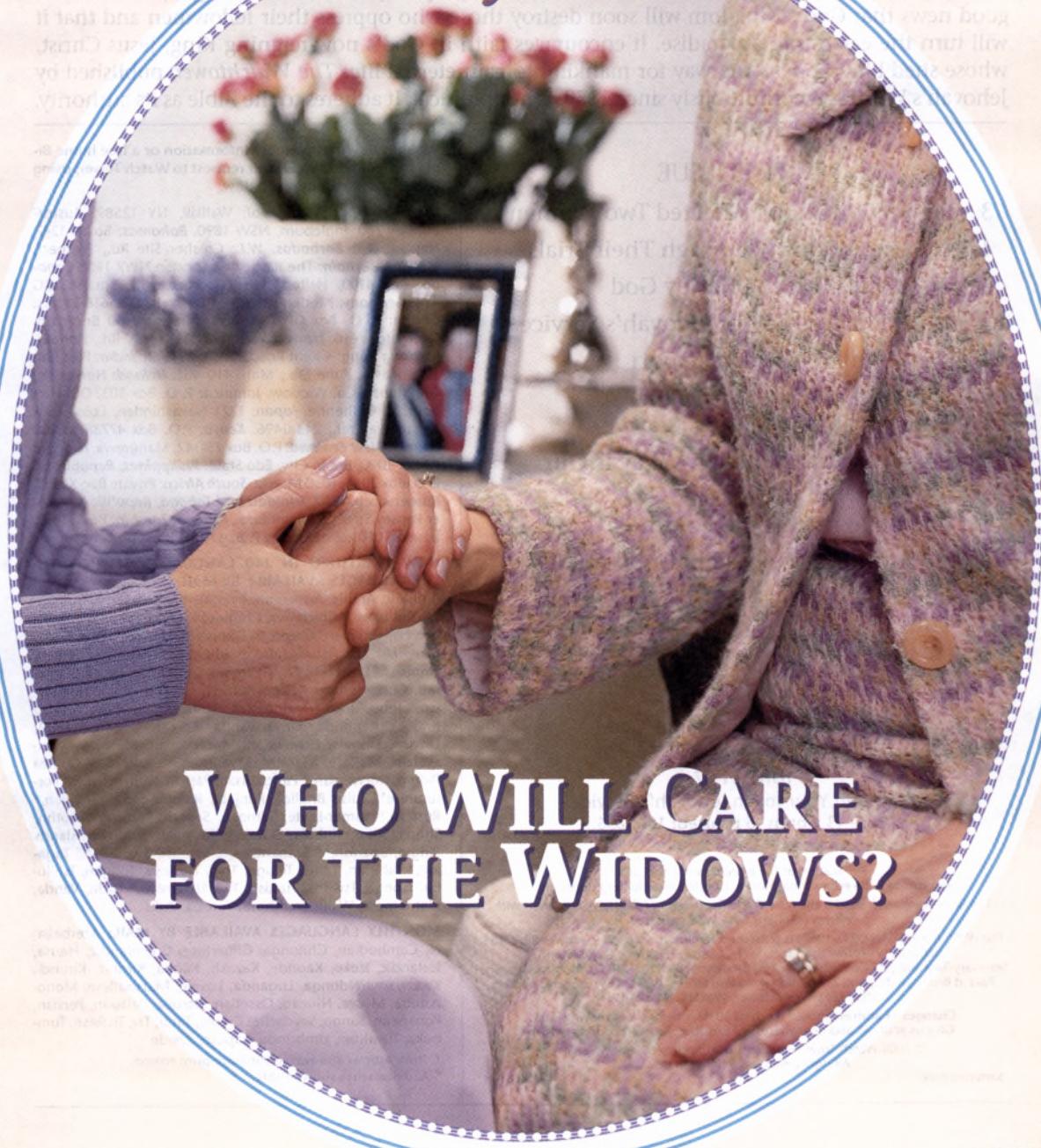


THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

MAY 1, 2001



WHO WILL CARE FOR THE WIDOWS?

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

May 1, 2001

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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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How WIDOWHOOD Affected Two Women

SANDRA is a widow who lives in Australia. When her husband died some years ago, Sandra's immediate reaction was total shock. "The realization that I had suddenly lost my mate and best friend overwhelmed me. I really cannot remember how I made it back home from the hospital or what I did for the rest of that day. During the next few weeks, my fears turned into constant physical pain."

Sandra has an older friend, Elaine, who has been a widow for some six years. Elaine nursed her husband, David, for six months prior to his death from cancer. Her grief was so intense that not long after her husband's death, she experienced temporary blindness. Two years later she collapsed in public. Her doctor found no sign of physical illness. However, he discovered that Elaine had been keeping her grief bottled up, so he recommended that she go home and try hard to cry. "It took quite a while to work through my grief," Elaine admits, adding that when lonely, "I even used to go into the bedroom and bury my head in David's clothes."

Yes, the death of a beloved mate can cause



a variety of reactions, for widowhood really involves more than simply living without a husband. Sandra, for instance, felt for a time that she had lost her identity. Like many other recently bereaved widows, she also felt vulnerable, insecure. Sandra recalls: "Being used to having my husband make final decisions, I was suddenly left alone to make those decisions. My sleep was disrupted. I was tired and fatigued. It was hard to know just what to do."

Stories similar to Sandra's and Elaine's are repeated on a daily basis the world over. Sickness, accidents, wars, ethnic cleansing, and violence in general are contributing to an increasing number of widows.* Many of these women suffer in silence, not knowing what to do. What can friends and relatives do to assist those adjusting to widowhood? The following article has some suggestions that may prove helpful.

* Other women are in a situation similar to that of widows because their husbands left them. Although separation and divorce create problems of their own, a number of the principles discussed in the following article may also help women in these circumstances.

HELPING WIDOWS Through Their Trials



ONE of the best-known stories about widows is the Bible account of Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi. Both women were widows. Naomi, however, lost not only her husband but also her two sons, one of whom had been Ruth's husband. Because they lived in an agricultural society that depended much on its menfolk, their situation was indeed tragic.—Ruth 1:1-5, 20, 21.

However, Naomi had an outstanding friend and comforter in her daughter-in-law

Ruth, who refused to leave her side. In time, Ruth proved to be “better to [Naomi] than seven sons”—not only because of her deep love for Naomi but also because of her love for God. (Ruth 4:15) When Naomi recommended that Ruth return to her Moabite family and friends, Ruth replied with one of the most touching expressions of loyalty ever recorded: “Where you go I shall go, and where you spend the night I shall spend the night. Your people will be my people, and

your God my God. Where you die I shall die, and there is where I shall be buried. May Jehovah do so to me and add to it if anything but death should make a separation between me and you."—Ruth 1:16, 17.

Ruth's attitude did not escape Jehovah God's notice. He blessed the little household of Naomi and Ruth, and eventually Ruth married the Israelite Boaz. Their child, who became an ancestor of Jesus Christ, was cared for by Naomi as though it were her own. This history is an example of how Jehovah cherishes widows who draw close to him and trust in him. Further, the Bible tells us that he values those who lovingly help widows in their trials. So how can we today support the widows in our midst?—Ruth 4:13, 16-22; Psalm 68:5.

Specific but Not Overbearing

When offering help to a widow, it is best to be clear and specific but not overbearing. Avoid vague comments such as, "Let me know if you need anything." That could amount to saying, "Keep warm and well fed" to someone who is cold and hungry and then doing nothing to help. (James 2:16) Many people will not ask for assistance when they need something; instead, they suffer in silence. To help such ones takes discernment, perceiving what their needs are. On the other hand, taking too much initiative—essentially taking over the widow's life—might lead to hurt feelings or conflict. Hence, the Bible stresses the need for balance in our dealings with others. While encouraging us to take an unselfish personal interest in people, it reminds us

not to be busybodies.—Philippians 2:4; 1 Peter 4:15.

Ruth displayed such a balanced attitude toward Naomi. While sticking loyally to her mother-in-law, Ruth did not push or dominate her. She took sensible initiatives, such as obtaining food for Naomi and herself, but she also followed Naomi's instructions.—Ruth 2:2, 22, 23; 3:1-6.

Of course, what is needed may differ greatly from one person to another. Sandra, mentioned earlier, says:

"I had what I needed in my distress—very dear and loving friends who flocked around me." Elaine, mentioned earlier, on the other hand, needed time to herself. Being helpful, therefore, means being discerning and striking a balance between respecting another's privacy and being available to help when needed.

Support From the Family

A warm, loving family, if there is one, can do much to reassure a widow that she will be able to cope. Although some family members may be able to offer more help

than others, all can contribute. "If any widow has children or grandchildren, let these learn first to practice godly devotion in their own household and to keep paying a due compensation to their parents and grandparents, for this is acceptable in God's sight."—1 Timothy 5:4.

In many cases, financial support or "compensation" may be unnecessary. Some widows have sufficient funds to care for their needs, and others qualify for state benefits, which are available in some lands. But where widows are in need, family members ought

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needed

to help. If a widow has no close relatives to offer support or such relatives are unable to help, the Scriptures encourage fellow believers to come to her aid: "The form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their tribulation." —James 1:27.

Those who act on these Bible principles truly "honor widows." (1 Timothy 5:3) To honor a person means, in effect, to demonstrate respect for that one. People who are shown honor feel valued, cherished, dignified. They do not feel that others are helping purely out of a sense of duty. Ruth, although herself a widow for a while, truly honored Naomi by willingly and lovingly making sure that Naomi's physical and emotional needs were cared for. In fact, Ruth's attitude quickly earned her a fine reputation, so that her future husband said to her: "Everyone in the city of my people is aware that you are an excellent woman." (Ruth 3:11, footnote) At the same time, Naomi's love for God, her undemanding nature, and her deep appreciation for Ruth's efforts in her behalf no doubt made it a pleasure for Ruth to assist her. What a fine example Naomi is to widows today!

Draw Close to God

Family members and friends cannot, of course, fill the void left by the death of a mate. For this reason it is important for the bereaved person to draw especially close to "the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation." (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4) Consider the example of Anna, a devout widow who was 84 years old at the time of Jesus' birth.

When Anna's husband died after they had been married just seven years, she turned to Jehovah for comfort. "[She] was never missing from the temple, rendering sacred service

night and day with fastings and supplications." (Luke 2:36, 37) Did Jehovah respond to Anna's godly devotion? Yes! He showed his love for her in a very special way by allowing her to see the baby who would grow up to be the Savior of the world. How this thrilled and comforted Anna! Clearly, she experienced the truth of Psalm 37:4: "Take exquisite delight in Jehovah, and he will give you the requests of your heart."

God Works Through Fellow Christians

Elaine states: "For a long time after David's death, I had a physical pain, like a knife turning in my rib cage. I thought it was indigestion. One day it became so bad that I thought I would have to see a doctor. A discerning spiritual sister and friend suggested that my grief might be a factor and encouraged me to ask Jehovah for help and comfort. I took her advice right there and then and offered a silent but heartfelt prayer, asking that Jehovah sustain me in my grief. And he did!" Elaine began to feel better, and soon thereafter even her physical pain went away.

Congregation elders can especially offer friendship in a kindly way to grieving widows. By providing regular spiritual support and comfort in a tactful and discerning way, elders can help them stay close to Jehovah despite their trials. Where necessary, elders can also help in arranging for material support. Such compassionate, discerning elders truly become "a hiding place from the wind." —Isaiah 32:2; Acts 6:1-3.

Permanent Comfort From Earth's New King

The one whom aged Anna rejoiced to see some two thousand years ago has now become the Messianic King of God's heavenly Kingdom. This government will soon eliminate all causes for sorrow, including death. In this regard, Revelation 21:3, 4 says: "Look!



The elderly widow Anna was blessed by God

The tent of God is with mankind . . . And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away." Did you notice that this passage refers to "mankind"? Yes, humans will be liberated from death and all the mourning and outcry it brings.

But there is even more good news! The Bible also promises a resurrection for the dead. "The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his [Jesus'] voice and come out." (John 5:28, 29) Just like Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, they will come out as humans, not spirit creatures. (John 11:43, 44) Those who thereafter 'do good things' will be brought to human per-

fection and personally experience Jehovah's fatherly care as he 'opens his hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing.'—Psalm 145:16.

Those who have lost a loved one in death and who put faith in this sure hope find it a source of great comfort. (1 Thessalonians 4:13) So if you are a widow, be sure to "pray incessantly" for the comfort and help you need daily to carry your various burdens. (1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Peter 5:7) And take the time each day to read God's Word so that God's thoughts can comfort you. If you do these things, you will see for yourself how, in spite of all the trials and challenges you face as a widow, Jehovah can truly help you to find peace.



BE JOYFUL WITH THE HAPPY GOD

"Finally, brothers, continue to rejoice, . . . and the God of love and of peace will be with you."—2 CORINTHIANS 13:11.

IN THESE dark days, many people see little cause for rejoicing. When tragedy strikes them or someone they love, they may feel like ancient Job, who said: "Man, born of woman, is short-lived and glutted with agitation." (Job 14:1) Christians are not immune to the stresses and strains of these "critical times hard to deal with," and it is not surprising that faithful servants of Jehovah sometimes become discouraged.—2 Timothy 3:1.

² Still, Christians can be joyful, even when under trial. (Acts 5:40, 41) To understand how this is possible, consider first what joy is. Joy has been defined as "the emotion excited by the acquisition or expectation of good."^{*} Consequently, if we take the time to count our present blessings while meditating on the joys that await us in God's new world, we can be joyful.

^{*} See *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, page 119, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

1, 2. (a) Why do many lack joy in life? (b) What is joy, and how can we cultivate it?

³ Everyone has some blessings for which to be grateful. A family head may lose his job. Naturally, he is concerned. He wants to provide for his loved ones. Still, if he is physically strong and in good health, he can be grateful for that. If he finds employment, he will be able to work hard. On the other hand, a Christian woman may have been stricken with a debilitating illness. Yet, she may give thanks for the support of loving friends and family members who help her face her illness with dignity and courage. And all true Christians, regardless of their circumstances, can rejoice in the privilege of knowing Jehovah, "the happy God," and Jesus Christ, "the happy and only Potentate." (1 Timothy 1:11; 6:15) Yes, Jehovah God and Jesus Christ are supremely happy. They have maintained their joy despite the fact that conditions on earth are far different from what Jehovah intended in the beginning. Their example can teach us much about how to maintain our joy.

3. In what sense can it be said that everyone has at least some reasons to rejoice?

They Have Never Lost Their Joy

⁴ In the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve enjoyed radiant health and had perfect minds. They had productive work to do and ideal surroundings in which to do it. Best of all, they had the privilege of regularly communicating with Jehovah. It was God's purpose that they enjoy a happy future. But our first parents were not satisfied with all these good gifts; they stole the forbidden fruit from "the tree of the knowledge of good and bad." This disobedient act laid the groundwork for all the unhappiness that we, their descendants, are experiencing today.—Genesis 2:15-17; 3:6; Romans 5:12.

⁵ However, Jehovah did not allow the ungrateful attitude of Adam and Eve to rob him of his joy. He was confident that the hearts of at least some of their offspring would be moved to serve him. He was so confident, in fact, that even before Adam and Eve produced their first child, he announced his purpose to redeem their obedient descendants! (Genesis 1:31; 3:15) In the centuries that followed, the majority of mankind walked in the footsteps of Adam and Eve, but Jehovah did not turn his back on the human family because of such widespread disobedience. Rather, he centered his attention on the men and women who 'made his heart rejoice,' those who made a real effort to please him because they loved him.—Proverbs 27:11; Hebrews 6:10.

⁶ What about Jesus—how did he maintain his joy? As a mighty spirit creature in heaven, Jesus had every opportunity to observe the activities of men and women on earth. Their imperfections were obvious, yet Jesus loved them. (Proverbs 8:31) Later, when he came to earth and actually "resided among" humans,

4, 5. (a) How did Jehovah react when the first humans rebelled? (b) In what way did Jehovah keep a positive attitude toward mankind?

6, 7. What factors helped Jesus to remain joyful?

his view of mankind did not change. (John 1:14) What enabled the perfect Son of God to maintain such a positive view of the sinful human family?

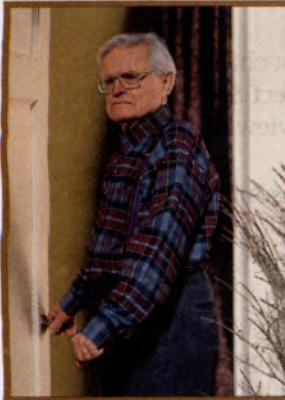
⁷ First of all, Jesus was reasonable in his expectations both of himself and of others. He knew that he was not going to convert the world. (Matthew 10:32-39) So he rejoiced when even one sincere person responded favorably to the Kingdom message. Although the conduct and attitude of his disciples sometimes left much to be desired, Jesus knew that at heart they really wanted to do God's will, and he loved them on that account. (Luke 9:46; 22:24, 28-32, 60-62) Significantly, in prayer to his heavenly Father, Jesus summarized the positive course that his disciples had taken up to that point: "They have observed your word."—John 17:6.

⁸ Without doubt, all of us would benefit from reflecting on the example set by Jehovah God and Christ Jesus in this respect. Can we more fully imitate Jehovah perhaps by not becoming overly concerned when things do not work out just as we had hoped? Can we follow more closely in Jesus' footsteps by maintaining a positive viewpoint toward our present circumstances, as well as by being reasonable in what we expect of ourselves and others? Let us see how some of these principles might be applied in a practical way in an area that is dear to the hearts of zealous Christians everywhere—the field ministry.

Maintain a Positive View of the Ministry

⁹ Jehovah wants us to be joyful in his service. Our joy should not be contingent on the results that we obtain. (Luke 10:17, 20) The prophet Jeremiah preached for years in

8. Name some ways in which we can imitate Jehovah and Jesus when it comes to maintaining our joy.
9. How was Jeremiah's joy rekindled, and how can his example help us?



People in our territory can change



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unproductive territory. When he focused on the negative reaction of the people, he lost his joy. (Jeremiah 20:8) But when he meditated on the beauty of the message itself, his joy was rekindled. Jeremiah said to Jehovah: “Your words were found, and I proceeded to eat them; and your word becomes to me the exultation and the rejoicing of my heart; for your name has been called upon me, O Jehovah.” (Jeremiah 15:16) Yes, Jeremiah rejoiced in his privilege of preaching God’s word. We can too.

¹⁰ Even if the majority refuse to respond to the good news, we have every reason to be joyful as we engage in the field ministry. Remember that Jehovah was clearly confident that some humans would be moved to serve him. Like Jehovah, we should never give up hope that at least some will eventually see the issue and accept the Kingdom message. We must not forget that people’s circumstances change. When faced with some unexpected loss or crisis, even the most self-

10. How can we preserve our joy in the ministry even if our territory is not at present productive?

satisfied individual may begin thinking seriously about the meaning of life. Will you be there to help when such a person becomes ‘conscious of his spiritual need’? (Matthew 5:3) Why, someone in your territory may be ready to listen to the good news the very next time you call!

¹¹ The makeup of our territory can also change. Consider an example. In a small town, there lived a close-knit group of young married couples with children. When Jehovah’s Witnesses called, they met with the same response at every door, “We are not interested!” If someone did show interest in the Kingdom message, the neighbors lost no time in discouraging further contact with the Witnesses. Needless to say, it was a challenge to preach there. Nevertheless, the Witnesses did not give up; they kept right on preaching. With what result?

¹² In time, many of the children in that town grew up, got married, and settled down there. Realizing that their way of life had not resulted in genuine happiness, some of these young adults began searching for the truth. They found it when they responded favorably to the good news proclaimed by the Witnesses. So it was that after many years, the little congregation began to grow. Imagine the joy of the Kingdom publishers who did not give up! May persistence in sharing the glorious Kingdom message bring joy to us too!

Fellow Believers Will Support You

¹³ When pressures mount or when life deals you a crushing blow, where can you

11, 12. What took place in one town, and what can we learn from it?

13. To whom can we turn when we are discouraged?

turn for comfort? Millions of Jehovah's dedicated servants turn first to Jehovah in prayer, then to their Christian brothers and sisters. While on earth, Jesus himself valued the support of his disciples. On the night before his death, he spoke of them as "the ones that have stuck with me in my trials." (Luke 22:28) Of course, those disciples were imperfect, but their loyalty was a comfort to the Son of God. We too can draw strength from fellow worshipers.

¹⁴ A Christian couple named Michel and Diane learned how valuable the support of their brothers and sisters can be. Their 20-year-old son, Jonathan, a Christian full of life and promise, was diagnosed with a brain tumor. The doctors valiantly tried to save him, but Jonathan's physical condition worsened until late one afternoon, he fell asleep in death. Michel and Diane were devastated. They realized that the Service Meeting, scheduled for that evening, was almost over. Still, desperately needing comfort, they asked the elder who was with them to accompany them to the Kingdom Hall. They arrived just as the congregation was being informed of Jonathan's death. After the meeting, the tearful parents were surrounded by their brothers and sisters, who hugged them and offered words of comfort. Recalls Diane: "We felt empty when we arrived at the hall, but what comfort we received from the brothers—how they uplifted us! Although they could not take away our pain, they helped us to bear up under the pressure!" —Romans 1:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 12:21-26.

¹⁵ Adversity caused Michel and Diane to draw closer to their brothers. It also caused them to draw closer to each other. Says Michel: "I have learned to cherish my dear wife even more. In moments of discour-

14, 15. What helped one couple to cope with the death of their son, and what do you learn from their experience?

ment, we talk to each other about Bible truth and how Jehovah is sustaining us." Diane adds: "The Kingdom hope means even more to us now."

¹⁶ Yes, our Christian brothers and sisters can serve as "a strengthening aid" to us during life's difficult moments and thus help us to preserve our joy. (Colossians 4:11) Of course, they cannot read our minds. When we need support, therefore, it is good to let them know. Then we can express genuine appreciation for whatever comfort our brothers are able to provide, viewing it as coming from Jehovah.—Proverbs 12:25; 17:17.

Look at Your Congregation

¹⁷ The closer you look at fellow believers, the more you will learn to appreciate them and find joy in their association. Look at your congregation. What do you see? Is there a single parent struggling to raise her children in the way of the truth? Have you given much thought to the fine example she sets? Try to imagine some of the problems that she faces. A single mother named Jeanine mentions some of these: loneliness, unwanted advances from men at work, a severely restricted budget. But the greatest hurdle of all, she says, involves caring for her children's emotional needs, since each child is unique. Jeanine brings up another problem: "It can be a real challenge to reject the tendency to make your son the head of the household so as to make up for the absence of a husband. I have a daughter, and it is hard to remember not to overburden her by making her my confidante." Like thousands of God-fearing single parents, Jeanine works full-time and cares for her household. She also studies the Bible with her children, trains them in the

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16. Why is it important to take the initiative in letting our brothers know of our needs?
 17. What challenges does one single mother face, and how do we view people like her?



What challenges do those in your congregation face?

ministry, and brings them to congregation meetings. (Ephesians 6:4) How happy Jehovah must be as he daily observes this family's efforts to maintain integrity! Does it not bring joy to our hearts to have such ones in our midst? Yes, indeed.

¹⁸ Look again at your congregation. You may see faithful widows or widowers who are "never missing" from the meetings. (Luke 2:37) Do they get lonely at times? Of course. They sorely miss their mates! But they keep busy in Jehovah's service and take a personal interest in others. Their stable, positive attitude adds to the joy of the congregation! A Christian who has served in the full-time ministry for more than 30 years remarked: "One of my greatest joys is seeing older brothers and sisters who have come through many trials still serving Jehovah faithfully!"

^{18, 19.} Illustrate how we can deepen our appreciation for members of the congregation.

Yes, older Christians among us are a great encouragement to younger ones.

¹⁹ What of the new ones who have only recently begun to associate with the congregation? Are we not stimulated when they express their faith at the meetings? Think of the progress they have made since they began studying the Bible. Jehovah must be very pleased with them. Are we? Do we express

Can You Answer?

- How is joy described?
- How can maintaining a positive attitude help us remain joyful?
- What can help us have a positive view of our congregation's territory?
- In what ways do you appreciate the brothers and sisters in your congregation?

our approval, commanding them for their efforts?

²⁰ Are you married, single, or a single parent? Are you a fatherless (or motherless) boy or girl, a widow or a widower? Are you one who has been associated with the congregation for many years or one who only recently started to associate? Be assured that your faithful example is encouraging to all of us. And when you join in singing a Kingdom song, when you make a comment or handle a student assignment in the Theocratic Minis-

try School, your contribution adds to our joy. Better still, it brings joy to Jehovah's heart.

²¹ Yes, even in these troublesome times, we can be joyful in worshiping our happy God. We have many reasons to respond to Paul's encouragement: "Continue to rejoice, . . . and the God of love and of peace will be with you." (2 Corinthians 13:11) What, though, if we are confronted by a natural disaster, persecution, or severe economic hardship? Is it possible to maintain our joy even in such situations? Draw your own conclusions as you consider the following article.

20. Why can it be said that each congregation member plays an important role in the congregation?

21. What do we have many reasons to do, but what questions arise?

MAINTAIN YOUR JOY IN JEHOVAH'S SERVICE

"Always rejoice in the Lord. Once more I will say, Rejoice!"—PHILIPPIANS 4:4.

JAMES, a 70-year-old Christian living in Sierra Leone, had worked hard all his life. Imagine his joy when he had finally saved up enough money to purchase a modest four-room house! Some time after James and his family moved in, however, civil war broke out in that country, and their home was burned to the ground. They lost their house, but they did not lose their joy. Why not?

² James and his family kept their minds focused, not on what they had lost, but on what yet remained. James explains: "Even during the time of horror, we held meetings, read the Bible, prayed together, and shared what little we had with others. We were able to maintain our joy because we focused on the wonderful relationship we have with Jehovah." By counting their blessings, the greatest of which is having a close personal relationship with Jehovah, these faithful Christians were

1, 2. How were one brother and his family able to maintain their joy despite losing everything they owned?



Paul and Silas were joyful even in prison

able to "continue to rejoice." (2 Corinthians 13:11) Of course, their distressing circumstances were not easy to endure. But they did not cease to rejoice in Jehovah.

³ The early Christians encountered trials comparable to those experienced by James and his family. Yet, the apostle Paul wrote these words to Hebrew Christians: "[You] joyfully took the plundering of your belongings." Paul then explained the source of their joy: "Knowing you yourselves have a better and an abiding possession." (Hebrews 10:34) Yes, those first-century Christians had a powerful hope. They confidently looked forward to receiving something that could not be plundered—the unfadable "crown of life" in God's heavenly Kingdom. (Revelation 2:10) Today, our Christian hope—be it heavenly or earthly—can help us to maintain our joy even when we face adversities.

"Rejoice in the Hope"

⁴ The apostle Paul encouraged fellow believers in Rome to "rejoice in the hope" of everlasting life. (Romans 12:12) That was timely advice for the Romans. Less than a decade after Paul wrote to them, they came under severe persecution, and some were tortured to death by order of Emperor Nero. Their faith that God would give them the promised crown of life undoubtedly sustained them in their suffering. What of us today?

⁵ As Christians, we too expect to be persecuted. (2 Timothy 3:12) Further, we realize that "time and unforeseen occurrence" befall us all. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) An accident can take the life of someone we love. A fatal illness can strike down a parent or a close friend. Unless we keep our Kingdom hope clearly in focus,

3. How did some early Christians maintain their joy?

4, 5. (a) Why was Paul's advice to "rejoice in the hope" so timely for the Romans? (b) What might cause a Christian to lose sight of his hope?

we may be endangered spiritually when such trials occur. Accordingly, we do well to ask ourselves, 'Do I "rejoice in the hope"? How often do I take the time to meditate on it? Is the coming Paradise real to me? Do I see myself there? Am I as eager for the end of the present system of things to come as I was when I first learned the truth?' This last question deserves serious thought. Why? Because if we are in good health, earn a comfortable living, and live in a part of the earth that is more or less unaffected by war, food shortage, or natural disasters, we could—at least for the moment—lose sight of the pressing need for God's new world to come.

⁶ Paul further counseled the Romans to "endure under tribulation." (Romans 12:12) Paul was no stranger to tribulation. Once, he saw in a vision a man who invited him to "step over into Macedonia" to help people there to learn about Jehovah. (Acts 16:9) At that, Paul, together with Luke, Silas, and Timothy, set sail for Europe. What awaited those zealous missionaries? Tribulation! After they had preached in the Macedonian city of Philippi, Paul and Silas were flogged and thrown into prison. Clearly, some citizens of Philippi were not merely indifferent to the Kingdom message—they were bitterly opposed. Did this turn of events cause the zealous missionaries to lose their joy? No. After they had been beaten and thrown into prison, "about the middle of the night, Paul and Silas were praying and *praising God with song.*" (Acts 16:25, 26) Of course, the pain from the beating gave Paul and Silas no joy, but that is not what the two missionaries focused on. Their thoughts were centered on Jehovah and the ways in which he was blessing them. By joyfully 'enduring under tribulation,' Paul and Silas served as fine examples for their brothers in Philippi and elsewhere.

6. (a) When Paul and Silas suffered tribulation, on what did they focus their thoughts? (b) How can the example of Paul and Silas encourage us today?

⁷ Paul wrote: "Persevere in prayer." (Romans 12:12) Do you pray when you have anxious moments? What do you pray about? Likely you mention your specific problem and ask for Jehovah's help. But you can also include expressions of thanksgiving for the blessings you enjoy. When problems arise, reflecting on Jehovah's goodness in his dealings with us helps us to "rejoice in the hope." David, whose life was far from trouble free, wrote: "Many things you yourself have done, O Jehovah my God, even your wonderful works and your thoughts toward us; there is none to be compared to you. Were I inclined to tell and speak of them, they have become more numerous than I can recount." (Psalm 40:5) If, like David, we regularly meditate on the blessings that we receive from Jehovah, we will find it impossible not to be joyful.

Keep a Positive Spirit

⁸ Jesus encourages his followers to keep a positive spirit when they meet with various trials. He says: "Happy are you when people

7. Why should our prayers include thanksgiving?
8. What helps a Christian to stay happy when undergoing persecution?

reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake." (Matthew 5:11) What reason do we have for happiness under such circumstances? Our ability to withstand opposition is proof that Jehovah's spirit is upon us. The apostle Peter told fellow Christians in his day: "If you are being reproached for the name of Christ, you are happy, because the spirit of glory, even the spirit of God, is resting upon you." (1 Peter 4:13, 14) By means of his spirit, Jehovah will also help us to endure and, as a result, to maintain our joy.

⁹ Even when we are in the direst of circumstances, we can find reasons to rejoice. A Christian named Adolf found that to be so. He lives in a country where the work of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned for many years. Adolf and several of his companions were arrested and sentenced to serve long prison terms because they refused to renounce their Bible-based beliefs. Prison life was hard, but like Paul and Silas, Adolf and his companions found reasons to give thanks to God. Their prison experience, they noted, helped them to strengthen their faith and to develop

9. What helped some brothers to find reasons for joy when in prison for their faith?



Is your sight focused on the joyful prospect of God's new world?



valuable Christian qualities, such as generosity, empathy, and brotherly affection. For example, when a prisoner received a package from home, he shared its contents with fellow believers, who viewed these extra provisions as coming from Jehovah, the ultimate Giver of "every good gift and every perfect present." Such acts of kindness brought joy both to the giver and to the recipients. So the very experience that was intended to break their faith actually made them stronger spiritually!—James 1:17; Acts 20:35.

¹⁰ Ella, who also lives in a country where the Kingdom work was long banned, was arrested for sharing her Christian hope with others. For eight months, she was subjected to relentless interrogation. When finally brought to trial, she was handed a ten-year sentence in a prison where there were no other worshipers of Jehovah. Ella was only 24 years of age at the time.

¹¹ Of course, Ella did not look forward to spending most of her young adulthood in a prison cell. But since she could not change her situation, she decided to change her viewpoint. Accordingly, she began to view the prison as her own personal witnessing territory. "There was so much preaching to do," she says, "that the years passed very quickly." After more than five years, Ella was interrogated again. Realizing that prison bars had not destroyed her faith, her interrogators told her: "We cannot release you; you have not changed." "But I *have* changed!" was Ella's firm reply. "I am in *better* spirits now than when I first went to prison, and my faith is *much stronger* than before!" And she added: "If you do not want to release me, I will stay until Jehovah sees fit to deliver me." Five and a half years of confinement had not robbed

10, 11. How did a sister handle relentless interrogation followed by a long prison term?

Ella of her joy! She learned to be satisfied in whatever circumstances she found herself. Can you learn something from her example? —Hebrews 13:5.

¹² Do not conclude that Ella possesses some unusual gift that allows her to face such challenges. Referring to the period of interrogation that she underwent in the months before she received her sentence, Ella admits: "I remember my teeth chattering, and I felt like a frightened sparrow." However, Ella has strong faith in Jehovah. She has learned to put her trust in him. (Proverbs 3:5-7) As a result, God is more real to her than before. She explains: "Every time I entered the interrogation room, I felt peace come over me. . . . The more terrifying the situation, the deeper the peace became." Jehovah was the source of that peace. The apostle Paul explains: "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."—Philippians 4:6, 7.

¹³ Ella, who has since been released, maintained her joy despite hardship. She did this, not in her own strength, but in the strength that Jehovah provided her. The same was true of the apostle Paul, who wrote: "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather boast as respects my weaknesses, that the power of the Christ may like a tent remain over me. . . . For when I am weak, then I am powerful."—2 Corinthians 12:9, 10.

¹⁴ The pressures you personally face today may be somewhat different from those

12. What can bring peace of mind to a Christian in difficult circumstances?

13. What assures us that if tribulation comes our way, we will have the strength to endure?

14. Illustrate how a Christian could take a positive view of a trying situation and what the result might be.

Additional Reasons for Being Joyful

As Christians, we have many reasons to rejoice. Consider the following:

1. We know Jehovah.
2. We have learned the truth of God's Word.
3. We can have our sins forgiven by means of our faith in Jesus' sacrifice.
4. God's Kingdom is ruling—the new world will soon be here!
5. Jehovah has brought us into a spiritual paradise.
6. We enjoy wholesome Christian association.
7. We have the privilege of sharing in the preaching work.
8. We are alive, and we have a measure of strength.

How many other reasons for joy can you mention?

we have here considered. Still, whatever form they take, pressures are difficult to cope with. For example, your employer may be very critical of your work—far more so than of the work of employees who belong to other religious faiths. It may not be possible for you to look for other employment. How might you maintain your joy? Recall Adolf and his companions, whose prison experience taught them to develop vital qualities. If you make a sincere effort to satisfy your employer—even one who is "hard to please"—you will develop such Christian qualities as endurance and long-suffering. (1 Peter 2:18) Furthermore, you may well become more valuable as an employee, which may increase your chances of obtaining more satisfying employment some day. Let us now discuss some other



ways in which we can maintain our joy in Jehovah's service.

Simplifying Leads to Joy

¹⁵ You may have little choice in the type of secular work you do or about where you work, but there may be other aspects of your life over which you can exercise some control. Consider the following experience.

¹⁶ A Christian couple invited an elder to their home for a meal. In the course of the evening, the brother and his wife confided that of late they had been feeling overwhelmed by the pressures of life. Although they both had demanding full-time jobs,

15-17. What did one couple learn could relieve stress, even though its source could not be completely removed?

they were not in a position to look for other work. They wondered how long they would be able to cope.

¹⁷ When asked for advice, the elder responded, "Simplify." How? The husband and his wife were spending up to three hours each day commuting to and from work. The elder, who knew the couple well, suggested that they consider moving closer to their place of employment, so that they would be able to reduce the amount of time that they spent traveling to and from work each day. The time saved could be spent in caring for other important matters—or just getting some rest. If life's pressures are robbing you of a measure of joy, why not see whether you can get relief by making some adjustments?

¹⁸ Another way to reduce pressure is to think carefully before making decisions. For example, one Christian decided to build a house. He chose a very complicated design, although he had never built a house before. He now realizes that he could have avoided unnecessary problems if he had 'considered his steps' before choosing the design for his home. (Proverbs 14:15) Another Christian agreed to back a loan for a fellow believer. According to the agreement, if the borrower was unable to repay the loan, the one backing it would be obliged to do so. At first, all went well, but in time the borrower began to renege. The lender became alarmed and demanded that the backer repay the entire loan. That put great pressure on the backer. Could it have been avoided if he had given more careful consideration to all factors before he agreed to assume responsibility for the debt?—Proverbs 17:18.

¹⁹ When we get tired, let us never conclude that we can reduce the pressure on us and regain our joy by cutting back on personal Bi-

18. Why is it vital to think carefully before making decisions?
19. What are some ways in which we can reduce stress in our lives?

ble study, field service, and meeting attendance. Why, these are vital ways in which we can receive Jehovah's holy spirit, a product of which is joy. (Galatians 5:22) Christian activities are always refreshing and usually not excessively tiring. (Matthew 11:28-30) It is far more likely that secular or recreational activities, not spiritual ones, are contributing to our fatigue. Learning to go to bed at a reasonable hour may help put us back on track. A little extra rest can go a long way. N. H. Knorr, who served as a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses until his death, used to tell missionaries: "When you get discouraged, the first thing to do is to get some rest. You will be surprised how much better almost any problem seems after you have had a good night's sleep!"

²⁰ Christians are privileged to serve "the happy God." (1 Timothy 1:11) As we have seen, we can maintain our joy even when we are beset by serious problems. Let us keep the Kingdom hope before us, adjust our viewpoint when necessary, and keep our life simple. Then, whatever situation we find ourselves in, we will respond to the apostle Paul's words: "Always rejoice in the Lord. Once more I will say, Rejoice!"—Philippians 4:4.

20. (a) Summarize some of the ways we can maintain our joy. (b) What reasons can you think of for being joyful? (See box on page 17.)

Give Thoughtful Consideration to These Questions:

- Why should Christians keep the Kingdom hope sharply in focus?
- What can help us maintain our joy in difficult circumstances?
- Why should we try to simplify our lives?
- In what areas have some simplified their lives?

God's Name Cleared of Reproach

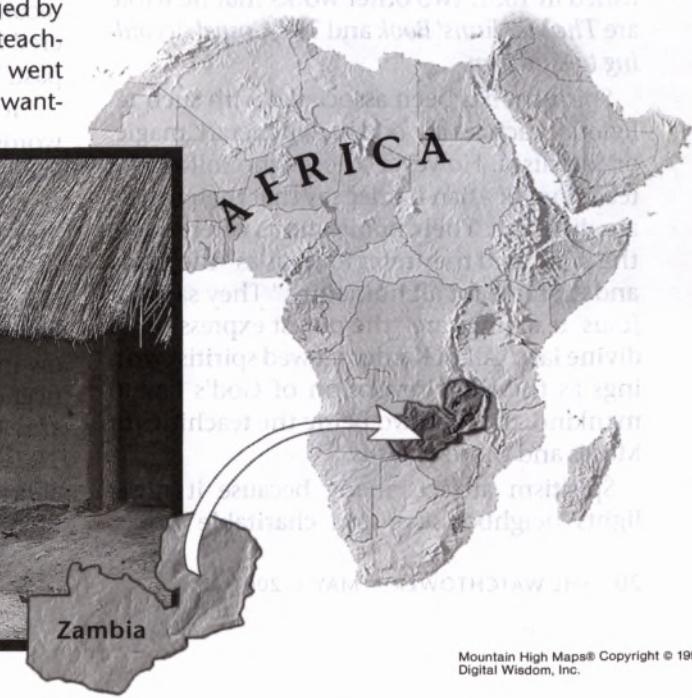
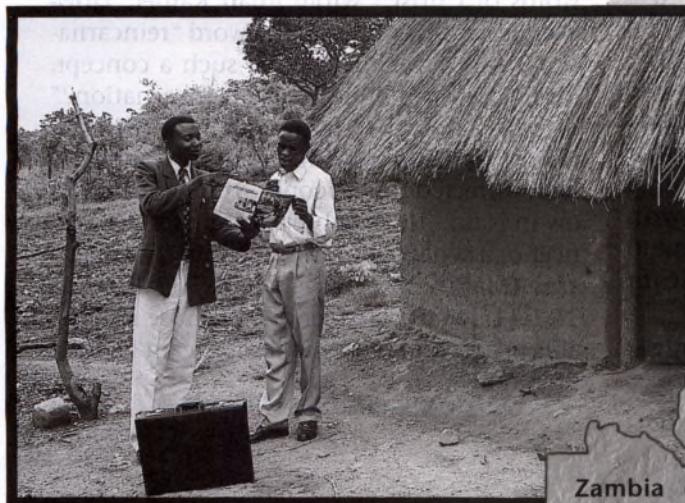
GOD'S Word, the Bible, says: "Maintain your conduct fine among the nations, that, in the thing in which they are speaking against you as evildoers, they may as a result of your fine works of which they are eyewitnesses glorify God in the day for his inspection." (1 Peter 2: 12) True Christians, therefore, endeavor to maintain fine conduct in order to avoid bringing reproach upon Jehovah's name.

In a remote area of Zambia called Senanga, a schoolteacher had a radio stolen from his house. Since Jehovah's Witnesses had been preaching in the area, the man accused them of the theft. He reported the matter to the police, claiming that the Witnesses had stolen his radio. As proof that the Witnesses had been to his house, he produced a tract he had found on the floor. However, the police refused to believe him. They advised him to go and make a more thorough investigation.

The Witnesses who had worked in the teacher's neighborhood that day were encouraged by the body of elders to go and talk to the teacher about the matter. Some of the brothers went and spoke to him, explaining that they want-

ed to clear Jehovah's name of reproach. During their discussion, they told him that they had met a young man in his house and had given a tract to him. From their description, the teacher recognized the man. In fact, they belonged to the same church. The teacher spoke with the young man, but he denied the charges. The teacher then discussed the matter with the young man's parents and went back home. Within an hour, the young man's mother returned the stolen radio.

Moved by remorse, the teacher approached the body of elders and asked for forgiveness for making false accusations. The elders accepted his apology but requested that the findings be made public so that everyone would know that the Witnesses were innocent. An announcement was made at the school, thus clearing Jehovah's name of reproach. Jehovah's Witnesses can keep on preaching freely in the area.



SPIRITISM and the Search for True Spirituality

ALL of us have spiritual as well as material needs. That is why so many ask such questions as, What is the purpose of life, why do people suffer, and what happens to us when we die? Many sincere people seek answers to these and similar questions at séances, where they consult mediums (also called channels), hoping to communicate with spirits of the dead. This practice is called spiritism.

Adherents of spiritism are found in many countries, and they gather in congregations and churches. In Brazil, for example, an estimated 4,000,000 spiritists follow the teachings codified by Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail, a 19th-century French educator and philosopher who wrote under the name of Allan Kardec. Kardec first became interested in spiritistic phenomena in 1854. He later posed questions to mediums in many places and recorded the answers in *The Book of Spirits*, published in 1857. Two other works that he wrote are *The Mediums' Book* and *The Gospel According to Spiritism*.

Spiritism has been associated with such religious practices as voodoo, witchcraft, magic, or Satanism. However, those who follow the teachings of Allan Kardec say that their beliefs are different. Their publications often quote the Bible, and they refer to Jesus as "the guide and example for all humanity." They say that Jesus' teachings are "the purest expression of divine law." Allan Kardec viewed spiritist writings as the third revelation of God's law to mankind, the first two being the teachings of Moses and those of Jesus.

Spiritism attracts many because it highlights neighbor love and charitable works.

One spiritist belief is: "Without charity there is no salvation." Many spiritists are active in social work, promoting hospitals, schools, and other institutions. Such efforts are commendable. How, though, do the beliefs of spiritists compare with Jesus' teachings as recorded in the Bible? Let us take two examples: the hope for the dead and the reason for suffering.

What Hope for the Dead?

Many spiritists believe in reincarnation. One spiritist publication states: "Reincarnation is the only doctrine that measures up to our idea of divine justice; it is the only doctrine that can explain the future and strengthen our hopes." Spiritists explain that at death the soul, or "incarnated spirit," leaves the body—like a butterfly emerging from its cocoon. They believe that these spirits are later reincarnated as humans in order to purge sins committed in an earlier life. But there is no recollection of those earlier sins. "God considered it convenient that a veil be cast over the past," says *The Gospel According to Spiritism*.

"To deny reincarnation is also to deny the words of Christ," wrote Allan Kardec. However, Jesus never uttered the word "reincarnation" and never mentioned such a concept. (See "Does the Bible Teach Reincarnation?" on page 22.) Rather, Jesus taught the resurrection of the dead. During his earthly ministry, he resurrected three people—the son of a widow in Nain, the daughter of the presiding officer of a synagogue, and his close friend Lazarus. (Mark 5:22-24, 35-43; Luke 7:11-15; John 11:1-44) Let us consider one of those remarkable events and see what Jesus meant by "resurrection."

The Resurrection of Lazarus

Jesus heard that his friend Lazarus was sick. Two days later, he told his disciples: "Lazarus our friend has gone to rest, but I am journeying there to awaken him from sleep." The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant, so he said plainly: "Lazarus has died." When Jesus finally came to Lazarus' tomb, the man had been dead for four days. Still, Jesus ordered that the stone sealing the tomb's entrance be taken away. Then he cried out: "Lazarus, come on out!" At that, something wonderful happened. "The man that had been dead came out with his feet and hands bound with wrappings, and his countenance was bound about with a cloth. Jesus said to them: 'Loose him and let him go.'"—John 11:5, 6, 11-14, 43, 44.

Clearly, this was no reincarnation. Jesus said that the dead Lazarus was sleeping, unconscious. As the Bible expresses it, 'his thoughts had perished.' He was "conscious of nothing at all." (Psalm 146:4; Ecclesiastes 9:5) The resurrected Lazarus was not a different person with a reincarnated spirit. He had the same personality, was of the same age, and had the same memories. He resumed his life where he had prematurely left it and returned to the loved ones who had mourned his death.—John 12:1, 2.

The resurrection hope reveals God's deep interest in us as individuals



Later, Lazarus died again. So, what purpose did his resurrection serve? Along with the other resurrections Jesus performed, it reinforces our trust in God's promise that His faithful servants will be raised from the dead in His due time. Those miracles of Jesus add powerful weight to his words: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life."—John 11:25.

Regarding that future resurrection, Jesus said: "The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear [my] voice and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life, those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment." (John 5:28, 29) As was the case with Lazarus, that will be a resurrection of dead *people*. It will not be a reuniting of conscious spirits with resurrected bodies that have decomposed and may even have been absorbed into other living organisms. Resurrecting the dead is well within the capacity of the Creator of heaven and earth, who is infinite in wisdom and power.

Does not the doctrine of the resurrection, as taught by Jesus Christ, reveal God's deep love of humans as individuals? But what about the second question mentioned earlier?

What Is the Reason for Suffering?

Much human suffering comes about because of things that unwise, inexperienced, or even wicked people do. What, though, of tragic events that cannot be directly blamed on people? For example, why are there accidents and natural disasters? Why are some children born with congenital defects? Allan Kardec viewed such things as punishments. He wrote: "If we are being punished then wrong must have been committed. If that wrong is not of the present life then it must come from a past existence." Spiritists are taught to pray: "Lord, You are all justice. The illness You saw

DOES THE BIBLE TEACH REINCARNATION?

Is the doctrine of reincarnation supported by any Bible texts? Consider some of the scriptures that believers in this doctrine have used:

"For all, the Prophets and the Law, prophesied until John . . . He himself is 'Elijah who is destined to come.'"—Matthew 11:13, 14.

Was John the Baptizer Elijah reborn? When asked: "Are you Elijah?" John clearly answered: "I am not." (John 1:21) It had, however, been foretold that John would precede the Messiah "with Elijah's spirit and power." (Luke 1:17; Malachi 4:5, 6) In other words, John the Baptizer was Elijah in the sense that he carried out a work comparable to that of Elijah.

"Unless anyone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Do not marvel because I told you, You people must be born again."—John 3:3, 7.

One of the apostles later wrote: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Peter 1:3, 4, *Revised Standard Version*; John 1:12, 13) Clearly, the rebirth that Jesus referred to was a spiritual experience that would occur while his followers were still alive, not a future reincarnation.

"When a man is dead, he lives forever: when my days of existence on Earth have finished, I will wait, seeing that I shall return again."—A "Greek translation" of Job 14:14 quoted in *The Gospel According to Spiritism*.

The *Revised Standard Version* renders this verse: "If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my service I would wait, till my release should come." Read the context of that verse. You will see that the dead await in the grave for their "release." (Verse 13) While waiting, they are nonexistent. "A man that has died is utterly gone; and when a mortal is fallen, he is no more."—Job 14:10, Bagster's *Septuagint* version.

fit to send me must be deserved . . . I accept it as an expiation for my past and as a test of my faith and submission to Your blessed will."—*The Gospel According to Spiritism*.

Did Jesus teach such a thing? No. Jesus well knew the Bible statement: "Time and unforeseen occurrence befall them all." (Ecclesiastes 9:11) He knew that sometimes bad things just happen. They do not have to be a punishment for sins.

Consider this event in Jesus' life: "As [Jesus] was passing along he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him: 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, so that he was born blind?'" The reply Jesus gave was most enlightening: "Neither this man sinned nor his parents, but it was in order that the works of God might be made manifest in his case. After he said these things, he spit on the ground and made a clay with the saliva, and put his clay upon the man's eyes and said to him: 'Go wash in the pool of Siloam.' . . . And so he went off and washed, and came back seeing."—John 9:1-3, 6, 7.

Jesus' words showed that neither the man nor his parents were responsible for his congenital blindness. So Jesus gave no support to the idea that the man was being punished for sins committed in a previous life. True, Jesus knew that all humans inherit sin. But they inherit the sin of Adam, not sins they committed before they were born. Because of Adam's sin, all humans are born physically imperfect, subject to sickness and death. (Job 14:4; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12; 9:11) In fact, that was a situation that Jesus had been sent to remedy. John the Baptizer said that Jesus was "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world!"—John 1:29.*

Notice, too, that Jesus did not say that God had deliberately caused the man to be born

* For a discussion of how sin and death originated, see chapter 6 of the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

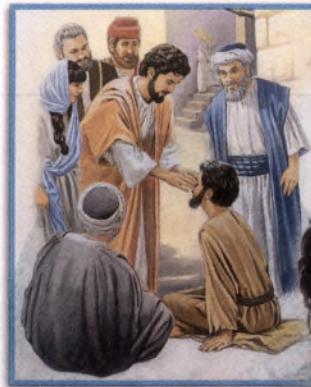
blind so that Jesus could come along and heal him some day. What a cruel, cynical act that would have been! Would that have brought praise to God? No. Rather, the miraculous cure of the blind man served to ‘make manifest the works of God.’ Like the many other cures Jesus performed, it reflected God’s sincere love for suffering mankind and confirmed the trustworthiness of His promise to bring an end to all human sickness and suffering in His due time.—Isaiah 33:24.

Is it not comforting to discover that instead of causing suffering, our heavenly Father gives “good things to those asking him”? (Matthew 7:11) What glory it will bring to the Most High when the eyes of the blind are opened, the ears of the deaf are unstopped, and the lame walk, jump, and run!—Isaiah 35:5, 6.

Satisfying Our Spiritual Needs

Jesus declared: “Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah’s mouth.” (Matthew 4:4) Yes, our spiritual needs are satisfied when we read God’s Word, the Bible, and conduct our lives in harmony with it. Consulting spirit mediums does not truly satisfy our spiritual needs. Indeed, such a practice is explicitly condemned in what Allan Kardec referred to as the first revelation of God’s law.—Deuteronomy 18:10-13.

Many, including spiritists, recognize that God is the Supreme Being, eternal, infinitely perfect, kind, good, and just. But the Bible reveals much more. It discloses that he has a personal name, Jehovah, which we must honor as Jesus did. (Matthew 6:9; John 17:6) It portrays God as a real person with whom humans can enjoy a close relationship. (Romans 8:38, 39) Reading the Bible, we learn



God will bring an end to all human suffering



that God is merciful and that he “has not done to us even according to our sins; nor according to our errors has he brought upon us what we deserve.” (Psalm 103:10) Through his written Word, the Sovereign Lord Jehovah reveals his love, supremacy, and reasonableness. He is the One who guides and protects obedient humans. Getting to know Jehovah and his Son, Jesus Christ, “means everlasting life.”—John 17:3.

The Bible provides all the information that we need about God’s purposes, and it tells us what we must do if we wish to please him. A careful examination of the Bible provides true and satisfying answers to our questions. The Bible also gives us guidance as to what is right and wrong, and it provides a solid hope. It assures us that in the near future, God “will wipe out every tear from [mankind’s] eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things [will] have passed away.” (Revelation 21:3, 4) By means of Jesus Christ, Jehovah will free mankind from inherited sin and imperfection, and obedient humans will inherit eternal life on a paradise earth. At that time, both their physical and spiritual needs will be completely satisfied.—Psalm 37:10, 11, 29; Proverbs 2:21, 22; Matthew 5:5.



PRESSING ON IN JEHOVAH'S WAY IS OUR STRENGTH AND JOY

AS TOLD BY

LUIGGI D. VALENTINO

"This is the way. Walk in it," Jehovah admonishes. (Isaiah 30:21)

Following this counsel has been my goal ever since my baptism 60 years ago.

This goal was set early on by the example of my parents, immigrants from Italy, who settled in Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A., in 1921. There they raised three children—my older brother, Mike, my younger sister, Lydia, and me.

MY PARENTS looked into different religions but eventually gave up in disappointment. Then one day in 1932, Dad was listening to a radio program in Italian. It was a broadcast by Jehovah's Witnesses, and Dad liked what he heard. He wrote for more information, and an Italian Witness from Jehovah's Witnesses' headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, looked us up. After a lively discus-

sion that lasted till daybreak, my parents were convinced that they had found the true religion.

Dad and Mom began attending Christian meetings and opened their home to traveling overseers. Although I was just a boy, these men let me accompany them in the preaching work and started me thinking about serving Jehovah full-time. One such visitor was Car-

ey W. Barber, now a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. Before long, in February 1941, I was baptized at the age of 14, and in 1944, I began serving as a pioneer in Cleveland. Mike and Lydia also embarked on the way of Bible truth. Mike served Jehovah till his death, and Lydia accompanied her husband, Harold Weidner, for 28 years in the traveling ministry. Today, they serve as special full-time ministers.

Prison Deepens My Resolve to Press On

In early 1945, I ended up in Ohio's Chillicothe Federal Prison because my Bible-trained conscience moved me to act in harmony with Isaiah 2:4, which speaks of beating swords into plowshares. At one time, the prison authorities allowed the Witness prisoners to have only a limited amount of Bible literature published by Jehovah's Witnesses. However, Witnesses from a nearby congregation helped out. At times, they dropped a few publications in the fields near the prison. The next morning, as the prisoners were taken to their work locations, they searched for those publications and then managed to get them into the prison. By the time I arrived at the prison, we were allowed to have more literature. Even so, I learned more than ever to value the spiritual food that Jehovah provides—a lesson I still remember every time I receive a new issue of *The Watchtower* or *Awake!*

Although we were allowed to hold congregation meetings in prison, non-Witnesses were not allowed to be present. Still, some prison officials and inmates attended secretly, and a few even accepted the truth. (Acts 16:30-34) Visits by Brother A. H. Macmillan were an outstanding source of comfort. He always assured us that the time we spent in prison was not in vain because it trained us for future assignments. That dear older brother touched my heart and deepened my resolve to walk in Jehovah's way.

I Gain a Companion

World War II ended, the prison gates opened, and I resumed pioneering, the full-time ministry. But in 1947 my father died. To support the family, I took up secular work and also became qualified to give medical massages—a skill that would help me out during a difficult period that my wife and I faced some 30 years later. But I am getting ahead of myself. First, let me tell you about my wife.

One afternoon in 1949 while I was in the Kingdom Hall, the phone rang. I picked it up and heard a sweet voice say: "My name is Christine Genchur. I'm one of Jehovah's Witnesses. I moved to Cleveland to find a job, and I want to associate with a congregation." Our Kingdom Hall was far from the area where she was living, but I liked the sound of her voice, so I gave her directions to our hall and encouraged her to come that Sunday—the day I was to deliver the public talk. On Sunday, I was the first person in the Kingdom Hall, yet no unfamiliar sister showed up. Throughout the talk, I kept glancing at the entrance, but no one came in. The next day I called her, and she said that she was not yet familiar with the bus system. So I volunteered to meet her to explain things better.

I learned that her parents, immigrants from Czechoslovakia, had begun associating with the Bible Students after reading the booklet *Where Are the Dead?* Her parents were baptized in 1935. In 1938, Christine's dad became the company servant (now called presiding overseer) of the congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Clymer, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., and in 1947, Christine was baptized at the age of 16. It did not take me long to fall in love with this beautiful, spiritually-minded sister. We were married on June 24, 1950, and since then Christine has been my faithful partner, ever willing to put God's Kingdom interests first. I am grateful to Jehovah that this capable

companion agreed to join her life to mine.
—Proverbs 31:10.

A Big Surprise

On November 1, 1951, we started pioneering together. Two years later, at a convention in Toledo, Ohio, Brothers Hugo Riemer and Albert Schroeder spoke to a group of pioneers interested in missionary service. We were among them. We were encouraged to continue pioneering in Cleveland, but the very next month, we received a big surprise—an invitation to attend the 23rd class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, starting in February 1954!

As we were driving to Gilead School, then in South Lansing, New York, Christine was so nervous that she kept telling me, "Go slower!" I said, "Christine, if we drive any slower, we'll be parked." After arriving at the campus, though, we soon felt more at ease. Brother Nathan Knorr welcomed the group of students and showed us around. He also explained how we could conserve water and electricity, stressing that thriftiness is a virtue when caring for Kingdom interests. That advice stuck in our minds. We still live by it.

Flying Down to Rio

Soon we graduated, and on December 10, 1954, we climbed aboard a plane in wintry New York City, excited about the prospect of flying down to our new assignment in sunny Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Peter and Billie Carrbello, fellow missionaries, traveled with us. The flight was to take 24 hours, with stopovers in Puerto Rico, Venezuela, and Belém in northern Brazil. However, because of engine problems, it was 36 hours

before we saw Rio de Janeiro below us. But what a magnificent sight! The city lights glistened like fiery diamonds on a velvet carpet, and the moon's silvery light shimmered on the waters of Guanabara Bay.

Several members of the Bethel family were waiting for us at the airport. After giving us a warm welcome, they drove us to the branch office, and about three o'clock in the morning, we rolled into bed. A few hours later, the wake-up bell reminded us that our first day as missionaries had begun!

An Early Lesson

We soon learned an important lesson. We had spent an evening at the home of a Witness family. When we wanted to walk back to the branch, the host objected, "No, you can't leave; it's raining," and he tried to insist we stay overnight. "Where we come from it rains too," I said, shrugging off his words with a laugh. And off we went.

Because of the mountains around Rio, rainwater quickly gathers and runs down into the city, often causing floods. Soon we were wading through the knee-deep water. Near the branch, the streets had turned into raging rivers with water up to our chest. We were soaked when we finally reached Bethel. The next day, Christine felt miserable and came down with typhoid fever, which left her weak for a long time. Needless to say, as new missionaries, we should have heeded the advice of experienced local Witnesses.

First Steps in the Missionary and Traveling Work

After this bumpy start, we eagerly began our field ministry. We read a presentation in Portuguese to



Newly arrived in
Rio de Janeiro

anyone we met, and we seemed to make about equal progress. One householder would say to Christine, "I understand you, but I can't understand him," pointing to me. Another householder would tell me, "I understand you but not her." Even so, we were thrilled to obtain over 100 *Watchtower* subscriptions during those first few weeks. In fact, several of our Bible students were baptized during our first year in Brazil, giving us a taste of how fruitful this missionary assignment would prove to be.

In the mid-1950's, many congregations in Brazil did not have regular visits by circuit overseers because of a shortage of qualified brothers. So although I was still learning the language and had not yet given a public talk in Portuguese, I was assigned to circuit work in the state of São Paulo in 1956.

Since the first congregation we visited had not received a circuit overseer's visit for two years, everyone had high expectations for the public talk. To prepare that talk, I cut out paragraphs from *Watchtower* articles in Portuguese and pasted the clippings on sheets of paper. That Sunday, the Kingdom Hall was packed. People were even sitting on the stage, all awaiting the big event. The talk, or rather the reading, began. Once in a while I looked up, and to my amazement no one was moving, not even the children. All were staring wide-eyed at me. I thought: 'My, Valentino, how your Portuguese has improved! These people are paying attention.' Years later, when I visited that congregation again, a brother who had been present at that first visit said: "Do you remember that public talk you gave? We didn't understand one word of it." I confessed that I had not understood much of that talk either.

That first year in circuit work, I often read Zechariah 4:6. The words, 'Not by power but by my spirit,' reminded me that Jehovah's spirit was the only reason the Kingdom work progressed. And progress it did, despite our obvious limitations.

Challenges and Blessings Along the Way

Circuit work meant traversing the country while lugging a typewriter, cartons of literature, suitcases, and briefcases. Christine wisely numbered our luggage so as not to overlook an item when scurrying from one bus to the next. It was not unusual to travel by bus for 15 hours over dirt roads to reach our next destination. At times, it was nerve-racking, especially when two buses going in opposite directions crossed a rickety bridge at the same time, passing so close that there was hardly room for a piece of tissue paper between them. We also traveled by train, by ship, and on horseback.

In 1961 we began serving in the district work, traveling from circuit to circuit instead of from congregation to congregation. Several evenings a week, we showed films produced by Jehovah's organization—each time at a different location. Often we had to act fast to outwit the local clergy, who tried to prevent these showings. In one town, the priest bullied an owner of a hall into canceling the contract he had made with us. After days of searching, we found another place, but we told no one and continued inviting everyone to the original location. Before the program started, Christine went to that hall and quietly directed those who wanted to see the film to the new location. That evening, 150 people saw the film, which had the fitting title *The New World Society in Action*.

Although the traveling work in isolated areas was taxing at times, the humble brothers who lived there were so appreciative of our visits and so hospitable in sharing their modest homes with us that we always thanked Jehovah that we could be with them. Befriending them resulted in heartwarming blessings for us. (Proverbs 19:17; Haggai 2:7) How sad we were, therefore, that after we had served for over 21 years in Brazil, our missionary days came to an end!

During a Crisis, Jehovah Showed Us the Way

In 1975, Christine underwent surgery. We resumed the traveling work, but Christine's health worsened. It seemed best to return to the United States so that she could receive medical care. In April 1976, we arrived in Long Beach, California, and stayed with my mother. After having lived abroad for two decades, we were at a loss as to how we could handle this situation. I began to give massages, and the earnings from that work kept us going. The state of California provided Christine a place in a hospital, but there she felt weaker every day because the doctors refused to treat her without giving her blood. Desperate, we beseeched Jehovah for guidance.

One afternoon when I was out in field service, I noticed a doctor's office, and on the spur of the moment, I decided to step inside. Although the doctor was about to go home, he let me into his office, and we talked for two hours. Then he said: "I appreciate your work as missionaries, and I will treat your wife without cost and without a blood transfusion." I could not believe my ears.

This kind doctor, who turned out to be a respected specialist, transferred Christine to a hospital where he worked, and under his able care, her condition soon improved. How grateful we were that Jehovah had shown us the way during that difficult time!

New Assignments

As Christine regained strength, we served as pioneers and had the joy of helping several people in Long Beach to become worshipers of Jehovah. In 1982 we were asked to do circuit work in the United States. We thanked Jehovah every day for using us again in the traveling work—a type of ministry we loved. We served in California and then in New England, where the circuit included some Portuguese-speaking congregations. Later it also included Bermuda.



***Our spiritual family in New Bedford,
Massachusetts***

After four refreshing years, we received another assignment. We were invited to serve as special pioneers wherever we wanted. Although we were sad to leave the traveling work, we were determined to press on with our new assignment. But where? In the traveling work, I had noticed that the Portuguese congregation in New Bedford, Massachusetts, needed help—so we headed for New Bedford.

When we arrived, the congregation gave us a huge welcome party. How that made us feel wanted! It moved us to tears. A young couple with two infants kindly took us into their home until we found our own apartment. Jehovah truly blessed this special pioneer assignment beyond our expectations. Since 1986 we have helped some 40 different persons in this town to become Witnesses. They are our spiritual family. In addition, I have had the joy of observing five local brothers grow into caring shepherds of the flock. It has been like serving in a fruitful missionary assignment.

As we look back, we rejoice that we have served Jehovah from youth on and made the truth our way of life. Granted, age and infirmities affect us now, but pressing on in Jehovah's way is still our strength and joy.

TO MAKE copies of the Bible, early Christians were foremost in the use of the codex—a book, not a scroll. However, the Christians did not immediately begin to produce a single volume containing all the books of the Bible. An important step toward widespread production of one-volume Bibles was taken in the sixth century by Flavius Cassiodorus.

Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus was born about 485-490 C.E. into a wealthy family in Calabria, at the southern tip of present-day Italy. He lived during a turbulent period in Italian history when the peninsula was occupied, first by the Goths and then by the Byzantines. When he was about 60 or 70 years of age, Cassiodorus founded the Vivarium monastery and library near his home in Squillace, Calabria.

A Careful Bible Editor

Among Cassiodorus' prime concerns was the transmission of the Bible. "In Cassiodorus' view," writes historian Peter Brown, "all Latin literature was to be mobilized towards transmitting the Scriptures. All the aids previously used so as to read and copy classical texts were to be used in order to understand the Scriptures and to copy them intelligently. Like a newly formed planetary system, Latin culture as a whole was supposed to spin in orbit around the vast sun of the Word of God."

Cassiodorus gathered translators and grammarians to the Vivarium monastery to collate the entire Bible and presided over the painstaking editorial process. He entrusted the work to only a few learned men. These were to avoid hasty emendation of presumed scribal errors. If there was a question about grammar, ancient Bible manuscripts were to be considered more authoritative than accepted Latin usage. Cassiodorus directed: "Grammatical peculiarities . . . must be preserved, since a text known to be inspired cannot be susceptible to corruption. . . . Biblical methods of expression, metaphor, and idiom must be preserved, even if outlandish by Lat-

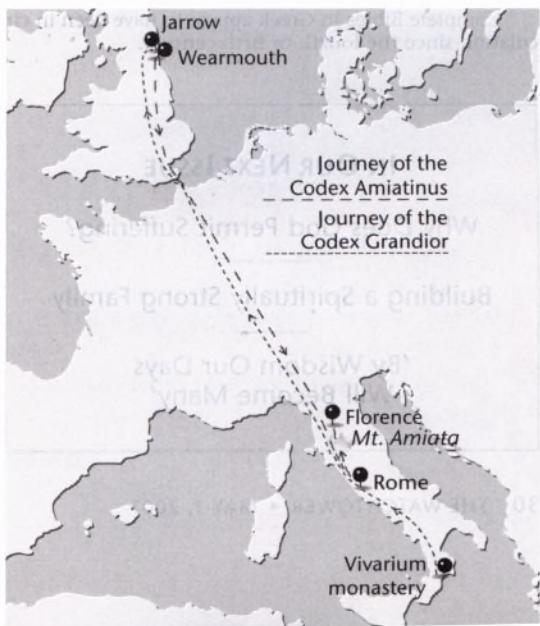
The Bible in a Single Volume

in standards, as must also the 'Hebraic' forms of proper names."—*The Cambridge History of the Bible*.

The Codex Grandior

The copyists at the Vivarium monastery were commissioned to produce at least three distinct editions of the Bible in Latin. One of these, in nine volumes, probably contained the Old Latin text, a translation that appeared in the late second century. A second edition contained the Latin *Vulgata*, which Jerome completed about the beginning of the fifth century. The third, the Codex Grandior, meaning "larger codex," was drawn from three Bible texts. Both of the last two editions brought all the books of the Bible together in a single volume.

It seems that Cassiodorus was the first to produce Latin Bibles in single volumes,



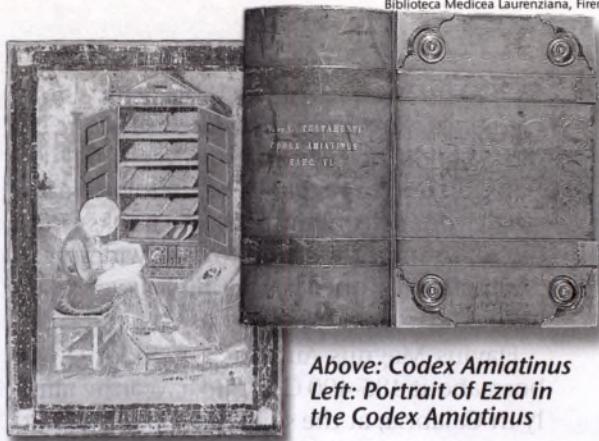
designating them *pandectae*.^{*} He undoubtedly saw the practicality of uniting all the books of the Bible in one volume, thus eliminating the time-consuming process of consulting several volumes.

From Southern Italy to the British Isles

Shortly after Cassiodorus' death (likely about 583 C.E.), the journey of the Codex Grandior began. At that time, part of the Vivarium library is believed to have been transferred to the Lateran library in Rome. In 678 C.E., the Anglo-Saxon abbot Ceolfrith brought the codex with him to the British Isles on his return from a stay in Rome. It thus came to the twin monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow, which were directed by Ceolfrith, in what is now Northumbria, England.

Cassiodorus' single-volume Bible must have fascinated Ceolfrith and his monks, who were likely attracted by its ease of use. Thus, within just a few decades, they produced three other complete Bibles as single volumes. The only surviving copy of these is an enormous manuscript called the Codex Amiatinus. It has 2,060 calfskin pages, each about 20 by 13 inches. With its covers it is 10 inches thick and weighs over 75 pounds. It is the oldest complete single-volume Latin Bible still in existence. Eminent 19th-century Biblicalist Fen-

* Complete Bibles in Greek appear to have been in circulation since the fourth or fifth century.



Above: Codex Amiatinus
Left: Portrait of Ezra in
the Codex Amiatinus

ton J. A. Hort identified the codex in 1887. Hort commented: "Even on a modern spectator this prodigy of a [manuscript] leaves an impression not far removed from awe."

Return to Italy

The original Codex Grandior commissioned by Cassiodorus is now lost. But its Anglo-Saxon descendant, the Codex Amiatinus, began a return journey to Italy soon after its completion. Shortly before he died, Ceolfrith decided to return to Rome. He took along one of his three Latin Bible manuscripts as a gift for Pope Gregory II. Ceolfrith died along the way, in 716 C.E., at Langres, France. But his Bible continued on the journey with the party of travelers. The codex was eventually included in the library of the monastery of Mount Amiata, central Italy, from which place it takes the name Codex Amiatinus. In 1782 the manuscript was moved to the Medicean-Laurentian Library in Florence, Italy, where it remains one of the library's most treasured possessions.

How has the Codex Grandior affected us? From the time of Cassiodorus, copyists and printers have increasingly favored the production of single-volume Bibles. Down to today, having the Bible in this form has made it easier for people to consult it and thereby to benefit from its power in their lives.—Hebrews 4:12.

- IN OUR NEXT ISSUE**
- Why Does God Permit Suffering?
- Building a Spiritually Strong Family
- 'By Wisdom Our Days Will Become Many'

"Jehovah Has Been Very Good to Me!"

ON A very pleasant evening in March 1985, men and women in the Writing Department at the headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in New York, U.S.A., took note of a milestone. Karl F. Klein had then served 60 years in the full-time ministry. Enthusiastically, Brother Klein said: "Jehovah has been very good to me!" He observed that Psalm 37:4 was a favorite Bible text of his. Later, he delighted all by playing his cello.

For the next 15 years, Brother Klein continued to work as a member of the writing staff and to serve on the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. Then, on January 3, 2001, at the age of 95, Karl Klein faithfully completed his earthly course.

Karl was born in Germany. His family moved to the United States, and Karl grew up in a suburb of Chicago, Illinois. While still young both Karl and his younger brother Ted became deeply interested in the Bible. Karl was baptized in 1918, and the thrilling things he heard at a convention of Bible Students in 1922 sparked in him a lifelong affection for the field ministry. He did not want a week to pass without sharing in the preaching work, doing so even in the final weeks of his life.

Karl became a member of the headquarters staff in 1925, working first in the printery. He had a real passion for music, and for some

years he played the cello in an orchestra that was featured



*Karl in 1943 with
T. J. Sullivan and
Ted and Doris*



in Christian radio broadcasts. Thereafter, he worked in the Service Department, particularly enjoying his association with its overseer, T. J. Sullivan. Meanwhile, Ted married and with his wife, Doris, took up missionary service in Puerto Rico.

For half a century, Karl Klein worked in the Writing Department, where he made an outstanding contribution because he loved to do research and had a deep knowledge of the Bible. In 1963, Karl married

Margareta, a German missionary who was serving in Bolivia. With her loving support, especially as he experienced health problems, he was able to be productive long past the age at which most retire. Karl's natural candor, combined with a musician's enthusiasm, contributed to memorable talks in congregations and at conventions. Not long before his death, he presided at a morning text discussion for the large New York Bethel family, to the delight and benefit of all.

Many regular readers of *The Watchtower* will recall Brother Klein's life story, an appealing account of his experiences that was published in the issue of October 1, 1984. You will enjoy reading or rereading that account, bearing in mind that its writer spent yet another decade and a half as a faithful and devoted Christian.

As one of the Lord's anointed, Brother Klein desired with all his heart to reign with Christ in heaven. We have every reason to believe that Jehovah has now fulfilled that desire.—Luke 22:28-30.



*Karl and
Margareta,
October 2000*

THE apostle Paul counseled the Christians in first-century Ephesus: "Keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, buying out the opportune time for yourselves, because the days are wicked." (Ephesians 5:15, 16) Why was this counsel necessary? The answer to that question requires a knowledge of the conditions faced by Christians in that ancient city.

Ephesus was known for its outstanding wealth, gross immorality, rampant crime, and varied demonic activities. In addition, Christians there had to contend with philosophical beliefs regarding time. The non-Christian Greeks in Ephesus did not believe that time moved in a straight line. Greek philosophy had taught them that life was repeated in endless cycles. A person who squandered his time in one cycle of life could gain it all back in another cycle. This type of thinking could have induced Ephesian Christians to adopt a casual attitude toward Jehovah's timetable of events,



ARE YOU *"Buying Out the Opportune Time"?*

including his timetable for divine judgment. Hence, Paul's counsel to 'buy out the opportune time' was appropriate.

Paul was not talking about time in just a general sense. The Greek word he used signifies an appointed time, a seasonable time for a specific purpose. Paul was counseling the first-century Christians to make wise use of the opportune period, or season of favor, they currently enjoyed, before its end would come and divine mercy and the offer of salvation would be withdrawn.—Romans 13:11-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:6-11.

We are living in a similar opportune period of time. Rather than squander this never-to-be-repeated season of favor by pursuing the temporary pleasures offered by

- the world, Christians are wise if they use the time available to them to perform "deeds of godly devotion" and thus strengthen their relationship with the Creator, Jehovah God.—2 Peter 3:11; Psalm 73:28; Philippians 1:10.