing, we will have the joy of seeing many more people come to know Jehovah and serve with us in doing his will.

CHAPTER 15

Benefiting From Theocratic Subjection

BEING in subjection to God, the Universal Sovereign, is essential if we are to be organized to do Jehovah's will. We recognize his Son's headship over the Christian congregation and also observe the headship principle in other areas of life. Such theocratic subjection benefits everyone concerned.

² The idea of subjection to constituted authority was introduced to mankind in the garden of Eden. It is embodied in God's commands found at Genesis 1:28 and 2:16, 17. Lower creatures were to be in subjection to humans, and Adam and Eve were to submit to God's will and authority. Obedience to this divine authority would result in peace and good order. The headship principle is later highlighted at 1 Corinthians 11:3. The apostle Paul wrote: "I want you to know that the head of every man is the Christ; in turn, the head of a woman is the man; in turn, the head of the Christ is God." This indicates that in this overall arrangement, everyone except Jehovah is subject to headship.

³ Most people today do not recognize or observe the headship principle. Why? The trouble started in Eden when mankind's parents deliberately chose to take themselves out from under God's sovereign headship. (Gen. 3:4, 5) However, they did not obtain greater freedom. Instead, they became subject to a wicked spirit creature, Satan the Devil. The first rebellion alienated mankind

from God. (Col. 1:21) As a result, the majority of mankind today remain in the power of the wicked one.—1 John 5:19.

⁴ By learning the truth of God's Word and acting on it, we have come out from under Satan's influence. As dedicated, baptized Witnesses, we accept Jehovah as the Sovereign of our life. We agree with King David, who acknowledged Jehovah as "head over all." (1 Chron. 29:11) Yes, we humbly confess: "Know that Jehovah is God. He is the one who made us, and we belong to him. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture." (Ps. 100:3) We recognize that Jehovah is great and is worthy of our total submission, since he created all things. (Rev. 4:11) As ministers of the true God, we follow Jesus Christ, who set the perfect example of subjection to God.

⁵ What did Jesus learn from the things he suffered while on earth? Hebrews 5:8 answers: "Although he was a son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered." Yes, Jesus remained in loyal subjection to his heavenly Father, even when facing adversity. Furthermore, Jesus did not do a single thing of his own initiative. He did not speak of his own originality; nor did he seek his own glory. (John 5:19, 30; 6:38; 7:16-18) During his ministry, he found delight in doing his Father's will, even though this course brought him opposition and persecution. (John 15:20) Nonetheless, Jesus showed subjection to God. Jesus "humbled himself" even to the point of "death on a torture stake." The outcome of his complete subjection to Jehovah was rewarding in many ways, resulting in everlasting salvation for mankind, exaltation for himself, and glory to his Father.—Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 5:9.

AREAS OF THEOCRATIC SUBJECTION

Theocratic
subjection affects
all aspects of life

⁶ When we subject ourselves to God by doing his will, we escape many of the anxieties and frustrations that overtake those who refuse to submit to Jehovah's sovereignty. Our adversary, the Devil, constantly seeks to devour us. We will experience deliverance from that wicked one if we take a stand against him and humble ourselves before Jehovah in willing subjection.—Matt. 6:10, 13; 1 Pet. 5:6-9.

⁷ Within the Christian congregation, we recognize Christ's headship and the authority he has given to "the faithful and discreet slave." This affects our attitude and conduct toward one another. Godly subjection in the congregation will move us to be obedient to God's Word in all aspects of our worship. This obedience involves our ministry, our meeting attendance and participation, our relationship with the elders, and our cooperation with organizational arrangements.—Matt. 24:45-47; 28:19, 20; Heb. 10:24, 25; 13:7, 17.

⁸ Our subjection to God contributes to the peace, security, and good order of the Christian congregation. Jehovah's qualities are reflected in his godly subjects. (1 Cor. 14:33, 40) Our own experiences with Jehovah's organization have led us to express sentiments similar to those of King David. After noting the contrast between Jehovah's servants and the wicked, David joyfully exclaimed: "Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!"—Ps. 144:15.

⁹ Within the marriage arrangement and the family structure, "the head of a woman is the man." At the same time,

men are to be in subjection to Christ, while the head of Christ is God. (1 Cor. 11:3) Wives are to be in subjection to their husbands, and children to their parents. (Eph. 5:22-24; 6:1) Peace results when each family member follows the headship principle.

¹⁰ A husband is to exercise headship in a loving way, imitating Christ. (Eph. 5:25-29) When he does not abuse or abdicate his headship, his wife and children are delighted to be in subjection to him. The wife's role is that of a helper, or complement. (Gen. 2:18) By patiently supporting and respecting her husband, she gains his favor and brings praise to God. (1 Pet. 3:1-4) When husbands and wives follow the Bible's counsel on headship, they set an example for their children in showing subjection to God.

¹¹ Our being in subjection to God also affects how we view "the superior authorities," which "stand placed in their relative positions by God." (Rom. 13:1-7) As law-abiding citizens, Christians pay taxes, paying back "Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God." (Matt. 22:21) Being submissive and obedient to the duly constituted authorities in everything that is not in conflict with Jehovah's righteous law, we are able to direct our efforts and energies to the preaching work.—Mark 13:10; Acts 5:29.

¹² Theocratic subjection affects all aspects of life. With eyes of faith, we see the day when all mankind will be subject to Jehovah God. (1 Cor. 15:27, 28) How blessed and favored will be those who joyfully acknowledge Jehovah's sovereignty and remain in subjection to him for all eternity!

CHAPTER 16

A United Brotherhood

FOR some 1,500 years, Jehovah God dealt with the nation of Israel as his name people. Then Jehovah “turned his attention to the nations to take out of them a people for his name.” (Acts 15:14) People for Jehovah’s name would be his witnesses, united in thought and action regardless of where they lived on earth. Uniting a people for God’s name would be the result of the commission that Jesus gave to his followers: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.”—Matt. 28:19, 20.

² By dedicating yourself to Jehovah and getting baptized, you have become a disciple of Jesus Christ. You are part of a united, worldwide brotherhood of Christians, who do not allow national, tribal, or economic differences to divide them. (Ps. 133:1) As a result, you love and respect your Christian companions in the congregation. Some of them may be of a different race or nationality or educational background and may formerly have been socially unacceptable to you because of these differences. You share a bond of brotherly love that is far stronger than any other relationship, be it social, religious, or family.—Mark 10: 29, 30; Col. 3:14; 1 Pet. 1:22.

ADJUSTMENTS IN THINKING

³ If some have difficulty overcoming racial, political, social, or other ingrained prejudices, they might think of the

early Jewish Christians, who had to break free from Jewish religious prejudices against people of all other nations. When Peter was instructed to go to the home of the Roman centurion Cornelius, Jehovah kindly prepared Peter for the assignment.—Acts, chap. 10.

⁴ In a vision, Peter was told to kill and eat certain animals that were ceremonially unclean for Jews. When Peter objected, a voice from heaven told him: “Stop calling defiled the things God has cleansed.” (Acts 10:15) It took this divine intervention for Peter to condition his mind for the assignment he was about to receive, namely, to visit a man of the nations. When obeying Jehovah’s direction, Peter declared to those gathered: “You well know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or approach a man of another race, and yet God has shown me that I should call no man defiled or unclean. So I came, really without objection, when I was sent for.” (Acts 10:28, 29) Thereafter, Peter witnessed the evidence of Jehovah’s approval of Cornelius and his household.

⁵ Saul of Tarsus, a highly educated Pharisee, had to humble himself and associate with those who had formerly been socially unacceptable to him. He even had to take direction from them. (Acts 4:13; Gal. 1:13-20; Phil. 3:4-11) We can only imagine the adjustments that must have taken place in the thinking of such people as Sergius Paulus, Dionysius, Damaris, Philemon, Onesimus, and others as they accepted the good news and became disciples of Jesus Christ.—Acts 13:6-12; 17:22, 33, 34; Philem. 8-20.

MAINTAINING OUR INTERNATIONAL UNITY

⁶ No doubt the love of the brothers and sisters in the congregation helped draw you to Jehovah and his organization.

You observed the unmistakable mark of love that characterizes true disciples of Jesus Christ, as he expressed it: “I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples—if you have love among yourselves.” (John

13:34, 35) And you came to appreciate Jehovah and his organization even more when you realized that the love in the congregation is only a reflection of the love that exists in the worldwide brotherhood. You are experiencing the fulfillment of Bible prophecy about the gathering of people in the last days to worship Jehovah in peace and unity.—Mic. 4:1-5.

You are part of a united, worldwide brotherhood of Christians, who do not allow national, tribal, or economic differences to divide them

⁷ In view of the many divisive factors that exist today, who would ever have thought it possible to unite people “out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues”? (Rev. 7:9) Consider the differences between the people of a high-tech society and those who hold to ancient tribal customs. Look at the religious rivalries between people of the same race and nationality. With nationalism coming to the fore, people have become more divided politically than ever. And if you consider economic differences as well as countless other divisive factors, the uniting of people out of all nations, languages, groups, and classes in an unbreakable bond of love and peace is a miracle that only Almighty God can bring about.—Zech. 4:6.

⁸ But such unity is a reality, and when you became a dedicated, baptized Witness of Jehovah, you became part of it. Benefiting from that unity, you have the responsibility to help maintain it. This is done by heeding the apostle Paul's words found at Galatians 6:10: "As long as we have the opportunity, let us work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith." We also follow this counsel: "Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with humility consider others superior to you, as you look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others." (Phil. 2:3, 4) As long as we train ourselves to see our brothers and sisters as Jehovah sees them and not according to what they are in the flesh, we will continue to enjoy peaceful and happy relationships with them.—Eph. 4:23, 24.

CONCERN FOR ONE ANOTHER

⁹ As the apostle Paul illustrated for us, the congregation is not divided but its members have mutual concern for one another. (1 Cor. 12:14-26) What affects some members of the organization affects all of God's people. We may be separated by great distances from some of those in our worldwide brotherhood, but we are not less concerned about their welfare. If some of our brothers are being persecuted, the rest of us are greatly distressed. If some are in need or have become victims of disaster or war or civil strife, the rest are eager to find ways to render spiritual as well as material assistance.—2 Cor. 1:8-11.

¹⁰ All of us should pray for our brothers every day. Some are facing temptation to do what is bad. Others experience suffering that may be publicly known. Still others face opposition from workmates and from within divided

households that is relatively unknown. (Matt. 10:35, 36; 1 Thess. 2:14) This is of concern to us because we are a worldwide brotherhood. (1 Pet. 5:9) Among us are those who are working hard in Jehovah's service, taking the lead in the preaching work and in the congregations. Also, there are those who are charged with the oversight of the worldwide work. All need our prayers, by which we demonstrate our love and genuine interest, even when there may not be anything else that we can personally do to be of assistance.—Eph. 1:16; 1 Thess. 1:2, 3; 5:25.

¹¹ With all the turmoil on earth during these last days, Jehovah's people must be prepared to come to the aid of one another. At times disasters, such as earthquakes and floods, call for conducting extensive relief efforts and arranging for large amounts of material assistance. First-century Christians set a fine example in this regard. Remembering Jesus' counsel, the disciples in other lands gladly sent material gifts to the brothers in Judea during a time of famine. (Acts 11:27-30; 20:35) The apostle Paul organized the relief so that everything was carried out in an orderly manner. (2 Cor. 9:1-15) In modern times, when our brothers become victims of circumstances and need material relief, the organization and individual Christians are quick to respond and supply what is needed.

SET APART TO DO JEHOVAH'S WILL

¹² Our united, worldwide brotherhood is organized to do Jehovah's will. At this time, his will is that the good news of the Kingdom be preached in all the earth for a witness to all the nations. (Matt. 24:14) While we are doing this work, it is Jehovah's will that we conduct ourselves in accord with his high moral standards. (1 Pet. 1:14-16) We should be

willing to subject ourselves to one another and to work for the advancement of the good news. (Eph. 5:21) As never before, this is a time, not to seek our own personal interests, but to put God's Kingdom first in our life. (Matt. 6:33) Keeping this in mind as we work together for the sake of the good news brings joyful satisfaction now and will lead to everlasting blessings.

¹³ As Jehovah's Witnesses, we are unique, set apart from the rest of mankind as a clean people, zealous in service to our God. (Titus 2:14) Our worship of Jehovah makes us different. Not only do we work shoulder to shoulder with our brothers around the earth but we speak the one language of truth and act in harmony with the truth we speak. This was foretold when Jehovah declared through his prophet Zephaniah: "I will change the language of the peoples to a pure language, so that all of them may call on the name of Jehovah, to serve him shoulder to shoulder."—Zeph. 3:9.

¹⁴ Then Jehovah inspired Zephaniah to describe the worldwide brotherhood that has become a reality today: "Those remaining of Israel will practice no unrighteousness; they will not speak a lie, nor will a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths; they will feed and lie down, and no one will make them afraid." (Zeph. 3:13) Having gained an understanding of Jehovah's Word of truth and made over our mind and conformed our way of life to Jehovah's standards, we are able to work in unity. We accomplish what appears to be impossible in the eyes of those who view matters from a human standpoint. Yes, we are indeed a distinct people, God's people, bringing honor to him in all the earth.—Mic. 2:12.

CHAPTER 17

Stay Close to Jehovah's Organization

THE disciple James wrote: “Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you.” (Jas. 4:8) Yes, Jehovah is not too lofty nor too far removed to hear our expressions to him, despite our imperfections. (Acts 17:27) How can we draw close to God? We can do this by building a close personal relationship with Jehovah that includes earnest prayer. (Ps. 39:12) We can also cultivate intimacy with God by regularly studying his Word, the Bible. In this way, we get to know Jehovah God, his purposes, and his will for us. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) Thus, we learn to love him and develop a wholesome fear of displeasing him.—Ps. 25:14.

² Closeness with Jehovah, however, is possible only through his Son, Jesus. (John 17:3; Rom. 5:10) No human could ever give us better insight into the mind of Jehovah than Jesus did. He was so intimately acquainted with his Father that he could say: “No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son is willing to reveal him.” (Luke 10:22) So when we study the Gospels to learn about the way Jesus thought and felt, we are, in effect, learning how Jehovah thinks and feels. Such knowledge enables us to draw closer to our God.

³ Under the headship of God's Son, we cultivate intimacy with Jehovah by staying close to the visible channel that helps us learn how to do God's will. As foretold at Matthew 24:45-47, the Master, Jesus Christ, has appointed

“the faithful and discreet slave” to provide “food at the proper time” for the household of faith. Today, the faithful slave supplies us with an abundance of spiritual food in the form of Bible-based publications as well as assembly and convention programs. Through this channel, Jehovah counsels us to read his Word daily, to attend our Christian meetings regularly, and to have a meaningful share in preaching the “good news of the Kingdom.” (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20; Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:1-3) Never would we want to have a fleshly viewpoint of the faithful slave. We should endeavor to stay close to the visible part of Jehovah’s organization and respond to its direction. This will draw us closer to our God, Jehovah, and will serve to strengthen and protect us despite trials.

WHY TRIALS ARE INCREASING

⁴ Perhaps you have been in the truth for many years. If so, you certainly know what it means to endure tests of integrity. But even if you have only recently come to know Jehovah and associate with his people, you are aware that Satan the Devil opposes anyone who submits to Jehovah’s sovereignty. (2 Tim. 3:12) So whether you have endured little or much, there is no reason for you to become fearful or discouraged. Jehovah promises that he will sustain you and reward you with deliverance and future life.—Heb. 13:5, 6; Rev. 2:10.

⁵ All of us may yet be subjected to trials during these remaining days of Satan’s system. Ever since God’s Kingdom was established in 1914, Satan has not been permitted access to Jehovah’s heavens. He was hurled down to the earth, where he and his wicked angels are confined. The increased woe on the earth, including the intensified

persecution of Jehovah's dedicated servants, is a result of Satan's anger and is proof that we are living in the last days of his wicked rule over mankind.—Rev. 12:1-12.

⁶ Infuriated by his debased condition, Satan knows that his time is short. With his demons, he makes every effort to interfere with the Kingdom-preaching work and to destroy the unity of Jehovah's servants. This puts us at the battle lines of the spiritual warfare described as “a struggle, not against blood and flesh, but against the governments, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places.” If we are to come off victorious on Jehovah's side, we must not let up in the fight but keep our spiritual armor intact. We must “stand firm against the crafty acts” of the Devil. (Eph. 6:10-17) This calls for endurance on our part.

CULTIVATING ENDURANCE

⁷ Endurance means “the ability to withstand hardship or adversity.” In a spiritual sense, endurance refers to a quality of firmness in doing what is right in the face of hardship, opposition, persecution, or any other factor designed to turn us away from our course of integrity to God. Christian endurance must be cultivated. This takes time. Our ability to endure increases as we make spiritual progress. By enduring minor tests of our faith that come at the beginning of our Christian course, we become stronger, able to endure more difficult trials that are sure to come. (Luke 16:10) We cannot afford to wait until major trials come along before making it our determination to stand firm in the faith. Our firm decision must be made before the test comes. Pointing out that endurance is to be cultivated

along with other godly qualities, the apostle Peter wrote: “Put forth all earnest effort to supply to your faith virtue, to your virtue knowledge, to your knowledge self-control, to your self-control endurance, to your endurance godly devotion, to your godly devotion brotherly affection, to your brotherly affection love.”—2 Pet. 1:5-7; 1 Tim. 6:11.

⁸ The importance of cultivating endurance is called to our attention by James in his letter: “Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials, knowing as you do that this tested quality of your faith produces endurance. But let endurance complete its work, so that you may be complete and sound in all respects, not lacking in anything.” (Jas. 1:2-4) James says that Christians should welcome trials and be joyful about them because they help us to produce endurance. Have you looked at matters that way? Then James shows that endurance itself has a work to perform in perfecting our Christian personality and making us fully acceptable to God. Yes, our endurance is built up day by day as we face and overcome trials. Endurance, in turn, produces other desirable qualities that we need.

⁹ Our endurance is pleasing to Jehovah; it will move him to grant us the reward of everlasting life. James further stated: “Happy is the man who keeps on enduring trial, because on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life, which Jehovah promised to those who continue loving Him.” (Jas. 1:12) Yes, it is with life in view that we endure. Without endurance, we cannot stay in the truth. If we succumb to worldly pressures, we will be forced back into the world. Without endurance, we will not continue to have Jehovah’s spirit and therefore we will not produce its fruitage in our life.

¹⁰ If we are to keep on enduring in these difficult times, we need to cultivate the proper attitude toward suffering as Christians. Recall that James wrote: “Consider it all joy.”

That may not be easy to do,

inasmuch as physical suffering or mental anguish may be involved. But remember that future life is at stake. An experience of the apostles helps us to see how we can rejoice during sufferings. The account is found in the book of Acts, and it reads: “They summoned the apostles, flogged them, and ordered them to stop speaking on the basis of Jesus’ name, and let them go. So they went out from before the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name.” (Acts 5:40, 41) The apostles understood that their suffering was proof that they had been obedient to Jesus’ command and that they had received Jehovah’s approval. Years later, when writing his first inspired letter, Peter commented on the value of such suffering for righteousness’ sake.—1 Pet. 4:12-16.

¹¹ Another experience involves Paul and Silas. When carrying on their missionary work in Philippi, they were arrested and charged with disturbing the city and proclaiming unlawful customs. As a result, they were severely beaten and thrown into prison. The Bible account tells us that while they were yet in prison with their wounds unattended, “about the middle of the night, Paul and Silas were praying and praising God with song, and the prisoners were listening to them.” (Acts 16:16-25) Paul and his companion rightly viewed their sufferings for Christ not only as evidence of their own integrity before God and men but also

Our endurance is
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as a means of giving a further witness to those who might be inclined to listen to the good news. The life of others was involved. That very night, the jailer and his household listened and became disciples. (Acts 16:26-34) Paul and Silas trusted in Jehovah, in his power, and in his willingness to sustain them in their sufferings. They were not disappointed.

¹² Today, too, Jehovah has provided all that we need to sustain us during times of trial. He wants us to endure. He has given us his inspired Word to equip us with accurate knowledge concerning his purpose. This builds up our faith. We have the opportunity to associate with fellow believers and to render sacred service. We also have the privilege of maintaining close association with Jehovah himself through prayer. He listens to our expressions of praise and our earnest requests for help to keep a clean standing before him. (Phil. 4:13) And not to be overlooked is the strength derived from contemplating the hope set before us.—Matt. 24:13; Heb. 6:18; Rev. 21:1-4.

ENDURING VARIOUS TRIALS

¹³ The trials we face today are much like those faced by the early disciples of Jesus Christ. In modern times, Jehovah's Witnesses have suffered verbal and physical abuse at the hands of misinformed opposers. Just as in the days of the apostles, much of the opposition is instigated by religious fanatics whose false teachings and practices are exposed in God's Word. (Acts 17:5-9, 13) At times, Jehovah's people have found relief by claiming legal rights that are guaranteed by political governments. (Acts 22:25; 25:11) However, rulers have also imposed official bans on our work, endeavoring to put an end to our Christian ministry.

(Ps. 2:1-3) Under such circumstances, we boldly follow the example of the faithful apostles, who said: “We must obey God as ruler rather than men.”—Acts 5:29.

¹⁴ As the spirit of nationalism intensifies throughout the earth, greater pressures are put on preachers of the good news to abandon their God-given ministry. All of God’s servants appreciate more fully the warning found at Revelation 14:9-12 concerning the worship of “the wild beast and its image.” We realize the significance of John’s words: “Here is where it calls for endurance on the part of the holy ones, those who keep the commandments of God and hold fast to the faith of Jesus.”

¹⁵ Tests that come because of wars, revolutions, or outright persecution and official bans may make it impossible for you to carry on Christian worship openly. You may not be able to meet as a congregation. Contact with the branch office may be cut off. Visits by circuit overseers may be interrupted. Publications may not arrive. If any of these things happen, what should you do?

¹⁶ The answer is, do whatever you can and as much as you can under the circumstances. Personal study should be possible. Small groups can usually meet for study in private homes. Publications studied in the past and the Bible itself can be used as a basis for meetings. Do not worry or get excited. The Governing Body will generally be able to establish some form of communication with responsible brothers in a short time.

¹⁷ Even if you do find yourself isolated from all your Christian brothers, keep in mind that you are not isolated from Jehovah and his Son, Jesus Christ. Your hope can remain firm. Jehovah can still hear your prayers, and he can

strengthen you with his spirit. Look to him for guidance. Remember that you are a servant of Jehovah and a disciple of Jesus Christ. Therefore, make good use of opportunities to witness. Jehovah will bless your efforts, and others may soon join you in true worship.—Acts 4:13-31; 5:27-42; Phil. 1:27-30; 4:6, 7; 2 Tim. 4:16-18.

¹⁸ If, however, like the apostles and others, you are faced with the very threat of death, put your trust in “the God who raises up the dead.” (2 Cor. 1:8-10) Your faith in his provision of the resurrection can help you to endure even the most severe opposition. (Luke 21:19) Christ Jesus set the example; he knew that his faithfulness under test would strengthen others to endure. You can be a source of strength to your brothers in a similar way.—John 16:33; Heb. 12:2, 3; 1 Pet. 2:21.

¹⁹ Besides persecution and opposition, you may have to endure other difficult situations. For example, some have become discouraged because of the apathy of people in their territory. Others have had to cope with their own physical or emotional illnesses or have had to endure limitations imposed by human frailty. The apostle Paul likewise had to endure a trial of some sort that interfered with his service or made it difficult at times. (2 Cor. 12:7) Also, Epaphroditus, a first-century Christian from Philippi, became “depressed because [his friends] heard he had fallen sick.” (Phil. 2:25-27) Our human imperfections and those of others may pose problems particularly difficult to endure. There may be personality conflicts with fellow Christians or even within one’s family. But such obstacles can be endured successfully and can be overcome by those who adhere to the counsel of Jehovah’s Word.—Ezek. 2:3-5; 1 Cor. 9:27; 13:8; Col. 3:12-14; 1 Pet. 4:8.

DETERMINED TO REMAIN FAITHFUL

²⁰ We must hold fast to the one whom Jehovah has appointed as Head of the congregation, Jesus Christ. (Col. 2: 18, 19) We need to work closely with “the faithful and discreet slave” and those appointed as overseers. (Heb. 13:7, 17) By adhering closely to theocratic arrangements and co-operating with those taking the lead, we will be organized to do Jehovah’s will. We need to make full use of the privilege of prayer. Remember, not even prison walls or solitary confinement can cut off our communication with our loving heavenly Father or disrupt the unity we have with fellow worshippers.

²¹ With determination and endurance, let us do all we can to carry out our commission to preach, persevering in the work the resurrected Jesus Christ set out for his followers to do: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.” (Matt. 28: 19, 20) Like Jesus, let us endure. May we keep the Kingdom hope and the prospect of everlasting life clearly before us. (Heb. 12:2) As baptized disciples of Christ, we have the privilege of sharing in the fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy regarding “the conclusion of the system of things.” He said: “This good news of the Kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.” (Matt. 24:3, 14) If we apply ourselves wholeheartedly to that work during this time, we will have the joy of entering into an eternity of life in Jehovah’s righteous new world!

APPENDIX

A Message to Christian Parents:

As a parent, you desire to help your precious children come to love Jehovah and dedicate their life to him. What can you do to help prepare them for baptism? At what point will they be ready for this important step? Jesus instructed his followers: “Make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them.” (Matt. 28:19) According to this, the primary requirement for baptism is to be a disciple—one who not only understands and believes Christ’s teachings but follows them closely. This is something that even the relatively young can do.

Set a good example for your children, and inculcate Jehovah’s teachings in them. (Deut. 6:6-9) This includes using the information in the books *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* and *“Keep Yourselves in God’s Love”* to teach them basic Bible truths and prepare them to reason on Bible principles. Help your children to be able to explain their beliefs in their own words. (1 Pet. 3:15) The knowledge and encouragement they receive from you and from personal study, congregation meetings, and good associates will help them progress to baptism and beyond. Keep spiritual goals before them.

Proverbs 20:11 says: “Even a child is known by his actions, whether his behavior is pure and right.” What are some actions that would indicate that a child, either a boy or a girl, has become a disciple of Jesus Christ and is ready to get baptized?

A child who is progressing toward baptism should obey his godly parents. (Col. 3:20) Regarding Jesus when he was 12 years old, the Bible says: “He continued subject to [his parents].” (Luke 2:51) Of course, you cannot expect your child to be perfect. But one who desires to get baptized will strive to follow Jesus’ example and be known for his subjection to his parents.

He will also demonstrate an interest in learning Bible truths. (Luke 2:46) Does your child want to attend meetings and participate? (Ps. 122:1) Does he have an appetite for regular Bible reading and personal study?—Matt. 4:4.

A child progressing toward baptism endeavors to put Kingdom interests first. (Matt. 6:33) He is mindful of his responsibility as an unbaptized publisher and demonstrates initiative to go in the field service and talk at the doors. He shares in various aspects of the ministry and is not ashamed to let his teachers and schoolmates know that he is one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. He takes his assignments for the Life and Ministry Meeting seriously.

He will also strive to remain morally clean by avoiding bad associations. (Prov. 13:20; 1 Cor. 15:33) This will be reflected in his preferences regarding music, movies, television programs, video games, and the use of the Internet.

Many have responded to the diligent efforts of their parents, made the truth their own, and qualified for baptism in their youth. May Jehovah bless you as you help your children reach this important milestone in their relationship with Jehovah.

A Message to the Unbaptized Publisher:

It is a privilege to serve with the congregation as an unbaptized publisher. You are to be commended for the spiritual progress you have made. You have come to know God through a study of his Word and have exercised faith in his promises.—John 17:3; Heb. 11:6.

Before you started to study with Jehovah's Witnesses, you may have associated in some way with a different religious organization or you may have had no religious affiliation at all. Perhaps you engaged in another activity out of harmony with Bible principles. But now you have manifested your faith by repentance, which means deep regret over past wrongdoing, and by conversion, which means rejecting a wrong course and determining to do what is right in God's sight.—Acts 3:19.

On the other hand, perhaps like Timothy, "from infancy you have known the holy writings," and you have thereby been safeguarded from involvement in unchristian conduct and serious wrongdoing. (2 Tim. 3:15) You have learned to resist peer pressure and other inducements to do what is bad in Jehovah's eyes. You have demonstrated faith by upholding true worship and sharing your beliefs with others. You have been trained in the Christian ministry. Now you have made a personal decision to serve Jehovah as an unbaptized publisher.

In either case, whether you learned Jehovah's ways from infancy or came to know Jehovah later in life, you may now be contemplating two further steps in your spiritual

progress—dedication and baptism. You make a dedication to Jehovah by approaching him in prayer and expressing your personal decision to give him exclusive devotion forever. (Matt. 16:24) In symbol of that dedication, you then undergo water baptism. (Matt. 28:19, 20) Through dedication and baptism, you become an ordained minister of Jehovah God. What a wonderful privilege!

As your study of the Bible has indicated, though, you may encounter various challenges. Remember that shortly after baptism, “Jesus was led by the spirit up into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil.” (Matt. 4:1) Following your baptism as a disciple of Christ, you can expect further tests. (John 15:20) They will come in various forms. You may face opposition from family. (Matt. 10:36) You may be ridiculed by schoolmates, workmates, and former associates. Always remember Jesus’ words found at Mark 10:29, 30: “Truly I say to you, no one has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the good news who will not get 100 times more now in this period of time—houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the coming system of things, everlasting life.” So continue working hard to stay close to Jehovah and to live up to his righteous standards.

When you desire to get baptized, make this known to the congregation elders. The questions that follow this message provide the basis for discussions that the elders will have with you in order to determine whether you qualify for baptism. You may begin reviewing these questions privately as a part of your regular personal study program.

In preparation for these discussions, take time to read and reflect on the quoted and cited Scripture references. In many cases, they may not provide the complete answer to the question posed, but they will help you to see the Scriptural basis for an answer. If you are not sure of the answer to a question, you may find it helpful to do some additional research using the Bible and the publications provided by “the faithful and discreet slave.” (Matt. 24:45) You may wish to make personal notes in this book or elsewhere. You may use those notes and have this book open during your discussions with the elders. If you have difficulty understanding any of the questions, feel free to ask for assistance from the one who is studying the Bible with you or from the elders.

In your discussions with the elders, do not feel that you have to give lengthy or complicated answers to the questions. A simple, direct answer in your own words will usually suffice. For many of the questions, it is also beneficial to refer to one or two Bible texts that show the Scriptural basis for your answer.

If you have not yet gained sufficient knowledge of basic Bible teachings, the elders will arrange for you to receive assistance so that you will be able to express in your own words a proper understanding of the Scriptures and qualify for baptism at a later time.

[Note to congregation elders: Instructions for handling discussions with baptism candidates appear on pages 211-214.]

Questions for Those Desiring to Get Baptized

PART 1 ELEMENTARY BIBLE TEACHINGS

Your study of the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses has acquainted you with the truth. What you have learned has no doubt brought you great spiritual refreshment and has given you the hope of future life and blessings on a paradise earth under God's Kingdom. Your faith in God's Word has been strengthened, and through association with the Christian congregation, you have already experienced many blessings. You have come to appreciate how Jehovah is dealing with his people today.—Zech. 8:23.

As you now prepare for baptism, you will benefit from a review of elementary Bible teachings, conducted by the congregation elders. (Heb. 6:1-3) May Jehovah continue to bless all your endeavors to come to know him, and may he grant you the promised reward.—John 17:3.

1. Who is the true God?

“Know, therefore, on this day, and take it to heart that Jehovah is the true God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. There is no other.”—Deut. 4:39.

“Even though there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, just as there are many ‘gods’ and many ‘lords,’ there is actually to us one God, the Father, from whom all things are and we for him; and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are and we through him.”—1 Cor. 8:5, 6.

Additional references: Ps. 83:18; Isa. 43:10-12.

2. What are some of Jehovah’s outstanding attributes?

“God is *love*.”—1 John 4:8.

“The Rock, perfect is his activity, for all his ways are *justice*. A God of faithfulness who is never unjust; righteous and upright is he.”—Deut. 32:4.

“O the depth of God’s riches and *wisdom* and knowledge! How unsearchable his judgments are and beyond tracing out his ways are!”—Rom. 11:33.

“Alas, O Sovereign Lord Jehovah! Look! You made the heavens and the earth by your great *power* and by your outstretched arm. Nothing is too wonderful for you.”—Jer. 32:17.

3. What terms does the Bible use to help us understand some aspects of Jehovah’s authority?

“Jehovah is our Judge, Jehovah is our Lawgiver, Jehovah is our King; he is the One who will save us.”—Isa. 33:22.

“Do you not know? Have you not heard? Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, is a God for all eternity. He never tires out or grows weary. His understanding is unsearchable.”—Isa. 40:28.

4. What does it mean to give Jehovah exclusive devotion? Why does he alone deserve such devotion?

“You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength.”—Mark 12:30.

“Jesus said to [Satan]: ‘It is written, “It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.”’—Luke 4:8.

“You are worthy, Jehovah our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they came into existence and were created.”—Rev. 4:11.

Additional references: Ex. 20:4, 5; Acts 17:28.

5. How should we view God’s personal name?

“I will exalt you, O my God the King, I will praise your name forever and ever. All day long I will praise you; I will praise your name forever and ever.”—Ps. 145:1, 2.

“You must pray, then, this way: ‘Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified.’”—Matt. 6:9.

Additional reference: Ex. 20:7.

6. Why is it important for us to use God’s personal name in worship?

“Symeon has related thoroughly how God for the first time turned his attention to the nations to take out of them a people for his name.”—Acts 15:14.

“Everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved.”—Rom. 10:13.

Additional references: Ps. 91:14; Joel 2:32.

7. How will Jehovah God sanctify his name? How can we have a share in this?

“I will certainly magnify myself and sanctify myself and make myself known before the eyes of many nations; and they will have to know that I am Jehovah.”—Ezek. 38:23.

“May they be put to shame and be terrified forever; may they be disgraced and perish; may people know that you, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth.”—Ps. 83:17, 18.

“Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, so that I can make a reply to him who taunts me.”—Prov. 27:11.

Additional references: Ezek. 36:16-18; 1 Pet. 2:12.

8. Why would it be wrong for us to make an image of God or attempt to worship him through the use of images?

“You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form like anything that is in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down to them nor be led to serve them, for I, Jehovah your God, am a God who requires exclusive devotion.”—Deut. 5:8, 9.

“I am Jehovah. That is my name; I give my glory to no one else, nor my praise to graven images.”—Isa. 42:8.

“God is a Spirit, and those worshipping him must worship with spirit and truth.”—John 4:24.

“We are walking by faith, not by sight.”—2 Cor. 5:7.

9. What does it mean for a person to dedicate himself to Jehovah? Have you made your personal dedication to Jehovah in prayer?

“‘Look! I have come . . . to do your will, O God.’ . . . ‘Look! I have come to do your will.’”—Heb. 10:7, 9.

“Jesus said to his disciples: ‘If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and keep following me.’”—Matt. 16:24.

10. Who is Jesus Christ?

“Simon Peter answered: ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’”—Matt. 16:16.

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; because by means of him all other things were created in the heavens and on the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, whether they are thrones or

lordships or governments or authorities. All other things have been created through him and for him.”—Col. 1:15, 16.

Additional references: John 1:1, 2, 14; Acts 2:36.

11. What is Jesus’ position in relation to Jehovah God, and what authority has Jehovah given him?

“I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I am.”—John 14:28.

“Keep this mental attitude in you that was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he was existing in God’s form, gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God. No, but he emptied himself and took a slave’s form and became human. More than that, when he came as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, yes, death on a torture stake. For this very reason, God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name, so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend—of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the ground—and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”—Phil. 2:5-11.

Additional references: Dan. 7:13, 14; John 14:10, 11; 1 Cor. 11:3.

12. Why did Jesus come to earth?

“The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his life as a ransom in exchange for many.”—Matt. 20:28.

“God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.”—John 3:16.

“He saw Jesus coming toward him, and he said: ‘See, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”—John 1:29.

“For this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.”—John 18:37.

13. Why do we need the ransom, and how does it affect you personally?

“By means of him we have the release by ransom through the blood of that one, yes, the forgiveness of our trespasses.”—Eph. 1:7.

“The love the Christ has compels us, because this is what we have concluded, that one man died for all; so, then, all had died. And he died for all so that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised up.”—2 Cor. 5:14, 15.

Additional references: Rom. 3:23; 1 John 4:11.

14. What is holy spirit, and what has been accomplished by means of it?

“God’s active force was moving about over the surface of the waters.”—Gen. 1:2.

“No prophecy of Scripture springs from any private interpretation. For prophecy was at no time brought by man’s will, but men spoke from God as they were moved by holy spirit.”—2 Pet. 1:20, 21.

“They all became filled with holy spirit and started to speak in different languages, just as the spirit enabled them to speak.”—Acts 2:4.

15. How does holy spirit operate for our benefit today?

“You will receive power when the holy spirit comes upon you, and you will be witnesses of me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the most distant part of the earth.”—Acts 1:8.

“Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God.”—Acts 20:28.

“It is to us God has revealed them through his spirit, for the spirit searches into all things, even the deep things of God.”—1 Cor. 2:10.

“The fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.”—Gal. 5:22, 23.

Additional references: Matt. 10:19, 20; John 14:26.

16. What is the Kingdom of God?

“In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. And this kingdom will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it alone will stand forever.”—Dan. 2:44.

“Let your Kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also on earth.”—Matt. 6:10.

Additional references: Isa. 9:7; John 18:36.

17. What blessings will Kingdom rule bring for the earth and for mankind?

“He will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away.”—Rev. 21:4.

“The nursing child will play over the lair of a cobra, and a weaned child will put his hand over the den of a poisonous snake. They will not cause any harm or any ruin in all my holy mountain.”—Isa. 11:8, 9.

Additional references: Isa. 26:9; 65:21, 22.

18. What does it mean to seek first the Kingdom?

“Stop storing up for yourselves treasures on the earth . . . Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . No one can slave for two masters . . . You cannot slave for God and for Riches. . . . So never be anxious and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or, ‘What are we to drink?’ or, ‘What are we to

wear?’ For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing.”—Matt. 6:19-32.

“The Kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure, hidden in the field, that a man found and hid; and because of his joy, he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field. Again the Kingdom of the heavens is like a traveling merchant seeking fine pearls. Upon finding one pearl of high value, he went away and promptly sold all the things he had and bought it.”—Matt. 13:44-46.

Additional references: Matt. 16:24; 19:27-29.

19. How do we know that we have entered into the time of the end and that God’s Kingdom is ruling?

“While he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached him privately, saying: ‘Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?’”—Matt. 24:3.

“Know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having an appearance of godliness but proving false to its power; and from these turn away.”—2 Tim. 3:1-5.

Additional references: Matt. 24:4-14; Rev. 6:1-8; 12:1-12.

20. Who is Satan the Devil? Where did he and his demons come from?

“Down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth.”—Rev. 12:9.

“That one was a murderer when he began, and he did not stand fast in the truth, because truth is not in him. When he speaks the lie, he speaks according to his own disposition, because he is a liar and the father of the lie.”—John 8:44.

“The angels who did not keep their original position but forsook their own proper dwelling place, he has reserved with eternal bonds in dense darkness for the judgment of the great day.”—Jude 6.

Additional references: Job 1:6; 2:1.

21. In the garden of Eden, what challenge did Satan make against Jehovah and His rulership? What false accusation did Satan later make against faithful Job?

“The serpent . . . said to the woman: ‘Did God really say that you must not eat from every tree of the garden?’ At this the woman said to the serpent: ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But God has said about the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden: “You must not eat from it, no, you must not touch it; otherwise you will die.”’ At this the serpent said to the woman: ‘You certainly will not die. For God knows that in the very day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and bad.’”—Gen. 3:1-5.

“Satan answered Jehovah: ‘Is it for nothing that Job has feared God? Have you not put up a protective hedge around him and his house and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his livestock has spread out in the land. But, for a change, stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your very face.’”—Job 1:9-11.

“Satan answered Jehovah: ‘Skin for skin. A man will give everything that he has for his life. But, for a change, stretch out your hand and strike his bone and flesh, and he will surely curse you to your very face.’”—Job 2:4, 5.

22. How can we personally show our support for Jehovah and his rulership and prove that Satan's accusations against God's servants are false?

“Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, so that I can make a reply to him who taunts me.”—Prov. 27:11.

“It is unthinkable for me to declare you men righteous! Until I die, I will not renounce my integrity!”—Job 27:5.

Additional references: Ps. 26:11; Jas. 4:7.

23. According to Jehovah's judgment against Satan and his demons, what will become of them?

“I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. He will crush your head, and you will strike him in the heel.”—Gen. 3:15.

“For his part, the God who gives peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. May the undeserved kindness of our Lord Jesus be with you.”—Rom. 16:20.

“I saw an angel coming down out of heaven with the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. He seized the dragon, the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for 1,000 years.”—Rev. 20:1, 2.

“The Devil who was misleading them was hurled into the lake of fire and sulfur, where both the wild beast and the false prophet already were.”—Rev. 20:10.

24. What are some of the spiritistic practices that Christians shun?

“There should not be found in you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, anyone who employs divination, anyone practicing magic, anyone who looks for omens, a sorcerer, anyone binding others with a spell, anyone who consults a spirit medium or a fortune-teller, or anyone who inquires of the dead.”—Deut. 18:10, 11.

“As for the cowards and those without faith and those who are disgusting in their filth and murderers and the sexually immoral and those practicing spiritism and idolaters and all the liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. This means the second death.”—Rev. 21:8.

25. What is the human soul? Can the soul die?

“Jehovah God went on to form the man out of dust from the ground and to blow into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living person [or, “soul,” ftn.].”—Gen. 2:7.

“Look! All the souls—to me they belong. As the soul of the father so also the soul of the son—to me they belong. The soul who sins is the one who will die.”—Ezek. 18:4.

26. What is sin? How did we all become sinners?

“Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”—1 John 3:4.

“Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because they had all sinned.”—Rom. 5:12.

Additional reference: Ps. 51:5.

27. What should you do if you commit a serious sin?

“Finally I confessed my sin to you; I did not cover my error. I said: ‘I will confess my transgressions to Jehovah.’”—Ps. 32:5.

“Is there anyone sick among you? Let him call the elders of the congregation to him, and let them pray over him, applying oil to him in the name of Jehovah. And the prayer of faith will make the sick one well, and Jehovah will raise him up. Also, if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, openly confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. A righteous man’s supplication has a powerful effect.”—Jas. 5:14-16.

“The one covering over his transgressions will not succeed, but whoever confesses and abandons them will be shown mercy.”—Prov. 28:13.

28. What should be our attitude toward sin?

“Do not let sin continue to rule as king in your mortal bodies so that you should obey their desires. For sin must not be master over you, seeing that you are not under law but under undeserved kindness.”—Rom. 6:12, 14.

29. What is death?

“In the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For dust you are and to dust you will return.”—Gen. 3:19.

“The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing at all, nor do they have any more reward, because all memory of them is forgotten.”—Eccl. 9:5.

Additional references: Ps. 146:4; Eccl. 3:19, 20; 9:10; John 11:11-14.

30. Why do people die?

“Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because they had all sinned.”—Rom. 5:12.

“The wages sin pays is death.”—Rom. 6:23.

31. What hope is there for one who dies?

“I have hope toward God, which hope these men also look forward to, that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.”—Acts 24:15.

“Do not be amazed at this, for the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life, and those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment.”—John 5:28, 29.

32. How many from among mankind will be resurrected to heaven?

“I saw, and look! the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who have his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. And they are singing what seems to be a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, and no one was able to master that song except the 144,000, who have been bought from the earth.”—Rev. 14:1, 3.

33. What will those who are resurrected to heaven do there?

“You made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they are to rule as kings over the earth.”—Rev. 5:10.

“I saw thrones, and those who sat on them were given authority to judge. . . . They came to life and ruled as kings with the Christ for 1,000 years. Happy and holy is anyone having part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of the Christ, and they will rule as kings with him for the 1,000 years.”—Rev. 20:4, 6.

Additional reference: Rev. 22:5.

34. What is the hope for mankind in general?

“He said: ‘Jesus, remember me when you get into your Kingdom.’ And [Jesus] said to him: ‘Truly I tell you today, you will be with me in Paradise.’”—Luke 23:42, 43.

“I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. But another scroll was opened; it is the scroll of life. The dead were judged out of those things written in the scrolls according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead in it, and death and the Grave gave up the dead in them, and they were judged individually according to their deeds.”—Rev. 20:12, 13.

Additional reference: Rev. 21:1-4.

35. Why should we hold firmly to our hope in the resurrection of the dead?

“Do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, fear him who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.”—Matt. 10:28.

PART 2 JEHOVAH'S RIGHTEOUS REQUIREMENTS

In your study of the Bible, you have gained knowledge about what Jehovah asks of you and how to measure up to his righteous standards. Responding to what you have learned, you may have made a number of adjustments in your personal conduct and in your attitude toward life itself. Now that you have resolved to live by Jehovah's righteous standards, you are in a position to render acceptable service as a minister of the good news.

A review of the following will help you fix clearly in mind Jehovah's righteous requirements and will remind you of some of the things you can do in order to become one of his approved servants. This information will impress on you the importance of doing all things with a good conscience and to Jehovah's honor.—2 Cor. 1:12; 1 Tim. 1:19; 1 Pet. 3:16, 21.

1. What is the Christian standard for marriage?

“In reply he said: ‘Have you not read that the one who created them from the beginning made them male and female and said: “For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh”? So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has yoked together, let no man put apart.’”—Matt. 19:4-6.

“The overseer should therefore be irreprehensible, a husband of one wife . . . Let ministerial servants be husbands of one wife.”—1 Tim. 3:2, 12.

2. What is the only Scriptural basis for divorce that frees one to remarry?

“I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except on the grounds of sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery.”—Matt. 19:9.

3. What does the Bible say about separation?

“What God has yoked together, let no man put apart.”—Mark 10:9.

“To the married people I give instructions, not I but the Lord, that a wife should not separate from her husband. . . . And a husband should not leave his wife.”—1 Cor. 7:10, 11.

Additional reference: 1 Cor. 7:4, 5, 12-16.

4. Why should those living together as husband and wife be legally married? If you are married, are you sure that your marriage is legal and recognized by the government?

“Continue reminding them to be in subjection and to be obedient to governments and authorities.”—Titus 3:1.

“Let marriage be honorable among all, and let the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge sexually immoral people.”—Heb. 13:4.

“For the Lord’s sake subject yourselves to every human creation, whether to a king as being superior or to governors as sent by him to punish wrongdoers but to praise those who do good.”—1 Pet. 2:13, 14.

5. Why should we show respect for the gift of life?

“With you is the source of life.”—Ps. 36:9.

“The God who made the world . . . gives to all people life and breath and all things. . . . For by him we have life and move and exist.”—Acts 17:24, 25, 28.

“Christ Jesus . . . gave himself a corresponding ransom for all.”—1 Tim. 2:5, 6.

“If you build a new house, you must also make a parapet for your roof, so that you may not bring bloodguilt on your house because of someone falling from it.”—Deut. 22:8.

6. How does Jehovah view (a) the unlawful shedding of human blood? (b) abortion? (c) suicide?

“As for the . . . murderers . . . , their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. This means the second death.”—Rev. 21:8.

“If men should struggle with each other and they hurt a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but no fatality results, the offender must pay the damages imposed . . . But if a fatality does occur, then you must give life for life.”—Ex. 21:22, 23.

“Look! All the souls—to me they belong. As the soul of the father so also the soul of the son—to me they belong.”—Ezek. 18:4.

7. What responsibility rests on a person who is infected with a communicable disease that is potentially fatal?

“All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must do to them. This, in fact, is what the Law and the Prophets mean.”—Matt. 7:12.

“Look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others.”—Phil. 2:4.

8. To avoid transmitting an infectious or a potentially fatal disease to others, why should an infected person (a) not initiate displays of affection, such as hugging and kissing? (b) not react negatively when some choose not to invite him into their home? (c) Why should a person who may have been exposed to an infectious disease voluntarily choose to have a blood test before beginning a courtship? (d) Why should a person with a communicable disease inform the coordinator of the body of elders before getting baptized?

“Do not owe anything to anyone except to love one another; for whoever loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law. For the law code . . . is summed up in this saying: ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does not work evil to one’s neighbor; therefore, love is the law’s fulfillment.”—Rom. 13:8-10.

“Love . . . does not behave indecently, does not look for its own interests, does not become provoked. It does not keep account of the injury.”—1 Cor. 13:4, 5.

9. Why should Christians abstain from blood, and what does it mean to do so?

“Only flesh with its life—its blood—you must not eat.”—Gen. 9:4.

“Whenever you desire it, you may slaughter and eat meat, according to the blessing that Jehovah your God has given you . . . But you must not eat the blood; you should pour it out on the ground like water.”—Deut. 12:15, 16.

“Keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled, and from sexual immorality.”—Acts 15:29.

10. Why are Christians not under the Mosaic Law and its requirements regarding sacrifices and the Sabbath?

“Christ is the end of the Law, so that everyone exercising faith may have righteousness.”—Rom. 10:4.

“Do not let anyone judge you about what you eat and drink or about the observance of a festival or of the new moon or of a sabbath. Those things are a shadow of the things to come, but the reality belongs to the Christ.”—Col. 2:16, 17.

Additional references: Gal. 3:24, 25; Col. 2:13, 14.

11. What quality should characterize our relationship with our Christian brothers and sisters?

“I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples—if you have love among yourselves.”—John 13:34, 35.

“Clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union.”—Col. 3:14.

Additional reference: 1 Cor. 13:4-7.

12. How should Christians view the shortcomings of fellow believers?

“Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely even if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Just as Jehovah freely forgave you, you must also do the same.”—Col. 3:13.

“Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.”—1 Pet. 4:8.

Additional references: Prov. 17:9; 19:11; Matt. 7:1-5.

13. If a brother's sin against you is of a serious nature, such as fraud or slander, what should you do?

“If your brother commits a sin, go and reveal his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have

gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take along with you one or two more, so that on the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter may be established. If he does not listen to them, speak to the congregation. If he does not listen even to the congregation, let him be to you just as a man of the nations and as a tax collector.”—Matt. 18:15-17.

14. What is the fruitage of the spirit, and how will cultivating it help us to maintain a fine relationship with others?

“The fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control.”—Gal. 5: 22, 23.

15. Why must lying be avoided?

“The Devil . . . did not stand fast in the truth, because truth is not in him. When he speaks the lie, he speaks according to his own disposition, because he is a liar and the father of the lie.”—John 8:44.

“As for . . . all the liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur.”—Rev. 21:8.

Additional references: Ex. 20:16; 2 Cor. 6:4, 7.

16. What is the Christian view of stealing?

“Let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief.”—1 Pet. 4:15.

“Let the one who steals steal no more; rather, let him do hard work, doing good work with his hands, so that he may have something to share with someone in need.”—Eph. 4:28.

17. What does the Bible say about the use of alcoholic beverages?

“Go, eat your food with rejoicing, and drink your wine with a cheerful heart, for already the true God has found pleasure in your works.”—Eccl. 9:7.

“Do not drink water any longer, but take a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent cases of sickness.”—1 Tim. 5:23.

18. What is the Christian view of drunkenness?

“Or do you not know that unrighteous people will not inherit God’s Kingdom? Do not be misled. Those who are sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, . . . greedy people, drunkards . . . will not inherit God’s Kingdom.”—1 Cor. 6: 9, 10.

“The overseer should therefore be irreprehensible, . . . not a drunkard.”—1 Tim. 3:2, 3.

Additional reference: 1 Cor. 5:11.

19. What is the Christian view of heavy drinking, even if it is not to the point of drunkenness?

“Do not be among those who drink too much wine.”—Prov. 23:20.

“Ministerial servants should likewise be serious, . . . not indulging in a lot of wine.”—1 Tim. 3:8.

Additional reference: 1 Pet. 4:3.

20. Why should Christians abstain from all nonmedical use of addictive or mind-altering natural or synthetic substances?

“I appeal to you by the compassions of God, brothers, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, a sacred service with your power of reason. And stop being molded by this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, so that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”—Rom. 12:1, 2.

“Let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”—2 Cor. 7:1.

Additional references: 1 Pet. 4:7; Rev. 21:8, *Int.*

21. What does the Bible say about sexual immorality (*por-nei'a*), which includes adultery, fornication, sexual relations with another person of the same sex, and other ungodly sexual conduct?

“The works of the flesh are plainly seen, and they are sexual immorality, uncleanness, brazen conduct, . . . and things like these. . . . Those who practice such things will not inherit God’s Kingdom.”—Gal. 5:19-21.

“Do you not know that unrighteous people will not inherit God’s Kingdom? Do not be misled. Those who are sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, men who submit to homosexual acts, men who practice homosexuality . . . will not inherit God’s Kingdom.”—1 Cor. 6:9, 10.

“God gave them over to uncontrolled sexual passion, for their females changed the natural use of themselves into one contrary to nature; likewise also the males left the natural use of the female and became violently inflamed in their lust toward one another, males with males, working what is obscene and receiving in themselves the full penalty, which was due for their error.”—Rom. 1:26, 27.

“Let marriage be honorable among all, and let the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge sexually immoral people and adulterers.”—Heb. 13:4.

Additional references: Mark 7:20-23; Eph. 5:5; 1 Pet. 4:3; Rev. 21:8.

22. By adhering to what Bible counsel will you be able to resist temptations to engage in sexual immorality?

“Keep your minds fixed on the things above, not on the things on the earth. Deadens, therefore, your body members that are on the earth as respects sexual immorality, uncleanness, uncontrolled sexual passion, hurtful desire, and greediness, which is idolatry.”—Col. 3:2, 5.

“Brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well-spoken-of, whatever things are virtuous, and whatever things are praiseworthy, continue considering these things.”—Phil. 4:8.

23. Why must a Christian avoid becoming involved in any form of gambling?

“You are among those forsaking Jehovah, those forgetting my holy mountain, those setting a table for the god of Good Luck, and those filling up cups of mixed wine for the god of Destiny.”—Isa. 65:11.

“Do you not know that unrighteous people will not inherit God’s Kingdom? Do not be misled. Those who are . . . thieves, greedy people . . . will not inherit God’s Kingdom.”—1 Cor. 6:9, 10.

24. If a person commits a serious sin out of weakness but wants help to be restored to Jehovah’s favor, what should he immediately do?

“Finally I confessed my sin to you; I did not cover my error. I said: ‘I will confess my transgressions to Jehovah.’”—Ps. 32:5.

“Is there anyone suffering hardship among you? Let him carry on prayer. Is there anyone in good spirits? Let him sing psalms. Is there anyone sick among you? Let him call the elders of the congregation to him, and let them pray over him, applying oil to him in the name of Jehovah. And the prayer of faith will make the sick one well, and Jehovah will raise him up. Also, if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”—Jas. 5:13-15.

Additional references: Prov. 28:13; 1 John 2:1, 2.

25. In addition to confessing his own sins, each person has what responsibility regarding serious wrongdoing by others that could threaten the spiritual or moral cleanness of the congregation?

“If someone sins because he has heard a public call to testify and he is a witness or has seen or learned about it and he does not report it, then he will answer for his error.”—Lev. 5:1.

26. What is the proper viewpoint to have if one is Scripturally reproved?

“My son, do not reject the discipline of Jehovah, and do not loathe his reproof.”—Prov. 3:11.

“The commandment is a lamp, and the law is a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way to life.”—Prov. 6:23.

27. What action does the congregation take when a person in its midst proves to be an unrepentant violator of God’s commandments?

“In my letter I wrote you to stop keeping company with sexually immoral people, not meaning entirely with the sexually immoral people of this world or the greedy people or extortioners or idolaters. Otherwise, you would actually have to get out of the world. But now I am writing you to stop keeping company with anyone called a brother who is sexually immoral or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man. For what do I have to do with judging those outside? Do you not judge those inside, while God judges those outside? ‘Remove the wicked person from among yourselves.’”—1 Cor. 5:9-13.

28. What is idolatry? What are some forms of idolatry that Christians must guard against today?

“You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form like anything that is in the heavens above or on the earth

below or in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down to them nor be enticed to serve them, for I, Jehovah your God, am a God who requires exclusive devotion.”—Ex. 20:4, 5.

“Guard yourselves from idols.”—1 John 5:21.

Additional references: Isa. 42:8; Jer. 10:14, 15.

29. What is the position of a Christian regarding the world alienated from God?

“They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world.”—John 17:16.

“Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is making himself an enemy of God.”—Jas. 4:4.

30. What was Jesus’ attitude toward participation in the political affairs of the world?

“The Devil took him along to an unusually high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him: ‘All these things I will give you if you fall down and do an act of worship to me.’ Then Jesus said to him: ‘Go away, Satan! For it is written: “It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.”’”—Matt. 4:8-10.

“Jesus, knowing that they were about to come and seize him to make him king, withdrew again to the mountain all alone.”—John 6:15.

31. When a person separates himself from the world and becomes a Christian, what treatment should he expect from those in the world?

“If you were part of the world, the world would be fond of what is its own. Now because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, for this reason the world hates you. . . . If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.”—John 15:19, 20.

“All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted.”—2 Tim. 3:12.

“They are puzzled that you do not continue running with them in the same decadent course of debauchery, so they speak abusively of you.”—1 Pet. 4:4.

32. How does being separate from the world affect a Christian in his choice of secular employment?

“Let the one who steals steal no more; rather, let him do hard work, doing good work with his hands, so that he may have something to share with someone in need.”—Eph. 4:28.

“The Devil . . . is a liar and the father of the lie.”—John 8:44.

“He will render judgment among many peoples and set matters straight respecting mighty nations far away. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, nor will they learn war anymore.”—Mic. 4:3.

“I heard another voice out of heaven say: ‘Get out of her [Babylon the Great], my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues.’”—Rev. 18:4.

33. What Bible principles should a Christian apply regarding his choice of entertainment and recreation?

“Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits.”—1 Cor. 15:33.

“Brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well-spoken-of, whatever things are virtuous, and whatever things are praiseworthy, continue considering these things.”—Phil. 4:8.

“Do not love either the world or the things in the world.”—1 John 2:15.

“Jehovah . . . hates anyone who loves violence.”—Ps. 11:5.

“Keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, making the best use of your time, because the days are wicked. On this account stop being unreasonable, but keep perceiving what the will of Jehovah is. Also, do not get drunk with wine, in which there is debauchery, but keep getting filled with spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, praises to God, and spiritual songs, singing and accompanying yourselves with music in your hearts to Jehovah, always giving thanks to our God and Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—Eph. 5:15-20.

“Let sexual immorality and every sort of uncleanness or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as is proper for holy people.”—Eph. 5:3.

34. Why would it be improper for true Christians to share in worship with other religious groups?

“I heard another voice out of heaven say: ‘Get out of her [Babylon the Great], my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues. For her sins have massed together clear up to heaven, and God has called her acts of injustice to mind.’”—Rev. 18:4, 5.

Additional references: Matt. 7:13, 14, 21-23; 1 Cor. 10:20; 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

35. What is the only religious ceremony that Christians are commanded to observe?

“He took a loaf, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them, saying: ‘This means my body, which is to be given in your behalf. Keep doing this in remembrance of me.’”—Luke 22:19.

Additional reference: 1 Cor. 11:23-26.

36. How can you determine whether you should participate in celebrations that are popular in your community?

“They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world.”—John 17:16.

“You cannot be partaking of ‘the table of Jehovah’ and the table of demons.”—1 Cor. 10:21.

“They mingled with the nations and adopted their ways. They kept serving their idols, and these became a snare to them.”—Ps. 106:35, 36.

“The time that has passed by is sufficient for you to have done the will of the nations when you carried on in acts of brazen conduct, unbridled passions, overdrinking, wild parties, drinking bouts, and lawless idolatries.”—1 Pet. 4:3.

“The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing at all.”—Eccl. 9:5.

37. How does the Bible portray birthday celebrations? How does this affect your view of birthday celebrations?

“When Herod’s birthday was being celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced for the occasion and pleased Herod so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. Then she, at her mother’s prompting, said: ‘Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.’ Grieved though he was, the king, out of regard for his oaths and for those dining with him, commanded it to be given. So he sent and had John beheaded in the prison. His head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.”—Matt. 14:6-11.

Additional references: Gen. 40:20-22; Eccl. 7:1, 8.

PART 3 JEHOVAH'S ARRANGEMENT OF THINGS

Through your study of the Bible, you have learned that Jehovah has a purpose to bring all things back into subjection to himself, just as they were in the beginning. (1 Cor. 15:24-28; Eph. 1:8-10) Having reached this point in your study, you are no doubt eager to find your place in Jehovah's arrangement and to be submissive to his rule. The following questions and Scripture references will help you to examine your own understanding of submission to Jehovah's arrangement, whether in the congregation, in the family, or in regard to the political elements of this system of things. You will no doubt deepen your appreciation for Jehovah's arrangements to educate and build up his people spiritually. These include congregation meetings that you can attend and participate in as your circumstances allow.

Additionally, this section will focus on the importance of having a regular share in the Kingdom-preaching work, helping others to come to know Jehovah and what he is doing for mankind. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) Finally, it will impress on your mind the seriousness of your dedication to Jehovah God and your baptism. You can be certain that Jehovah appreciates your sincere response to his undeserved kindness expressed in your behalf.

1. In God's arrangement of things, who is the head of the married woman?

"You wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as it is becoming in the Lord."—Col. 3:18.

"Let wives be in subjection to their husbands as to the Lord, because a husband is head of his wife just as the Christ is head of the congregation, he being a savior of this body."—Eph. 5:22, 23.

2. How should a husband exercise headship over his wife?

"Husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself, for no man ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cherishes it, just as the Christ does the congregation."—Eph. 5:28, 29.

"You husbands, keep on loving your wives and do not be bitterly angry with them."—Col. 3:19.

3. How should a Christian wife view subjection to her husband if he is an unbeliever?

"You wives, be in subjection to your husbands, so that if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives, because of having been eyewitnesses of your chaste conduct together with deep respect."—1 Pet. 3:1, 2.

4. Who is primarily responsible before God for the training and disciplining of children?

"Fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and admonition of Jehovah."—Eph. 6:4.

"Listen, my son, to the discipline of your father, and do not forsake the instruction of your mother."—Prov. 1:8.

5. What responsibility do children have in the family arrangement?

"Children, be obedient to your parents in union with the Lord, for this is righteous. 'Honor your father and your

mother' is the first command with a promise: 'That it may go well with you and you may remain a long time on the earth.'"—Eph. 6:1-3.

"You children, be obedient to your parents in everything, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord."—Col. 3:20.

6. What is the proper attitude for Christians to maintain toward worldly rulers?

"Let every person be in subjection to the superior authorities, for there is no authority except by God; the existing authorities stand placed in their relative positions by God."—Rom. 13:1.

"Continue reminding them to be in subjection and to be obedient to governments and authorities."—Titus 3:1.

7. Why must a Christian pay all taxes and assessments demanded by law?

"Render to all their dues: to the one who calls for the tax, the tax; to the one who calls for the tribute, the tribute; to the one who calls for fear, such fear; to the one who calls for honor, such honor."—Rom. 13:7.

Additional reference: Luke 20:21-25.

8. Are there any circumstances under which a Christian would refuse to obey worldly rulers?

"With that they called them and ordered them not to say anything at all or to teach on the basis of the name of Jesus. But in reply Peter and John said to them: 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, judge for yourselves. But as for us, we cannot stop speaking about the things we have seen and heard.'"—Acts 4:18-20.

"In answer Peter and the other apostles said: 'We must obey God as ruler rather than men.'"—Acts 5:29.

9. Should Christians comply with legal requirements that do not conflict with God's laws, such as registering

marriages and births, responding to census inquiries, or obtaining required licenses and permits?

“In those days a decree went out . . . for all the inhabited earth to be registered. . . . Of course, Joseph also went up from Galilee . . . to get registered with Mary, who had been given him in marriage.”—Luke 2:1-5.

“Continue reminding them to be in subjection and to be obedient to governments and authorities.”—Titus 3:1.

10. What is the headship arrangement in the Christian congregation?

“I want you to know that the head of every man is the Christ; in turn, the head of a woman is the man; in turn, the head of the Christ is God.”—1 Cor. 11:3.

11. Who is the Head of the Christian congregation?

“[Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; because by means of him all other things were created in the heavens and on the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, whether they are thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. All other things have been created through him and for him. Also, he is before all other things, and by means of him all other things were made to exist, and he is the head of the body, the congregation.”—Col. 1:15-18.

12. What is the Governing Body of the Christian congregation, and what role does it fill today?

“Some men came down from Judea and began to teach the brothers: ‘Unless you get circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’ But after quite a bit of dissension and disputing by Paul and Barnabas with them, it was arranged for Paul, Barnabas, and some of the others to go up to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem regarding this issue.”—Acts 15:1, 2.

“As they traveled on through the cities, they would deliver to them for observance the decrees that had been decided on by the apostles and the elders who were in Jerusalem. Then, indeed, the congregations continued to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number day by day.”—Acts 16:4, 5.

“Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on coming finds him doing so! Truly I say to you, he will appoint him over all his belongings.”—Matt. 24:45-47.

13. By what visible means is Christ's headship represented in the congregation?

“Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son.”—Acts 20:28.

“I make this appeal to the elders among you: Shepherd the flock of God under your care, serving as overseers, not under compulsion, but willingly before God; not for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; not lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock.”—1 Pet. 5:1-3.

14. How do members of the congregation demonstrate submission to Christ's headship?

“Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out, imitate their faith.”—Heb. 13:7.

“Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over you as those who will render an account, so that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you.”—Heb. 13:17.

15. Whose ideas are recorded in the Bible? Why should you regularly study God's Word and set aside time each week for family worship?

"All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, so that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work."—2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

"His delight is in the law of Jehovah, and he reads His law in an undertone day and night. He will be like a tree planted by streams of water, a tree that produces fruit in its season, the foliage of which does not wither. And everything he does will succeed."—Ps. 1:2, 3.

Additional references: Deut. 17:18-20; Prov. 2:1-6; 1 Thess. 2:13.

16. Why is it beneficial to attend the meetings arranged by the congregation? What efforts do you make to do so?

"My foot is standing on level ground; in the great congregation, I will praise Jehovah."—Ps. 26:12.

"Let us consider one another so as to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking our meeting together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you see the day drawing near."—Heb. 10:24, 25.

Additional references: Ps. 35:18; 149:1.

17. Why should you participate in congregation meetings as your circumstances allow?

"I will declare your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."—Ps. 22:22.

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens his friend."—Prov. 27:17.

"Let us always offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of our lips that make public declaration to his name."—Heb. 13:15.

18. Why must our Christian faith be accompanied by works?

“Faith by itself, without works, is dead. Nevertheless, someone will say: ‘You have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.’ Indeed, just as the body without spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”—Jas. 2:17, 18, 26.

19. What urgent work does the Bible set out for all Christians?

“This good news of the Kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”—Matt. 24:14.

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.”—Matt. 28:19, 20.

20. With whom should we share the good news of the Kingdom?

“I did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you publicly and from house to house. But I thoroughly bore witness both to Jews and to Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus.”—Acts 20:20, 21.

“He began to reason . . . every day in the marketplace with those who happened to be on hand.”—Acts 17:17.

21. Why should you take seriously your responsibility to share the good news with others?

“I call you to witness this very day that I am clean from the blood of all men, for I have not held back from telling you all the counsel of God.”—Acts 20:26, 27.

“If I am declaring the good news, it is no reason for me to boast, for necessity is laid upon me. Really, woe to me if I do not declare the good news!”—1 Cor. 9:16.

22. How can we give material support to the Kingdom work?

“Honor Jehovah with your valuable things, with the first-fruits of all your produce; then your storehouses will be completely filled, and your vats will overflow with new wine.”—Prov. 3:9, 10.

“Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”—2 Cor. 9:6, 7.

23. How can we demonstrate our love for brothers and sisters who come to be in need of material assistance?

“If a brother or a sister is lacking clothing and enough food for the day, yet one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,’ but you do not give them what they need for their body, of what benefit is it?”—Jas. 2:15, 16.

Additional references: Prov. 3:27; Jas. 1:27.

24. What should be our attitude toward giving of ourselves and of our material possessions in Jehovah’s service?

“Who am I and who are my people that we should be in a position to make voluntary offerings like this? For everything is from you, and we have given to you what comes from your own hand.”—1 Chron. 29:14.

“Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”—2 Cor. 9:7.

25. What attitude should we have when we are persecuted or undergoing trials?

“Happy are those who have been persecuted for righteousness’ sake, since the Kingdom of the heavens belongs to them. Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake. Rejoice and be overjoyed, since your reward is great in the heavens; for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you.”—Matt. 5:10-12.

“Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials, knowing as you do that this tested quality of your faith produces endurance.”—Jas. 1:2, 3.

“They went out from before the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name.”—Acts 5:41.

26. To whom should we pray, and in whose name should we pray?

“O Hearer of prayer, to you people of all sorts will come.”—Ps. 65:2.

“In that day you will ask me no question at all. Most truly I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything, he will give it to you in my name.”—John 16:23.

Additional reference: John 14:6.

27. How should we pray?

“When you pray, do not act like the hypocrites, for they like to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the main streets to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your private room and, after shutting your door, pray to your Father who is in secret. Then your Father who looks on in secret will repay you. When praying, do not say the same things over and over again as the people of the nations do, for they imagine they will get a hearing for their

use of many words. So do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need even before you ask him.”—Matt. 6: 5-8.

28. What are some of the things you can pray about?

“You must pray, then, this way: ‘Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your Kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also on earth. Give us today our bread for this day; and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the wicked one.’”—Matt. 6:9-13.

“This is the confidence that we have toward him, that no matter what we ask according to his will, he hears us.”—1 John 5:14.

29. What effect might our conduct have on our prayers?

“You husbands, in the same way, continue dwelling with [your wives] according to knowledge. Assign them honor as to a weaker vessel, the feminine one, since they are also heirs with you of the undeserved favor of life, in order for your prayers not to be hindered. For the eyes of Jehovah are on the righteous, and his ears listen to their supplication, but the face of Jehovah is against those doing bad things.”—1 Pet. 3:7, 12.

Additional reference: Isa. 1:15-17.

30. Why do Jehovah’s Witnesses baptize in water those who embrace the Christian faith?

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit.”—Matt. 28:19.

“In the course of those days, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John.”—Mark 1:9.

31. Why is it appropriate for dedicated and baptized Christians to be called Jehovah's Witnesses?

“‘You are my witnesses,’ declares Jehovah, ‘yes, my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and have faith in me and understand that I am the same One. Before me no God was formed, and after me there has been none. I—I am Jehovah, and besides me there is no savior.’ ‘I am the One who declared and saved and made known when there was no foreign god among you. So you are my witnesses,’ declares Jehovah, ‘and I am God.’”—Isa. 43:10-12.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION WITH BAPTISM CANDIDATES

Baptisms are usually held at assemblies and conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses. At the conclusion of the baptism talk, the speaker will ask the baptism candidates to stand and answer the following two questions in a loud voice:

- 1. On the basis of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, have you repented of your sins and dedicated yourself to Jehovah to do his will?**
- 2. Do you understand that your dedication and baptism identify you as one of Jehovah's Witnesses in association with God's spirit-directed organization?**

Affirmative answers to these questions constitute a "public declaration" by the baptism candidates that they have put faith in the ransom and have unreservedly dedicated themselves to Jehovah. (Rom. 10:9, 10) Baptism candidates will want to give prayerful thought to these questions in advance so that they can answer in harmony with their personal convictions.

What is appropriate attire for baptism? (John 15:19; Phil. 1:10; 1 Tim. 2:9)

Those getting baptized will want to wear modest clothing, keeping in mind the importance of the occasion. A revealing swimsuit would be unbecoming attire for a Christian and should not be worn. Likewise, it would be inappropriate for one to be unkempt or slovenly in appearance. Further, it would not be fitting to wear garments with sayings or slogans. By maintaining the dignity of the occasion, we will continue to stand out as different from the world.

How should a person conduct himself when getting baptized? (Luke 3:21, 22)

Jesus' baptism set the example for Christian baptisms today. He appreciated that baptism is a serious step, and this was reflected in his attitude and actions. Hence, the baptism site would not be the place for jesting, swimming, or other conduct that would detract from the seriousness of the occasion; nor would a new Christian carry on as though he had won a great victory. While baptism is a joyful occasion, that joy should be expressed in a dignified manner.

Even after you get baptized, why will it be vital for you to maintain a good schedule of personal study and to share regularly in the ministry?

How will staying in close association with the congregation help you to carry out your dedication to Jehovah?

Are you now thoroughly convinced that you should get baptized at the earliest opportunity?

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONGREGATION ELDERS

When an unbaptized publisher makes known to the elders his desire to get baptized, he should be encouraged to review carefully the “Questions for Those Desiring to Get Baptized,” found on pages 170-208. His attention should be directed to “A Message to the Unbaptized Publisher,” beginning on page 167, which explains how he can prepare for the discussions with the elders. As noted there, the prospective baptism candidate may use his personal notes and may have this book open during the discussions. However, there is no need for someone to review the questions with him before he meets with the elders.

The coordinator of the body of elders should be informed of the person’s desire to get baptized. After the person requesting baptism has had time to read the information, the coordinator of the body of elders will make arrangements for some of the elders to have discussions with the person based on that material. It is not necessary to wait until an assembly is announced before having these discussions. The three parts can usually be covered in three sessions of about one hour each, although there is no objection to using more time if that is necessary. Neither the candidate nor the elder should be rushed when going through the questions. On the other hand, the assigned elders will want to make this discussion a priority in their schedule. Where possible, a different elder should be assigned to handle each of the sessions. It would be good to open and close each session with prayer.

It is usually best to review the questions with each baptism candidate individually, not in a group. By having a

candidate comment on every question, the elders will get a clear picture of his depth of understanding, leaving no doubt as to whether he is ready for baptism or not. Additionally, the one requesting baptism may be more inclined to express himself in this setting. A husband and wife may have these sessions together.

When the baptism candidate is a sister, the discussions should be held in such a way that they are held in plain view of others but out of earshot. If it is necessary to take along another person, he should be an elder or a ministerial servant, depending on the section being reviewed, as outlined in the next paragraph.

In congregations that have very few elders, capable ministerial servants who have demonstrated good judgment and discernment may review with individuals the questions for baptism dealing with doctrinal matters. These are found in “Part 1—Elementary Bible Teachings” and “Part 3—Jehovah’s Arrangement of Things.” Only elders should consider “Part 2—Jehovah’s Righteous Requirements.” If the congregation does not have sufficient qualified brothers, the circuit overseer may be contacted to determine if a nearby congregation may be able to assist.

The elders will make sure that a person desiring baptism has acquired a *reasonable* understanding of basic Bible teachings. Additionally, they will want to ascertain whether the prospective minister deeply appreciates the truth and demonstrates proper respect for Jehovah’s organization. If the person does not understand primary Bible teachings, the elders will arrange for him to receive personal assistance so that he can qualify for baptism at a later time. Others may need to be given time to demonstrate more appreciation for field service or submissiveness to organi-

zational arrangements. It will be up to the elders to use discretion in apportioning the hour or so spent in each session in order to discern fully whether the person is ready for baptism. Although more time may be spent on certain questions and less time on others, *all* the questions should be reviewed.

The elders assigned to review these questions will meet after the third session and decide whether the person should be accepted for baptism or not. Elders will take into consideration the background, ability, and other circumstances of each person. Our interest is in those who have turned their hearts to Jehovah and who have grasped the sense of fundamental Bible truths. With your loving assistance, those getting baptized will be adequately prepared to accomplish their important assignment as ministers of the good news.

Thereafter, one or two of the assigned elders should meet with the person and inform him whether he qualifies for baptism or not. If the person qualifies, the elders should review with him the “Concluding Discussion With Baptism Candidates,” found on pages 209-210. **If the candidate has not yet completed his study of the *Bible Teach* and “*God’s Love*” books, the elders should encourage him to do so after baptism.** This discussion need take only ten minutes or less.

One year after baptism, two elders should meet with the baptized publisher to provide encouragement and helpful suggestions. One of the elders should be the person’s group overseer. If the new one is a youth, his believing parent(s) should be present. The spirit of the meeting should be very warm and encouraging. The elders will discuss his spiritual progress and offer practical suggestions

on how he can continue in a good routine of personal study and daily Bible reading, weekly family worship, faithful meeting attendance and participation, and weekly field service activity. (Phil. 3:16) If he has not completed his study of the *Bible Teach* and “*God’s Love*” books, the elders should make arrangements for someone to help him do so. The elders should be generous with loving commendation. Usually, counsel and suggestions on one or two points are sufficient.

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(See also Disassociation; Disfellowshipping; Marking disorderly ones; Personal differences; Reinstatement)

against another Christian: 14:5-6, 13-20

announcements regarding: 14:24, 29, 33, 39-40

children: 14:37

serious: 14:21-33

unbaptized publishers: 14:38-40

Notes: