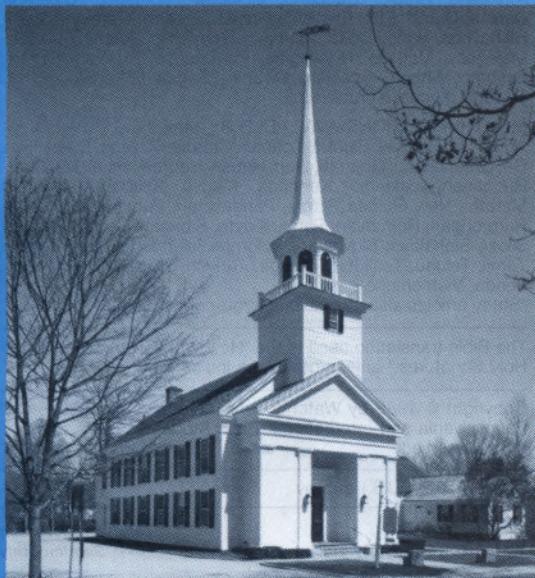


July 15, 1985



The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



**Does Your
Religion
Really
Please God?**



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Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

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Vol. 106, No. 14

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THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER" is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they 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 the 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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- August 18: "Let No Man Deprive You of the Prize."
Page 10. Songs to Be Used: 222, 109.
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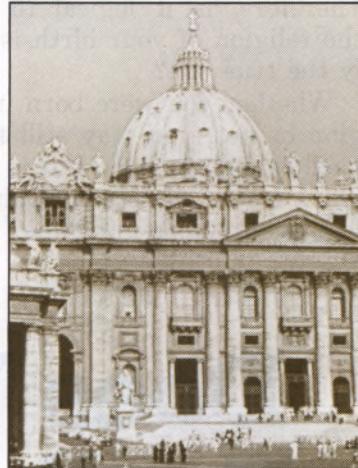
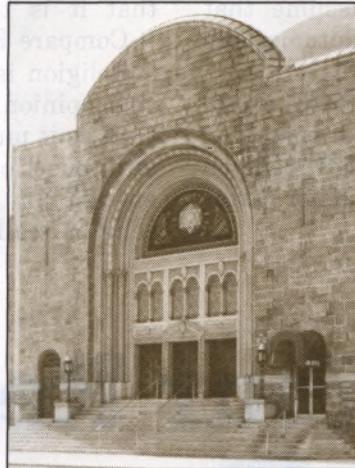
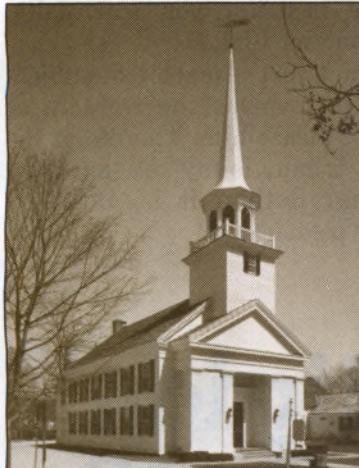
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'My Religion Is Good Enough for Me!'



HAVE you ever reacted with such words when one of Jehovah's Witnesses called at your home? Perhaps you added: 'It was good enough for my parents and my grandparents. So why bother with any other religion?'

Of course, we benefit greatly from the wisdom and experience of our parents. But is that necessarily a wise basis for following a religion? Certainly we do not imitate our parents and grandparents in everything we do. Why not? Because there has been progress in knowledge and understanding.

To illustrate: Over 40 years ago when people got sick, they may have died simply because available treatment was inadequate. Since 1943, antibiotics have been available and have saved many lives. Do we refuse to consider using antibiotics just because our grandparents did not know of them? No, we keep an open mind

and weigh the merits of new developments. That same attitude is wise with regard to religion.

The apostle Paul's case further illustrates that the religion of our forebears is not necessarily true worship that pleases God. Prior to Paul's conversion to Christianity, his reaction to the Christian "Way" was violent in the extreme, for he "kept on persecuting the congregation of God and devastating it." But why? Because he was 'zealous for the traditions of his fathers.' His sincere adherence to his former religion prevented him from recognizing the truth about Jesus Christ—and that could not have pleased God.—Acts 9: 1, 2; Galatians 1:13, 14.

Your Religion —By Choice or by Chance?

In most cases, a person's religion is really a matter of coincidence. In what

sense? In that you may have been born a Catholic, a Protestant, a Hindu, a Taoist, or a Buddhist because that was the religion of your parents. But suppose you had been born in another country or family. Perhaps you would now be fervently professing a different religion. Therefore, is it logical to assume that the religion of your birth is automatically the true one?

Whether you were born into your religion or not, you may still feel that it is good enough for you. But is right religion just a matter of personal opinion or taste? Is that a reliable guideline?

Perhaps we can illustrate this with food. Ask a child to tell you which he prefers—a slice of cake or a dish of spinach. Most likely he will choose the cake. But will that choice be the most nutritious? Similarly, the fact that a religion appeals to your personal taste does not necessarily mean that it is the best for you spiritually.

—Compare Romans 10:2, 3.

Religion is not just a matter of subjective opinion. It involves the worship of God, so it must please him. Therefore, the vital question is not, Is my religion good enough for me? Rather, it is, Does my religion really please God?

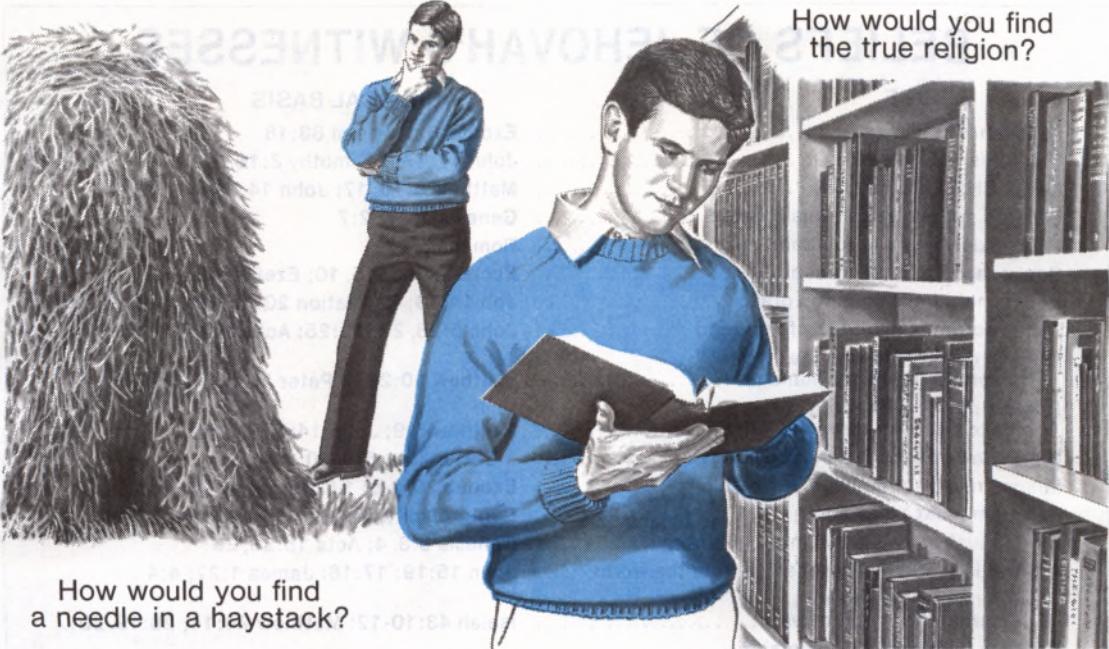
Does Your Religion Really Please God?

GOD is not a God of disorder but of peace.' (1 Corinthians 14:33) Surely, then, the many religions with their conflicting doctrines could not all have God's approval. Hence, there can be only one religion that meets his requirements for true worship. How can we find that one religion that really pleases God?

Doubtless, many feel that such a search would be like looking for a needle in a haystack. Sifting through it would be quite a task! Yet there is a simpler method —using a powerful magnet. It would attract the steel needle and separate it from the straw. Likewise, the Bible can be used as a magnet to separate truth from error. But how does the Bible do that? By defining acceptable worship from God's viewpoint.

The apostle Paul wrote: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) Accurate knowledge of the Bible is essential if we are to avoid the pitfall of reducing religious devotion only to what is convenient or pleasing to us.

Additionally, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, stated: "God is a Spirit, and those worshiping him must worship with spirit and truth." (John 4:24) How can we "worship with spirit and truth"? By following the truthful guidelines that God has provided, through inspiration, in his Word, the Holy Bible.



How would you find
the true religion?

How would you find
a needle in a haystack?

True Worshipers Exhibit Love

What does God's Word lead us to expect of true worship? We have an immediate clue in three words: "God is love." (1 John 4:16) Therefore, worship that pleases God must be based on genuine love.

In practical terms, what does that mean? Religion that pleases God cannot inculcate or allow for hatred of fellow humans. The Bible's simple command is, "You must love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:39) That means separating from this world's hatreds, prejudices, and conflicts. It means learning war no more and pursuing peace.—Isaiah 2:2-4.

To illustrate the point: Could we imagine a "French" apostle Paul going out to kill a "German" apostle Peter just because their respective nations had declared war? Yet, during the second world war most religions were so deeply involved in the war efforts of their nations that they even supplied chaplains for the armies! At the same time, "Christian" clergymen on both

sides prayed to the same God for victory. But does God stand divided? Can he be dragged into what Professor Albert Einstein described as the "infantile sickness" of nationalism, "the measles of humanity"? Of course not! That is why worshipers who really please God must remain neutral and practice genuine love. (John 13:34, 35; 17:16) They 'do not wage war according to what they are in the flesh.' —Compare 2 Corinthians 10:3, 4.

True Worship Exalts God's Name

The apostle Paul pointed to another mark of religion that is pleasing to God when he said that although many are called gods and lords, among true worshipers there is only "one God the Father." (1 Corinthians 8:5, 6) Surely, then, those pleasing God would know and use his name.

The Bible, in its original languages, specifically mentions the name of God over 7,000 times. For instance, Psalm 83:18

BELIEFS OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

BELIEF	BIBLICAL BASIS
Jehovah is God's name	Exodus 6:3; Psalm 83:18
The Bible is God's Word	John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17
Jesus Christ is God's Son	Matthew 3:16, 17; John 14:28
Man did not evolve but was created	Genesis 1:27; 2:7
Human death is due to Adam's sin	Romans 5:12
Soul ceases to exist at death	Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Ezekiel 18:4
Hell is mankind's common grave	Job 14:13; Revelation 20:13, <i>King James Version</i>
Resurrection is the hope of the dead	John 5:28, 29; 11:25; Acts 24:15
Christ's earthly life was the ransom for obedient humans	Matthew 20:28; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 2:1, 2
Prayers must be directed only to Jehovah through Christ	Matthew 6:9; John 14:6, 13, 14
Bible's laws on morals must be obeyed	1 Corinthians 6:9, 10
Images must not be used in worship	Exodus 20:4-6; 1 Corinthians 10:14
Spiritism must be avoided	Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Galatians 5:19-21
Blood must not be taken into one's body	Genesis 9:3, 4; Acts 15:28, 29
A Christian must keep separate from the world	John 15:19; 17:16; James 1:27; 4:4
Christians must witness, declaring the "good news"	Isaiah 43:10-12; Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20
Baptism by complete immersion symbolizes dedication to God	Mark 1:9, 10; John 3:23; Acts 19:4, 5
Religious titles are improper	Job 32:21, 22; Matthew 23:8-12
We are now in "the time of the end"	Daniel 12:4; Matthew 24:3-14; 2 Timothy 3:1-5
Christ's presence is in spirit	Matthew 24:3; John 14:19; 1 Peter 3:18
Satan is the invisible ruler of the world	John 12:31; 1 John 5:19
God will destroy present wicked system of things	Daniel 2:44; Revelation 16:14, 16; 18:1-8
Kingdom under Christ will rule the earth in righteousness	Isaiah 9:6, 7; Daniel 7:13, 14; Matthew 6:10
"Little flock" to rule with Christ in heaven	Luke 12:32; Revelation 14:1-4; 20:4
Other people God approves will receive eternal life on a paradise earth	Luke 23:43; John 3:16

reads: "That people may know that you, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth." Then why do adherents of so many religions worship a nameless God? And why do they omit his name from their Bible translations? That certainly is not the way to please God, for Jesus prayed: "Let your name be sanctified."—Matthew 6:9.

The Religion That Pleases God

Is there any worldwide religious group that fulfills the two basic requirements of

true worship that we have just discussed? Is there any religion that really practices the love that Christ taught? And do those same worshipers truly glorify God and honor his name in this 20th century?

It is a well-attested fact that Jehovah's Witnesses maintain neutrality toward the wars of the nations. For this reason, they have suffered in concentration camps and prisons. Rather than compromising their Bible-based principles, they have preferred the pathway of martyrdom trodden by the early Christians. This stand has

been motivated by their love for God and fellow humans. Such love is one mark of true worship that pleases God.

Many have noted the fine record of Jehovah's Witnesses in this respect. For example, a few years ago a South American newspaper publisher noted that the Witnesses "refuse for conscientious reasons to serve in the armed forces." He continued: 'Even as children, Jehovah's Witnesses are aware that on reaching the age of eighteen they will have to serve an extended period in prison because of their neutrality. They accept the punishment as part of their religious faith. They are gentle and peaceful.'

What about another requirement of re-

ligion that pleases God? Indeed, who honors the divine name, Jehovah? It is self-evident that only Jehovah's Witnesses are doing this worldwide by both their preaching and their conduct.—Romans 10:13-15.

Why not get better acquainted with Jehovah's Witnesses? The accompanying chart lists some of their beliefs, along with Scriptural reasons for them. Submit the Witnesses' form of worship to this simple test: Does it meet God's standards of truth as laid down in the Bible? Is it producing the peaceable fruit of love that must form a part of true worship? Does it honor God's name? If you find that it does all of this, you will have discovered the religion that *really* pleases God.

The Watchtower —Aid in Crime Prevention



NAOMI, a seven-year-old girl living in Manchester, England, excitedly wrote to the London office of the Watch Tower Society: "When I went into our Post Office, I saw a big poster of one of our magazines, the one of the lady having her handbag stolen by a man with a knife. The Greater Manchester police have copied it to warn people about muggings!" What is the story behind this unusual crime-prevention poster?

While witnessing on a Manchester street, one of Jehovah's Witnesses placed with a man a copy of the November 1, 1984, issue of *The Watchtower* with the theme "Our Critical Times—Why So Violent?" The gentleman put the magazine in his pocket, but he was mugged on his way home. As he sat recovering from the shock of the event, he remembered the magazine and began to read it. When visited by an officer of the Police Crime Prevention Department, he showed him the magazine, commenting that he never thought he would be a mugging victim himself.

The police officer was greatly impressed by the cover photograph, saying that it contained in graphic detail all that was necessary to alert the public to the dangers of mugging. Permission to reproduce the picture as a crime-prevention poster was readily granted, resulting in the distribution of 3,000 of them in the Greater Manchester area.



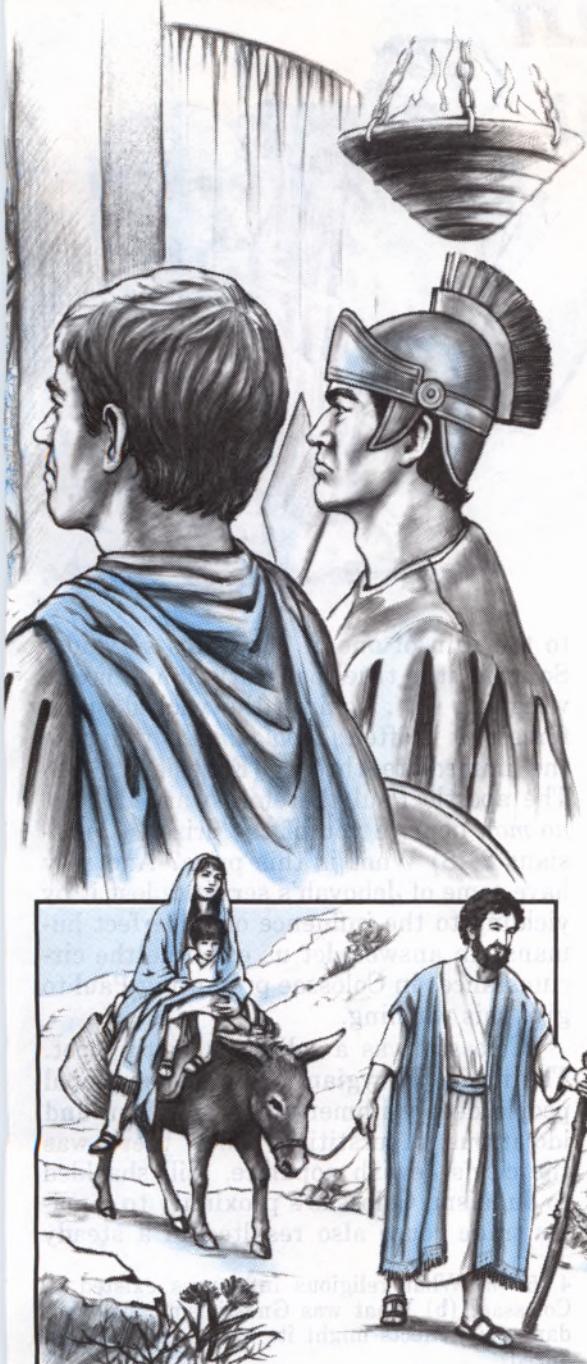
Escape From a Tyrant

WHY does Joseph wake Mary up in the middle of the night? 'Jehovah's angel just appeared to me,' Joseph tells her. 'And he said to take you and the child and to flee into Egypt, for Herod is about to hunt for Jesus to kill him.'

The three of them make their escape. And it is just in time because Herod has learned that the astrologers have tricked him and have left the country. Remember, they were supposed to report back to him when they found Jesus. Herod is furious. So in an attempt to kill Jesus, he gives orders to put to death all the boys in Bethlehem and its districts who are two years of age and younger. He bases this age calculation on the information that he obtained earlier from the astrologers.

The slaughter of all the baby boys is something horrible to see! Herod's





soldiers break into one home after another. And when they find a baby boy, they grab him from his mother's arms. We have no idea how many babies they kill, but the great weeping and wailing of the mothers fulfills a Bible prophecy of God's prophet Jeremiah.

In the meantime, Joseph and his family have safely made it to Egypt, and they are now living there. But one night Jehovah's angel again appears to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up and take Jesus and his mother back to Israel,' the angel says, 'for those who were trying to kill him are dead.' So, in fulfillment of another Bible prophecy that says God's Son would be called out of Egypt, the family return to their homeland.

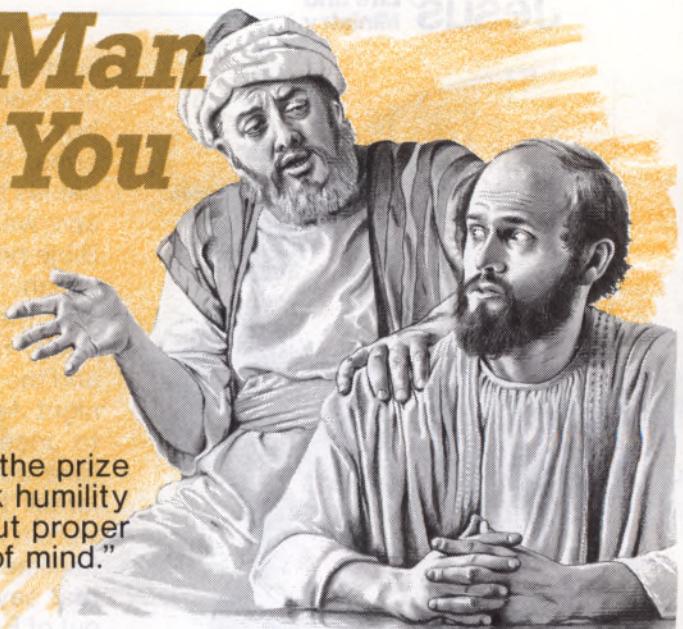
Apparently Joseph intends to settle in Judea, where they were living before they fled to Egypt. But he learns that Herod's wicked son Archelaus is now the king of Judea, and in another dream Jehovah warns him of the danger. So Joseph and his family travel north and settle in the town of Nazareth. Here in this community, away from the center of Jewish religious life, Jesus grows up. **Matthew 2:13-23; Jeremiah 31:15; Hosea 11:1.**

- ♦ When the astrologers did not return, what terrible thing did King Herod do, but how was Jesus protected?
- ♦ On returning from Egypt, why did Joseph not again stay in Bethlehem?
- ♦ What Bible prophecies were fulfilled during this period of time?

"Let No Man Deprive You of the Prize"

"Let no man deprive you of the prize who takes delight in a mock humility . . . [and is] puffed up without proper cause by his fleshly frame of mind."

—COLOSSIANS 2:18.



THE first human sinner, Eve, was led to her death by a crafty, superhuman spirit creature. The second sinner, Adam, was seduced by his wife—a mere human.

—1 Timothy 2:14; Genesis 3:17.

² Eve was the first of a procession of individuals whose urgings, if heeded, would have worked against the eternal interests of fellow humans. Listen as their words echo throughout the Bible! Potiphar's wife to Joseph: "Lie down with me." (Genesis 39:7) Job's wife: "Curse God and die!" (Job 2:9) The Israelites to Aaron: "Get up, make for us a god who will go ahead of us." (Exodus 32:1) Peter to Jesus Christ: "Be kind to yourself, Lord; you will not have this destiny at all."—Matthew 16:22.

³ All too often such urgings have worked

- 1, 2. How have many worked against the eternal interests of fellow humans, and can you cite further examples of this from the Bible?
3. What warning did Paul give at Colossians 2:18, and what questions arise as a result?

to the ruin of one of Jehovah's servants. So while it is true that Christians "have a wrestling . . . against the wicked spirit forces," it is often *fellow humans* who pose the immediate threat. (Ephesians 6:12) The apostle Paul therefore warned: "Let no man deprive you of the prize." (Colossians 2:18) What is this prize? And why have some of Jehovah's servants lost it by yielding to the influence of imperfect humans? In answer, let us examine the circumstances in Colossae prompting Paul to give this warning.

⁴ Colossae was a religious melting pot. The native Phrygians were an emotional people deeply immersed in spiritism and idolatrous superstition. Then there was the city's Jewish populace, still shackled to Judaism. Colossae's proximity to a major trade route also resulted in a steady

- 4, 5. (a) What religious influences existed in Colossae? (b) What was Gnosticism, and what dangerous effects might its influence have produced?

stream of visitors. Likely, these foreigners loved to spend their leisure time telling or listening to something new. (Compare Acts 17:21.) This led to the spread of new philosophies, among them slowly emerging Gnosticism. Says scholar R. E. O. White: "Gnosticism was a climate of thought as widespread as evolutionary theory is today. It probably came into prominence in the first century or earlier and reached its zenith in the second. It combined philosophic speculation, superstition, semi-magical rites, and sometimes a fanatical and even obscene cultus."

⁵ In such a climate, religion in Colossae seems to have become a kind of ongoing experiment—a hybrid mixture of Judaism, Greek philosophy, and pagan mysticism. Would Christianity, too, be cast into the same melting pot?

'Deprived of the Prize'—How?

⁶ Paul's powerful letter to the Colossians would have counteracted the influence of any who might have wished to fuse Judaism and pagan philosophy with Christianity. Repeatedly, he called attention to Christ. Paul wrote: "Carefully concealed in him [Christ, not any Judaizer or pagan philosopher] are all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge." The Colossians were urged to "go on walking in union with him [Christ], rooted and being built up in him and being stabilized in the faith." Otherwise, they might be led astray. So Paul warned: "Look out: perhaps there may be someone who will carry you off as his prey through the philosophy and *empty deception* according to the tradition of men, according to the *elementary things* of the world and not according to Christ."—Colossians 2:3, 6-8.

6. (a) How would Paul's words have counteracted the influence of pagan philosophies and Judaism? (b) Why was there a need for Christians to "look out"?

⁷ Perhaps some new followers of Jesus Christ missed the awe of mysticism or the stimulation of philosophy. Certain Jewish Christians may have had a lingering fondness for the obsolete traditions of Judaism. The teachings of pagan philosophers and Judaizers would therefore have had a certain appeal to such individuals. Yet, however convincing or eloquent these false teachers may have seemed, they offered nothing more than "empty deception." Instead of expounding the pure word of God, they were merely parroting "the elementary things of the world"—useless philosophies, precepts, and beliefs. Embracing those erroneous ideas would spell disaster for a Christian. Hence, Paul said: "Let no man deprive you of the prize."—Colossians 2:18.

⁸ "The prize" was immortal life in the heavens. It was likened to the reward given the victorious runner after an exhausting footrace. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Philippians 3:14; 2 Timothy 4:7, 8; Revelation 2:7) Ultimately, only Jehovah God through Jesus Christ could disqualify someone from the race for life. (John 5:22, 23) Nevertheless, if a false teacher brought a Christian under his tutelage, this could have the effect of depriving him of the prize. The deceived one could veer so far from the truth that he could fail to finish the race!

Personality of the False Teachers

⁹ Was there any way, then, of identifying a person who was intent on 'depriving a Christian of the prize'? Yes, for Paul

7. (a) Why might the teachings of pagan philosophers and Judaizers have appealed to some Christians? (b) Why were their teachings really "empty deception"?

8. (a) What was "the prize," and what scriptures support your answer? (b) How could anointed Christians be deprived of "the prize"?
9. What four things characterized the false teachers among the Colossians?



The 'worship of angels' threatened the Christian congregation in Colossae.

Similar idolatry persists among professed Christians today

gave the personality profile of the false teachers at Colossae. Such a man (1) "takes delight in a mock humility and a form of worship of the angels"; (2) is "taking his stand on' the things he has seen"; (3) is "puffed up without proper cause by his fleshly frame of mind"; whereas (4) "he is not holding fast to the head," Jesus Christ.—Colossians 2:18, 19.

¹⁰ What a clever ruse! Ignoring Jesus' condemnation of ostentatious fasting, the false teacher presented an appealing facade of humility. (Matthew 6:16) Indeed, the false teacher 'took delight' in making a show of fasting and other forms of religious self-denial. (Colossians 2:20-23) His sad-faced appearance was carefully de-

10. How did the false teachers 'take delight in a mock humility'?

signed to emit a false piety. Indeed, the false teacher was 'practicing his righteousness in front of men in order to be observed by them.' (Matthew 6:1) But all of this was a sham, "a mock humility." As *The Expositor's Bible* puts it: "A man who knows that he is humble, and is self-complacent about it, glancing out of the corners of his downcast eyes at any mirror where he can see himself, is not humble at all."—Italics ours.

¹¹ Nevertheless, this sham humility added seeming credibility to an otherwise absurd practice—the "worship of the angels." Paul does not explain exactly how this worship was performed. The evidence is, however, that it was a form of false worship that persisted in the area of Colossae for centuries. A fourth-century council at nearby Laodicea found it necessary to declare: "Christians ought not to forsake the Church of God, and . . . call upon the names of angels. . . . If any one, therefore, be found to exercise himself in this private idolatry, let him be accursed." However, fifth-century theologian and scholar Theodore indicates that "this vice" of angel worship still existed there in his day. To this day, the Catholic Church "encourages the faithful to love, respect, and invoke the angels," promoting "Masses and Divine Offices in honor of guardian angels."—*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, volume I, page 515.

¹² Using a basic line of reasoning similar to that of Catholic theologians, the false teacher may have said: 'What a marvelous privilege the angels have! Was not the Mosaic Law transmitted through them? Are they not close to God in heaven? Surely we should give these mighty ones their

11. (a) What was the worship of angels?
(b) What evidence is there that the worship of angels persisted in Colossae?

12. How might the false teachers have reckoned that the worship of angels was acceptable?

due honor! Would this not show true *humility* on our part? After all, God is so high, and we humans are so low! The angels can, therefore, serve as our *mediators* in approaching God.'

¹³ Worship of angels in whatever form, though, is wrong. (1 Timothy 2:5; Revelation 19:10; 22:8, 9) But the false teacher would try to waive this objection aside by ‘“taking his stand on” the things he had seen.’ According to *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, this expression was used “in the mystery religions to denote the climax of initiation, when the mystēs [initiate] ‘sets foot on’ the entrance to the new life which he is now to share with the god.” By using pagan phraseology, Paul mocked the way the false teacher prided himself on having special insight—perhaps even claiming to have had supernatural visions.

¹⁴ Though claiming to be spiritual, however, the false teacher was really puffed up without proper cause by his *fleshly frame of mind*. The sinful flesh tainted his outlook and motives. “Puffed up” with pride and arrogance, his mind was “on the works that were wicked.” (Colossians 1:21) Worst of all, he was not holding fast to the head, Christ, for he was giving more weight to the speculations of worldlings than to the teachings of Jesus.

Still a Danger?

¹⁵ The prize of everlasting life—be it in heaven or on a paradise earth—is still held out to Jehovah’s servants. True, the Gnostics and the Judaizers have long

13. (a) Is the worship of angels acceptable? (b) How did the false teacher “take his stand on” the things he had seen?

14. How were the false teachers ‘puffed up by a fleshly frame of mind’?

15. (a) What attitudes are noted among some Christians today? (b) Where do such attitudes originate, and how do they compare with the counsel of the Bible?

since been gone. Yet there are individuals who might now hinder a Christian from gaining this prize. They may not do so deliberately. However, because they have allowed themselves to be unduly affected by this system’s “philosophy and empty deception,” they may remark:

‘I try to be honest, but it’s hard when you’re running a business. This is a dog-eat-dog world, and sometimes you just have to compromise.’ (Compare this view with Proverbs 11:1; Hebrews 13:18.)

‘You mean you’re still just a housewife? Times have changed! Why not get a job and do something with your life?’ (Compare Proverbs 31:10-31.)

‘I know my job cuts into meetings and the field ministry quite a bit. But it takes a lot of money to support our life-style. And what’s wrong with having a few nice things?’ (Contrast this reasoning with Luke 21:34, 35; 1 Timothy 6:6-8.)

‘I get so tired of hearing the elders always talking about field service! I work all week and deserve to relax on the weekends.’ (Compare Luke 13:24; Mark 12:30.)

‘Pioneering is not for everybody. Besides, in today’s economy you need a university education if you’re going to make it.’ (Contrast this with Matthew 6:33; 1 Corinthians 1:19, 20; 1 Timothy 6:9-11.)

Materialistic and fleshly reasoning is part and parcel of “the elementary things of the world”—the fundamental precepts and beliefs of *worldlings*! Yielding to it can cause irreparable spiritual damage.

¹⁶ Self-appointed judges and teachers pose yet another danger. Like those in Colossae, they may make issues of purely personal matters. They are often characterized by “mock humility.” (Colossians 2:16-18) Their holier-than-thou attitude betrays a wrong motive—a desire to elevate themselves above others. They are often

16. How might some today become hypocritical judges?



Beware of those who would influence you with the thinking of the world!

"righteous overmuch," quick to go beyond what the 'faithful slave' has said or published. Thus they may ignite controversies over such matters as recreation, health care, styles of dress and grooming, or the use of alcoholic beverages. (Ecclesiastes 7:16; Matthew 24:45-47) Attention is thereby diverted from spiritual matters and focused on fleshly desires.—Compare 1 Timothy 6:3-5.

17 Today, some even go so far as to 'take their stand on' personal views of Scripture, or they claim to have special insight. One woman, who had been baptized only a year, claimed to be of the anointed and thought that this gave her opinions added weight. Thus she expressed a strong desire to "teach and encourage others" in some official capacity. (But see 1 Timothy 2:12.) Since Jehovah hates "self-exaltation

17, 18. (a) How have some 'taken their stand on' personal views, and why is this dangerous? (b) What will our next lesson discuss?

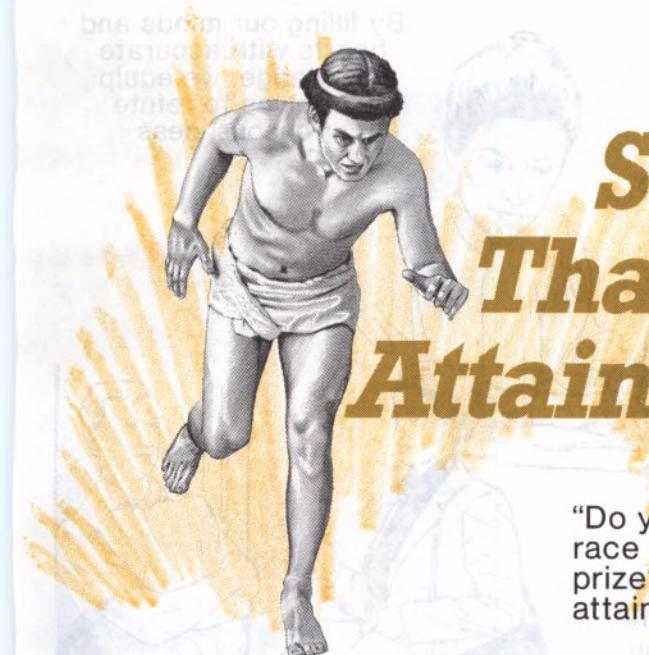
and pride," Christians should have a modest view of their own opinions. (Proverbs 8:13) They avoid the snare of being "puffed up without proper cause by [their] fleshly frame of mind." (Colossians 2:18) Any who advance their personal ideas and put the counsel of Christ's appointed 'faithful slave' in a poor light are not holding fast to the head. Surely, then, Jehovah's loyal witnesses should guard against

ungodly influence that could rob them of the prize of life.

18 Satan still uses man to hinder fellow humans from gaining life. What are some other ways in which the Devil employs this stratagem? And how can a witness of Jehovah tenaciously hold on to the prize?

Do You Recall?

- What religious influences threatened Christians in ancient Colossae?
- What were the identifying traits of those who would deprive Christians of "the prize"?
- How do some Christians today show that they have been influenced by "the elementary things of the world"?
- How might false teachers steer Christians into a wrong course?



'Run in Such a Way That You May Attain the Prize'

"Do you not know that the runners in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may attain it."—1 CORINTHIANS 9:24.

IT WAS to have been the grand climax to 12 years of grueling preparation. But just over half way into the race, the young athlete fell in a heap, abruptly ending her dreams of an Olympic gold medal. The news media called her fall a "tragedy."

² Far more tragic, however, would be the failure of a witness of Jehovah to finish the race for life, especially with the promised New Order so near! (2 Peter 3:13) Appropriately, then, the apostle Paul said: "Do you not know that the runners in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may attain it." (1 Corinthians 9:24) Some in ancient Corinth were in danger of losing out because they selfishly did as they pleased, even at the cost of 'wounding the consciences' of others. (1 Corinthians 8:

1, 2. (a) What would be a great tragedy for a Christian today? (b) What counsel did Paul give at 1 Corinthians 9:24, and how did it apply to Christians at Corinth?

1-4, 10-12) Winning the race, though, entailed sacrifice, for Paul said: "Every man taking part in a contest exercises self-control . . . I pummel my body and lead it as a slave, that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow."—1 Corinthians 9:25-27.

³ Later, when writing to the Colossians, Paul warned of yet another potential danger—men who would 'deprive them of the prize' of life. (Colossians 2:18) So how could Christians 'run in such a way as to attain it'? Did the apostle suggest that they study philosophy and mysticism in order to debate successfully with false teachers? No, for Christians had 'died toward the elementary things of the world' and should have wanted nothing to do

3. (a) What situation existed at Colossae that could have prevented Christians there from finishing the race? (b) Was it advisable for Christians at Colossae to study philosophy and mysticism?

with its philosophies and traditions.—Colossians 2:20.

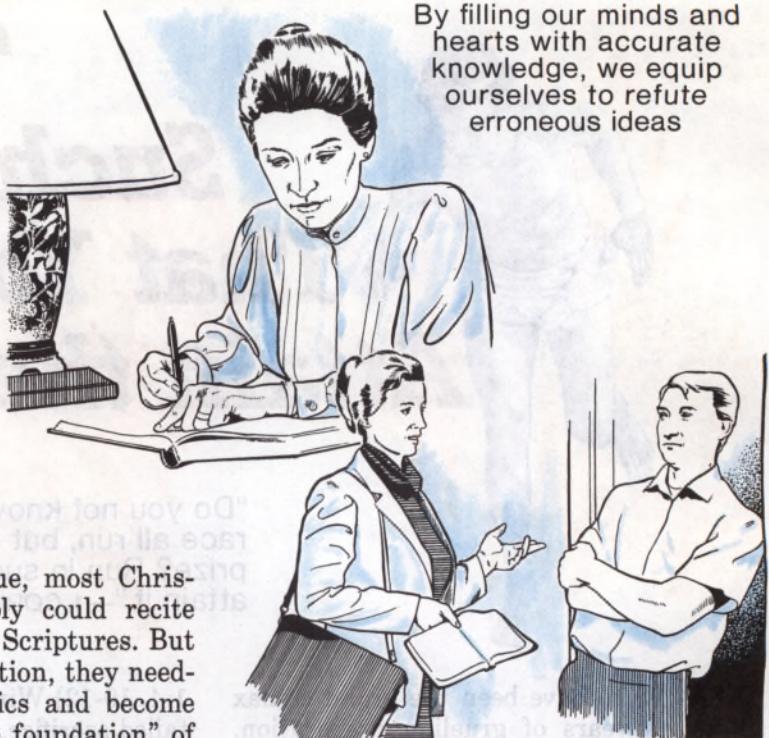
⁴ Paul, therefore, encouraged his fellow believers to focus their efforts on becoming “filled with the *accurate knowledge* of [God’s] will in all wisdom and *spiritual comprehension*.” Yes, “*accurate knowledge*”—not idle speculations—would help them “walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him.” (Colossians 1:9, 10; see also Colossians 3:10.) True, most Christians in Colossae probably could recite the basic teachings of the Scriptures. But through study and meditation, they needed to go beyond the basics and become firmly “established on the foundation” of Christ. (Colossians 1:23; 1 Corinthians 3:11) After gaining such depth, ‘no man could delude them with persuasive arguments.’ (Colossians 2:4) Through skillful use of God’s Word, they could effectively refute the claims of any angel worshipers or Judaizers.—Deuteronomy 6:13; Jeremiah 31:31-34.

⁵ Have you, though, gone beyond “the primary doctrine” and peered into “the deep things of God”? (Hebrews 6:1; 1 Corinthians 2:10) For example, can you identify the beasts of Revelation or explain what the spiritual temple is? (Revelation, chapter 13; Hebrews 9:11) Can you explain the Scriptural basis for the modern

4. How would gaining “*accurate knowledge*” help Christians in Colossae?

5. (a) Give some examples of “deep things” that a mature Christian should know and understand. (b) How does one sister’s experience show the danger of not taking in “*accurate knowledge*”?

By filling our minds and hearts with accurate knowledge, we equip ourselves to refute erroneous ideas



day organization of Jehovah’s Witnesses? Are you well grounded in Bible doctrine? One Christian sister found it difficult to defend her beliefs when discussing the Trinity with a certain woman. Later, the woman gave our sister literature that slandered Jehovah’s organization. “I got very depressed spiritually,” this Witness recalls. Happily, an elder was able to expose the false claims of the opposers and restore our sister’s faith. (Jude 22, 23) “Now I understand,” she says, “why the Society always says pray, study, and meditate.”

“Trembling at Men”

⁶ “Trembling at men is what lays a

6. (a) What has proved to be a stumbling block to some servants of God? Give some Biblical examples. (b) What often causes the fear of man?

snare," warned the wise man. (Proverbs 29:25) And at times a morbid "fear of death" or an inordinate desire for acceptance by others pushes a person into this snare. (Hebrews 2:14, 15) Elijah, for one, fearlessly stood up against practitioners of Baal worship. But when Queen Jezebel ordered his execution, "he became afraid

... and began to go for his soul and came to Beer-sheba." (1 Kings 19:1-3) The night Jesus was arrested, the apostle Peter likewise gave in to fear of man. Although Peter had boasted, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both into prison and into death," when charged with being one of Christ's disciples, "he started to curse and swear: 'I do not know the man!'"—Luke 22:33; Matthew 26:74.

⁷ Fearful desire for acceptance may have been the real reason why some sought to blend Christianity with Judaism. When Judaizers arose in Galatia, Paul exposed their hypocrisy, saying: "All those who want to make a pleasing appearance in the flesh are the ones that try to compel you to get circumcised, *only that they may not be persecuted.*" (Galatians 6:12) Could it be that a similar desire for popular acceptance has also been the force motivating some who have recently left Jehovah's organization?

⁸ Christians must work to overcome such fears. If you are reluctant to preach in territories close to your home, or you hold back from witnessing to relatives, fellow workers, or schoolmates, remember the question that Jehovah asks at Isaiah 51:12: "Who are you that you should be afraid of a mortal man that will die, and

of a son of mankind that will be rendered as mere green grass?" (Compare Matthew 10:28.) Remind yourself that anyone "trusting in Jehovah will be protected." (Proverbs 29:25) Peter overcame his fear of man, eventually dying a martyr's death. (John 21:18, 19) And many brothers today show similar courage.

⁹ A missionary serving in a country where the preaching work was under ban said: "It takes faith to go to a meeting or in the service, knowing that it is possible that you will be picked up by the police." But like the psalmist the brothers there said: "Jehovah is on my side; I shall not fear. What can earthling man do to me?" (Psalm 118:6) And the work in that country flourished, recently attaining legal recognition. Regular participation in the field ministry is sure to help you develop the same confidence in Jehovah.

Family Ties

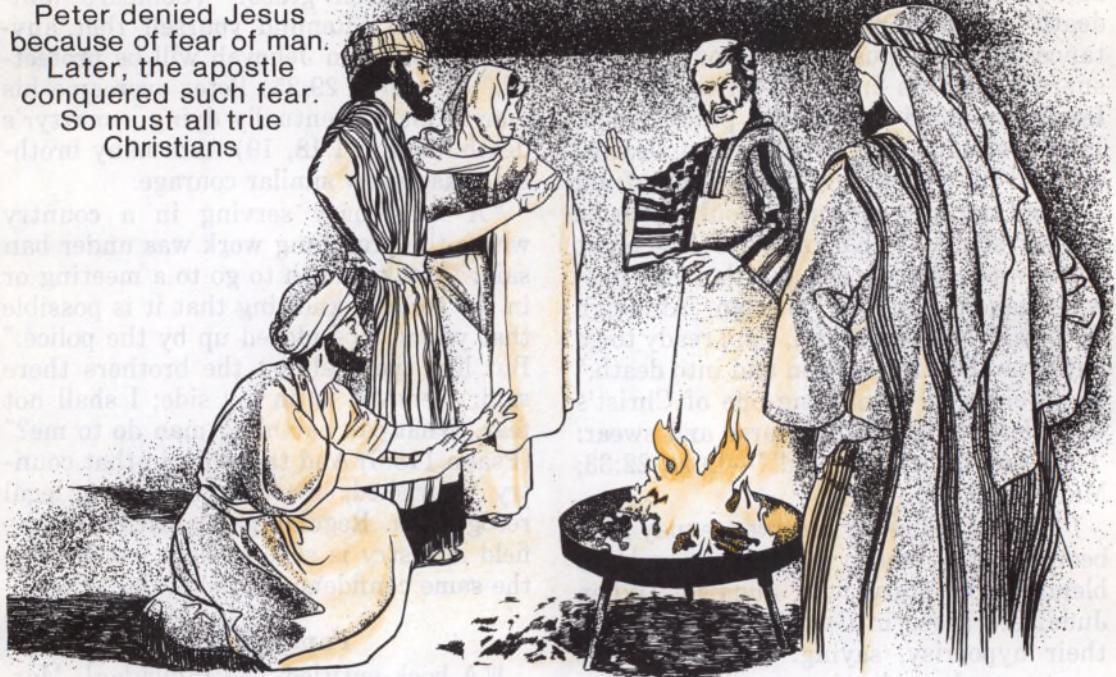
¹⁰ A book entitled *The Individual, Marriage, and the Family* states: "A universal need of the individual in all societies and in all segments of society is the need to 'belong' and to have a significant other who 'belongs' to him." This need is usually fulfilled through the family arrangement, an institution of Jehovah. (Ephesians 3:14, 15) Satan, though, often exploits the attachment we feel to family members. Adam's strong feelings for his wife evidently prodded him to ignore the consequences and join her in rebellion. (1 Timothy 2:14) And what about Solomon? In spite of his renowned wisdom, "it came about in the time of Solomon's growing old that his wives themselves had inclined his heart to follow other gods; and his heart did not prove to be complete with

10. (a) What emotional need is universal, and how is it usually fulfilled? (b) Give Bible examples of men whose attachment to their wives was stronger than their relationship with Jehovah.

7. (a) Likely, what was the real reason why some in Colossae sought to blend Christianity with Judaism? (b) Who today appear to be similarly motivated?

8, 9. (a) How might a Christian today manifest the fear of man? (b) How can this fear be overcome?

Peter denied Jesus because of fear of man.
Later, the apostle conquered such fear.
So must all true Christians



Jehovah his God . . . And Solomon began to do what was bad in the eyes of Jehovah.”—1 Kings 11:4-6.

¹¹ Do you remember aged Eli, a high priest of Israel? His sons Hophni and Phinehas were “good-for-nothing men” who “did not acknowledge Jehovah.” They showed brazen disregard for sacrifices to Jehovah and committed sexual immorality “with the women that were serving at the entrance of the tent of meeting.” Yet Eli offered only the meekest of protests (“Why do you keep doing things like these?”), while making no effort to remove them from their privileged office. In effect, he was ‘honoring his sons more than Jehovah,’ this resulting in his—and their—death!—1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22, 23, 29-34; 4:18.

11. How did Eli ‘honor his sons more than Jehovah’?

¹² Misdirected loyalties could, therefore, hinder you in your race for life. Jesus told his disciples: “He that has greater affection for father or mother than for me is not worthy of me; and he that has greater affection for son or daughter than for me is not worthy of me.” (Matthew 10:37; Luke 14:26) But what if a loved one left the truth or was disfellowshipped? Would you go along with the worldly notion that “blood is thicker than water” and follow that relative into destruction? Or would you put faith in the words of Psalm 27:10: “In case my own father and my own mother did leave me, even Jehovah himself would take me up”?

12. (a) What warning did Jesus give regarding family ties? (b) What worldly line of reasoning might some pursue when it comes to relatives, but is this Scripturally proper?

¹³ The sons of Korah had such faith. Their father led a rebellion against the authority of Moses and Aaron. Jehovah, however, dramatically proved that he backed Moses and Aaron by executing Korah and his coconspirators. Yet "the sons of Korah did not die." (Numbers 16:1-3, 28-32; 26:9-11) Apparently they refused to join their father in rebellion, and Jehovah blessed their loyalty by preserving them alive. Their descendants later had the privilege of writing portions of the Bible! —See the superscriptions of Psalms 42, 44-49, 84, 85, 87, 88.

¹⁴ Loyalty today likewise results in blessings. One young Witness remembers the stand he and his brothers took when their mother, long inactive as a Christian, entered an adulterous marriage. "We reported matters to the elders," he recalls, "and since she did not live at home, we decided to limit association with her until the elders could handle matters. It was the hardest thing we ever had to do." The mother protested, "Does your everlasting life mean more to you than *I* do?" To this they replied, "Our relationship with Jehovah means more than *anything*." The woman was jolted into manifesting sincere repentance, was restored spiritually, and serves again as an active publisher of the good news.

¹⁵ Some have allowed their own children to be stumbling blocks. Failing to recognize that "foolishness is tied up with the heart of" youngsters, some parents have allowed their children to associate closely

13. How did the sons of Korah prove their loyalty to Jehovah, and how were they blessed for this?

14. What experience illustrates the blessing that results from placing loyalty to Jehovah above loyalty to relatives?

15. (a) How have some parents allowed their own children to be stumbling blocks? (b) How can a parent help both himself and his offspring to gain life?

with worldlings, attend unsavory social affairs, and even date when far too young for marriage. (Proverbs 22:15) What are often the tragic consequences of such permissiveness? Spiritual shipwreck. (1 Timothy 1:19) Some even compound the wrong by deviously covering up the wrongdoing of their children! (Proverbs 3:32; 28:13) However, by loyally sticking to Bible principles, a parent helps both himself and his children to gain the prize of life.—1 Timothy 4:16.

Your Friends—"Wise" or "Stupid"?

¹⁶ The book *Sociology: Human Society* observes: "Desire for the esteem of one's close friends exerts a strong pressure for conformity to their standards." The book *Adolescence* shows that young people are particularly vulnerable to such pressure. It states: "[This is because] of the changes they are experiencing in their bodies, self-concepts, and relationships with their families. As a result, adolescents begin spending more time with their friends and less with their families."

¹⁷ Not to be overlooked are the words of Proverbs 13:20: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly." One Christian girl confesses: "All the bad association at my school is really starting to affect me. I caught myself saying a curse word in school today . . . I almost said it, but I didn't." Sad to say, some Christian youths have been led into very serious acts of misconduct by so-called friends. But if you are a young person desirous of gaining the

16. (a) How can our friends be a powerful influence? (b) Who are particularly vulnerable to the influence of friends, and why?

17. (a) Illustrate the truthfulness of the words of Proverbs 13:20. (b) What kind of friends could be considered "wise"? (c) How can young people today follow the example of young Samuel?

prize, search out wise friends—those who are spiritually minded, upright in their conduct, upbuilding in their speech. Remember, young Samuel did not associate with the bad sons of Eli. He stayed busy “ministering to Jehovah,” thus remaining untouched by their corruption.—1 Samuel 3:1.

Attain the Prize!

¹⁸ Beware, then, of anyone who would deprive you of the prize of life. This, of course, does not mean that you should view your brothers with suspicion. At times, though, perhaps unwittingly, some brothers may say things that discourage you. (‘Why do you keep *pushing* yourself? Do you think you’re the only one who will gain life?’) They may even harshly judge your sincere efforts. (‘I just don’t see *how* you can pioneer with a family. It just isn’t fair to your children.’) However, recall that Jesus rejected Peter’s admonition to ‘take it easy.’ (Matthew 16:22, 23) Use your Bible-trained ears to “test out words,” and do not be influenced by those that do not ring true. (Job 12:11) Remember that Paul said: “If anyone contends even in the games, he is not crowned unless he has contended according to the rules.” (2 Timothy 2:5) Yes, God’s “rules”—not unscriptural opinions—must guide your thinking.—Compare 1 Corinthians 4:3, 4.

¹⁹ True, at times a fellow Christian may ‘stab’ you with some thoughtless word. (Proverbs 12:18) *Do not let this make you quit the race for life!* Remember Joseph.

18. (a) How may some brothers, perhaps unwittingly, hinder us in our race for life? (b) What can protect us from such unwholesome influences?

19, 20. (a) How did Joseph’s brothers seek to do him harm, and how did Joseph respond to their unkindness? (b) How can we avoid stumbling over imperfect humans? (c) What should be our resolve with regard to the prize, and why?

His own brothers considered murdering him, and though restrained from doing so, they finally sold him into cruel slavery. Joseph, however, did not allow this to embitter him or ‘enrage him against Jehovah.’ (Proverbs 19:3) Rather than taking revenge, he later gave them opportunity to demonstrate a changed attitude. And upon observing their repentance, he “proceeded to kiss all his brothers and to weep over them.” As Jacob later said, “the archers [Joseph’s jealous brothers] kept harassing him and shot at him and kept harboring animosity against him.” Yet Joseph repaid their hatred with kindness. Rather than being weakened by the experience, “the strength of his hands was supple.”—Genesis 37:18-28; 44:15-45:15; 49:23, 24.

²⁰ So rather than stumbling over imperfect humans, keep on ‘running in such a way as to attain’ the prize! Like Joseph, let trialsome encounters *strengthen* rather than weaken you. (Compare James 1:2, 3.) Let your love for God prove to be so strong that no human will become a stumbling block to you. (Psalm 119:165) Always remember that Jehovah holds out the prize of everlasting life—a prize beyond description, beyond comprehension. Let no man deprive you of it!

Do You Recall?

- Why is accurate knowledge of such value to Christians?
- How can one overcome the fear of man that has prevented some from gaining life?
- How could one’s own family prove to be a stumbling block?
- How should a Christian respond to discouraging or even hurtful words from fellow Christians?

Insight on the News

Economic Pastoral

"The U.S. bishops have stirred the waters, even kicked up a storm, with the release of their pastoral on the economy," proclaimed the *National Catholic Reporter*. The pastoral, a letter entitled "Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy," was released in preliminary form last November. Although it is not expected to be in final form until 1986, the letter has already elicited widespread criticism from many American businessmen and economists, including Catholics. Why? In part, because it advocates strong political reforms.

For example, the bishops propose that the government reduce unemployment to 3 or 4 percent, create more job-training programs, reduce or eliminate taxes for the poor, and increase the level of public assistance. But should followers of Christ take a stand on such highly controversial political issues?

Jesus Christ was very concerned with the condition of the poor and underprivileged. Furthermore, the early Christian congregation, out of concern, made provision for the care of its members who had limited resources. (Luke 14:13, 14; 18:22; Galatians 2:10; 1 Timothy 5:16) Yet Jesus and his followers avoided involvement in worldly affairs of their day. (John 6:15) Why? Because they centered their attention on the real solution to mankind's problems—God's Kingdom.—Matthew 6:33; John 17:16; 18:36.

Likewise, true Christians today maintain neutrality and do not seek to promote human political solutions for social ills. Doing so would divert attention from God's Kingdom, which will soon replace the governments of our day and bring an end to all poverty and want. (Daniel 2:44) While the bishops' pastoral makes scant reference to such a blessed prospect, true Christians proclaim this as welcome news.

Life—From Clay?

"Scientists in California . . . reported a major discovery that supports the emerging theory that life on earth began in clay rather than the sea," said *The New York Times*. Working at the Ames Research Center in Mountainview, California, the scientists discovered that ordinary ceramic clay has the capacity to store and transfer energy. This, they speculate, could have enabled clay to convert inorganic raw materials into chemicals that led to the first life forms. "The theory is also evocative of the biblical account of the Creation," says the report. "In Genesis, it is written, 'And the Lord God formed man of dust of the ground,' and in common usage this primordial dust is called clay." Still, according to this theory, life arose spontaneously. Does the Bible support this view?

No, it does not. The Bible says that God 'created all things, and because of his will they existed and were created.' (Revelation 4:11) In harmony with this, the

amazingly complex and diverse life forms on earth bespeak the work of an intelligent Creator—a fact that precludes life's arising by chance.—Compare Hebrews 3:4.

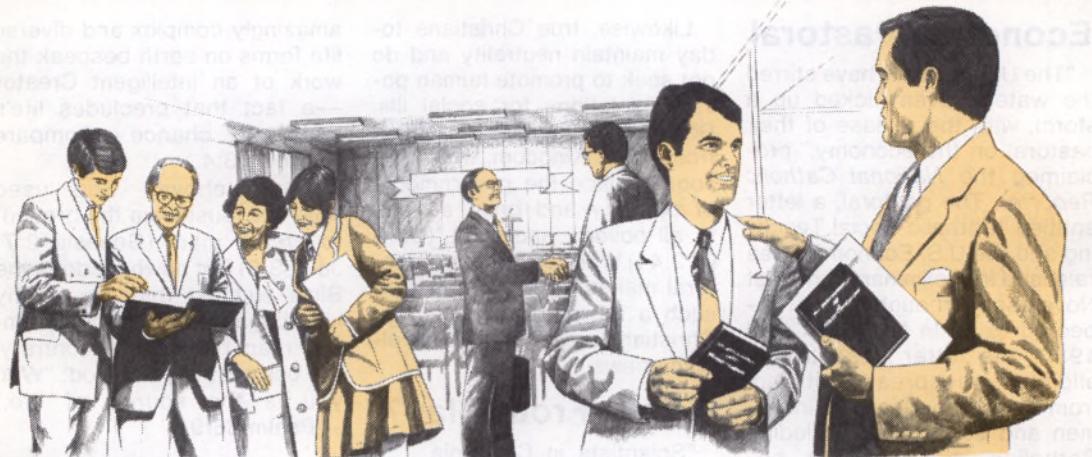
True, Jehovah God used "clay" or "dust from the ground" to create man. (Genesis 2:7; Job 33:6) But nowhere does the Bible suggest that life of any kind began as a random chemical reaction. To the contrary, the psalmist says of God: "With you is the source of life." —Psalm 36:9.

Help for Marriages

Premarital counseling apparently is on the increase. "The attitude seems to be that if you can get help before the problems begin, you have a better chance," says Suzanne Prescott, editor in chief of the newsletter *Marriage and Divorce Today*. Indeed, of 90 married couples monitored between 1968 and 1978 by Dr. Claude Guldner of the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, the 30 who received counseling both before and just after their weddings were getting along the best.

Interestingly, a Biblical proverb urges: "Listen to counsel and accept discipline, in order that you may become wise in your future." (Proverbs 19:20) The best counsel one can receive is that given in the Bible by Jehovah God, the Originator of marriage.—Compare Ephesians 5:21-33; 1 Corinthians 7:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 6:14, 15.

Are You Resisting the Spirit of Discontent?



MURMURING in the spirit of complaint is early brought to our attention in the Holy Scriptures. (Exodus 15:24) Today murmuring of this type is all around us and is swelling to a veritable roar. It threatens to engulf everyone, for it exerts a strong influence. The spirit behind it often finds expression in complaint, perhaps in a low murmuring tone, a muttering in discontent or dissatisfaction. Such murmuring must be resisted by true Christians. But how can we resist the spirit of discontent?

How It Began

There are legitimate reasons not to be contented with some circumstances. Understandably, "the cry of complaint about Sodom and Gomorrah" became loud because of the wickedness of their inhabitants. (Genesis 18:20, 21) But unwarranted complaint and murmuring are rooted in discontent. And the original promoter of the spirit of discontent was Satan the

Devil, "who is misleading the entire inhabited earth." (Revelation 12:9) In the garden of Eden he brought about a situation designed to produce discontent, first in Eve and then in Adam. (Genesis 3:1-7) Ever since that time, Satan has been successful in producing situations that promote discontent.

Centuries after the revolt in Eden, Jehovah made a name for himself by delivering the Israelites from Egypt and organizing them into a nation. (Exodus 9:16) Were they grateful to their Deliverer? Why, during their 40 years in the wilderness, they repeatedly murmured against Jehovah, either directly or indirectly by finding fault with Moses and Aaron! In one case, Jehovah asked: "How long will this evil assembly have this murmuring that they are carrying on against me?" (Numbers 14:26, 27; Exodus 16:2, 7) The spirit of discontent persisted in ancient Israel all through its history.—Ezekiel 18:25.

Complaining About One's Lot in Life

Of course, because of being imperfect, a person could improperly let his circumstances become a cause of complaint. The righteous man Job was so unhappy about his terrible experiences that he called down evil on the day of his birth. (Job 3:1-3) Can professing Christians become discontented with their lot in life? Yes, they can, and some have.

Referring to "ungodly men" who had slipped into the first-century Christian congregation, the disciple Jude wrote: "These men are murmurers, complainers about their lot in life, proceeding according to their own [degraded, immoral] desires, and their mouths speak swelling things, while they are admiring personalities for the sake of their own benefit." (Jude 3, 4, 16) To remain faithful as Christians, we must shun such complainers. And how much better it is to count our many blessings as Jehovah's servants, thus maintaining a spirit that has divine approval!—Galatians 6:18.

Against Brothers or Associates

Servants of Jehovah should desire to maintain a loving, cooperative attitude toward one another. Yet, murmuring can be detrimental to good relations with others. The Levite Korah and his company murmured against Moses and Aaron and manifested a spirit of envy. Because Jehovah was greatly displeased with this, the murmurers met death.—Numbers, chapter 16.

Centuries later, the apostle John mentioned position-hungry Diotrephes, who was 'chattering about him with wicked words.' If John was able to come to that congregation, he intended to give that murmurer suitable attention.—3 John 9, 10.

We therefore need to guard against be-

ing discontented, murmuring about our privileges within the congregation. For instance, we will do well to curb feelings of discontent over someone else's appointment to care for certain responsibilities for which we consider ourselves better suited. We may be wrong, and surely we do not want to have a spirit like that of Korah or Diotrephes.

Seek Bible Remedies

All of us, being imperfect and living in stressful times, no doubt occasionally have feelings of discontent. But we do have needed aid, for the Scriptures show us how to overcome the spirit of discontent and the tendency to complain.

A basic point to acknowledge is that murmuring is not approved by Jehovah, as it betrays lack of faith and lack of love of God. Thus the apostle Paul warned: "Neither be murmurers, just as some of them [the Israelites in the wilderness] murmured, only to perish by the destroyer." (1 Corinthians 10:10; Numbers 14: 35-38) Paul also wrote: "Keep doing all things free from murmurings and arguments." (Philippians 2:14) Actually, how can a person be whole-souled in serving "the happy God" and yet be a chronic complainer? (1 Timothy 1:11) So we need to adopt Jehovah's view of matters and exercise implicit confidence in his ability to make us contented and happy. Remember that the fruitage of his spirit includes joy.—Galatians 5:22, 23.

In resisting the spirit of discontent, it is helpful to realize that in this life there is constant change. Hence, any cause for complaint is strictly temporary. (Compare 2 Corinthians 4:17.) An awareness of this should help us to find joy in serving Jehovah at all times. Rather than yielding to anxiety or discontent, "having sustenance and covering," let us "be content with these things." (1 Timothy 6:8) It is heart-

warming to note that Jehovah assures us: "I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you." Safe and secure in our heavenly Father's care, therefore, let us not complain about our lot in life, but may we be "content with the present things."—Hebrews 13:5.

Remember Our Blessed Position

Do you sometimes feel discontented about what you have accomplished in your life? If so, reflect on your former status and your present favored position in the spiritual paradise enjoyed by true Christians. (Compare 2 Corinthians 12:1-4.) Anointed followers of Christ have been 'called out of darkness into God's wonderful light.' Their associates, the "great crowd," are also enjoying the marvelous light of truth and have grand prospects before them. (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 7:9-14) Should we not be contented—in fact, supremely happy—that we enjoy spiritual light and are privileged to know and serve Jehovah God and our King, Jesus Christ?

We are part of an international association of brothers and sisters, a great publicity organization that Jesus Christ is directing through "the faithful and discreet slave." This worldwide brotherhood is accomplishing Jehovah's will in preaching

ing the good news of the Kingdom and in making disciples. (Matthew 24:14, 45-47; 28:19, 20; 1 Peter 2:17) What grand reasons for contentment!

If we personally are not contented with some aspect of congregational function, however, it may well be that we have misunderstood certain developments or are somewhat wrong in our viewpoint—something that surely is not impossible among imperfect humans and even dedicated Christians. (Compare Proverbs 16:2; Galatians 2:11-14; Philippians 4:2.) On the other hand, if we are right, should we not have confidence that Jehovah can bring about any needed adjustments, doing so through his Son, the Head of the congregation? (Ephesians 5:22, 23) How much better to be patient rather than discontented!

When we meditate on Jehovah's dealings with his people as an organization, we have sound reasons to be content. For instance, Bible doctrines have been made very clear, and this has upbuilt Jehovah's people spiritually. God's viewpoint on clean conduct has been clarified, so that Jehovah's Witnesses, although not perfect, are of outstanding morality. Our understanding of how the true Christian organization should function has improved to the extent that we are serving Jehovah in harmony with Scriptural directions for congregational organization. (Philippians 1:1) Should this not add to our contentment as dedicated Christians?

Faithful Christians also have a glorious hope for the future, one that should enable us to overcome any temporary lack of complete contentment. Now so near is the time when every living thing will be praising Jehovah! (Psalm 150) Meanwhile, let us not give place to murmuring. Rather, may we serve our loving heavenly Father with godly contentment.

In Our Next Issue

- Religion and Politics
—On a Collision Course?
- True Christians Are
Kingdom Preachers
- Missionary Service
—Come What May!

Despite My Infirmity, Let Jehovah Be Praised!



Bill and Janice Adams "listening" to a Bible discourse

THOSE who serve Jehovah God faithfully despite serious infirmities have constant evidence that he supports them. "Never will he allow the righteous one to totter."—Psalm 55:22.

Such comforting words have real meaning for Bill and Janice, both in their late 20's. Married for about three years, they are associated with a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Washington, D.C. Bill serves as a pioneer, a full-time Kingdom proclaimer, and conducts a number of home Bible studies. Four of these are held with deaf individuals.

Janice was born deaf, and complications associated with her form of deafness caused her to become blind as well. During the "Kingdom Increase" District Convention last year, Janice sat in a section reserved for the deaf, to whom the spoken word was communicated by means of sign language. Of course, since Janice is also blind, she could not get the message in that way. Therefore, an interpreter was assigned to sit next to her. By placing her hand on the dominant hand of the interpreter, Janice could "hear" the program.

During the singing of one of the Kingdom songs, an interpreter failed to appear on the platform because of a misunderstanding regarding the schedule. So Bill, who was interpreting for Janice at the time, got up on the platform with her and signed the song. She, in turn, put her hand on his and sang with the others—something that brought tears to many eyes.

Bill and Janice have been "walking in the truth" for about two years. (3 John 4) And although Janice is physically blind and deaf, she is helping others to see and hear God's truth. She has been blessed with three home Bible studies, all conducted in sign language because the students are also deaf. So where there is an earnest desire to praise Jehovah and help others spiritually, his servants find a way.

Kingdom Truth Blossoms in 'the Flowered Island'



THE island of Martinique, basking in the blue waters of the Caribbean Sea and cooled by the gentle trade winds, is as paradisaic as any place can now be. Appropriately, the native Caribs called this 425-square-mile (1,100-sq-km) island in the West Indies Madinina, 'the flowered island.' Here, the brilliant purples and reds of the bougainvillea mingle with the scarlet of the flame trees and the iridescent hues of the crotos. There is a veritable symphony of colors, dazzling and spectacular, all over the island.

Blossoming of Kingdom Truth

Like the colorful flowers, blooming throughout the island today are 24 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. Fort-de-France, the capital city with its 100,000 inhabitants, has eight of them. All of this, however, is the result of divine blessing upon the seeds of Kingdom truth planted over the past 35 years.

In 1949 four graduates of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead sowed the first seeds of Kingdom truth. Though the local authorities allowed the missionaries

to remain for only two years, they kept busy sowing and watering, all the while trusting in Jehovah's promise: "In me the islands themselves will hope, and for my arm they will wait."—Isaiah 51:5.

Such trust in God was rewarded, for Jehovah's arm is never too short. In 1954 a couple from France came to Martinique. They were Xavier and Sarah Noll, full-time ministers. With hard work and Jehovah's blessing, by 1963 the number of Kingdom proclaimers had grown to 138. By 1976 there were 1,055 individuals busily preaching the good news in this 'flowered island.'

The year 1984 saw seven successive peaks of Kingdom proclaimers. The number of regular pioneers increased from 19 to 44, and 491 took up the auxiliary pioneer work in April. During the year, a peak of 1,635 individuals, about one out of every 200 inhabitants of the island, shared in proclaiming the good news. Truly, as the prophet Isaiah foretold, 'Jehovah must be glorified in the islands of the sea.'—Isaiah 24:15.

Branch Dedication

The blossoming of Kingdom truth in Martinique reached a high point on August 22, 1984. Some 2,000 guests from France, Canada, French Guiana, Guadeloupe, and the United States assembled for the dedication of a beautiful four-story building, the new Watch Tower branch office and Bethel home for Martinique.

A rich spiritual program was arranged for the morning. It started with Brother Noll's recounting the small beginning of the preaching work on the island. The audience was thrilled to learn that the first missionaries were present among them that morning.

Next on the program was a report on the construction, given by Brother Faustini, a missionary. For two and a half years, 40 brothers worked full time on the project. But on weekends, 100 to 200 volunteers from the local congregations would come to help. Among the full-time workers were brothers from Canada, French Guiana, Guadeloupe, and France, who for a while left jobs, homes, friends, and relatives to come and help with the work. Several of them took the opportunity to express their appreciation for the privilege of having a share in Kingdom expansion in this part of the field.



The climax of the morning was a vigorous speech on the theme "Moving Ahead With Jehovah's Organization." It was given by J. E. Barr, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. He emphasized the need to work harmoniously in order to accomplish God's will and to press forward to the things ahead. Clearly, the Witnesses in Martinique have done this, as attested to by the expansion and the blossoming of Kingdom truth on the island.

The news media responded enthusiastically. Coverage by television brought the event before the public. The newspaper *France-Antilles* observed that the high quality of workmanship seen in the structure reflected a "great love for work well done" and called the building "an architectural masterpiece" worthy of close inspection by experts in the field.

A Hospitable People

The appeal of Martinique is not limited to its reputation as 'the flowered island.' Among its friendly and hospitable people, it is a matter of custom to invite a visitor in and listen to him and not let him leave without offering him something. Even though people are more in a hurry nowadays, they still take time to talk and listen. All of this makes the preaching work a real pleasure. That was the experience of the Nolls on their first day of preaching in Martinique.

"Of course we were anxious to find out how the people would receive us, but what happened exceeded all our expectations," recalled Brother Noll. "That morning my wife and I had to return home twice to refill our bags with Bible literature. Some accepted the literature as soon as they saw that it talked about God; others took it simply because we called. How stimulating to see such hospitality! Whereas in other places we have to see that we do not stay



Young ones, too, are joyfully responding to Kingdom truth

too long because people are busy, here we must avoid being detained too long in order to visit as many people as possible."

The experience of a traveling overseer showed how hospitable and generous the islanders are. "Our brothers have never hesitated to share what they have," he said. "One day a couple invited us to an evening meal. When we arrived in their tiny one-room home that had no running water or electricity, we were surprised by what we saw. There, set out on a tiny table, were only two plates. 'Why only two?' we asked. With their small income, they only had two plates, two forks, and two spoons. They told us they would eat as soon as we finished. Every time we thought about this couple, tears would come to our eyes."

Love for God's Word

Most people in Martinique have a deep reverence for the Holy Scriptures. Often the Bible, opened to the book of Psalms, is prominently displayed on a table. They believe that the Bible protects the house when they are out. Of course, when individuals learn the truth, they no longer

look upon the Bible as a charm but as God's message to mankind.

This was the case with the headmistress of a local school. When she learned what the Bible says about image worship, she destroyed all her religious idols. (Psalm 115:4-8; 1 Corinthians 10:14) When the neighbors learned what she did with her "saints," the news got around the small town quickly. An uproar followed, fanned by the angry remarks of the local priest from the pulpit. But that did not deter her from embracing the truth. Today, this 75-year-old Witness is zealously making true worship blossom out in her part of the island.

A young man living in an isolated area started studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses by correspondence. Shortly thereafter, he attended a circuit assembly and was so impressed by what he heard that he told all his friends about it upon returning to his town, where he was the bell ringer at the local church. Astonished at the Bible knowledge he had acquired in such a short time, one of his friends went to see the priest to ask his opinion of the Witnesses. "Just between you and me," the priest told him, "Jehovah's Witnesses teach the truth." Soon, the Witness conducting the study received this message from the young man: "I have decided to stop smoking and stop ringing the bells." Today, he is busy helping people hear the sound of the truth and serves as an elder in one of the congregations in Fort-de-France.

Even the children show remarkable interest in God's Word. To illustrate: A Witness schoolteacher showed her class the book *Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It*, and

four pupils wanted a copy. When the Witness brought four copies of the book to school the next day, she was flooded with so many requests from the other students that she had to arrange for them to come to her house for the book. "A few days later, a woman approached me and asked me for two copies of the book," the sister related. The woman so appreciated the book her daughter had obtained that she wanted to study it with her children. "With her I placed the 105th copy of this book meant for the youths," said the sister.

Bible Truth Changes Lives

As in many parts of the world, drug abuse is taking its toll in Martinique. However, one young man, who was once bearded, long-haired, and heavily involved with drugs, was so impressed by the love and warmth of the Witnesses and the clear Bible message they offered that he gave up his drug habit, changed his life-style, and dedicated his life to Jehovah God.

One day a car pulled up when he was offering the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines to passersby on the street. The driver, a police officer, called out: "But it's G——! What did you do to change so much?" He recognized the young man because in the past he had arrested him at the same spot for possession of illegal drugs. The young Witness, taking the Bible and the magazines out of his book bag, answered: "Here is what changed me!" Pleasantly surprised, the police officer encouraged him to continue. But he was not able to leave without the young man placing two magazines with him.

Marital problems have been an obstacle for some in making spiritual progress. However, God's Word can help those who truly love their Creator to break free from even the most difficult situations. One woman with six children by three different men and cohabiting with the third

man started to study the Bible with the Witnesses. Soon she realized that her life was out of harmony with God's requirements. Her love for God and her desire to serve him gave her courage to tell the man she was living with to leave, in spite of the heavy responsibility of supporting six children by herself. Other women in similar situations have acted in faith and have been richly blessed for doing so.

Assemblies Give a Witness

The circuit assemblies and district conventions have contributed much toward the blossoming of Kingdom truth in Martinique. The first circuit assembly was held in 1955 at the home of Brother and Sister Noll. The five local Witnesses were supported by 27 others from Guadeloupe, the neighboring island. Though the total attendance was under 40, that assembly was a most upbuilding experience for the brothers.

Today, the Witnesses can no longer find facilities large enough for them to come together for a large assembly. Instead, they have built several sectional metal structures that can be assembled on football fields. This has made it possible to hold assemblies in the smaller towns on the island. The local people are always impressed by the orderly throng of Witnesses coming to the assembly and by the efficient way in which they put up and take down the assembly facilities. More than 4,000 people attended the two district conventions in 1984, and a fine witness was given.

What About the Future?

The building of the branch and Bethel home has strengthened the love, that "perfect bond of union," among all the brothers in Martinique. (Colossians 3:14) It was also an opportunity for all to cultivate the spirit of generosity. Many

brought meals or gifts of fruits, vegetables, timber, machines, furniture, and so on. Others donated money and expensive jewelry. What a demonstration of unselfish love!

No doubt, the new branch facility will play an important role in the further blossoming of Kingdom truth in this 'flowered island.' Much work of cultivation re-

mains to be done, because on April 4, 1985, there were 4,848 individuals in attendance at the Memorial of the death of Jesus Christ. All the Witnesses in Martinique are looking forward to the time when the entire earth will become a flowered garden—a paradise—under the righteous rule of God's Messianic Kingdom.

—Luke 23:43.

Questions From Readers

- Did 2 John 10, which says not to receive into one's home or to greet certain ones, refer only to those who had promoted false doctrine?

In context this counsel concerned the "many deceivers" who had gone forth, "persons not confessing Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh." (2 John 7) The apostle John offered directions on how Christians back there should treat one who denied that Jesus had existed or that he was the Christ and Ransomer. John directed: "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, never receive him into your homes or say a greeting to him. For he that says a greeting to him is a sharer in his wicked works." (2 John 10, 11) But the Bible elsewhere shows that this had a wider application.

At one time among the Christians in Corinth, a man was practicing immorality, and the apostle Paul wrote them to "quit mixing in company with anyone called a brother that is a fornicator or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man." (1 Corinthians 5:11) Now, did that apply to former brothers

who had been expelled only for the gross wrongs there listed?

No. Revelation 21:8 shows also that such individuals as unrepentant murderers, spiritists, and liars are included among those who merit the second death. Surely the counsel in 1 Corinthians 5:11 would also have been applied with equal force to former Christians guilty of these wrongs. Further, John wrote that some "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. But they went out that it might be shown up that not all are of our sort." (1 John 2: 18, 19) John did not say that they had been expelled for gross sin. Perhaps some of them just quit, deciding that they no longer wanted to be in the congregation because they disagreed over a doctrine. Others may have grown tired and given out.—1 Corinthians 15:12; 2 Thessalonians 2: 1-3; Hebrews 12:3, 5.

Of course, if a brother had begun to stray into sin, mature

Christians would have tried to help him. (Galatians 6:1; 1 John 5:16) If he had doubts, they would have attempted to 'snatch him out of the fire.' (Jude 23) Even if he had become inactive, not going to meetings or in the public ministry, spiritually strong ones would have striven to restore him. He might have told them that he did not want to be bothered with being in the congregation, reflecting his weakened faith and low spirituality. They would not have badgered him, but they might occasionally have made a friendly visit on him. Such loving, patient, merciful efforts would have reflected God's interest that none be lost.—Luke 15:4-7.

In contrast, John's words indicate that some went further than spiritual weakness and inactivity; they actually repudiated God's congregation. Someone may have come out openly in opposition to God's people, declaring that he no longer wanted to be in the congregation. He may even have renounced his former faith formally, such as by a letter. Of course, the congregation would have accepted his decision to

disassociate himself. But how would they then have treated him?

John says: "Everyone that pushes ahead and does not remain in the teaching of the Christ does not have God. He that does remain in this teaching is the one that has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, never receive him into your homes or say a greeting to him." (2 John 9, 10) Those words certainly would have applied to a person who became an apostate by joining a false religion or by spreading false doctrine. (2 Timothy 2: 17-19) But what about those who John said "went out from us"? While Christians in the first century would know that they should not associate with an expelled wrongdoer or with an active apostate, did they act similarly toward someone who was not expelled but who willfully renounced the Christian way?

Aid to Bible Understanding shows that the word "apostasy" comes from a Greek word that literally means "a standing away from" but has the sense of 'desertion, abandonment or rebellion.'** The *Aid* book adds: "Among the varied causes of apostasy set forth in apostolic warnings were: lack of faith (Heb. 3:12), lack of endurance in the face of persecution (Heb. 10:32-39), abandonment of right moral standards (2 Pet. 2:15-22), the heeding of the 'counterfeit words' of false teachers and 'misleading inspired utterances' (. . . 1 Tim. 4:1-3) . . . Such ones willfully abandoning the Christian congregation thereby become part of the 'antichrist.' (1 John 2:18, 19)"

A person who had willfully and formally disassociated himself

* Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary says "apostasy" is "1: renunciation of a religious faith 2: abandonment of a previous loyalty."

from the congregation would have matched that description. By deliberately repudiating God's congregation and by renouncing the Christian way, he would have made himself an apostate. A loyal Christian would not have wanted to fellowship with an apostate. Even if they had been friends, when someone repudiated the congregation, apostatizing, he rejected the basis for closeness to the brothers. John made it clear that he himself would not have in his home someone who 'did not have God' and who was "not of our sort."

Scripturally, a person who repudiated God's congregation became more reprehensible than those in the world. Why? Well, Paul showed that Christians in the Roman world daily contacted fornicators, extortioners, and idolaters. Yet he said that Christians must "quit mixing in company with anyone called a brother" who resumed ungodly ways. (1 Corinthians 5:9-11) Similarly, Peter stated that one who had "escaped from the defilements of the world" but then reverted to his former life was like a sow returning to the mire. (2 Peter 2:20-22) Hence, John was providing harmonious counsel in directing that Christians were not to 'receive into their homes' one who willfully 'went out from among them.' —2 John 10.

John added: "For he that says a greeting to him is a sharer in his wicked works." (2 John 11) Here John used the Greek word of greeting *khai'ro* rather than the word *a-spa'zo-mai*, found in verse 13.

Khai'ro meant to rejoice. (Luke 10:20; Philippians 3:1; 4:4) It was also used as a greeting, spoken or written. (Matthew 28:9; Acts 15:23; 23:26) *A-spa'zo-mai* meant "to enfold in the arms, thus to greet, to welcome." (Luke 11: 43; Acts 20:1, 37; 21:7, 19) Ei-

ther could be a salutation, but *a-spa'zo-mai* may have implied more than a polite "hello" or "good-day." Jesus told the 70 disciples not to *a-spa'se sthe* anyone. He thus showed that their urgent work allowed no time for the Eastern way of greeting with kisses, embraces, and long conversation. (Luke 10:4) Peter and Paul urged: 'Greet [*a-spa'sa sthe*] one another with a kiss of love, or a holy kiss.'—1 Peter 5:14; 2 Corinthians 13:12, 13; 1 Thessalonians 5:26.

So John may deliberately have used *khai'ro* in 2 John 10, 11 rather than *a-spa'zo-mai* (verse 13). If so, John was not urging Christians then to avoid merely warmly greeting (with an embrace, kiss, and conversation) a person who taught falsehood or who renounced the congregation (apostatized). Rather, John was saying that they ought not even greet such an individual with *khai'ro*, a common "good-day."*

The seriousness of this counsel is evident from John's words: "He that says a greeting to him is a sharer in his wicked works." No true Christian would have wanted God to view him as sharing in wicked works by associating with an expelled wrongdoer or with one who rejected His congregation. How much finer to be a sharer in the loving Christian brotherhood, as John wrote: "That which we have seen and heard we are reporting also to you, that you too may be having a sharing with us. Furthermore, this sharing of ours is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."—1 John 1:3.

* Regarding the use of *khai'ro* in 2 John 11, R. C. H. Lenski comments: "[It] was the common greeting on meeting or on parting. . . . Here the sense is: Do not even give the proclaimer this greeting! Already this makes you a participant in the wicked works for which he has come. John [refers] . . . to a greeting of any nature."



"Solution to All Our Problems"

That is what a young person from Puerto Rico says is found in the book *Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It*. He writes:

"Not too long ago I wrote to you concerning a problem I had, masturbation, and asked that you favor me with some advice by means of presenting some information in your magazine. Well, a friend of mine, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, gave me the book *Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It* to read. This happened about a month ago. I would like to let you know that since I read chapter 5 of this book, I have not practiced this habit again. I have come to realize that masturbation isn't really something one needs. . . .

"I would like it if every young person would read this book, regardless of his religious affiliation. All young people have the same problems, and this book is like a treasure, for it has the solution to all our problems. . . . You should continue publishing books for youths because in a world filled with drugs and immorality, this book is like a glass of very cool, refreshing water."

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