

WILL HATE EVER END?

AUGUST 15, 2000

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM





THE WATCHTOWER®

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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 Epidemic of Hate

"Folks never understand the folks they hate."

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, ESSAYIST AND DIPLOMAT.

HATE seems to be all around us today. Such names as East Timor, Kosovo, Liberia, Littleton, and Sarajevo—as well as neo-Nazi, skinhead, and white supremacist—have been etched in our minds along with lingering images of charred ruins, freshly dug mass graves, and dead bodies.

Dreams of a future free of hate, conflict, and violence have been shattered. Danielle Mitterand, wife of the late French president, remembered about her youth: "People dreamed of living freely in a fraternal society they could trust; of being at one with themselves living among and with others; they dreamed of living healthy, peaceful and dignified lives in a strong and generous world that watched over them." What happened to those ideals? She lamented: "Half a century later, our dream has admittedly come under attack."

The present resurgence of hate simply cannot be ignored. It is more widespread, and it is appearing in increasingly blatant forms. The sense of individual security that millions take for granted has been compromised by a wave of senseless acts of hate, each seemingly more horrific than the preceding one. Even if we are spared hate in our home or our country, it lies in wait for us elsewhere. We probably see evidence of it every day on the television screen in news and current affairs

broadcasts. Some of it has even spilled over to the Internet. Consider a few examples.

The last decade has seen an unprecedented rise of nationalism. "Nationalism," observed Joseph S. Nye, Jr., director of the Harvard Center for International Affairs, "is becoming stronger in most of the world, not weaker. Instead of one global village there are villages around the globe more aware of each other. That, in turn, increases the opportunities for conflict."

Other forms of hate are more insidious, hidden within the borders of a country or even within the limits of a neighborhood. When five skinheads murdered an elderly Sikh in Canada, this event "highlighted what some see as a resurgence of hate crimes in a country often praised for its racial tolerance." In Germany, after declining steadily in previous years, racist attacks by extremists surged by 27 percent in 1997. "It is a discouraging development," remarked Interior Minister Manfred Kanther.

In northern Albania a report revealed that more than 6,000 children have become virtual prisoners in their own homes for fear of being shot by enemies of their families. These children are victims of the vendetta tradition, "which has paralysed life for thousands of families." In the United States, according to

the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), "racial prejudice motivated more than half the 7,755 hate crimes committed in 1998 that were reported to the FBI." Some of the motives for the rest of the hate crimes involved prejudice regarding religion, ethnic or national origin, and disabilities.

Moreover, newspaper headlines each day point to an epidemic of xenophobia, which is directed primarily against refugees, who now number more than 21 million people. Sad to

say, the majority of those expressing hate toward foreigners are young people, egged on by irresponsible political figures and others looking for scapegoats. Less obvious signs of the same phenomenon include distrust, intolerance, and stereotyping of people who are different.

What are some of the reasons for this epidemic of hate? And what can be done to eradicate hatred? The following article will deal with these questions.

The Only Way to Eradicate Hate

"There is no hate without fear. . . . We hate what we fear and so where hate is, fear is lurking."

—CYRIL CONNOLLY, LITERARY CRITIC AND EDITOR.

MANY sociologists believe that hate is deeply rooted in the human unconscious. "A large part of it may even be hard-wired," built into the very nature of humans, said a political scientist.

It is understandable that students of human nature reach such conclusions. Their only subjects for study are men and women born "with error" and "in sin," according to the inspired record of the Bible. (Psalm 51:5) Even the Creator himself, appraising imperfect man millenniums ago, "saw that the badness of man was abundant in the earth and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time."—Genesis 6:5.

Prejudice, discrimination, and their resulting hate are products of man's inherent imperfection and selfishness. (Deuteronomy 32:5) Sadly, no human agency or government, whatever its policy, has been able to legislate a change in man's heart on such matters. Foreign correspondent Johanna Mc-

Geary remarked: "No globocop, however powerful, can step in to wipe out the hatreds that have made Bosnia, Somalia, Liberia, Kashmir, the Caucasus run with blood."

Before we start looking for solutions, however, we have to get a basic understanding of what is behind the manifestations of hatred.

Hate Fed by Fear

Hate comes in ever so many shades and forms. Writer Andrew Sullivan summed up the matter nicely: "There is hate that fears, and hate that merely feels contempt; there is hate that expresses power, and hate that comes from powerlessness; there is revenge, and there is hate that comes from envy. . . . There is the oppressor's hate, and the victim's hate. There is hate that burns slowly, and hate that fades. And there is hate that explodes, and hate that never catches fire."

Without doubt, some of the principal factors generating hateful conflict in our times

"What Would Jesus Have Done?"

In June 1998, three white men in rural Texas in the United States attacked James Byrd, Jr., a black man. They took him to a remote, desolate area, beat him, and chained his legs together. Then they attached him to a pickup truck and dragged him three miles down the road until his body hit a culvert. This has been dubbed the decade's (1990's) most horrific hate crime.

Three sisters of James Byrd are Jehovah's Witnesses. How do they feel about the perpetrators of this horrible crime? In a joint statement, they said: "Having a loved one tortured and lynched produced an unimaginable sense of loss and pain. How does one respond to such a brutal act? Retaliation, hateful speech, or promotion of hate-ridden propaganda never entered our mind. We thought: 'What would Jesus have done? How would he have responded?' The answer was crystal clear. His message would have been one of peace and hope."

Among the Scriptural references that helped them prevent hate from developing in their hearts was Romans 12:17-19. The apostle Paul wrote: "Return evil for evil to no one. . . . If possible, as far as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men. Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath; for it is written: 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says Jehovah.'"

They continued: "We recall the realistic statements made in our publications that some injustices or crimes are so horrendous that it will be harder to say, 'I forgive you' and just walk away. Forgiveness in such instances could be just letting go of the resentment so that one can move on with one's life and not become physically or mentally ill because of harboring resentment." What an eloquent testimony to the power of the Bible to prevent deep-seated hatred from taking root!

are social and economic. Strong prejudices and outbursts of hate are often to be found in those areas where the group occupying the more economically favored position is in the minority. Also, hate often exists where the standard of living of a section of the community is threatened by an influx of foreigners.

Some may feel that these newcomers will compete for jobs, working at lower wages, or will cause the value of property to decrease. Whether such fears are justified or not is another matter. *Fear* of economic loss and *fear* that the standards of the community or of life-style will suffer are powerful factors inducing prejudice and hate.

What should be the first step toward the eradication of hate? A change of attitudes.

Changing Attitudes

"True change can come only from the volition of the peoples involved," observed McGeary. And how can people's volition be changed? Experience has shown that the most powerful, most motivating, and most enduring influence against the development of hate comes from God's Word, the Bible. This is because "the word of God is alive and exerts power and is sharper than any two-edged sword and pierces even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of joints and their marrow, and is able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart."—Hebrews 4:12.

Admittedly, the uprooting of prejudice and hatred does not occur automatically, nor does it happen overnight. But it can be done. Jesus Christ, the great motivator of hearts and

Animosity Turned Into Friendship

In recent years, thousands of immigrants have streamed into Greece searching for work. Worsening economic conditions, however, have reduced job opportunities, and this has intensified the struggle for employment. As a result of this, there is great animosity among various ethnic groups. A typical example is the rivalry between immigrants from Albania and those from Bulgaria. In many areas of Greece, intense competition has taken place between people of these two groups.

In the town of Kiato, in northeastern Peloponnisos, a Bulgarian family and an Albanian man started studying the Bible with

Jehovah's Witnesses and got to know one another. The application of Bible principles melted the animosity that exists between many from these two ethnic groups. It also contributed to a genuine brotherly friendship between these individuals. Ivan, a Bulgarian, even assisted Loulis, the Albanian, to find accommodations next to Ivan's house. The two families often share their food and their few material belongings. Both men are now baptized Witnesses of Jehovah and cooperate closely in preaching the good news. Needless to say, this Christian friendship does not go unnoticed by neighbors.

sensitizer of consciences, was able to move people to change. Millions have succeeded in following Jesus Christ's wise counsel: "Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those persecuting you."—Matthew 5:44.

True to his teachings, Jesus included in the group of his most trusted friends Matthew, a former tax collector, one who had been a hated outcast in Jewish society. (Matthew 9:9; 11:19) Furthermore, Jesus instituted a way of pure worship that would eventually embrace thousands of the previously excluded and hated Gentiles. (Galatians 3:28) People from all around the then known world became followers of Jesus Christ. (Acts 10:34, 35) These individuals became known for their surpassing love. (John 13:35) When hate-filled men stoned to death Jesus' disciple Stephen, his final words were: "Jehovah, do not charge this sin against them." Stephen wanted the best for those who hated him.—Acts 6:8-14; 7:54-60.

Modern-day true Christians have similarly responded to Jesus' counsel to do good, not just to their Christian brothers, but even to those who hate them. (Galatians 6:10) They are working hard to eliminate malicious ha-

tred from their lives. Recognizing the powerful forces that can engender hatred within them, they take positive action and replace hatred with love. Yes, as an ancient wise man said, "hatred is what stirs up contentions, but love covers over even all transgressions."—Proverbs 10:12.

The apostle John stated: "Everyone who hates his brother is a manslayer, and you know that no manslayer has everlasting life remaining in him." (1 John 3:15) Jehovah's Witnesses believe that. As a result, they are now being integrated—from all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political backgrounds—into one united, hate-free community, a genuine global brotherhood.—See accompanying boxes.

Hate Will Be Eradicated!

'But,' you may say, 'that's all well and good for the individuals involved. However, this will not make hatred disappear from our earth altogether.' True, even if you do not have hatred in your heart, you can still be its victim. So we have to look to God for the real solution to this global problem.

God purposed that all vestiges of hatred will



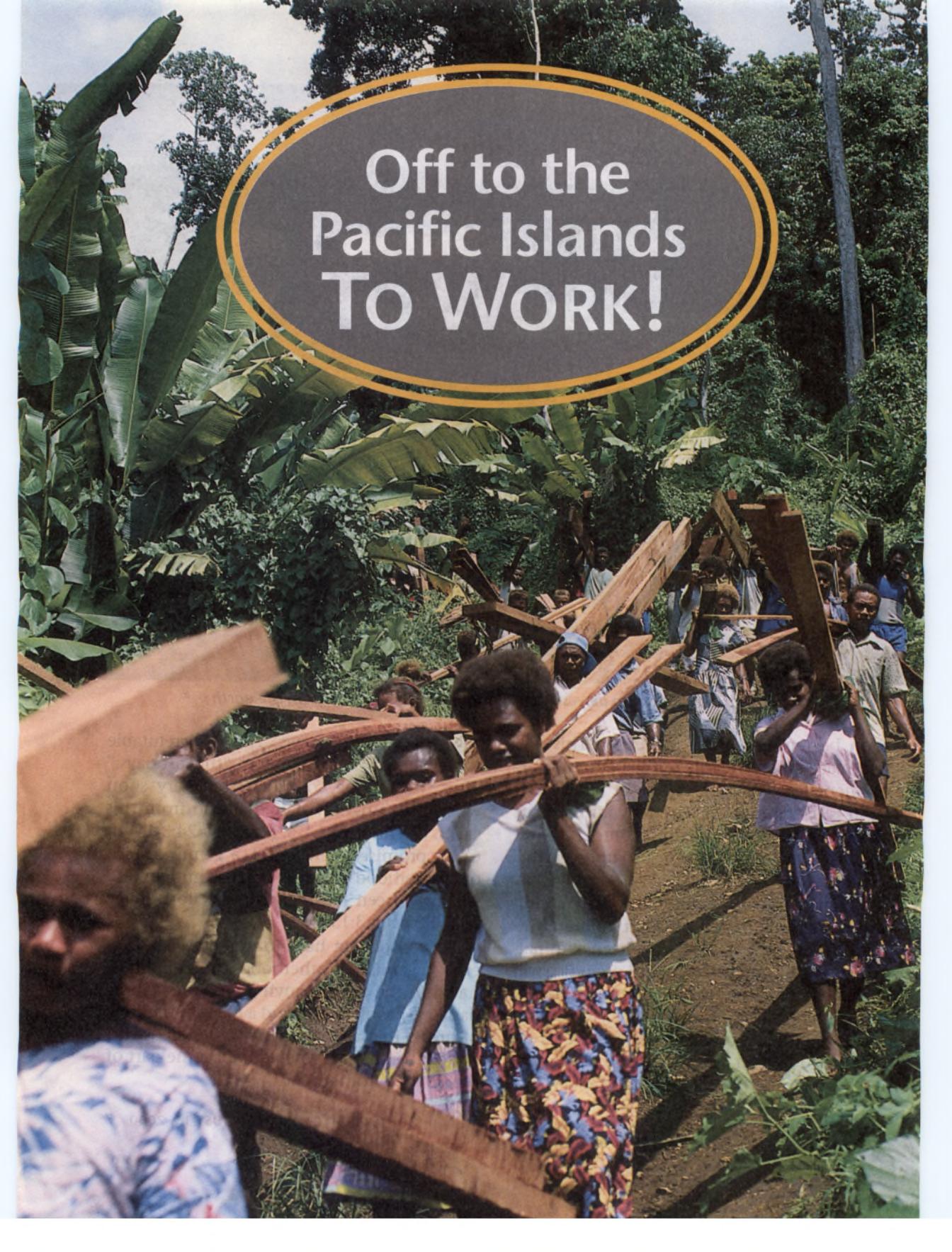
Under God's Kingdom all vestiges of hatred will be removed from the earth

soon be removed from the earth. This will take place under the rule of the heavenly government for which Jesus taught us to pray: "Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." —Matthew 6:9, 10.

When that prayer is fully answered, conditions that foster hatred will exist no more. Situations that exploit it will have been eliminated. Propaganda, ignorance, and prejudice will have been replaced by enlightenment, truth, and righteousness. Then, indeed, God 'will have wiped out every tear, death will be no more, and neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore.'—Revelation 21:1-4.

Now even better news! There is irrefutable evidence that we are living in "the last days." Thus, we can be confident that very soon we will see ungodly hatred vanish from this earth. (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Matthew 24:3-14) In God's promised new world, a genuine spirit of brotherhood will exist because humankind will have been restored to perfection.—Luke 23:43; 2 Peter 3:13.

But you do not have to wait until then to enjoy a genuine brotherhood. In fact, as illustrated in the accompanying accounts, Christian love has already found a place in millions of hearts that could otherwise be filled with hatred. You too are invited to become part of that loving brotherhood!



Off to the
Pacific Islands
To Work!

THE departure lounges at the international airports in Brisbane and Sydney, Australia, were abuzz with more excitement than usual. A group of 46 people was set to fly to sun-drenched Samoa to rendezvous with 39 others from New Zealand, Hawaii, and the United States. Their luggage was most unusual—consisting primarily of tools, such as hammers, saws, and drills—not the sort of things one ordinarily takes on a trip to an attractive Pacific island. But, then, their mission was anything but ordinary.

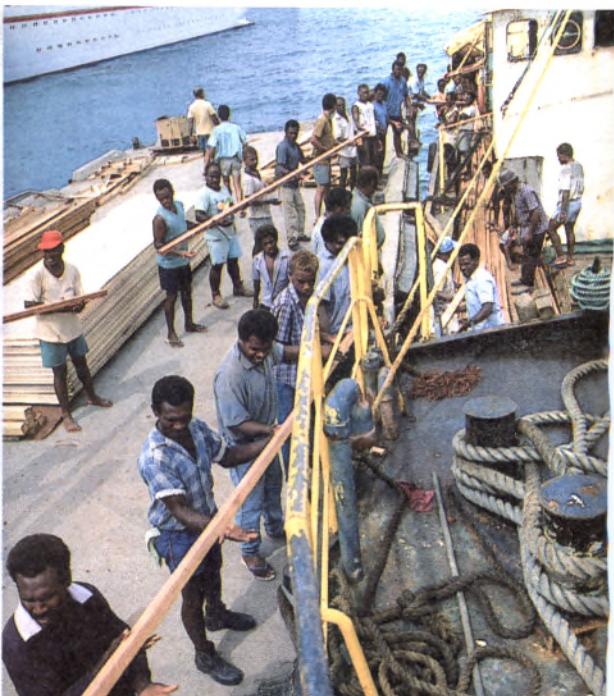
Traveling at their own expense, they were about to spend two weeks as unpaid volunteers in a construction program supervised by the Regional Engineering Office at the Australia branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses. The program, financed by voluntary contributions, involves building Kingdom Halls, Assembly Halls, missionary homes, and branch or translation facilities for the rapidly growing congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Pacific islands. Let us meet some of the workers, who had been on Kingdom Hall building teams in their own countries.

Max, a roof sheeter, comes from Cowra in New South Wales, Australia. He is married and has five children. Arnold is from Hawaii. He and his wife have two sons, and he is also a pioneer, or full-time minister. Like Max, Arnold serves as an elder in his home congregation. Obviously, these men—and they are typical of most in the program—are not volunteers because they have time to spare. Rather, they and their families see a need, and they want to do what they can to assist.

Multinational Workers Fill a Vital Need

One place where their skills and services were needed was Tuvalu, a Pacific nation of about 10,500 people located on a remote group of nine coral atolls close to the equator and northwest of Samoa. The islands, or atolls, each average about a square mile in area. By 1994, the 61 Witnesses there were urgently in need of a new Kingdom Hall and a larger translation office.

In this part of the tropical Pacific, buildings must be designed and built to withstand frequent savage storms and cyclones. But few quality building



Materials for the project



Work crew at the building site



*As the projects ended,
we rejoiced over what
God's spirit had
accomplished*



materials are available in the islands. The solution? Every component—from roof sheeting and trusses to furniture and curtains, toilet bowls and shower nozzles, even screws and nails—was shipped over in containers from Australia.

Before the materials arrived, a small advance team prepared the site and laid the foundation. Then the international workers came in to erect, paint, and furnish the buildings.

All this activity in Tuvalu, incidentally, raised the ire of a local clergyman who announced over the radio that the Witnesses were erecting a "Tower of Babel"! What, though, were the facts? "When the people building the Biblical Tower of Babel found that they could no longer understand one another because their language was confused by God, they had to abandon their project and leave the tower incomplete," remarks volunteer worker Graeme. (Genesis 11: 1-9) "It is quite the opposite when working for Jehovah God. In spite of language and cultur-

al differences, the projects are always completed." And so was this one—in just two weeks. Indeed, 163 people, including the prime minister's wife, attended the dedication ceremony.

Doug, the project supervisor, reflecting on the experience, says: "It was a joy to work with the volunteers from other countries. We have different ways of doing things, different terminology, even different systems of measurement, yet none of these things caused any problems." Having been on a number of such projects now, he adds: "This reinforces in my mind that with Jehovah's backing his people can erect a building anywhere on this earth, regardless of how isolated or difficult the site may be. Sure, we have many talented men, but it is Jehovah's spirit that makes it possible."

God's spirit also moves the Witness families in the islands to provide food and accommodations, which, for some, is quite a sacrifice. And it is deeply appreciated by those who receive such hospitality. Ken, from Melbourne, Australia, had worked on a similar project in French Polynesia. He notes: "We came as slaves, but we were treated like kings." Where possible, local Witnesses also help with the construction work. In the Solomon Islands, women mixed concrete—by hand. One hundred men and women climbed high into rain-soaked mountains and carried down over 40 tons of timber. Young people pitched in too. One worker from New Zealand recalls: "I remember a young island brother who carried two to three bags of cement at a time. And he shoveled gravel all day long in heat and rain."

Having the local Witnesses participate in the work brings another benefit. The Watch Tower Society's Samoa branch office reports: "The island brothers have learned trade skills that they can use in building Kingdom Halls and in doing postcyclone repairs and reconstruction. It may also help them to earn a living in a community where many find that difficult."

The Building Program Gives a Fine Witness

Colin was in Honiara and saw the Solomon Islands Assembly Hall being built. Impressed, he wrote the Watch Tower Society's local branch office this message in Pidgin English: "Everyone they gettim one mind and no one they cross, they also one family." Shortly thereafter, when he returned to his village at Aruligo, 25 miles away, he and his family built their own Kingdom Hall. Then they sent another message to the office: "Our Kingdom Hall, including even a podium, is ready, so can we have some meetings here?" This was promptly arranged, and over 60 people attend regularly.

A European Union adviser saw the project in Tuvalu. "I guess everybody says this to you," he commented to a worker, "but to me this is simply a miracle!" A woman working at the telephone exchange asked another visiting volunteer: "How come you are all so happy? It's so hot here!" They had never before seen Christianity at work in such a practical and self-sacrificing way.

Sacrifices Without Regrets

"He that sows bountifully will also reap bountifully," says the Bible at 2 Corinthians 9:6. The workers, their families, and their congregations are continuing to sow generously in helping fellow Witnesses in the Pacific. "My own congregation donated over a third of my airfare," says Ross, an elder from Kincumber, near Sydney, "and my brother-in-law, who also came along, contributed an additional \$500." Another worker paid for his trip by selling his

car. Still another sold some land. Kevin needed an additional \$900, so he decided to sell his 16 two-year-old pigeons. Through an acquaintance, he located a buyer who offered him exactly \$900 for them!

"Was it worth the airfare and lost wages, totaling about \$6,000?" Danny and Cheryl were asked. "Yes! Even at double that sum, it would have been more than worthwhile," they replied. Alan, from Nelson, New Zealand, added: "With what it cost me to go to Tuvalu, I could have gone to Europe and had money left over. But would I have received the blessings, or made so many friends of different backgrounds, or done something for someone else instead of for myself? No! Even so, whatever I gave our island brothers, they gave me far more in return."

Another key to the success of the program is family support. While some wives are able to accompany their husbands and even help on site, others have school-age children to care for or family businesses to tend to. "My wife's willingness to look after the children and the household while I was away," said Clay, "was by far a greater sacrifice than mine." Indeed, all husbands who were unable to take their wives along would add a hearty "Amen" to that!

Since the completion of the project in Tuvalu, volunteer workers have constructed Kingdom Halls, Assembly Halls, missionary homes, and translation offices in Fiji, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, and other places. Many projects, including some for locations in Southeast Asia, are still on the drawing board. Will there be enough workers?

Apparently that will not be a problem. "Everyone here who has participated in international building projects has asked to be remembered when another one is planned," writes the Hawaii branch office. "As soon as they return home, they begin saving for it." How can the program be anything but successful when you add Jehovah's rich blessing to selfless dedication like that?

SACRIFICES THAT PLEASED GOD

"Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices."

—HEBREWS 8:3.

To sacrifice seems as 'natural' to man as to pray; the one indicates what he feels about himself, the other what he feels about God," writes Biblical historian Alfred Edersheim. From the time that sin entered into the world, it has brought the pain of guilt, alienation from God, and helplessness. Relief from these is needed. It is easy to understand that when people find themselves in such a desperate state, they feel the need to turn to God for help.—Romans 5:12.

² The first Bible record of offerings being made to God is in connection with Cain and Abel. We read: "It came about at the expiration of some time that Cain proceeded to bring some fruits of the ground as an offering to Jehovah. But as for Abel, he too brought some firstlings of his flock, even their fatty pieces." (Genesis 4:3, 4) Next, we find that Noah, preserved by God through the great Flood that destroyed the wicked generation of his day, was moved "to offer burnt offerings upon the altar" to Jehovah. (Genesis 8:20) On several occasions, God's faithful servant and friend Abraham, moved by God's promises and blessings, 'built an altar and called on the name of Jehovah.' (Genesis 12:8; 13:3, 4, 18) Later, Abraham met the greatest test of his faith when

1. Why do people feel the need to turn to God?
2. What record of early offerings to God do we find in the Bible?



he was told by Jehovah to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering. (Genesis 22:1-14) These accounts, though brief, shed much light on the subject of sacrifice, as we shall see.

³ From these and other Bible accounts, it is clear that offering some form of sacrifice was a fundamental part of worship long before Jehovah gave specific laws regarding such. In line with that, one reference work defines "sacrifice" as "a religious rite in which an object is offered to a divinity in order to establish, maintain, or restore a right relationship of man to the sacred order." But this brings up some important questions worthy of our careful consideration, such as: Why is sacrifice needed in worship? What kind of sacrifices are acceptable to God? And what meaning do ancient sacrifices have for us today?

Why Is Sacrifice Needed?

⁴ When Adam sinned, he did so deliberately. His taking and eating the fruit from the tree of

3. What role do sacrifices play in worship?
4. What was the outcome for Adam and Eve when they sinned?

the knowledge of good and bad was an intentional act of disobedience. The penalty for that disobedient act was death, as God had clearly stated: "In the day you eat from it you will positively die." (Genesis 2:17) Adam and Eve eventually reaped the wages of sin—they perished. —Genesis 3:19; 5:3-5.

⁵ What, though, about Adam's offspring? Having inherited sin and imperfection from Adam, they are subjected to the same alienation from God, hopelessness, and death that the first human pair experienced. (Romans 5:14) However, Jehovah is a God not only of justice and power but also—in fact, primarily—of love. (1 John 4:8, 16) So he takes the initiative to heal the breach. After stating that "the wages sin pays is death," the Bible goes on to say, "but the gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord."—Romans 6:23.

⁶ What Jehovah God eventually did to make good that gift was to provide something that would cover the loss resulting from Adam's transgression. In Hebrew, the word *ka-phar*' at first probably meant "cover" or perhaps "wipe off," and it is also translated "atonement."^{*} In other words, Jehovah provided a suitable means to cover over sin inherited from Adam and wipe out the damage that resulted so that those who qualify for that gift could be liberated from the condemnation of sin and death. —Romans 8:21.

⁷ The hope of being set free from enslavement

* *Insight on the Scriptures*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., explains: "As used in the Bible, 'atonement' has the basic thought of 'cover' or 'exchange,' and that which is given in exchange for, or as a 'cover' for, another thing must be its duplicate. . . . To make adequate atonement for what was forfeited by Adam, a sin offering having the precise value of a perfect human life would have to be provided."

5. Why did Jehovah take the initiative in behalf of Adam's offspring, and what did He do for them?
6. What is Jehovah's will regarding the damage done by Adam's sin?
7. (a) What hope was provided through God's sentence on Satan? (b) What price must be paid for mankind's liberation from sin and death?

ment to sin and death was alluded to right after the first human pair sinned. Pronouncing his sentence on Satan, who was represented by the serpent, Jehovah stated: "I shall put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He will bruise you in the head and you will bruise him in the heel." (Genesis 3:15) By that prophetic statement, a ray of hope burst forth for all who would put faith in that promise. There is, however, a price to be paid for that liberation. The promised Seed would not just come and destroy Satan; the Seed must be bruised in the heel, that is to say, must suffer death, though not permanently.

⁸ No doubt Adam and Eve gave much thought to the identity of the promised Seed. When Eve gave birth to her firstborn son, Cain, she proclaimed: "I have produced a man with the aid of Jehovah." (Genesis 4:1) Was she thinking that perhaps her son would turn out to be the Seed? Whether she did so or not, Cain, as well as his offering, proved to be a disappointment. On the other hand, his brother Abel showed faith in God's promise and was moved to offer some firstlings of his flock as a sacrifice to Jehovah. We read: "By faith Abel offered God a sacrifice of greater worth than Cain, through which faith he had witness borne to him that he was righteous."—Hebrews 11:4.

⁹ Abel's faith was not just faith in God in general, which Cain must also have had. Abel had faith in God's promise of a Seed to bring about the salvation of faithful humans. It was not revealed to him how that would be worked out, but God's promise made Abel aware that someone would have to be bruised in the heel. Yes, he apparently concluded that blood would have to be shed—the very idea of sacrifice. Abel offered a gift involving life and blood to the

8. (a) How did Cain turn out to be a disappointment? (b) Why did Abel's sacrifice prove to be acceptable in God's eyes?
9. (a) In what did Abel put faith, and how did he express it? (b) What did Abel's offering accomplish?



Abel's sacrifice was pleasing because it demonstrated his faith in Jehovah's promise

Source of life, likely as a token of his intense longing for and in anticipation of the realization of Jehovah's promise. This expression of faith was what made Abel's sacrifice pleasing to Jehovah, and in a limited way, it expressed the essence of sacrifice—a means by which sinful humans can approach God to gain his favor.

—Genesis 4:4; Hebrews 11:1, 6.

¹⁰ The profound significance of sacrifice was made dramatically clear when Jehovah commanded Abraham to offer up his son Isaac as a burnt offering. Although that sacrifice was not literally carried out, it served as a picture of what Jehovah himself would eventually do—offer up his only-begotten Son as the greatest sacrifice ever in order to accomplish His will toward mankind. (John 3:16) With the sacrifices and offerings of the Mosaic Law, Jehovah set down prophetic patterns to teach his chosen people what they must do to receive forgiveness for their sins and to solidify their hope for salvation. What can we learn from these?

Sacrifices Acceptable to Jehovah

¹¹ “Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices,” says the apostle Paul.

10. How was the significance of sacrifice made clear by Jehovah's asking Abraham to offer up Isaac?

11. What two categories of offerings were presented by Israel's high priest, and for what purposes?

(Hebrews 8:3) Note that Paul divides the offerings made by the high priest of ancient Israel into two categories, namely, “gifts” and “sacrifices,” or “sacrifices for sins.” (Hebrews 5:1) People generally give gifts to express affection and appreciation, as well as to cultivate friendship, favor, or acceptance. (Genesis 32:20; Proverbs 18:16) Similarly, many of the offerings prescribed by the Law can be viewed as “gifts” to God to seek his acceptance and favor.* Transgressions of the Law required restitution, and to make amends, “sacrifices for sins” were offered. The Pentateuch, especially the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, provides a broad array of material regarding different kinds of sacrifices and offerings. While it can be a real challenge for us to absorb and remember all the details, some key points regarding the various types of sacrifices merit our attention.

¹² We may note that in Leviticus chapters 1 to 7, five principal types of offerings—burnt offering, grain offering, communion sacrifice, sin offering, and guilt offering—are described individually, even though some of them were actually offered together. We note also that these offerings are described twice in these chapters, with different objectives: once, in Leviticus 1:2 to 6:7, detailing what was to be offered on the altar, and the second time, in Leviticus 6:8 to 7:36, showing the portions that were set aside for the priests and those that were reserved for the offerer. Then, in Numbers chapters 28 and 29, we find what might be viewed as a detailed timetable, outlining what was to be offered daily, weekly, monthly, and at the yearly festivals.

* A Hebrew word frequently translated “offering” is *qor·ban'*. In recording Jesus' condemnation of an unscrupulous practice of the scribes and the Pharisees, Mark explained that “corban” means “a gift dedicated to God.”—Mark 7:11.

12. Where in the Bible can we find an overview of the sacrifices, or offerings, in the Law?

¹³ Among the offerings made voluntarily as gifts or as an approach to God to gain his favor were the burnt offerings, grain offerings, and communion offerings. Some scholars hold that the Hebrew term for "burnt offering" means "an offering of ascent" or "an ascending offering." This is fitting because in a burnt offering, the slaughtered animal was burned on the altar and a sweet-smelling, or restful, odor ascended heavenward to God. The distinctive feature of the burnt offering was that after its blood was sprinkled around the altar, the animal was offered in its entirety to God. The priests made "all of it smoke on the altar as a burnt offering, an offering made by fire of a restful odor to Jehovah."—Leviticus 1: 3, 4, 9; Genesis 8:21.

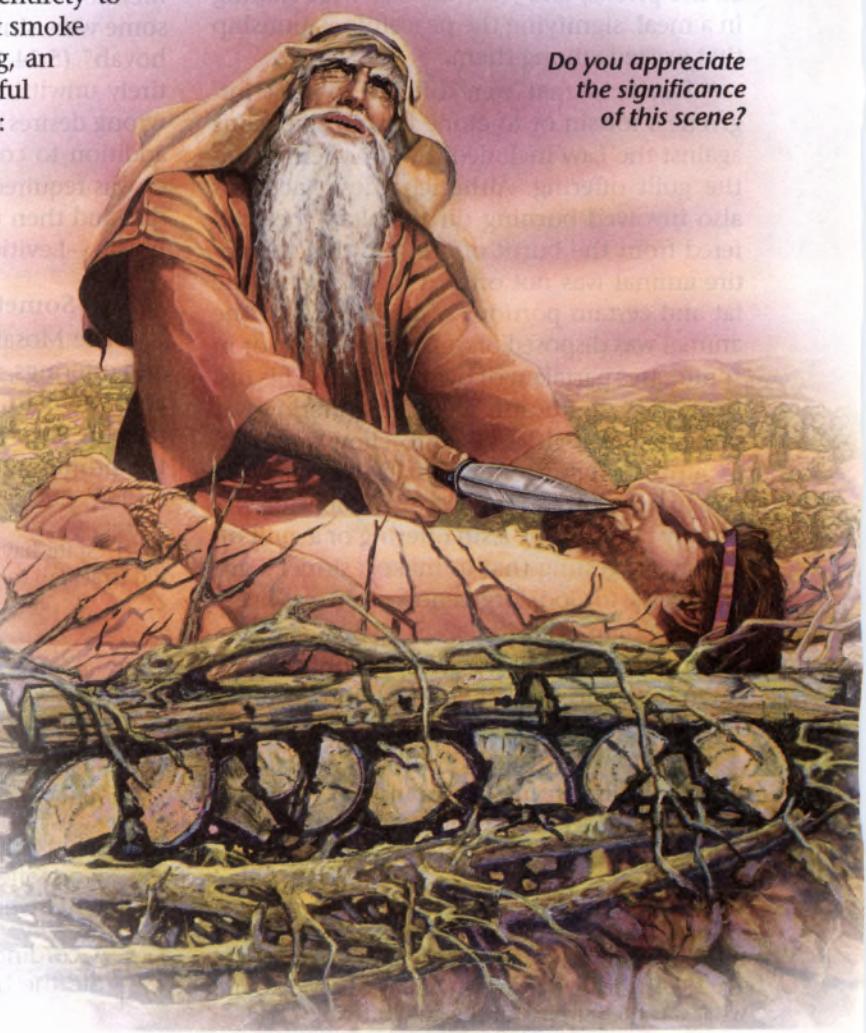
¹⁴ The grain offering is described in Leviticus chapter 2. It was a voluntary offering consisting of fine flour, usually moistened with oil, with frankincense added. "The priest must grasp from it his handful of its fine flour and its oil along with all its frankincense; and he must make it smoke as a remembrancer of it upon the altar, as an offering made by fire of a restful odor to Jehovah." (Leviticus 2:2) Frankincense was one of the ingredients of the holy incense burned on the incense altar in the tabernacle and temple. (Exodus 30:34-36) King David evidently had this in mind when he said: "May my prayer be prepared as incense

before you, the raising up of my palms as the evening grain offering."—Psalm 141:2.

¹⁵ Another voluntary offering was the communion sacrifice, described in Leviticus chapter 3. The name can also be translated "a sacrifice of peace offerings." In Hebrew, the word "peace" denotes much more than simply being free from war or disturbance. "In the

15. What was the purpose of the communion sacrifice?

Do you appreciate the significance of this scene?



13. Describe the offerings made voluntarily as gifts to God.

14. How was the grain offering presented?

Bible, it denotes this, and also the state or relation of peace with God, prosperity, joy, and happiness," says the book *Studies in the Mosaic Institutions*. Thus, communion sacrifices were offered, not to secure peace with God, as if to appease him, but to express gratitude for or to celebrate the blessed condition of peace with God enjoyed by those who are approved by him. The priests and the offerer partook of the sacrifice after the blood and fat were offered to Jehovah. (Leviticus 3:17; 7:16-21; 19:5-8) In a beautiful and symbolic way, the offerer, the priests, and Jehovah God were sharing in a meal, signifying the peaceful relationship that existed among them.

¹⁶ Sacrifices that were offered to seek forgiveness for sin or to atone for transgressions against the Law included the sin offering and the guilt offering. Although these sacrifices also involved burning on the altar, they differed from the burnt offering in that the entire animal was not offered to God, only the fat and certain portions of it. The rest of the animal was disposed of outside the camp or in some cases partaken of by the priests. This distinction is significant. The burnt offering was presented as a gift to God to allow approach to him, so it was offered to God exclusively and in total. Interestingly, a burnt offering was usually preceded by a sin offering or a guilt offering, suggesting that to make a sinner's gift acceptable to God, forgiveness of sin was needed.—Leviticus 8:14, 18; 9:2, 3; 16:3, 5.

¹⁷ The sin offering was accepted only for unintentional sin against the Law, sin committed because of weakness of the flesh. "In case a soul sins by mistake in any of the things that Jehovah commands should not be done," then the sinner was to offer a sin offering in proportion to his status, or standing, in the

16. (a) What was the purpose of the sin offering and the guilt offering? (b) How did those differ from the burnt offering?

17, 18. For what was the sin offering provided, and what was the purpose of the guilt offerings?

community. (Leviticus 4:2, 3, 22, 27) On the other hand, unrepentant sinners were cut off; no sacrifices were available for them.—Exodus 21:12-15; Leviticus 17:10; 20:2, 6, 10; Numbers 15:30; Hebrews 2:2.

¹⁸ The meaning and purpose of the guilt offering are made clear in Leviticus chapters 5 and 6. A person may have sinned unintentionally. Still, his transgression may have incurred guilt against the rights of either his fellowmen or Jehovah God, and that wrong had to be satisfied or righted. Several categories of sins are mentioned. Some were private sins (5:2-6), some were sins against "the holy things of Jehovah" (5:14-16), and some, though not entirely unwitting, were sins that resulted from wrong desires or fleshly weaknesses (6:1-3). In addition to confessing such sins, the offender was required to make compensation where due and then to present a guilt offering to Jehovah.—Leviticus 6:4-7.

Something Better to Come

¹⁹ The Mosaic Law, with its many sacrifices and offerings, was given to the Israelites to enable them to approach God to gain and retain his favor and blessing until the arrival of the promised Seed. The apostle Paul, a natural Jew, put it this way: "The Law has become

19. Despite having the Law and its sacrifices, why did Israel fail to gain God's favor?

Can You Explain?

- What prompted faithful men of old to offer sacrifices to Jehovah?
- Why were sacrifices needed?
- What principal types of sacrifices were offered under the Law, and what were their purposes?
- According to Paul, what key purpose did the Law and its sacrifices serve?

our tutor leading to Christ, that we might be declared righteous due to faith." (Galatians 3:24) Sadly, Israel as a nation did not respond to that tutelage but abused that privilege. Consequently, their multitude of sacrifices became loathsome to Jehovah, who said: "I have had enough of whole burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed animals; and in the blood of young bulls and male lambs and he-goats I have taken no delight."—Isaiah 1:11.

SACRIFICES OF PRAISE THAT PLEASE JEHOVAH

"Present your bodies a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God."

—ROMANS 12:1.

SINCE the Law has a shadow of the good things to come, but not the very substance of the things, men can never with the same sacrifices from year to year which they offer continually make those who approach perfect." (Hebrews 10:1) There, in one bold statement, the apostle Paul affirms that all the sacrifices offered under the Mosaic Law were of no permanent value as far as man's salvation is concerned.—Colossians 2:16, 17.

² Does this mean that the material in the Pentateuch regarding offerings and sacrifices is of no value to Christians today? As a matter of fact, over the span of a little more

1. What does the Bible say about the relative value of the sacrifices under the Mosaic Law?

2. Why is it not in vain to try to understand the detailed information in the Bible about the offerings and sacrifices of the Law?

²⁰ In 70 C.E., the Jewish system of things, with its temple and priesthood, came to its end. After that, sacrifices in the manner stipulated by the Law were no longer possible. Does this mean that the sacrifices, as an integral part of the Law, have lost all meaning for worshipers of God today? We will examine this in the next article.

20. What happened in 70 C.E. as far as the Law and its sacrifices are concerned?



than a year, individuals enrolled in the Theocratic Ministry School in the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide recently read through the first five books of the Bible. Some have struggled to read and understand all the details. Has all their effort been in vain? That surely cannot be the case, for "all the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope." (Romans 15:4) The question, then, is, What "instruction" and "comfort" can we glean from that

body of information in the Law regarding offerings and sacrifices?

For Our Instruction and Comfort

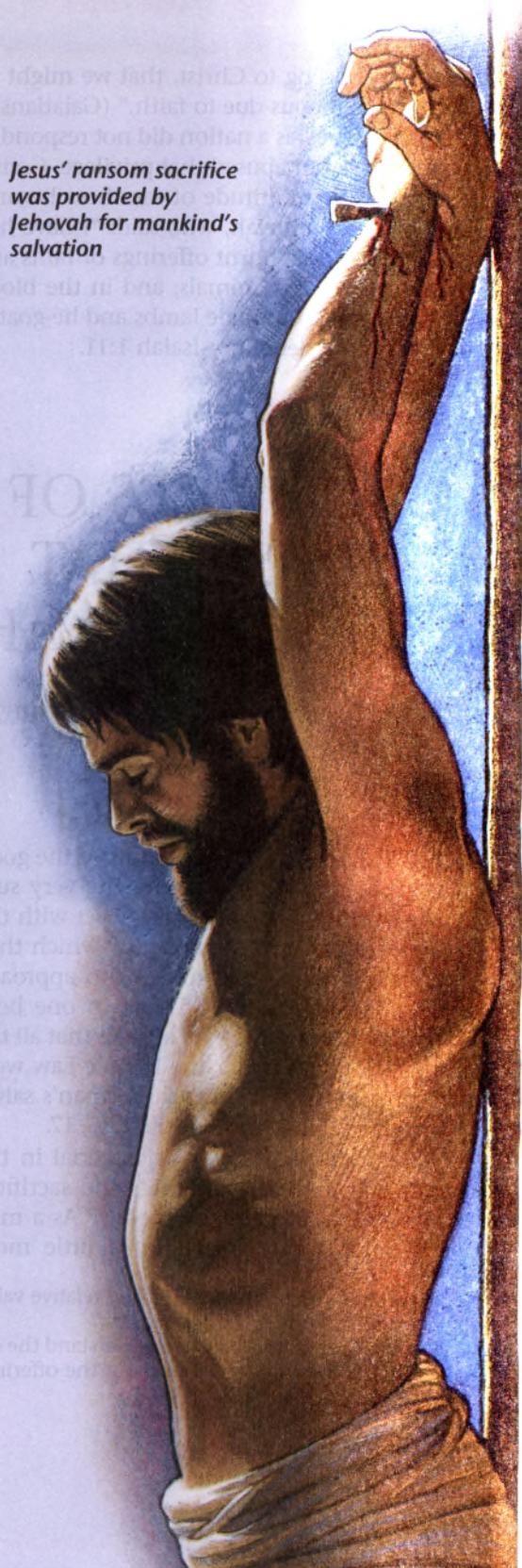
³ Though not required to offer literal sacrifices in the manner stipulated by the Law, we are still very much in need of what the sacrifices did to a degree for the Israelites, namely, to have our sins forgiven and to enjoy God's favor. Since we no longer offer literal sacrifices, how can we receive such benefits? After pointing out the limitations of the animal sacrifices, Paul declares: "When [Jesus] comes into the world he says: 'Sacrifice and offering you did not want, but you prepared a body for me. You did not approve of whole burnt offerings and sin offering.' Then I said, 'Look! I am come (in the roll of the book it is written about me) to do your will, O God.'"—Hebrews 10:5-7.

⁴ Quoting from Psalm 40:6-8, Paul points out that Jesus did not come to perpetuate the "sacrifice and offering," the "whole burnt offerings and sin offering," all of which by the time of Paul's writing no longer had God's approval. Rather, Jesus came with a body prepared by his heavenly Father, one that corresponded in every respect to the one God prepared when He created Adam. (Genesis 2:7; Luke 1:35; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45) As the perfect Son of God, Jesus had the role of the "seed" of the woman, as foretold at Genesis 3:15. He would take steps to 'bruise Satan in the head,' though Jesus himself would be 'bruised in the heel.' In this way, Jesus became the means provided by Jehovah for mankind's salvation, to which men of faith had been looking since the days of Abel.

⁵ Speaking about this special role that Jesus played, Paul says: "The one who did not

3. What basic need do we have?
4. How does Paul apply Psalm 40:6-8 to Jesus Christ?
- 5, 6. What superior way of approach to God is available to Christians?

*Jesus' ransom sacrifice
was provided by
Jehovah for mankind's
salvation*



know sin [God] made to be sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness by means of him." (2 Corinthians 5:21) The expression "made to be sin" can also be translated 'made as a sin offering.' The apostle John says: "He is a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, yet not for ours only but also for the whole world's." (1 John 2:2) Hence, while the Israelites had a temporary means of approach to God by their sacrifices, Christians have a superior basis for coming to God—the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. (John 14:6; 1 Peter 3:18) If we exercise faith in the ransom sacrifice provided by God and obey Him, we too can have our sins forgiven and enjoy God's favor and blessing. (John 3: 17, 18) Is that not a source of comfort? How, though, can we demonstrate that we have faith in the ransom sacrifice?

⁶ After explaining that Christians have a superior basis for approach to God, the apostle Paul outlines, as we read at Hebrews 10:22-25, three ways in which we can demonstrate our faith and appreciation for God's loving provision. Even though Paul's admonition was directed chiefly to those who have "the way of entry into the holy place"—that is, anointed Christians with a heavenly calling—surely all humanity need to pay attention to Paul's inspired words if they want to benefit from Jesus' propitiatory sacrifice.—Hebrews 10:19.

Offer Sacrifices Clean and Undefined

⁷ First, Paul urges Christians: "Let us approach with true hearts in the full assurance of faith, having had our hearts sprinkled from a wicked conscience and our bodies bathed with clean water." (Hebrews 10:22) The language employed here unmistakably reflects what was done in a typical sacrifice under the Law. This is fitting because for a sacrifice to be acceptable, it had to be offered with the

7. (a) How does Hebrews 10:22 reflect what was done in a sacrifice? (b) What had to be done to make sure that a sacrifice was acceptable to God?

right motive and be of something clean and undefiled. The sacrificial animal was from the herd or the flock, that is to say of the clean animals, and was "sound," without defect. If the sacrifice was from the fowls, it had to be from the turtledoves or young pigeons. If those conditions were met, "it [was to] be graciously accepted for him to make atonement for him." (Leviticus 1:2-4, 10, 14; 22:19-25) The grain offering contained no leaven, which is a symbol of corruption; neither would it contain honey, likely meaning the syrup of fruit, which has a tendency to cause fermentation. When the sacrifices—animal or grain—were offered on the altar, salt, a preservative, was added.—Leviticus 2:11-13.

⁸ What of the person making the offering? The Law stated that anyone coming before Jehovah had to be clean and undefiled. Someone who had become defiled for any reason first had to offer a sin or guilt offering to restore his clean standing before Jehovah so that his burnt offering or communion sacrifice could be acceptable to Him. (Leviticus 5: 1-6, 15, 17) Do we, therefore, appreciate the importance of always maintaining a clean standing before Jehovah? If we want our worship to be acceptable to God, we must be swift about correcting any infractions of God's laws. We should be quick to avail ourselves of the God-given means for help—"the older men of the congregation" and the "propitiatory sacrifice for our sins," Jesus Christ. —James 5:14; 1 John 2:1, 2.

⁹ The emphasis on freedom from defilement of any kind was, in fact, the key difference between the sacrifices offered to Jehovah and those offered to false gods by the people in the nations around Israel. Commenting

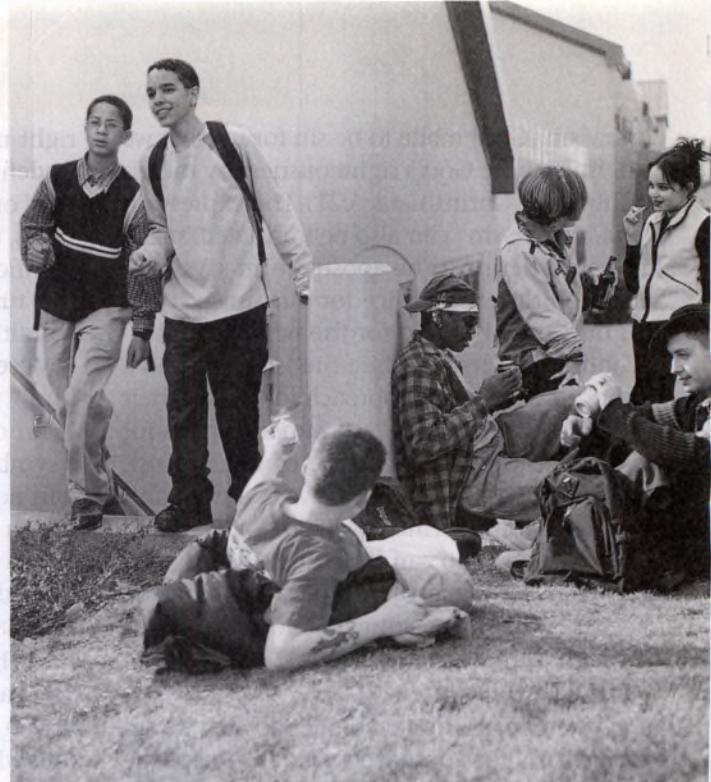
8. (a) What was required of the person making an offering? (b) How can we make sure that our worship is acceptable to Jehovah?

9. What is a key difference between the sacrifices made to Jehovah and those offered to false gods?

on this distinctive feature of the sacrifices in the Mosaic Law, one reference work observes: "We may note that there is no connection with divination or augury; no religious frenzy, self-mutilations, or sacred prostitution, sensual and orgiastic fertility rites being utterly forbidden; no human sacrifices; no sacrifices for the dead." All of this draws attention to one fact: Jehovah is holy, and he does not condone or approve of sin or corruption of any kind. (Habakkuk 1:13) Worship and sacrifices rendered to him must be clean and undefiled—physically, morally, and spiritually.—Leviticus 19:2; 1 Peter 1:14-16.

¹⁰ In view of this, we ought to scrutinize ourselves in all areas of life to be sure that our service to Jehovah is acceptable to him. We should never think that as long as we are having some share in Christian meetings and in the ministry, it does not matter what we do in our private life. We also should not feel that participation in Christian activities somehow excuses us from the need to abide by God's laws in other areas of our life. (Romans 2:21, 22) We cannot expect God's blessing and favor if we allow anything unclean or defiled in his eyes to contaminate our thinking or actions. Bear in mind Paul's words: "I entreat you by the compassions of God, brothers, to present your bodies a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God, a sacred service with your power of reason. And quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." —Romans 12:1, 2.

10. In line with Paul's admonition recorded at Romans 12:1, 2, what self-scrutiny should we make?



For our service to be acceptable to Jehovah, we must be free from defilement of any kind

Offer Sacrifices of Praise Wholeheartedly

¹¹ In writing to the Hebrews, Paul next calls attention to a vital aspect of true worship: "Let us hold fast the public declaration of our hope without wavering, for he is faithful that promised." (Hebrews 10:23) The expression "public declaration" literally means "confession," and Paul also speaks of "a sacrifice of praise." (Hebrews 13:15) This reminds us of the type of sacrifice that men like Abel, Noah, and Abraham offered.

¹² When an Israelite offered a burnt sacrifice, it was done "of his own free will before Jehovah." (Leviticus 1:3) By such a sacrifice, he voluntarily made a public declaration, or ac-

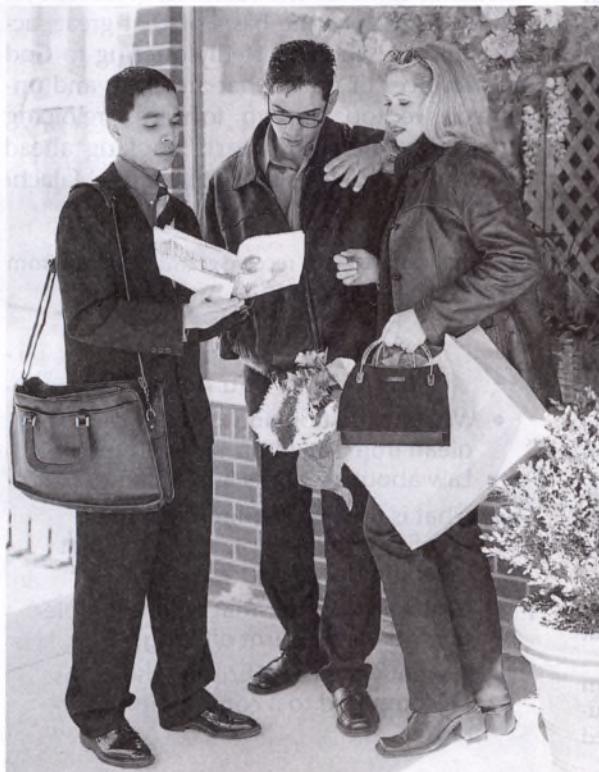
11. What is included in the term "public declaration," mentioned at Hebrews 10:23?

12, 13. What did an Israelite acknowledge when he offered a burnt sacrifice, and what can we do to reflect the same spirit?

knowledgegment, of Jehovah's bountiful blessings and loving-kindness toward his people. Recall that a distinctive feature of the burnt sacrifice was that the entire offering was consumed on the altar—a fitting symbol of total devotion and dedication. Correspondingly, we demonstrate our faith in the ransom sacrifice and our gratitude for that provision when we willingly and wholeheartedly offer our "sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips," to Jehovah.

¹³ While Christians do not offer literal sacrifices—animal or vegetable—they do have the responsibility to bear witness to the Kingdom good news and to make disciples of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) Do you take advantage of opportunities to share in public-

We publicly acknowledge Jehovah's goodness when we engage in the ministry



ly declaring the good news of God's Kingdom so that many more people can come to know the wonderful things God has in store for obedient mankind? Do you willingly spend your time and energy in teaching interested ones and helping them to become disciples of Jesus Christ? Our zealous participation in the ministry, like the restful odor of a burnt offering, is well-pleasing to God.—1 Corinthians 15:58.

Rejoice in Fellowship With God and Men

¹⁴ Finally, Paul calls attention to our relationship with fellow Christians as we worship God. "Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you behold the day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:24, 25) The expressions "to incite to love and fine works," "the gathering of ourselves together," and "encouraging one another" all remind us of what the communion offering in Israel did for God's people.

¹⁵ The term "communion offerings" is sometimes translated "peace offerings." The Hebrew word for "peace" here is in the plural, perhaps signifying that participation in such sacrifices results in peace with God and peace with fellow worshipers. Regarding the communion sacrifice, one scholar observes: "This was, indeed, a season of happy fellowship with the Covenant God, in which He condescended to become Israel's Guest at the sacrificial meal, even as He was always their Host." This reminds us

14. How do Paul's words at Hebrews 10:24, 25 parallel the idea of the communion sacrifice?

15. What parallel do we see between the communion sacrifice and Christian meetings?

of Jesus' promise: "Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst." (Matthew 18:20) Every time we attend a Christian meeting, we benefit from the upbuilding association, the encouraging instruction, and from the thought that our Lord Jesus Christ is present with us. That makes a Christian meeting a truly joyous and faith-strengthening occasion.

¹⁶ In the communion sacrifice, all the fat—around the intestines, the kidneys, the appendage upon the liver, and the loins, as well as the fatty tail of the sheep—was offered to Jehovah by being burned, made to smoke on the altar. (Leviticus 3:3-16) The fat was considered the richest and best part of an animal. Offering it on the altar symbolized giving the best to Jehovah. What makes Christian meetings particularly joyous is that we not only receive instruction but also offer praise to Jehovah. This we do by participating—with our humble but best effort—in singing heartily, listening attentively, and commenting when possible. "Praise Jah, you people!" exclaimed the psalmist. "Sing to Jehovah a new song, his praise in the congregation of loyal ones."

—Psalm 149:1.

Bountiful Blessings From Jehovah Await Us

¹⁷ At the inauguration of the temple in Jerusalem, in the seventh month of the year 1026 B.C.E., King Solomon offered "a grand sacrifice before Jehovah," consisting of "the burnt sacrifice and the grain offering and the fat pieces of the communion sacrifices." In addition to what was offered in the grain offerings, a total of 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep were sacrificed on that occasion.—1 Kings 8:62-65.

16. Having the communion sacrifice in mind, what makes Christian meetings especially joyous?

17, 18. (a) What grand sacrifice did Solomon make at the inauguration of the temple in Jerusalem? (b) What blessings for the people resulted from the ceremony at the temple's inauguration?

¹⁸ Can you imagine the expense and the amount of work involved in such a massive ceremony? Yet, the blessings that Israel received obviously far outweighed the cost. At the end of the festivities, Solomon "sent the people away; and they began to bless the king and to go to their homes, rejoicing and feeling merry of heart over all the goodness that Jehovah had performed for David his servant and for Israel his people." (1 Kings 8:66) Truly, as Solomon put it, "the blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich, and he adds no pain with it."—Proverbs 10:22.

¹⁹ We are living when the "shadow of the good things to come" has been replaced by "the very substance of the things." (Hebrews 10:1) Jesus Christ, in the role of the great antitypical High Priest, has already entered into heaven itself and presented the value of his own blood to make atonement for all those exercising faith in his sacrifice. (Hebrews 9:10, 11, 24-26) On the basis of that great sacrifice and by wholeheartedly offering to God our sacrifices of praise that are clean and undefiled, we too can go forward "rejoicing and feeling merry of heart," looking ahead to bountiful blessings from Jehovah.—Malachi 3:10.

19. What can we do to receive grand blessings from Jehovah now and forever?

How Would You Answer?

- What instruction and comfort can we glean from the information in the Law about sacrifices and offerings?
- What is the first requirement for a sacrifice to be acceptable, and what meaning does that have for us?
- What can we offer that is comparable to a voluntary burnt offering?
- In what ways can Christian meetings be compared to a communion offering?



How Do You Handle Differences?

DAILY we interact with a variety of personalities. This often brings us joy and new perspectives. At times, it also gives rise to differences, some of which are serious while others are just minor scrapes in our day-to-day life. Whatever their nature, how we deal with our differences impacts on us mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Doing what is within our power to resolve differences agreeably will contribute to our enjoying a healthier life and more peaceful relationships with others. An ancient proverb says: "A calm heart is the life of the fleshly organism."—Proverbs 14:30.

In stark contrast stands the truism: "As a city broken through, without a wall, is the man that has no restraint for his spirit." (Proverbs 25:28) Who of us would want to make ourselves vulnerable to the invasion of wrong thoughts that can cause us to act in improper ways—ways that can bring harm to others and to us? Uncontrolled, angry responses can do just that. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus recommended that we examine our attitude, which may influence how we handle any differences we may have with others. (Matthew 7:3-5) Rather than our being critical of others, we should think about how we can cultivate and maintain friendships with those of diverse views and backgrounds.

Our Attitude

A first step toward resolving a perceived or real difference is to recognize that we are sus-



ceptible to wrong thoughts and attitudes. The Scriptures remind us that we all sin "and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) Additionally, discernment may reveal that the source of our problem is not the other person. In this connection, let us consider the experience of Jonah.

Under instruction from Jehovah, Jonah had made his way to the city of Nineveh to preach about God's impending judgment upon its inhabitants. The happy result was that the entire city of Nineveh repented and put faith in the true God. (Jonah 3:5-10) Jehovah felt that their repentant attitude merited forgiveness, so he spared them. "To Jonah, though, it was highly displeasing, and he got to be hot with anger." (Jonah 4:1) Jonah's response to Jehovah's mercy was surprising. Why should Jonah be angry with Jehovah? Apparently, Jonah had become preoccupied with his own feelings, thinking that he had lost face in the community. He failed to appreciate Jehovah's mercy. Kindly, Jehovah led Jonah through an object lesson that helped him change his attitude and see the excelling value of God's mercy. (Jonah 4:7-11) It is clear that Jonah's attitude, not Jehovah's, needed altering.

Could we at times likewise need to change our own attitude toward a matter? The apostle Paul admonishes us: "In showing honor to one another take the lead." (Romans 12:10) What did he mean? In one respect, he is encouraging us to be reasonable and to treat other Christians with deep respect and dignity. This involves recognizing that each individual has the privilege of free choice. Paul also reminds us: "Each one will carry his own load." (Galatians 6:5) Hence, before differences cause a rift, how wise it would be to consider whether our own attitude needs to be adjusted! We must work hard to reflect the thinking of Jehovah and preserve peace with others who truly love God.—Isaiah 55:8, 9.

Our Approach

Imagine two young children tugging at the same toy, each pulling harder and harder with a view to having it. Angry words may accompany the struggle until finally one relinquishes his hold or someone else intervenes.

The Genesis account tells us that Abraham heard that an argument had taken place between his herders and those of his nephew Lot. Abraham took the initiative to approach Lot and say: "Please, do not let any quarreling continue between me and you and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we men are brothers." It was Abraham's determination not to let any conflict damage their relationship. At what price? He was ready to sac-

Do we insist on having things our way?



rifice his privilege of choice as the older man; he was prepared to give something up. Abraham allowed Lot to select where he wished to take his household and flocks. Lot subsequently chose for himself the verdant area of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham and Lot parted company in peace.—Genesis 13:5-12.

To maintain peaceful relations with others, are we prepared to act in the spirit that Abraham did? This Bible episode sets for us a beautiful model to imitate when handling a difference. Abraham appealed: "Do not let any quarreling continue." Abraham's genuine desire was to arrive at an amicable solution. Surely such an invitation to keep peaceful relations would help to set aside any misunderstanding. Abraham then concluded with the expression "for we men are brothers." Why sacrifice such a precious relationship for the sake of personal preference or pride? Abraham kept a clear focus on what was important. He did so with self-respect and honor, at the same time dignifying his nephew.

While situations arise where outside intervention may be required in order to resolve a difference, how much better if a matter can be resolved privately! Jesus encourages us to take the initiative in making peace with our brother, apologizing if necessary.* (Matthew 5:23, 24) It will require humility, or lowliness of mind, but Peter wrote: "Gird yourselves with lowliness of mind toward one another, because God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones." (1 Peter 5:5) The way we treat fellow worshipers has a direct bearing on our relationship with God.—1 John 4:20.

Within the Christian congregation, we may be called upon to relinquish a right in order to maintain peace. A goodly number of those now associating with Jehovah's Witnesses have

* See the articles "Forgive From Your Heart" and "You May Gain Your Brother," in *The Watchtower* of October 15, 1999.



Abraham set a fine example of being yielding so as to resolve a difference

come into God's family of true worshipers in the last five years. What joy this brings to our hearts! The way we comport ourselves surely affects these and others in the congregation. This is a good reason for giving careful thought to our choice of entertainment, hobbies, social pastimes, or employment, considering how others may perceive us. Could any of our actions or words be misunderstood and thus be a cause for stumbling others?

The apostle Paul reminds us: "All things are lawful; but not all things are advantageous. All things are lawful; but not all things build up. Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person." (1 Corinthians 10:23, 24) As Christians, we are genuinely concerned with building up the love and unity of the Christian brotherhood.—Psalm 133:1; John 13:34, 35.

Healing Words

Words can have a powerful effect for good. "Pleasant sayings are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and a healing to the bones." (Proverbs 16:24) The narrative of Gideon's averting a possible conflict with the Ephraimites illustrates the truth of this proverb.

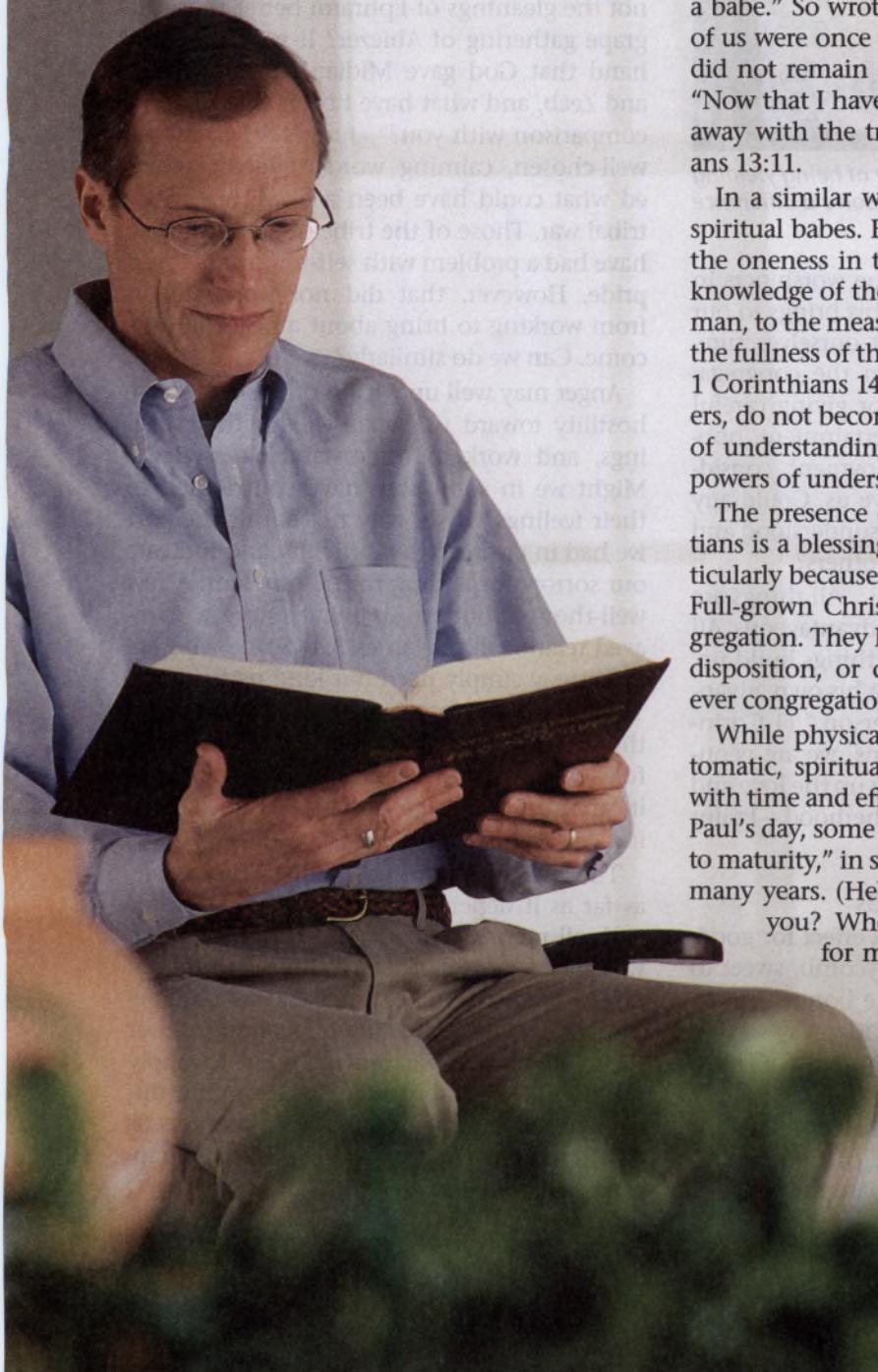
Gideon, heavily involved in battle against Midian, called on the tribe of Ephraim to help. However, after the battle was over,

Ephraim turned on Gideon and complained bitterly that he had not called on them at the outset of the fighting. The record states that "they vehemently tried to pick a quarrel with him." Gideon said in response: "What now have I done in comparison with you? Are not the gleanings of Ephraim better than the grape gathering of Abiezer? It was into your hand that God gave Midian's princes Oreb and Zeeb, and what have I been able to do in comparison with you?" (Judges 8:1-3) By his well-chosen, calming words, Gideon avoided what could have been a disastrous intertribal war. Those of the tribe of Ephraim may have had a problem with self-importance and pride. However, that did not stop Gideon from working to bring about a peaceful outcome. Can we do similarly?

Anger may well up within others and cause hostility toward us. Acknowledge their feelings, and work to understand their views. Might we in some way have contributed to their feelings? If so, why not admit the part we had in creating the difficulty and indicate our sorrow for adding to the problem. A few well-thought-out words may restore a damaged relationship. (James 3:4) Some who are upset may simply need our kind reassurance. The Bible notes that "where there is no wood the fire goes out." (Proverbs 26:20) Yes, carefully chosen words delivered in the right spirit can 'turn away rage' and prove to be a healing.—Proverbs 15:1.

The apostle Paul recommends: "If possible, as far as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men." (Romans 12:18) It is true that we cannot control others' feelings, but we can do our part to promote peace. Rather than being subject to our own imperfect responses or those of others, we can act now to apply well-founded Bible principles. Handling differences in the way that Jehovah instructs us to will result in our everlasting peace and happiness.—Isaiah 48:17.

Are You a “Full-Grown” Christian?



“WHEN I was a babe, I used to speak as a babe, to think as a babe, to reason as a babe.” So wrote the apostle Paul. Really, all of us were once helpless babes. However, we did not remain such forever. Observed Paul: “Now that I have become a man, I have done away with the traits of a babe.”—1 Corinthians 13:11.

In a similar way, all Christians start off as spiritual babes. But in time, all can “attain to the oneness in the faith and in the accurate knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of stature that belongs to the fullness of the Christ.” (Ephesians 4:13) At 1 Corinthians 14:20, we are exhorted: “Brothers, do not become young children in powers of understanding . . . Become full-grown in powers of understanding.”

The presence of mature, full-grown Christians is a blessing to God’s people today, particularly because there are so many new ones. Full-grown Christians add stability to a congregation. They have a positive impact on the disposition, or dominant attitude, of whatever congregation they attend.

While physical growth is more or less automatic, spiritual growth comes about only with time and effort. Not surprisingly, back in Paul’s day, some Christians failed to “press on to maturity,” in spite of having served God for many years. (Hebrews 5:12; 6:1) What about you? Whether you have served God for many years or for only a relatively short period of time,

it would be appropriate for you to examine yourself honestly. (2 Corinthians 13:5) Are you among those who can truly be called mature, or full-grown, Christians? If not, how can you become such?

"Full-Grown in Powers of Understanding"

A spiritual babe is easily "tossed about as by waves and carried hither and thither by every wind of teaching by means of the trickery of men, by means of cunning in contriving error." Paul thus urged: "Let us by love grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ." (Ephesians 4:14, 15) How does one do so? Hebrews 5:14 says: "Solid food belongs to mature people, to those who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong."

Note that mature people have their perceptive powers trained through use, or experience in applying Bible principles. Obviously, then, one does not become mature overnight; it takes time to grow up spiritually. Even so, you can do much to facilitate your spiritual growth by personal study—especially of the deeper things of God's Word. In recent times *The Watchtower* has discussed many deep subjects. Mature ones do not shy away from such articles because they contain "some things hard to understand." (2 Peter 3:16) Rather, they eagerly devour such solid food!

Zealous Preachers and Teachers

Jesus directed his disciples: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19, 20) Zealous participation in the preaching work can also spur your spiritual growth. Why not strive to have as full a share in it as your circumstances permit?—Matthew 13:23.

At times, the pressures of life can make finding the time to preach challenging. Yet,

by 'exerting yourself vigorously' as a preacher, you demonstrate the importance you attach to the "good news." (Luke 13:24; Romans 1:16) You may thus be viewed as "an example to the faithful ones."—1 Timothy 4:12.

Integrity Keepers

Growing to maturity also involves putting forth effort to keep your integrity. As recorded at Psalm 26:1, David declared: "Judge me, O Jehovah, for I myself have walked in my own integrity." Integrity is moral soundness, completeness. However, it does not mean perfection. David himself committed several serious sins. But because he accepted reproof and corrected his way, he demonstrated that his heart still retained genuine love for Jehovah God. (Psalm 26:2, 3, 6, 8, 11) Integrity involves wholeness, or completeness, of heart devotion. David told his son Solomon: "Know the God of your father and serve him with a complete heart."—1 Chronicles 28:9.

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Keeping integrity involves being "no part of the world," staying out of the politics of the nations and their wars. (John 17:16) You must also refrain from corrupt practices, such as fornication, adultery, and drug abuse. (Galatians 5:19-21) Keeping integrity means more, though, than avoiding those things. Solomon warned: "Dead flies are what cause the oil of the ointment maker to stink, to bubble forth. So a little foolishness does to one who

is precious for wisdom and glory." (Ecclesiastes 10:1) Yes, even "a little foolishness," such as inappropriate jesting or flirtatious behavior with the opposite sex, could ruin the reputation of one "precious for wisdom." (Job 31:1) Therefore, demonstrate your maturity by seeking to be exemplary in all your conduct, avoiding even the "appearance of evil." —1 Thessalonians 5:22, *King James Version*.

Loyal Ones

A full-grown Christian is also loyal. As we read at Ephesians 4:24, the apostle Paul exhorts Christians: "Put on the new personality which was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty." In the Greek Scriptures, the original-language word for "loyalty" carries the thought of holiness, righteousness, reverence. A loyal person is devout, pious; he carefully observes all his duties toward God.

What are some ways in which you might develop such loyalty? One would be by cooperating with your local congregation elders. (Hebrews 13:17) Recognizing that Christ is the appointed Head of the Christian congregation, mature Christians are loyal to those appointed "to shepherd the congregation of God." (Acts 20:28) How inappropriate it would be to challenge or undermine the authority of appointed elders! You should also feel a sense of loyalty to "the faithful and dis-

creet slave" and the agencies that are used to disseminate spiritual "food at the proper time." (Matthew 24:45) Be quick to read and apply the information found in *The Watchtower* and its companion publications.

Showing Love by Your Actions

Paul wrote to Christians in Thessalonica: "The love of each and all of you is increasing one toward the other." (2 Thessalonians 1:3) Growing in love is an especially important aspect of spiritual growth. Jesus said, as recorded at John 13:35: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." Such brotherly love is not characterized by mere emotion or feeling. Observes *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*: "Love can be known only from the actions it prompts." Yes, you press on to maturity in this regard by putting love into action!

For example, at Romans 15:7, we read: "Welcome one another." One way to show love is by greeting your fellow believers and newcomers at congregation meetings—warmly and enthusiastically! Get to know them personally. Take a "personal interest" in others. (Philippians 2:4) Perhaps you can even show hospitality and invite various ones to your home. (Acts 16:14, 15) The imperfections of others can sometimes test the depth of your love, but as you learn to 'put up with them in love,' you demonstrate that you are becoming full-grown.—Ephesians 4:2.

Using Our Assets to Promote Pure Worship

In ancient times, not all of God's people fulfilled their responsibility to support Jehovah's temple. God thus sent prophets, such as Haggai and Malachi, to stir up His people in this regard. (Haggai 1:2-6; Malachi 3:10) Mature Christians today joyfully use their assets to support Jehovah's worship. Imitate such

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Do You Know How to Wait?

Reflect the Mental Attitude That Christ Had!

Our Precious Heritage
—What Does It Mean to You?



**Mature ones contribute to the spirit of the congregation
by taking an interest in others**

ones by following the principle at 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2, regularly 'setting something aside' to contribute to the congregation and to the worldwide work of Jehovah's Witnesses. God's Word promises: "He that sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."—2 Corinthians 9:6.

Do not overlook other assets that you possess, such as your time and energy. Try to 'buy out time' from less important activities. (Ephesians 5:15, 16; Philippians 1:10) Learn to be more efficient with your use of time. Doing so may make it possible for you to participate in Kingdom Hall maintenance projects and other similar activities that promote Jehovah's worship. Using your assets in this way will give added evidence that you are becoming a full-grown Christian.

Press On to Maturity!

Men and women who are studious and knowledgeable, who are zealous preachers,

who are flawless in their integrity, who are loyal and loving, and who are willing to lend physical and material support to the Kingdom work are truly a great blessing. No wonder, then, that the apostle Paul exhorted: "Now that we have left the primary doctrine about the Christ, let us press on to maturity"!—Hebrews 6:1.

Are you a full-grown, mature Christian? Or are you still, in some ways, like a spiritual babe? (Hebrews 5:13) In either case, be determined to apply yourself to personal study, to preaching, and to showing love for your brothers. Welcome whatever counsel and discipline are offered you by mature ones. (Proverbs 8:33) Shoulder your full load of Christian responsibility. With time and effort, you too can "attain to the oneness in the faith and in the accurate knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of stature that belongs to the fullness of the Christ."—Ephesians 4:13.

Do You Remember?

Have you appreciated reading the recent issues of *The Watchtower*? Well, see if you can answer the following questions:

- Why can we be sure that the fulfillment of the prophecy of "new heavens and a new earth" at Isaiah 65:17-19 involved more than the Jews' return from captivity?

Because the apostles Peter and John, writing in the first century C.E., pointed to a future fulfillment, which involves blessings that are still to come. (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-4)—4/15, pages 10-12.

- What may underlie the ancient Greek myths about violent demigods?

These may be embellishments and distortions of the fact that before the Flood some angels took human bodies and led violent, immoral lives on earth. (Genesis 6:1, 2)—4/15, page 27.

- What are some dangers that mature Christians will guard against at weddings?

It is important to avoid boisterous revelry, which might develop if alcohol flows too freely and there is wild dancing to loud music. Unless it is made clear that a reception is open to all, uninvited ones should not attend. The bridegroom should make sure that responsible Christians will be present until the celebration ends at a reasonable hour.—5/1, pages 19-22.

- What is suggested by the mention at Psalm 128:3 of sons being "like slips of olive trees" around a man's table?

Often new shoots sprout from the base of the trunk of an olive tree. When the main trunk of an old tree no longer bears much fruit, new shoots may become vigorous trunks around it. Similarly, parents can rejoice to have fruit-bearing children serving Jehovah alongside them.—5/15, page 27.

- What are some benefits that children derive from a wholesome family atmosphere?

It lays the groundwork for their having a healthy view of authority, appreciation of proper values, and happy relations with others. Such an atmosphere can also help them to develop a friendship with God.—6/1, page 18.

- In one land in the Far East, what was done to encourage the idea that all Christians are brothers?

All the congregations were urged not to address certain ones with honorific terms. Rather, all should be addressed equally as brothers.—6/15, pages 21, 22.

- Do Jehovah's Witnesses accept medicines derived from blood?

We believe that the Bible command 'abstain from blood' rules out transfusions of whole blood or its primary components (plasma, red cells, white cells, and platelets). (Acts 15:28, 29) As to fractions derived from the primary components, each Christian decides personally, bearing in mind what the Bible says and his relationship with God.—6/15, pages 29-31.

- Is it really possible to find inner peace today?

Yes. By means of the Bible, Jesus Christ is guiding people to the way of pure worship and the peace described at Isaiah 32:18. Furthermore, those acquiring such peace have the prospect of enjoying permanent peace on earth in fulfillment of Psalm 37:11, 29.—7/1, page 7.

- What role did George Young have in modern theocratic history?

Beginning in 1917, he proved to be a light bearer of the Kingdom good news in many lands. His ministry took him throughout Canada, to islands of the Caribbean, to Brazil and other lands of South America, to Central America, to Spain, to Portugal, to what was then the Soviet Union, and to the United States.—7/1, pages 22-7.

- What does 1 Corinthians 15:29 mean when it speaks of some "being baptized for the purpose of being dead ones"?

The point is that when Christians are anointed by holy spirit, they are immersed into a life course that leads to their death and subsequent resurrection to heavenly life.—7/15, page 17.

- What was the apostle Paul doing during what have been described as his silent years?

It may be that he helped to establish or strengthen congregations in Syria and Cilicia. Many of the hardships mentioned at 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 must have occurred during this period, showing that he was carrying on an active ministry.—7/15, pages 26, 27.

- What can help us to be reasonable in our expectations?

Remember that Jehovah is understanding. Prayer to him can help us to balance our thinking, and it shows modesty. Another help is getting a fresh view by talking with a mature friend.—8/1, pages 29, 30.

Questions From Readers

Isaiah chapter 53 contains a famous Messianic prophecy. Verse 10 says: "Jehovah himself took delight in crushing him; he made him sick." What does this mean?

It is easy to see why a question might arise about Isaiah 53:10. True Christians do not think that our compassionate and tender God would take delight in crushing or making anyone sick. The Bible gives us the basis for confidence that God does not take pleasure in tormenting the innocent. (Deuteronomy 32:4; Jeremiah 7:30, 31) Over the centuries Jehovah may on occasion have permitted suffering for reasons consistent with his wisdom and love. But he certainly did not cause his beloved Son, Jesus, to suffer. So, what is this passage really saying?

Well, we can be helped to grasp the import if we consider the verse in its entirety, noting the two occurrences of the word "delight." Isaiah 53:10 reads: "Jehovah himself took delight in crushing him; he made him sick. If you will set his soul as a guilt offering, he will see his offspring, he will prolong his days, and in his hand what is the delight of Jehovah will succeed."

The overall message of the Bible indicates that "the delight of Jehovah," mentioned at the end of the verse, centers on carrying out his purpose by means of the Kingdom. Jehovah's doing this will vindicate his sovereignty and will allow for inherited sin to be removed from obedient humans—our sins. (1 Chronicles 29:11; Psalm 83:18; Acts 4:24; Hebrews 2:14, 15; 1 John 3:8) The key to all of this is that God's Son had to become a human and provide the ransom sacrifice. As we know, in the process Jesus did suffer. The Bible tells us that he "learned obedience from the things he suffered." So Jesus did receive benefit from that suffering.—Hebrews 5:7-9.

Jesus knew in advance that the noble course that he would take would involve some agony. That is plain from his words recorded at John 12:23, 24, where we read: "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. Most truly I



say to you, Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains just one grain; but if it dies, it then bears much fruit." Yes, Jesus knew that he would have to keep his integrity even to the point of suffering death. The account continues: "'Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me out of this hour. Nevertheless, this is why I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.' Therefore a voice came out of heaven: 'I both glorified it and will glorify it again.'" —John 12:27, 28; Matthew 26:38, 39.

It is in this context that we can understand Isaiah 53:10. Jehovah well knew that his Son's experience would involve being crushed in a sense. Yet having in mind the glorious and extensive good that would result, Jehovah took delight in what Jesus would have to experience. In that sense Jehovah "took delight in crushing," or the crushing of, the Messiah. And Jesus too took delight in what he could and did accomplish. Truly, as Isaiah 53:10 concludes, 'in his hand what is the delight of Jehovah did succeed.'

A Lesson From the Mariner

SAILING solo on the open sea can be exhausting. The numbing effect of fatigue can easily push the mariner across a dangerous threshold, so that errors and wrong decisions are made. For this reason, he appreciates the value of a sea anchor. It allows a weary sailor to rest and recuperate without drifting dangerously. At the same time, the sea anchor forces the bow to point into the wind and waves and keeps the boat in its most stable position.

Just as sailors face numerous dangers at sea, Christians face the constant pressures of this world and feel the need for rest. In fact, once Jesus recommended to his disciples: "Come, you yourselves, privately into a lonely place and rest up a bit." (Mark 6:31) Today, some may take a few weeks to travel or have a weekend away to relax with their family. These moments can be refreshing and reinvigorating. How, though, can we make sure that we are spiritually safe at such times? What can serve as our spiritual sea anchor to help us resist drifting and maintain stability?

Jehovah has generously made a provision available to us. It is none other than

his Holy Word, the Bible. By reading it daily, we can stay close to Jehovah and never drift away from him. Its counsel can stabilize us and enable us to withstand the temptations of Satan and his world. Our maintaining a regular program of Bible reading, even when we are out of our routine, can serve to anchor us spiritually.

—Joshua 1:7, 8; Colossians 2:7.

The psalmist reminds us that "happy is the man" whose "delight is in the law of Jehovah, and in his law he reads in an undertone day and night." (Psalm 1:1, 2) Reading God's Word daily will bring us the "happy" result of being truly refreshed and reinvigorated, prepared to continue our Christian course.