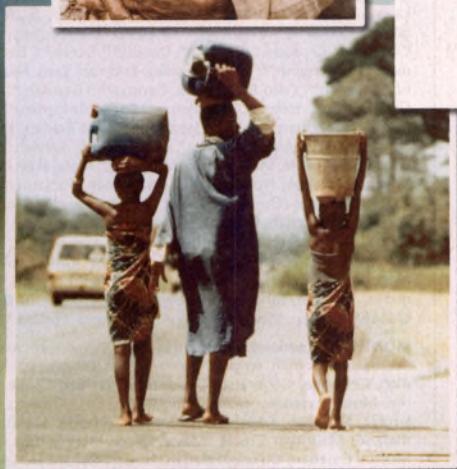
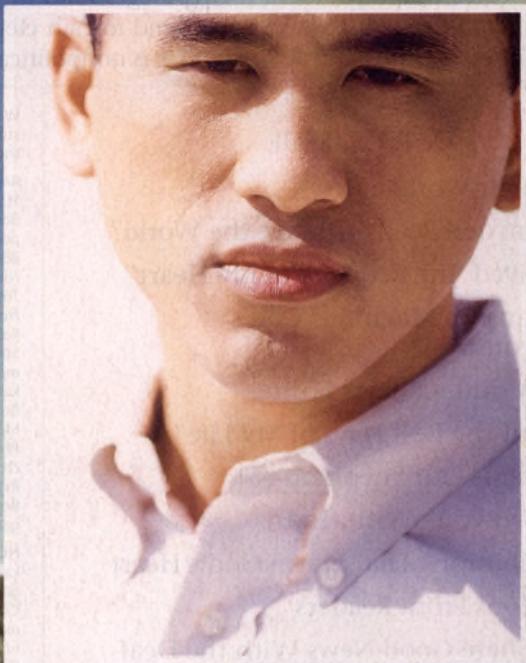


NOVEMBER 1, 2005

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



CAN ANYONE
CHANGE THE WORLD?



THE WATCHTOWER®
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

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AN UNFAIR WORLD

DO YOU agree that we live in an unfair world? No doubt you do. After all, whatever our talents are and however wisely we plan our lives, we are guaranteed neither wealth nor success nor even food. It often turns out as wise King Solomon of old said: "Bread does not belong to the wise, nor wealth to the intelligent, nor success to the skilful." Why? Because, Solomon continues, "time and chance govern all."—Ecclesiastes 9:11, *The New English Bible*.

"When Bad Times Come Suddenly"

Yes, "time and chance," which often means being in the wrong place at the wrong time, often wrecks our carefully laid plans and fondest hopes. According to Solomon, we are "like fish caught in a net, like a bird taken in a snare, . . . when bad times come suddenly." (Ecclesiastes 9:12, NE) Millions of people, for example, work tirelessly to cultivate the ground to get food

for their families, only to find themselves trapped in "bad times" when the rains fail and drought destroys their crops.

Others try to help, but even the help given to victims of "bad times" by the rest of the world community often seems unfair. In the fight against famine, for example, in one recent year, "the whole continent [of Africa] received in aid just one-fifth of the money that was allocated to the Gulf war," according to one leading relief agency. Was it fair that those with the resources spent five times as much money fighting a war in one country as they spent on alleviating the pain and suffering caused by famine on a whole continent? And is it fair in a time of material prosperity for many that 1 in 4 of earth's inhabitants still lives in absolute poverty or that millions of children die each year of preventable diseases? Surely not!

Of course, more than "time and chance" are involved when "bad times come suddenly." Powerful forces completely beyond our control also dominate our lives and dictate

what happens to us. That was certainly true in Beslan, Alania, in the autumn of 2004, when hundreds of people, many of them young children on their first day at school, were killed in a brutal conflict between terrorists and security forces. True, exactly who died and who survived in that tragedy was largely a matter of chance—but the fundamental cause of those “bad times” was human conflict.

Will It Always Be This Way?

“But that is the way life is,” some say when speaking about injustices. “It has al-

ways been that way, and it will always be.” According to them, the strong will always oppress the weak, and the rich will always exploit the poor. That combined with “time and chance,” they say, will affect us as long as the human family exists.

Does it really have to be this way? Will it ever be possible for those who use their abilities intelligently and wisely to reap a just reward for all their hard work? Can anyone do anything to bring permanent, lasting change to an unfair world? Consider what the next article has to say on this subject.

CAN ANYONE REALLY CHANGE THE WORLD?

“Poor people tell us that, above all, they want peace and security—and then opportunities to make their lives better. They want fair national and international systems so that their efforts are not thwarted by the overriding power of rich countries and rich companies.”



The Star, Johannesburg, S.A.

THAT is how the director of one international relief agency described the hopes and aspirations of poor people. In fact, her words could well describe the desire of all victims of the world’s tragedies and injustices. All of them long for a world of true peace and security. Will such a world ever become a reality? Does anyone really have the power and ability to change what is fundamentally an unfair world?

Efforts at Change

Many people have tried. For example, Florence Nightingale, a 19th-century English woman, devoted her life to the cause of providing clean, compassionate nursing care for the sick. In her day—before antiseptics and antibiotics—hospital care was not what we have come to expect today. “Nurses,” says one account, were “uneducated, unclean, and notorious for their drunkenness and immorality.” Did Florence Nightingale have any success in her efforts to change the world of nursing? She did. Similarly, countless caring, altruistic people have had outstanding success in many areas of life—literacy, education, medicine, housing, feeding programs, to name a few. As a result, significant improvements have been made to the quality of life of millions of disadvantaged people.

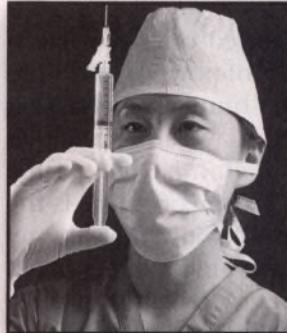
Still, we cannot ignore this harsh reality: Hundreds of millions still find their lives blighted by war, crime, disease, famine, and other calamitous events. “Poverty,” says Irish aid agency Concern, “kills 30,000 people every day.” Even slavery, the target of so many reformers over the centuries, is still with us. “There are more slaves alive today than all the people stolen from Africa in the time of the transatlantic slave trade,” states *Disposable People—New Slavery in the Global Economy*.

What has thwarted the efforts of people to bring about complete, lasting change? Is it simply the overriding power of the rich and the powerful, or is more involved?

Barriers to Change

According to God’s Word, the overriding barrier to any of man’s efforts to bring about a truly fair world is Satan the Devil. The apostle John tells us that “the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one.” (1 John 5:19) Right now, in fact, Satan is “misleading the entire inhabited earth.”

*Florence Nightingale
made real changes in
the world of nursing*



Courtesy National Library of Medicine

(Revelation 12:9) Until his malign influence is removed, there will be victims of evil and injustice. What brought about this sad situation?

Our original parents, Adam and Eve, were gifted with an earth that was designed to be a perfect paradise home for the whole human family—a world that was “very good.” (Genesis 1:31) What changed things? Satan did. He challenged God’s right to make the rules by which men and women should live. God’s way of ruling, he insinuated, was unfair. He induced Adam and Eve to opt for a course of independence so that they could decide for themselves what was good and what was bad. (Genesis 3:1-6) This resulted in a second barrier to man’s efforts to produce a fair, just world—sin and imperfection. —Romans 5:12.

Why Allow It?

‘But why did God let sin and imperfection develop?’ some may ask. ‘Why did he not use his limitless power to get rid of the rebels and start over again?’ That sounds like a simple solution. However, the use of power

raises serious questions. Is it not true that abuse of power is one of the main grievances of the poor and oppressed of the world? Does it not raise questions in the minds of righthearted people when some despot uses power to eliminate anyone who disagrees with his policies?

To assure honesthearted ones that He is not a tyrannical abuser of power, God chose to allow Satan and the human rebels to act independently of divine laws and principles —*for a limited period of time only*. Time would prove that God's way of ruling is the only right way. It would show that any restrictions he places on us are for our good. In fact, the tragic results of rebellion against God's rule have already shown that to be true. And they have proved that God is fully justified in using his great power to eliminate all wickedness when he chooses to do so. That will be very soon.—Genesis 18:23-32; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 37:9, 10, 38.

Until God acts, we are trapped in an unfair system, "groaning together and being in pain together." (Romans 8:22) Whatever we do to change things, we cannot get rid of Satan, nor can we completely eradicate the basic imperfection that is at the root of all the suffering we experience. It is simply beyond us to remedy the effects of sin inherited from Adam.—Psalm 49:7-9.

Jesus Christ Will Produce Lasting Change

Does this mean that the situation is completely hopeless? Certainly not. Someone far more powerful than mere mortal man has been charged with the responsibility of bringing about permanent change. Who is that? It is Jesus Christ. He is described in the Bible as God's Chief Agent for the salvation of the human family.—Acts 5:31.

He is now waiting for God's "appointed time" to act. (Revelation 11:18) What exactly

will he do? He will bring about the "restoration of all things of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets of old time." (Acts 3:21) Jesus will, for example, "deliver the poor one crying for help, also the afflicted one and whoever has no helper. . . . From oppression and from violence he will redeem their soul." (Psalm 72:12-16) Through Jesus Christ, God promises to make "wars to cease to the extremity of the earth." (Psalm 46:9) "No resident [of his cleansed earth] will say: 'I am sick,'" he promises. The blind, the deaf, the lame—all those affected by sickness and disease—will be restored to perfect health. (Isaiah 33:24; 35:5, 6; Revelation 21:3, 4) Even those who died in past centuries will benefit. He promises to bring back to life victims of injustice and oppression.—John 5:28, 29.

Jesus Christ will not bring about a partial, temporary change. He will totally eliminate all barriers to a truly fair world. He will remove sin and imperfection and destroy Satan the Devil and all those who follow his rebellious course. (Revelation 19:19, 20; 20:1-3, 10) The distress and suffering that God has temporarily permitted "will not rise up a second time." (Nahum 1:9) This is what Jesus had in mind when he taught us to pray for God's Kingdom to come and for God's will to take place "as in heaven, *also upon earth*."—Matthew 6:10.

'But,' you may object, 'did not Jesus himself say that we "will always have the poor with us"? Does that not mean that there will always be injustice and poverty?' (Matthew 26:11) Yes, Jesus did say that there would always be poor people. However, the context of his words along with the promises of God's Word shows that he meant that there would always be poor people *as long as this system of things lasts*. He knew that no human would ever be able to rid the world of



Christ's followers do good to others

poverty and injustice. He also knew that he would change all of that. He will soon bring about a totally new system of things—"new heavens and a new earth" in which pain, sickness, poverty, and death will cease to exist.—2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1.

"Do Not Forget the Doing of Good"

Does this mean that it is pointless to do whatever we can to help other people? By no means. The Bible encourages us to help others when they face trials and distressing circumstances. "Do not hold back good from those to whom it is owing, when it happens to be in the power of your hand to do it," writes ancient King Solomon. (Proverbs 3:27) "Do not forget the doing of good and the sharing of things with others," urges the apostle Paul.—Hebrews 13:16.

Jesus Christ himself encouraged us to do whatever we can to help others. He told the illustration of a Samaritan who came across a man who had been beaten and robbed. The Samaritan man, said Jesus, was "moved with pity" to use his own resources to bind up the wounds of the beaten man and to help him recover from the assault. (Luke 10:29-37) That compassionate Samaritan did not change the world, but he did make a huge difference to another man's life. We can do the same.

However, Jesus Christ can do more than help individuals. He really can bring about change, and he will do so very soon. When he does, victims of today's unjust conditions will be able to better their lives and enjoy true peace and security.—Psalm 4:8; 37:10, 11.

While we wait for that to happen, let us never hesitate to do anything we can, both spiritually and materially, to "work what is good" toward all those who are victims of an unfair world.—Galatians 6:10.



I RECEIVED 'THE REQUESTS OF MY HEART'

AS TOLD BY
DOMINIQUE MORGOU

At last, in December 1998, I was in Africa! A childhood dream was now a reality. I had always been thrilled by the thought of Africa's wide-open spaces and fascinating wildlife. Now I was actually there! At the same time, another dream had come true. I was a full-time evangelizer serving in a foreign land. To many, this might have seemed impossible. My sight is severely limited, and I walk the sandy streets of African villages with the help of a guide dog trained for the streets of European cities. Let me tell you how serving in Africa became possible for me and how Jehovah gave me 'the requests of my heart.'—Psalm 37:4.

I WAS born on June 9, 1966, in southern France. I was the youngest of seven children—two boys and five girls—all of us cared for by loving parents. However, there was one dark spot in my young life. Like my grandmother, my mother, and one of my sisters, I suffer from a hereditary disease that eventually leads to total blindness.

As a teenager, I was confronted with racism, prejudice, and hypocrisy, which made me rebel against society. It was during this difficult time that we moved to the region of Hérault. There, something wonderful happened.

One Sunday morning, two of Jehovah's Witnesses came to our door. My mother

knew them and invited them in. One of the women asked Mother if she remembered that she once promised that someday she would accept a Bible study. Mother remembered and asked, "When do we start?" They agreed to meet every Sunday morning, and in this way my mother began learning "the truth of the good news."—Galatians 2:14.

Gaining Insight

Mother spared no effort to understand and remember what she learned. Being blind, she had to memorize everything. The Witnesses were very patient with her. As for me, whenever the Witnesses came, I hid in my room and only came out when they left. One afternoon, however, Eugénie, one of the Witnesses, met me and spoke to me. She told me that God's Kingdom would end all hypocrisy, hatred, and prejudice in the world. "Only God holds the key to the solution," she said. Did I want to know more? The next day, I started my Bible study.

Everything I learned was new to me. I now understood that God is temporarily permitting wickedness on earth for good reasons. (Genesis 3:15; John 3:16; Romans 9:17) I further learned that Jehovah does not leave us without hope. He has given us his wonderful promise of everlasting life on a paradise earth. (Psalm 37:29; 96:11, 12; Isaiah 35:1, 2; 45:18) In that Paradise, I would recover the gift of sight, which I was losing gradually. —Isaiah 35:5.

Taking Up Full-Time Service

On December 12, 1985, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah by water baptism, joining my sister Marie-Claire, who had already taken this step. My brother Jean-Pierre soon followed suit, as did my dear mother.

In the congregation with which I was associated, there were several regular pioneers,

or full-time evangelizers. I warmed to their joy and enthusiasm for the ministry. Even Marie-Claire, suffering from an eye affliction and wearing an orthopedic device on one leg, entered the full-time service. To this day she continues to give me spiritual encouragement. Being surrounded by pioneers in the congregation and in the family helped me to develop a keen desire to share in full-time service myself. So in November 1990, I began serving in Béziers as a pioneer.—Psalm 94:17-19.

Coping With Discouragement

In the ministry, I was helped by the watchful care of other pioneers. Even so, from time to time, I felt discouraged because of my limitations and wished that I could do more. However, Jehovah sustained me through those periods of discouragement. I did research in the *Watch Tower Publications Index*, looking for life stories of pioneers who like me suffered from impaired vision. I was amazed how many there were! These practical and encouraging accounts taught me to appreciate what I was able to do and to accept my limitations.

To care for my needs, I did cleaning work at shopping malls together with other Witnesses. One day I noticed that my coworkers were going back over the areas that I had just cleaned. Obviously, I was missing a lot of dirt. I went to see Valérie, who was the pioneer in charge of our cleaning team, and I asked her to be frank with me and to tell me if I was making things difficult for everyone else. She kindly left it to me to decide when I felt I could no longer do the job. In March 1994, I gave up my cleaning job.

Again, I was overwhelmed by a feeling of uselessness. I prayed fervently to Jehovah, and I know that he heard my petitions. Once more, studying the Bible and Christian



I had always been thrilled by the thought of Africa's wide-open spaces and fascinating wildlife

publications was a great help. Even so, while my eyesight was weakening, my desire to serve Jehovah was growing stronger. What could I do?

First a Waiting List, Then a Quick Decision

I applied for training at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Nîmes and eventually was admitted for

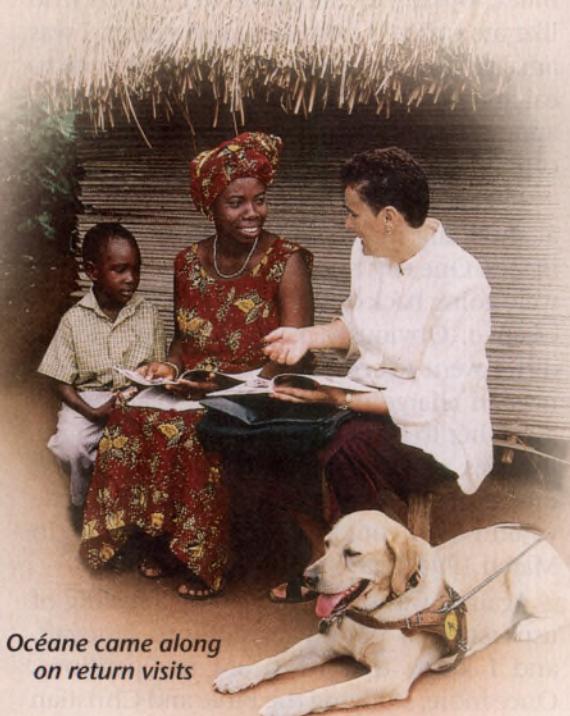
three months. It was time well spent. I came to understand the extent of my handicap and learned to adapt to it. Mixing with people who suffered from all kinds of infirmities helped me to realize how precious my Christian hope is. I at least had a goal and could do something productive. In addition, I learned French Braille.

When I returned home, my family noticed how much the training had helped me. One thing, though, that I really did not like was the white cane I had to use. I had a hard time coming to terms with that "stick." It would be nice to have another aid—perhaps a guide dog.

I filed a request for a dog but was told that there was a long waiting list. Also, the agency would have to conduct an investigation. A guide dog is not given to just anybody. One day a woman who helps run an association for the blind told me that a local tennis club was going to donate a guide dog to a blind or partially sighted person living in our area. She said that she had thought of me. Would I accept? I discerned Jehovah's hand in the matter and accepted the kind offer. Nevertheless, I had to wait for the dog.

Still Thinking About Africa

While waiting, I turned my attention in another direction. As mentioned earlier, since childhood I have had a deep interest in



*Océane came along
on return visits*

Africa. Despite my deteriorating eyesight, that interest was stronger than ever, especially since I had learned that so many people in Africa are interested in the Bible and in serving Jehovah. Some time earlier, I had casually mentioned to Valérie that I would like to go to Africa for a visit. Would she like to come with me? She agreed, and we wrote to several French-speaking branches of Jehovah's Witnesses in Africa.

A reply came from Togo. Thrilled, I asked Valérie to read it to me. The letter was encouraging, so Valérie said: "Well, why not?" After corresponding with the brothers at the branch, I was put in touch with Sandra, a pioneer in Lomé, the capital city. We set our departure date for December 1, 1998.

What a contrast, but what a delight! After landing in Lomé, we exited the plane and felt the African heat engulf us like a blanket. Sandra met us. We had never seen one another before, but right away we felt like old friends. Shortly before our arrival, Sandra and her partner, Christine, had been appointed as special pioneers in Tabligbo, a small town in the interior. We now had the privilege of accompanying them to their new assignment. We stayed about two months, and when we left, I knew that I would return.

A Delight to Be Back

In France, I immediately began preparing for my second trip to Togo. With my family's support, I was able to make arrangements to stay there for six months. So in September 1999, I was again on a plane bound for Togo. This time, however, I was alone. Imagine the feelings of my family when they saw me leave on my own in spite of my disability! But there was no reason to worry. I assured my parents that my friends, who had already become like family to me, would be waiting for me in Lomé.

What a delight it was to be back in an area where so many people show an interest in the Bible! It is not unusual to see people reading the Bible on the street. In Tabligbo people call you over just to have a Bible discussion. And what a privilege it was to share modest accommodations with two special pioneer sisters! I came to know another culture, a different way of looking at things. First and foremost, I noticed that our Christian brothers and sisters in Africa put Kingdom interests first in their lives. For example, having to walk many miles to the Kingdom Hall does not prevent them from attending meetings. I also learned many lessons from their warmth and hospitality.

One day when returning from field service, I confided to Sandra that I was afraid of returning to France. My eyesight had deteriorated further. I thought of the crowded and noisy streets in Béziers, of the stairs in apartment buildings, and of so many other things

The elders agreed that I should bring Océane to meetings



that make life difficult for someone with limited vision. In contrast, the streets in Tabligbo, although not paved, were quiet—no large crowds and not much traffic. How would I manage in France now that I was used to Tabligbo?

Two days later my mother called to let me know that the school for guide dogs was waiting for me. A young Labrador retriever named Océane was ready to become my "eyes." Once again, my needs were cared for and my anxieties dispelled. After six months of happy service in Tabligbo, I was on my way back to France to meet Océane.

After several months of training, Océane was entrusted to my care. Initially, it was not easy. We had to learn to understand each other. Gradually, though, I came to realize how much I needed Océane. In reality, Océane is now a part of me. How did people in Béziers react when they saw me coming to their door with a dog? I met with much respect and kindness. Océane became the "hero" of the neighborhood. Since many people are uncomfortable in the presence of a disabled person, having the dog enabled me to speak of my infirmity in a natural way. People relaxed and listened to me. Indeed, Océane became the best possible conversation opener.

In Africa With Océane

I had not forgotten Africa, and I now set about preparing for my third journey. This time, Océane came along. I was also accompanied by a young couple, Anthony and Auorre, and my friend Caroline—all pioneers like me. On September 10, 2000, we arrived in Lomé.

At first, many were afraid of Océane. Few people in Lomé had ever seen such a big dog, since most dogs in Togo are small. When they saw her harness, some thought

that she was a vicious animal that needed to be restrained. For her part, Océane adopted a defensive attitude, ready to protect me against anything she perceived as a threat. Still, Océane soon felt at home in the new environment. When she wears the harness, she is on the job—disciplined, responsible, staying by my side. When she is released, she is playful, sometimes naughty. We have a lot of fun together.

All of us were invited to stay with Sandra and Christine in Tabligbo. To help the local brothers and sisters get used to Océane, we invited them to visit us and explained the role of a guide dog, why I needed one, and how they should act around her. The elders agreed that Océane should come along with me to the Kingdom Hall. Since this arrangement was so unusual in Togo, an announcement explaining the matter was made to the congregation. As for the ministry, Océane came along only when I was making return visits and conducting Bible studies—situations where her presence would be more easily understood.

Preaching in this territory continues to be delightful. I was always touched by the thoughtfulness of the gentle people, demonstrated by kind actions, such as their eagerness to provide me with a chair. In October 2001, my mother came with me on my fourth trip to Togo. After three weeks she returned to France, reassured and happy.

I am deeply grateful to Jehovah that I have been able to serve in Togo. I am confident that Jehovah will continue to give me 'the requests of my heart' as I continue to use all I have in his service.*

* Sister Morgou returned to France and was able to make a fifth trip to Togo from October 6, 2003, to February 6, 2004. Sadly, because of medical complications, that trip might be her last to Togo in this system of things. Nevertheless, her strongest desire continues to be to serve Jehovah.

THE RANSOM

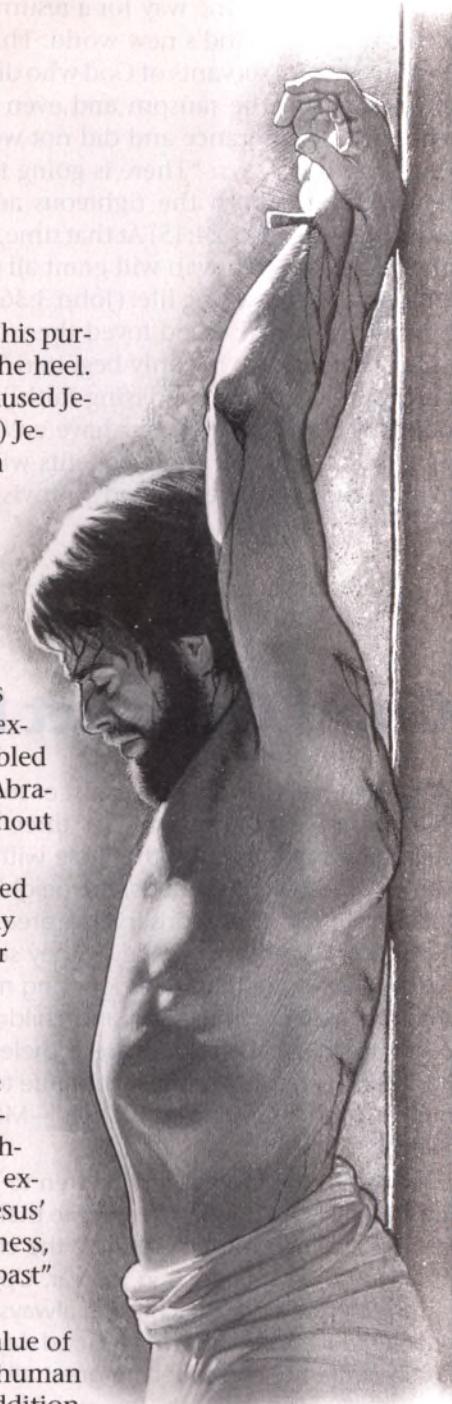
Magnifies God's Righteousness

AFTER the rebellion of Adam and Eve, Jehovah stated his purpose to raise up a Seed who would be bruised in the heel. (Genesis 3:15) This was fulfilled when God's enemies caused Jesus Christ's death on a torture stake. (Galatians 3:13, 16) Jesus was without sin, being miraculously conceived in the womb of a virgin by the power of holy spirit. Therefore, his shed blood could be used as the ransom price to free humans, who inherited sin and death from Adam.—Romans 5:12, 19.

Nothing can stop the almighty God, Jehovah, from fulfilling what he purposed. Thus, after man's fall into sin, the ransom price was as good as paid from Jehovah's viewpoint and he could have dealings with those who exercised faith in the fulfillment of his promises. This enabled sinful descendants of Adam, such as Enoch, Noah, and Abraham, to walk with and even be befriended by God without tarnishing his holiness.—Genesis 5:24; 6:9; James 2:23.

Some individuals who had faith in Jehovah committed serious sins. King David is one example. 'How,' you may ask, 'could Jehovah continue to bless King David after David committed adultery with Bath-sheba and then caused the death of her husband, Uriah?' An important factor was David's genuine repentance and faith. (2 Samuel 11:1-17; 12:1-14) Based on the future sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God could pardon the sins of the repentant David and yet maintain His own justice and righteousness. (Psalm 32:1, 2) In proof of this, the Bible explains what the most wonderful accomplishment of Jesus' ransom is, namely "to exhibit [God's] own righteousness, because he was forgiving the sins that occurred in the past" and "in this present season."—Romans 3:25, 26.

Yes, great benefits flow to mankind because of the value of Jesus' blood. On the basis of the ransom, repentant human sinners can enjoy a close relationship with God. In addition,



the ransom opens the way for a resurrection of the dead into God's new world. That will include faithful servants of God who died before Jesus paid the ransom and even many who died in ignorance and did not worship Him. The Bible says: "There is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." (Acts 24:15) At that time, based on the ransom, Jehovah will grant all obedient humans everlasting life. (John 3:36) Jesus himself explained: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have *everlasting life*." (John 3:16) All these benefits will flow to mankind because of God's provision of the ransom sacrifice.

The outstanding thing about the ransom, however, is not the benefits that we receive from it. Of greater importance is what Christ's ransom does for Jehovah's name. It proves that Jehovah is a God of perfect justice who can deal with sinful humans and still remain pure and holy. If God had not purposed to provide the ransom, no descendant of Adam, not even Enoch, Noah, and Abraham, could have walked with Jehovah or been his friend. The psalmist realized this and wrote: "If errors were what you watch, O Jah, O Jehovah, who could stand?" (Psalm 130:3) How thankful we should be both to Jehovah for sending his beloved Son to earth and to Jesus for willingly giving his life as a ransom for us!—Mark 10:45.

Good Conduct Bears Fruit

ON A small island off the coast of southern Japan, a mother and her three young children began to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. Seeing this, the neighbors in that isolated and very conservative area began to ignore the mother whenever they saw her. "What hurt more than their ignoring me was that they gave my husband and children the cold shoulder," she relates. Nevertheless, she told her children: "We must continue to greet our neighbors for Jehovah's sake."—Matthew 5:47, 48.

At home, she taught her children to be polite despite rejection. On the way to their regular visits to the local hot springs, the children practiced their greetings in the car. Upon entering the building, the children always called out cheerily, "Konnichiwa!"—"Good day!" The family patiently continued to greet all whom they met, even though the neighbors' re-

sponse remained chilly. Still, people could not help but notice the children's good manners.

Finally, one neighbor and then another responded with "Konnichiwa." At the end of two years, almost everyone in town was returning the family's greetings. They had also begun greeting one another and had become friendlier. The deputy mayor wanted to honor the children for their role in this change. But their mother assured him that they were only doing what Christians should do. Later, in an island-wide speech contest, one son related how his mother had trained the family to greet others politely regardless of the reaction. His talk won first prize and was printed in the town newspaper. Today, the family is very happy that following Christian principles produced such good results. Sharing the good news with others is much easier when people are friendly.

"One of the Best Days of My Life"

DEPRESSION is the most frequently reported, and arguably the most important mental health problem for young people," claims Beyond-blue, a government-funded agency in Australia. Studies reveal that about 100,000 young Australians suffer from depression each year.

Young Christians are not immune to depression. Faith in Jehovah, however, has helped many of them to overcome negative feelings and to make a success of their youth. In doing so, they make a fine impression on others. How?

Consider the experience of 18-year-old Claire. She and her mother attend a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Melbourne. When Claire's father abandoned the family, she became depressed. But her faith in her heavenly Father, Jehovah, remained strong. One day, the family doctor, Lydia, called at Claire's home to check up on Claire's mother, who was ill. Afterward, she kindly offered to drive Claire to the shopping center. Along the way, she asked Claire whether she had a boyfriend. Claire explained that as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, she did not casually date boys. This surprised the doctor. Claire then explained how the Bible had helped her to make wise decisions in life. Finally, she offered to bring the doctor a copy of a Bible-based publication that had greatly helped Claire. The book was entitled *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*.



Three days after receiving the book, Lydia telephoned Claire's mother to say how much she had enjoyed reading it. She then requested six more books for her colleagues. When Claire delivered the books, the doctor explained how impressed she was by Claire's faith. Claire offered to study the Bible with her, and the doctor accepted.

For several months, Claire conducted the study during the doctor's lunch break. Then Lydia asked Claire if she would speak at a seminar on the subject of depression in youths. Although apprehensive, Claire agreed. Over 60 people attended the seminar. Four mental-health professionals—all adults—addressed the audience. Then it was Claire's turn to speak. She highlighted how important it is for young people to have a relationship with God. She explained that Jehovah God cares deeply for young people and helps all those who turn to him for support and comfort. Additionally, she expressed her conviction that Jehovah will soon do away with all forms of physical and mental illness. (Isaiah 33:24) What resulted from this fine witness?

"Many came up to me after the session to say how impressed they were to hear a young person talk about God," said Claire. "I placed 23 copies of the *Young People Ask* book. Three girls in the audience gave me their telephone numbers. One of these girls is now studying the Bible. It was one of the best days of my life."

JEHOVAH IS OUR SHEPHERD

"Jehovah is my Shepherd. I shall lack nothing."

—PSALM 23:1.

IF YOU were asked to describe the way Jehovah cares for his people, what would you say? What comparison could you draw that would convey the tender care that he gives his faithful servants? Over 3,000 years ago, the royal psalmist David put in writing a beautiful description of Jehovah, using an analogy drawn from the occupation of David's early life.

² As a young man, David had been a shepherd, so he knew about caring for sheep. He was well-aware that sheep, if left to themselves, easily get lost and become prey for robbers or wild beasts. (1 Samuel 17:34-36) Without a caring shepherd, they may not find their pasture and their food. In his later years, David no doubt had fond memories of the many hours he had spent leading, protecting, and feeding sheep.

³ It is not surprising that the work of a shepherd came to mind when David was inspired to describe the care that Jehovah shows for his people. The 23rd Psalm,

penned by David, begins with the words: "Jehovah is my Shepherd. I shall lack nothing." Let us consider why this is a fitting statement. Then, with the help of Psalm 23, we will see in what ways Jehovah cares for his worshippers as a shepherd cares for his sheep.
—1 Peter 2:25.

A Fitting Comparison

⁴ Jehovah bears many titles in the Scriptures, but the designation "Shepherd" is among the most tender. (Psalm 80:1) To understand better why Jehovah is fittingly called a Shepherd, it is helpful for us to know two things: first, the disposition of sheep and second, the duties and qualities of a good shepherd.

⁵ The Bible often alludes to the traits of sheep, describing them as readily responding to a shepherd's affection (2 Samuel 12:3), unaggressive (Isaiah 53:7), and defenseless. (Micah 5:8) One writer who raised sheep for a number of years noted: "Sheep do not 'just take care of themselves' as some might suppose. They require, more

1-3. Why is it not surprising that David compared Jehovah to a shepherd?

4, 5. How does the Bible describe the traits of sheep?



than any other class of livestock, endless attention and meticulous care." To survive, these helpless creatures need a caring shepherd.—Ezekiel 34:5.

⁶ What was a typical day like for the ancient shepherd? One Bible dictionary explains: "In early morning he led forth the flock from the fold, marching at its head to the spot where they were to be pastured. Here he watched them all day, taking care that none of the sheep strayed, and if any for a time eluded his watch and wandered away from the rest, seeking diligently till he found and brought it back. . . . At night he brought the flock home to the fold, counting them as they passed under the rod at the door to assure himself that none were missing. . . . Often he had to guard the fold through the dark hours from the attack of wild beasts, or the wily attempts of the prowling thief."^{*}

⁷ There were times when sheep, especially the pregnant ewes and the young, required extra patience and tenderness. (Genesis 33:13) One Bible reference work states: "The birth of offspring in a flock often occurs far off on the mountain side. The shepherd solicitously guards the mother during her helpless moments and picks up the lamb and carries it to the fold. For the few days, until it is able to walk, he may carry it in his arms or in the loose folds of his coat." (Isaiah 40:10, 11) Clearly, a good shepherd needed a blend of strong and tender qualities.

⁸ "Jehovah is my Shepherd"—is that not a

* See Genesis 29:7; Job 30:1; Jeremiah 33:13; Luke 15:4; John 10:3, 4.

6. How does one Bible dictionary explain a typical day in the life of an ancient shepherd?
7. Why did a shepherd at times need to show extra patience and tenderness?
8. David cites what reasons for his confidence in Jehovah?

fitting description of our heavenly Father? As we examine Psalm 23, we will see how God cares for us with the strength and tenderness of a shepherd. In verse 1, David expresses his confidence that God will make all necessary provisions for His sheep so that they will "lack nothing." In the verses that follow, David cites three reasons for this confidence: Jehovah leads, protects, and feeds His sheep. Let us discuss these one at a time.

"He Leads Me"

⁹ First, Jehovah *leads* his people. David writes: "In grassy pastures he makes me lie down; by well-watered resting-places he conducts me. My soul he refreshes. He leads me in the tracks of righteousness for his name's sake." (Psalm 23:2, 3) A flock lying down peacefully in the midst of abundance—David here paints a scene of contentment, refreshment, and security. The Hebrew word rendered "pastures" can mean "pleasant place." Likely, on their own, the sheep would not find a refreshing spot to lie down in peace. Their shepherd must lead them to such a "pleasant place."

¹⁰ How does Jehovah lead us today? One way he does so is by example. His Word urges us to "become imitators of God." (Ephesians 5:1) The context of those words mentions compassion, forgiveness, and love. (Ephesians 4:32; 5:2) Certainly, Jehovah sets the finest example in displaying such warm qualities. Is he being unrealistic in asking us to imitate him? No. That inspired counsel is actually a marvelous expression of his confidence in us. In what way? We are made in God's image, meaning that we are endowed with moral qualities

9. What peaceful scene does David describe, and how would sheep come to be in such a setting?
10. How does God show his confidence in us?

and the capacity for spirituality. (Genesis 1:26) Hence, Jehovah knows that despite our imperfections, we have within us the potential for cultivating the same qualities that he exemplifies. Just think—our loving God is confident that we can be like him. If we follow his example, he will lead us, as it were, to a pleasant ‘resting-place.’ In the midst of this violent world, we will “dwell in security,” experiencing the peace that comes from knowing that we have God’s approval.—Psalm 4:8; 29:11.

¹¹ In leading us, Jehovah is tender and patient. A shepherd considers the limitations of his sheep, so he leads “according to the pace of the livestock.” (Genesis 33:14) Jehovah likewise leads “according to the pace of” his sheep. He considers our abilities and circumstances. In effect, he adjusts the pace, never asking more than we can give. What he does ask is that we be whole-souled. (Colossians 3:23) But what if you are older and cannot do what you used to? Or what if you have a serious illness that limits you? Therein lies the beauty of the requirement that we be whole-souled. No two souls are exactly alike. Serving whole-souled means using all your strength and energy to the fullest extent possible *for you* in God’s service. Despite the frailties that may affect our pace, Jehovah values our wholehearted worship.—Mark 12:29, 30.

11. In leading his sheep, what does Jehovah consider, and how is this reflected in what he asks of us?

¹² To illustrate that Jehovah leads “according to the pace of” his sheep, consider what is said about certain guilt offerings in the Mosaic Law. Jehovah wanted fine offerings that were prompted by grateful hearts. At the same time, the offerings were graded according to the offerer’s ability. The Law said: “If . . . he cannot afford enough for a sheep, then he must bring . . . two turtledoves or two young pigeons.” And if he could not afford even two pigeons? Then he could bring some “fine flour.” (Leviticus 5:7, 11) This shows that God did not demand what was beyond the offerer’s reach. Since God does not change, we can find comfort in knowing that he never asks more than we can give; rather, he is pleased to accept what is within our reach. (Malachi 3:6) What a pleasure it is to be led by such an understanding Shepherd!

“I Fear Nothing Bad, for You Are With Me”

¹³ David gives a second reason for his confidence: Jehovah *protects* his sheep. We read: “Even though I walk in the valley of deep shadow, I fear nothing bad, for you are with me; your rod and your staff are the things that comfort me.” (Psalm 23:4) David now speaks more intimately, addressing Jeho-

12. What example from the Mosaic Law illustrates that Jehovah leads “according to the pace of” his sheep?

13. At Psalm 23:4, how does David speak more intimately, and why is this not surprising?

Like a shepherd in Israel, Jehovah leads His sheep



vah with the pronoun "you." This is not surprising, for David is talking about how God helped him to endure adversity. David had been through many dark valleys—times when his very life was in danger. But he did not allow fear to dominate him, for he sensed that God—with His "rod" and "staff" at the ready—was with him. This awareness of protection comforted David and no doubt drew him closer to Jehovah.*

¹⁴ How does Jehovah protect his sheep today? The Bible assures us that no opposers—demon or human—will ever succeed in eliminating his sheep from the earth. Jehovah would never allow that. (Isaiah 54:17; 2 Peter 2:9) However, this does not mean that our Shepherd will shield us from all calamity. We experience the trials that are common to humans, and we face the opposition that befalls all true Christians. (2 Timothy 3:12; James 1:2) There are times when we may, so to speak, "walk in the valley of deep shadow." For example, we may come close to death as a result of persecution or some health crisis. Or it may be that someone dear to us comes close to or even succumbs to death. During what seem to be the darkest moments, our Shepherd is with us, and he will safeguard us. How?

¹⁵ Jehovah does not promise miraculous intervention.[#] But of this we can be sure: Jehovah will help us to get through whatever

* David composed a number of psalms in which he praised Jehovah for delivering him out of danger.—See, for example, the superscriptions of Psalms 18, 34, 56, 57, 59, and 63.

[#] See the article "Divine Intervention—What Can We Expect?" in the October 1, 2003, issue of *The Watchtower*.

14. What assurance does the Bible give us regarding Jehovah's protection, but what does this not mean?

15, 16. (a) In what ways does Jehovah help us to handle the obstacles we may face? (b) Relate an experience to show how Jehovah helps us in times of trial.

obstacles we may face. He can grant us the wisdom to cope "with various trials." (James 1:2-5) A shepherd uses his rod or staff not only to ward off predators but also to nudge his sheep in the right direction. Jehovah can "nudge" us, perhaps by means of a fellow worshipper, to apply Bible-based counsel that may make a big difference in our situation. In addition, Jehovah can give us the strength to endure. (Philippians 4:13) By means of his holy spirit, he can equip us with "power beyond what is normal." (2 Corinthians 4:7) God's spirit can enable us to endure any test that Satan might bring upon us. (1 Corinthians 10:13) Is it not comforting to know that Jehovah is ever ready to help us?

¹⁶ Yes, no matter what dark valley we may find ourselves in, we do not have to walk through it alone. Our Shepherd is with us, helping us in ways that we may not fully perceive at first. Consider the experience of a Christian elder who was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. "I must admit that at first I found myself wondering if Jehovah was angry at me or even if he loved me. But I was determined not to pull away from Jehovah. Instead, I voiced my concerns to him. And Jehovah helped me, often comforting me through my brothers and sisters. Many shared helpful insights based on their own experience of coping with serious illness. Their balanced comments reminded me that there was nothing unusual about what I was going through. Practical assistance, including some touching offers of kindness, reassured me that Jehovah was not displeased with me. Of course, I must continue to battle my illness, and I do not know what the outcome will be. But I am convinced that Jehovah is with me and that he will continue to help me through this trial."

"You Arrange Before Me a Table"

¹⁷ David now cites a third reason for his confidence in his Shepherd: Jehovah *feeds* his sheep, and he does so in abundance. David writes: "You arrange before me a table in front of those showing hostility to me. With oil you have greased my head; my cup is well filled." (Psalm 23:5) In this verse, David describes his Shepherd as a generous host who provides food and drink in abundance. The two illustrations—a caring shepherd and a generous host—are not at odds. After all, a good shepherd must know where to find rich pasture grounds and sufficient drinking water so that his flock will "lack nothing." —Psalm 23:1, 2.

¹⁸ Is our Shepherd also a generous host? There is no question about that! Just think of the quality, quantity, and variety of spiritual food that we now enjoy. Through the faithful and discreet slave class, Jehovah has provided us with helpful publications and rich programs at meetings, assemblies, and conventions—all of which fill our spiritual needs. (Matthew 24:45-47) There is certainly no shortage of spiritual food. "The faithful and discreet slave" has produced millions of

17. How does David describe Jehovah at Psalm 23:5, and why is this not at odds with the illustration of a shepherd?

18. What shows that Jehovah is a generous host?

Do You Recall?

- Why is it fitting that David compared Jehovah to a shepherd?
- How does Jehovah lead us with understanding?
- In what ways does Jehovah help us to endure trials?
- What shows that Jehovah is a generous host?

Bibles and Bible study aids, and such publications are now available in 413 languages. Jehovah has provided this spiritual food in great variety—from "milk," basic Bible teachings, to "solid food," deeper spiritual information. (Hebrews 5:11-14) As a result, when we face problems or decisions, we can usually find just what we need. Where would we be without such spiritual food? Our Shepherd is truly a most generous provider!—Isaiah 25:6; 65:13.

"I Will Dwell in the House of Jehovah"

¹⁹ After contemplating the ways of his Shepherd and Provider, David concludes: "Surely goodness and loving-kindness themselves will pursue me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of Jehovah to the length of days." (Psalm 23:6) David speaks from a heart filled with gratitude and faith—gratitude in recalling the past and faith in looking to the future. This former shepherd is secure, knowing that as long as he stays close to his heavenly Shepherd, as if dwelling in His house, he will always be the object of Jehovah's loving care.

²⁰ How thankful we are for the beautiful words recorded in the 23rd Psalm! David could hardly have found a more fitting way to describe how Jehovah leads, protects, and feeds his sheep. David's warm expressions have been preserved to give us confidence that we too can look to Jehovah as our Shepherd. Yes, as long as we stay close to Jehovah, he will care for us as a loving Shepherd "to the length of days," even to all eternity. However, as his sheep, we have the responsibility to walk with our great Shepherd, Jehovah. What this involves will be discussed in the next article.

19, 20. (a) At Psalm 23:6, what confidence does David express, and how may we share that confidence? (b) What will be discussed in the next article?

WILL YOU WALK WITH GOD?

"Be modest in walking with your God."

—MICAH 6:8.

A BABY, standing on wobbly legs, reaches toward a parent's outstretched arms and takes its first few steps. It may seem a small thing, but to the mother and father, it is a milestone, a moment full of promise for the future. The parents eagerly look forward to walking with their child, hand in hand, in the months and years to come. In many ways, they hope to provide the child with guidance and support far into the future.

² Jehovah God has similar feelings toward his earthly children. He once said regarding his people Israel, or Ephraim: "I taught Ephraim to walk, taking them upon my arms . . . With the ropes of earthling man I kept drawing them, with the cords of love." (Hosea 11:3, 4) Jehovah here describes himself as a loving parent who is patiently teaching a child to walk, perhaps taking him into His arms when he falls. Jehovah, the ultimate Parent, is eager to teach us how to walk. He also delights in accompanying us as we continue to make progress. As our theme text

1, 2. How might Jehovah's feelings toward us be compared to those of a parent teaching a child to walk?



shows, we can walk with God! (Micah 6:8) But what does it mean to walk with God?

Why do we need to do so? How is it possible? And what blessings come from walking with God? Let us consider these four questions one at a time.

What Does It Mean to Walk With God?

³ Of course, a flesh-and-blood human cannot literally take a walk with Jehovah, a spirit being.

(Exodus 33:20; John 4:24) So when the Bible speaks of humans walking with God, it uses figurative language. It paints a remarkable word picture, one that rises above national and cultural boundaries and that even transcends time. After all, in what place or era would people be unable to grasp the concept of one person walking in company with another? This word picture conveys warmth and closeness, does it not? Such feelings give us some insight into what it means to walk with God. Let us be more specific, though.

⁴ Remember the faithful men Enoch and Noah. Why are they described as walking

3, 4. (a) What is remarkable about the word picture of walking with God? (b) What does it mean to walk with God?

with God? (Genesis 5:24; 6:9) In the Bible, the term "to walk" often means to follow a certain course of action. Enoch and Noah chose a course in life that was in harmony with the will of Jehovah God. Unlike those in the world around them, they looked to Jehovah for guidance and obeyed his direction. They trusted in him. Does this mean that Jehovah made their decisions for them? No. Jehovah has given humans free will, and he wants us to use that gift along with our own "power of reason." (Romans 12:1) As we make decisions, however, we humbly allow our power of reason to be guided by Jehovah's infinitely superior mind. (Proverbs 3:5, 6; Isaiah 55:8, 9) In effect, as we walk through life, we take that journey in close company with Jehovah.

⁵ The Bible often likens life to a journey or a walk. In some cases, that comparison is direct, but in other cases, it is implied. For instance, Jesus said: "Who of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his life span?" (Matthew 6:27) Something about those words may strike you as puzzling. Why would Jesus speak of adding "one cubit," which is a measure of distance, to a person's "life span," which is measured in terms of time?^{*} Jesus was evidently picturing life as a journey. In effect, he taught that worrying will not help you to add even a small step to the walk of your life. Should we conclude, though, that there is nothing we can do about the length of that walk? Far from it! That brings us to our second question, Why do we need to walk with God?

* Some Bible translations change the "cubit" in this verse to a measurement of time, as in "one moment" (*The Emphatic Diaglott*) or "a single minute" (*A Translation in the Language of the People*, by Charles B. Williams). However, the word used in the original text definitely means a cubit, which was about 18 inches in length.

5. Why did Jesus speak of adding a cubit to one's life span?

Why Do We Need to Walk With God?

⁶ One reason why we need to walk with Jehovah God is explained at Jeremiah 10:23: "I well know, O Jehovah, that to earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." So we humans have neither the ability nor the right to direct our own life course. We are in desperate need of guidance. Those who insist on going their own way, independent of God, make the same mistake that Adam and Eve made. The first pair assumed the right to determine for themselves what is good and what is bad. (Genesis 3:1-6) That right simply "does not belong" to us.

⁷ Do you not feel the need for guidance on life's journey? Every day, we face decisions small and great. Some of these are difficult and can affect our future—as well as that of our loved ones. Just think, though, that someone infinitely older and wiser than we are is happy to give us loving guidance in making those decisions! Sadly, most people today prefer to trust their own judgment and guide their own steps. They ignore the truth stated at Proverbs 28:26: "He that is trusting in his own heart is stupid, but he that is walking in wisdom is the one that will escape." Jehovah wants us to escape the disasters that result from trusting the treacherous human heart. (Jeremiah 17:9) He wants us to walk in wisdom, to trust in him as our wise Guide and Instructor. When we do, our walk in life is secure, satisfying, and fulfilling.

⁸ Another reason why we need to walk with God involves the length of the walk we want to take. The Bible states a grim truth. In a sense, all imperfect humans are walking toward the same destination. In describing the

6, 7. Imperfect humans have what desperate need, and why do we do well to turn to Jehovah to fill that need?

8. Sin and imperfection naturally lead humans to what destination, yet what does Jehovah want for us?

trials that come with old age, Ecclesiastes 12:5 says: "Man is walking to his long-lasting house and the wailers have marched around in the street." What is this "long-lasting house"? The grave, where sin and imperfection naturally take us. (Romans 6:23) However, Jehovah wants more for us than a short, troubled walk from cradle to grave. (Job 14:1) Only by walking with God can we hope to walk for as long as we were meant to walk—forever. Is that not what you want? Clearly, then, you need to walk with your Father.

How Can We Walk With God?

⁹ The third question in our consideration deserves our most careful attention. It is, How can we walk with God? We find the answer at Isaiah 30:20, 21: "Your Grand Instructor will no longer hide himself, and your eyes must become eyes seeing your Grand Instructor. And your own ears will hear a word behind you saying: 'This is the way. Walk in it, you people,' in case you people should go to the right or in case you should go to the left." In this encouraging passage, Jehovah's words recorded in verse 20 may have reminded his people that when they rebelled against him, he was, in effect, hidden from them. (Isaiah 1:15; 59:2) Here, though, Jehovah is

9. Why was Jehovah at times hidden from his people, yet what assurance did he provide according to Isaiah 30:20?

represented, not as hiding, but as standing openly before his faithful people. We might think of an instructor standing before his students, demonstrating what he wants them to learn.

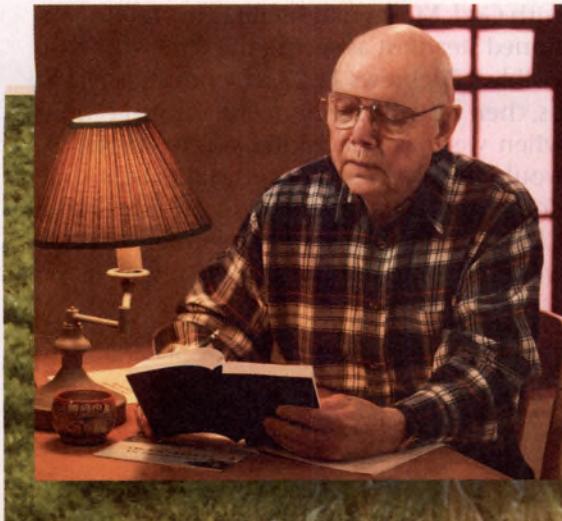
¹⁰ In verse 21, a different word picture is painted. Jehovah is depicted as walking behind his people, issuing directions on the right way to walk. Bible scholars have noted that this expression might be based on the way a shepherd sometimes follows his sheep, calling out to guide them and to keep them from going the wrong way. How does this word picture apply to us? Well, when we turn to God's Word for guidance, we are reading words that were recorded thousands of years ago. They are coming from behind us, as it were, in the stream of time. Yet, they are just as relevant today as they were the day they were written. Bible counsel can guide us in our day-to-day decisions, and it can help us to map out the course of our life over the years to come. (Psalm 119:105) When we earnestly seek out such counsel and apply it, then Jehovah is our Guide. We are walking with God.

¹¹ Are we really allowing God's Word to

10. In what sense may you "hear a word behind you" from your Grand Instructor?

11. According to Jeremiah 6:16, Jehovah painted what inviting word picture for his people, but how did they respond?

Through the pages of the Bible, we hear Jehovah's voice behind us say, "This is the way"



guide us that closely? It is worthwhile to pause at times and examine ourselves honestly. Consider a verse that will help us to do so: "This is what Jehovah has said: 'Stand still in the ways, you people, and see, and ask for the roadways of long ago, where, now, the good way is; and walk in it, and find ease for your souls.'" (Jeremiah 6:16) These words might remind us of a traveler who pauses at a crossroads to ask for directions. In a spiritual sense, Jehovah's rebellious people in Israel needed to do something similar. They needed to find their way back to "the roadways of long ago." That "good way" was the way in which their faithful forefathers had walked, the way from which the nation had foolishly strayed. Sadly, Israel responded stubbornly to this loving reminder from Jehovah. The same verse continues: "But they kept saying: 'We are not going to walk!'" In modern times, though, God's people have responded differently to such counsel.

¹² Since late in the 19th century, Christ's anointed followers have applied the counsel of Jeremiah 6:16 to themselves. As a class, they have led the way in a wholehearted return to "the roadways of long ago." Unlike apostate Christendom, they have faithfully adhered to "the pattern of healthful words" that was established by Jesus Christ and up-

12, 13. (a) How have Christ's anointed followers responded to the counsel of Jeremiah 6:16? (b) How might we examine ourselves regarding the way we are walking today?

How Would You Answer?

- What does it mean to walk with God?
- Why do you feel a need to walk with God?
- What will help you to walk with God?
- What blessings come to those who walk with God?

held by his faithful followers back in the first century C.E. (2 Timothy 1:13) To this day, the anointed help one another as well as their "other sheep" companions to pursue the healthful, happy way of life that Christendom has abandoned.—John 10:16.

¹³ By providing spiritual food at the proper time, the faithful slave class has helped millions to find "the roadways of long ago" and to walk with God. (Matthew 24:45-47) Are you among those millions? If so, what can you do to avoid drifting away, turning to follow your own course? It is wise to stop periodically and examine the way you are walking in life. If you faithfully read the Bible and Bible-based publications and attend the programs of instruction sponsored by the anointed today, then you are being trained to walk with God. And when you humbly apply the counsel you are given, you are indeed walking with God, following "the roadways of long ago."

Walk as Though "Seeing the One Who Is Invisible"

¹⁴ For us to walk with Jehovah, he must be real to us. Remember, Jehovah assured faithful ones in ancient Israel that he was not hidden from them. Today, he likewise reveals himself to his people as the Grand Instructor. Is Jehovah that real to you, as though he were standing before you to instruct you? That is the kind of faith we need if we are to walk with God. Moses had such faith, "for he continued steadfast as seeing the One who is invisible." (Hebrews 11:27) If Jehovah is real to us, then we will take his feelings into account when we make decisions. For example, we would not even consider engaging in wrongdoing and then try to hide our sins from Christian elders or family members. Rather, we endeavor to walk with God even when no

14. If Jehovah is real to us, how will that be reflected in the personal decisions that we make?

At meetings, we receive spiritual food at the proper time



fellow human can see us. Like King David of old, we resolve: "I shall walk about in the integrity of my heart inside my house."—Psalm 101:2.

¹⁵ Jehovah understands that we are imperfect, fleshly creatures and that we may at times find it a challenge to believe in what we cannot see. (Psalm 103:14) He does much to help us overcome such weakness. For example, he has gathered together "a people for his name" from all the nations of the earth. (Acts 15:14) As we unitedly serve together, we draw strength from one another. Hearing how Jehovah has helped a spiritual brother or sister overcome some weakness or pass some difficult test makes our God even more real to us.—1 Peter 5:9.

¹⁶ Above all, Jehovah has given us the example of his Son. Jesus said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) Studying Jesus' life course on earth is one of the best ways to make Jehovah more real to us. Everything that Jesus said or did was a perfect reflection of his heavenly Father's personality and ways. (John 14:9) As we make decisions, we need to think carefully about how Jesus would handle matters. When our decisions reflect such careful and prayerful thought, then we are following in Christ's footsteps. (1 Peter 2:21) As a result, we are walking with God.

What Blessings Result?

¹⁷ To walk with Jehovah God is to lead a blessed life. Remember what Jehovah prom-

15. How will associating with our Christian brothers and sisters help us to see Jehovah as real?

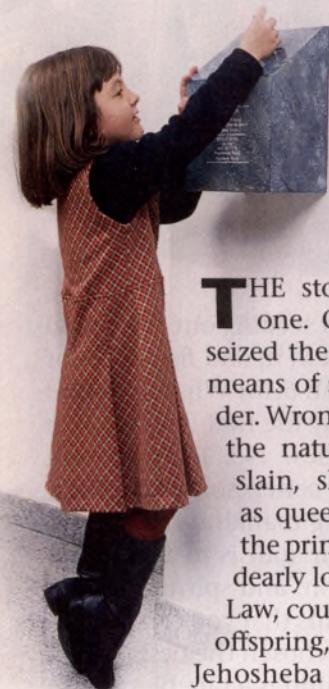
16. How will learning about Jesus help us to walk with God?

17. If we walk in Jehovah's way, what "ease" will we find for our souls?

ised his people about seeking out "the good way." He said: "Walk in it, and find ease for your souls." (Jeremiah 6:16) What does that "ease" mean? An easy life that is filled with pleasures and luxuries? No. Jehovah provides something far better, something that the wealthiest among mankind rarely find. To find ease for your soul is to find inner peace, joy, satisfaction, and spiritual fulfillment. Such ease means that you can be confident that you have chosen the best path in life. Such peace of mind is a rare blessing in this hard world!

¹⁸ Of course, life itself is a great blessing. Even a short walk is better than no walk at all. However, Jehovah never meant for your walk to consist of merely a brief trip from the vigor of youth to the pain of old age. No, Jehovah wants you to have the greatest blessing of all. He wants you to walk with him forever! This is well-expressed at Micah 4:5: "All the peoples, for their part, will walk each one in the name of its god; but we, for our part, shall walk in the name of Jehovah our God to time indefinite, even forever." Will you take hold of that blessing? Will you live what Jehovah invitingly calls "the real life"? (1 Timothy 6:19) By all means, then, make it your resolve to walk with Jehovah today, tomorrow, and every day thereafter on into eternity!

18. What blessing does Jehovah want to bestow upon you, and what is your resolve?



CONTRIBUTIONS

That Warm God's Heart

THE story is not a pretty one. Queen Athaliah had seized the throne of Judah by means of subterfuge and murder. Wrongly assuming that all the natural heirs had been slain, she installed herself as queen. Another woman, the princess Jehosheba, who dearly loved Jehovah and his Law, courageously hid a royal offspring, the baby Jehoash.

Jehosheba and her husband, High Priest Jehoiada, concealed the heir for six years in their temple quarters.
—2 Kings 11:1-3.

By the time Jehoash reached seven years of age, High Priest Jehoiada was ready to launch his plan to dislodge the usurping queen from her ill-gotten throne. He brought the boy out of hiding and crowned him rightful heir to the kingdom. Wicked Queen Athaliah was then hauled outside the temple grounds by the royal guards and executed, to the relief and joy of the people. By their actions, Jehoiada and Jehosheba contributed greatly to the restoration of true worship in the land of Judah. But more important, they contributed to the continuation of the royal line of David, which would lead to the Messiah.
—2 Kings 11:4-21.

The newly installed king was also to make a contribution that would warm God's heart. The house of Jehovah was badly in need of repairs. Athaliah's unbridled ambition to be

sole ruler of Judah resulted not only in the neglecting of the temple but also in the pillaging of it. So Jehoash set his heart on rebuilding and restoring the temple. Without delay, he issued an edict to gather needed funds for the rehabilitation of Jehovah's house. He said: "All the money for the holy offerings that is brought to the house of Jehovah, the money at which each one is assessed, the money for the souls according to individual valuation, all the money that it comes up on the heart of each one to bring to the house of Jehovah, let the priests take for themselves, each one from his acquaintance; and let them, for their part, repair the cracks of the house wherever any crack is found."
—2 Kings 12:4, 5.

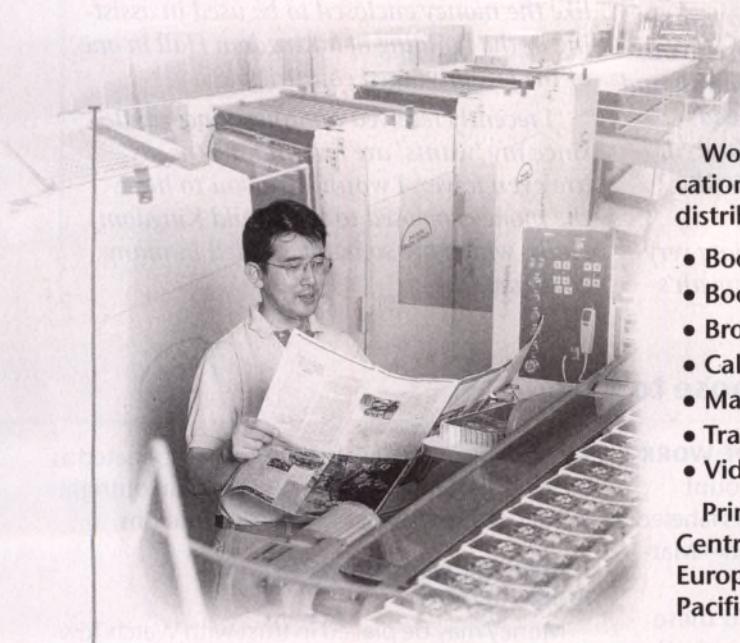
The people contributed willingly. The priests, however, were not wholehearted in fulfilling their duty to repair the temple. Hence, the king decided to take matters into his own hands and ordered that all contributions go directly into a special box. He put Jehoiada in charge, and the account states: "Jehoiada the priest now took a chest and bored a hole in its lid and put it beside the altar on the right as a person comes into the house of Jehovah, and there the priests, the doorkeepers, put all the money that was being brought into the house of Jehovah. And it came about that as soon as they saw that there was a great deal of money in the chest, the secretary of the king and the high priest would come up, and they would bind it up and count the money that was being

found at the house of Jehovah. And they gave the money that had been counted off over to the hands of doers of the work that were appointed to the house of Jehovah. In turn they paid it out to the workers in wood and to the builders that were working at the house of Jehovah, and to the masons and to the hewers of stone, and to buy timbers and hewn stones for repairing the cracks of the house of Jehovah and for all that was expended upon the house to repair it."—2 Kings 12:9-12.

The people's response was wholehearted. Jehovah's house of worship was restored so

that his worship could continue in a dignified manner. Thus, all contributed funds were used appropriately. King Jehoash made sure of that!

Today, Jehovah's visible organization watches carefully that all donated funds are properly used to advance the worship of Jehovah, and true Christians have responded as those ancient Israelites did—in a wholehearted way. Perhaps you are among those who contributed toward the furtherance of Kingdom interests during the past service year. Let us take note of some of the ways your contributions have been used.



"My name is Katelyn May. I am eight years old. I have \$28, and I would like you to have it to help pay for the printing presses. Your little sister, Katelyn."

"We had a family meeting about the new presses. Our children, ages 11 and 9, decided to take money from their savings and do their part. We are happy to send their contribution along with ours."

PUBLISHING

Worldwide, the following publications were printed for study and distribution:

- Books: 47,490,247
- Booklets: 6,834,740
- Brochures: 167,854,462
- Calendars: 5,405,955
- Magazines: 1,179,266,348
- Tracts: 440,995,740
- Videos: 3,168,611

Printing is done in Africa, North, Central, and South America, Asia, Europe, and island nations of the Pacific—a total of 19 countries.



CONSTRUCTION

Following are some of the building projects undertaken to support the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses:

- Kingdom Halls in lands with limited resources: 2,180
- Assembly Halls: 15
- Branches: 10
- International volunteers in full-time service: 2,342

"This weekend we had the first meeting in our new Kingdom Hall. We are so happy to have a proper place to give praise to our Father, Jehovah God. We thank Jehovah and you for giving attention to our needs by building more Kingdom Halls. Indeed, our Kingdom Hall is a real asset to the neighborhood."—Chile.

"The brothers and sisters appreciate very much the help that is given by Jehovah's



organization. To this day, we continue to talk about the wonderful time we spent with the construction crew."

—Moldova.

"My wife and I recently celebrated our 35th wedding anniversary. We were trying to decide what to get each other for the occasion, and we decided to give some-

thing back to Jehovah and his organization, for without their help, we probably wouldn't have succeeded in our marriage. We would like the money enclosed to be used in assisting in the building of a Kingdom Hall in one of the less privileged countries."

"I recently received an inheritance, and since my 'wants' are few and my 'needs' are even fewer, I would like you to have the money enclosed to help build Kingdom Halls, which are so badly needed in many countries."

Ways in Which Some Choose to Give

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WORLDWIDE WORK

Many set aside, or budget, an amount that they place in the contribution boxes labeled "Contributions for the Worldwide Work—Matthew 24:14."

Each month, congregations forward these amounts to the office of Jehovah's Witnesses that serves their respective countries. Voluntary donations of money may also be sent directly to Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, Attention Treasurer's Office, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201-2483, or to the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses that serves your country. Checks sent to the above address should be made payable to "Watch Tow-

er." Jewelry or other valuables may be donated as well. A brief letter stating that such is an outright gift should accompany these contributions.

CONDITIONAL-DONATION TRUST ARRANGEMENT

Money may be placed in trust with Watch Tower for use worldwide. However, upon request the funds will be returned. For more information, please contact the Treasurer's Office at the address noted above.

CHARITABLE PLANNING

In addition to outright gifts of money, there are other methods of giving to benefit Kingdom service worldwide. These include:

DISASTER RELIEF

In these last days, disasters often strike without warning. Many of Jehovah's Witnesses make extra contributions so that their brothers in stricken areas can be helped. As a reminder, contributions for disaster relief are administered as part of the worldwide work. Following are some of the places where Jehovah's Witnesses have helped disaster victims:

- Africa • Caribbean region
- Asia • Islands of the Pacific



"My husband and I would like to thank you very much for sending supplies for the relief efforts for the damage incurred during the hurricanes. We were able to put a new roof on our house. We truly appreciate that you responded so quickly."

"My name is Connor, and I am 11. When I saw what happened when the tsunami hit, I wanted to help. I hope this will help my brothers and sisters."

Insurance: Watch Tower may be named as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or a retirement/pension plan.

Bank Accounts: Bank accounts, certificates of deposit, or individual retirement accounts may be placed in trust for or made payable on death to Watch Tower, in accord with local bank requirements.

Stocks and Bonds: Stocks and bonds may be donated to Watch Tower as an outright gift.

Real Estate: Salable real estate may be donated either by making an outright gift or, in the case of residential property, by reserving a life estate to the donor, who can continue to live therein during his or her lifetime. Contact

the branch office in your country before deeding any real estate.

Gift Annuity: A gift annuity is an arrangement whereby one transfers money or securities to a designated corporation that is used by Jehovah's Witnesses. In exchange, the donor, or someone designated by the donor, receives a specified annuity payment every year for life. The donor receives an income-tax deduction for the year in which the gift annuity is established.

Wills and Trusts: Property or money may be bequeathed to Watch Tower by means of a legally executed will, or Watch Tower may be named as beneficiary of a trust agreement. A trust benefiting a religious organization may provide certain tax advantages. ►



SPECIAL FULL-TIME SERVANTS

A number of Christians serve in the evangelizing work or in Bethel homes full-time. Some full-time volunteers are supported by voluntary contributions. Among these are the following:

- Missionaries: 2,635
- Traveling overseers: 5,325
- Bethelites: 20,092

"Since I cannot go to serve at Bethel now [five-year-old boy], I want to send this contribution with much love. When I grow up, I am going to go to Bethel to work hard."

Promoting Bible Education

Jesus Christ commissioned his followers to "make disciples of people of all the nations." (Matthew 28:19) In obedience to his words, Jehovah's Witnesses are busy preaching and teaching the Bible's message in 235 lands. They publish and distribute Bible literature in 413 languages.

Indeed, the most valuable contribution a Christian can make to help more people learn about God and His purposes is his time. Jehovah's Witnesses have given of their time and strength in abundance to help their neighbors. They have also generously contributed in a financial way, and all their contributions, in one form or another, have helped to make Jehovah's name and purposes known throughout the earth. May Jehovah continue to bless these efforts to help others to learn more about him. (Proverbs 19:17) Such willingness to help warms Jehovah's heart!—Hebrews 13:15, 16.

As the term "charitable planning" implies, these types of donations typically require some planning on the part of the donor. To assist individuals desiring to benefit the worldwide work of Jehovah's Witnesses through some form of charitable planning, a brochure has been prepared in English and Spanish entitled *Charitable Planning to Benefit Kingdom Service Worldwide*. The brochure was written to provide information on a variety of ways that gifts may be made either now or through a bequest at death. After reading the brochure and conferring with their own legal or tax advisers, many have been able to help support the religious and humanitarian activities of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide and maximize

their tax benefits while doing so. This brochure may be obtained by requesting a copy directly from the Charitable Planning Office.

For more information, you may contact the Charitable Planning Office, either in writing or by telephone, at the address listed below or you may contact the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses that serves your country.

Charitable Planning Office

Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
of Pennsylvania
100 Watchtower Drive
Patterson, New York 12563-9204
Telephone: (845) 306-0707

Questions From Readers

Can a Christian maintain a good conscience if he accepts employment that involves being armed?

Jehovah's Witnesses the world over take seriously their God-given responsibility to provide materially for their families. (1 Timothy 5:8) However, certain forms of employment are in clear violation of Bible principles and should be avoided. These include employment connected with gambling, the misuse of blood, and the promoting of tobacco products. (Isaiah 65:11; Acts 15:29; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Colossians 3:5) Other types of work, though not directly condemned in the Bible, could violate one's conscience or the conscience of others.

Engaging in secular work that requires carrying a firearm or another weapon is a personal decision. However, armed employment exposes one to the possibility of becoming blood-guilty if called upon to use one's weapon. Hence, a Christian needs to consider prayerfully whether he is willing to accept the burden of making a snap decision where human life is involved. Carrying a weapon also exposes a



person to the danger of injury or death from an attack or reprisal.

Others may be affected by one's decision as well. For instance, a Christian's primary responsibility is preaching the good news of God's Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14) Would it be possible to teach others to "be peaceable with all men," while at the same time earning a living by carrying a weapon? (Romans 12:18) What about children or other family members? Would having a handgun in the house put their lives in danger? Moreover, could others be stumbled by one's stand on the matter?—Philippians 1:10.

In these "last days," more and more people are "fierce, without love of goodness." (2 Timothy 3:1, 3) Knowing this, could a person remain "free from accusation" were he to choose armed employment that might bring him into conflict with such individuals? (1 Timothy 3:10) Hardly. For this reason, the congregation would not regard such a person as "irreprehensible" if he continued to carry a weapon after being kindly given Bible counsel. (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:5, 6) Thus, such a man or woman would not qualify for any special privileges in the congregation.

Jesus assured his disciples that if they put Kingdom interests first in their lives, they need not be overly concerned about having the necessities of life. (Matthew 6:25, 33) Indeed, if we place our full trust in Jehovah, "he himself will sustain [us]. Never will he allow the righteous one to totter."—Psalm 55:22.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Is the Devil Real?

Wonders of Creation Exalt Jehovah

Hosea's Prophecy Helps Us to Walk With God



They Share Good News With the Deaf

"**T**HEY bring you spirituality!" That was how the director of a home for senior citizens in Navalcarnero, Madrid, Spain, recently described the visits of Jehovah's Witnesses to his center. What prompted him to say that?

Several of the residents of the Rosas del Camino center are deaf. However, since the Witnesses have made the effort to learn Spanish Sign Language, they can communicate with these residents. The director praised the Witnesses for freely offering their time to teach spiritual values to those in need. He observed the favorable effect the teaching of the good news of the Kingdom has had on the residents. And the residents—especially those with hearing or visual impediments—also greatly value the visits of the Witnesses.



Eulogio, one of the residents who is blind and deaf, is now studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. One day while the study was in progress, an elderly man approached and offered the Witness a poem that the residents had composed as a token of their gratitude. The poem was entitled "To Be a Witness." In part, it said: "They live a good, well-disciplined life, and from Jehovah they obtain joyful wisdom. They go back and forth to the houses because they trust in Jehovah."

It is precisely this trust in Jehovah that has led many Witnesses all over the world to learn the sign language of the deaf people in their country. In this way they share with such ones the encouraging message of hope found in the Bible.