

THE WATCHTOWER

JUNE 1, 1995

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



A WORLD
WITHOUT
CORRUPTION
WHEN?



THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

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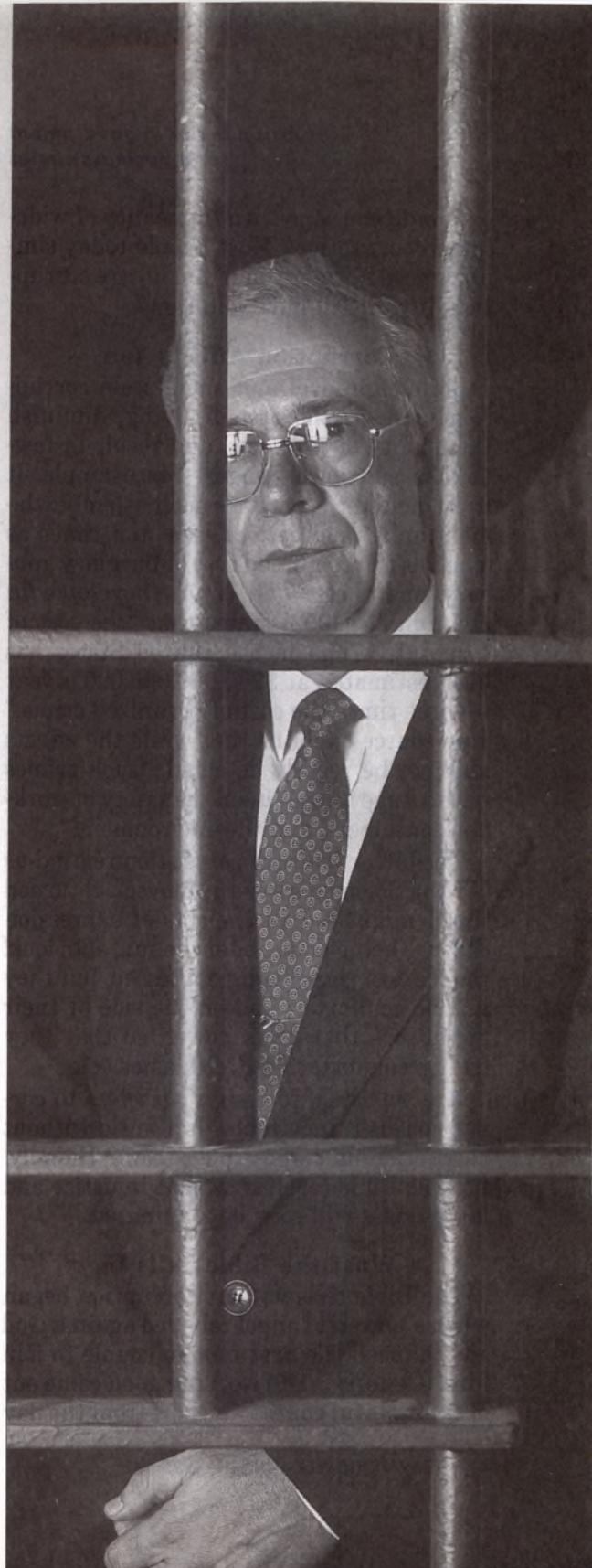
THE PROMISE OF A WORLD WITHOUT CORRUPTION

CORRUPTION has penetrated every level of society. Whether it is in government, science, sports, religion, or business, corruption seems to be out of control.

In one country after another, depressing news of corruption scandals hits the headlines. Many who have made a commitment to serve the interests of the people are being exposed as serving their own interests by receiving bribes and kickbacks. So-called white-collar crime is rampant. More and more people of high social or economic status are guilty of serious ethical and criminal violations in connection with their regular occupations.

There is growing concern over what one European journal describes as "grand corruption"—the practice by which senior officials, ministers and, all too frequently, heads of state require payments before approving major purchases and developments." In one country "two years of police investigation and almost daily arrests have still not deterred the incorrigibly corrupt," states the British magazine *The Economist*.

Because of such widespread corruption, many today feel that there is no one they can trust. They echo the sentiments of the Bible writer David when he said: "They have all turned aside, they are all alike corrupt; there is no one doing good, not even one."—Psalm 14:3.



Corruption is rife in government and business circles

How do you cope with the reality of widespread corruption? Most people today simply ignore it. But even if you ignore corruption, it will still hurt you. How?

Corruption Affects You

Both high-level and small-scale corruption increase the cost of living, diminish the quality of products, and result in fewer jobs and lower wages. For example, it is estimated that crimes such as embezzlement and fraud cost at least ten times as much as the combined cost of burglary, robbery, and theft. *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* (1992) states that "the cost of corporate crime in the United States has been estimated at \$200,000,000,000 a year—three times the cost of organized crime." This source explains that while the effects may not be readily detected, "such crimes have a huge impact upon the safety of workers, consumers, and the environment."

The bitter fruits of corruption remind us of King Solomon's words: "I myself returned that I might see all the acts of oppression that are being done under the sun, and, look! the tears of those being oppressed, but they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, so that they had no comforter."—Ecclesiastes 4:1.

Are we, then, to resign ourselves to corruption? Is it inevitable? Is a world without corruption an impossible dream? Happily, no! The Bible teaches us that injustice and lawlessness will soon be eliminated.

What the Bible Tells Us

The Bible tells us that corruption began when a powerful angel rebelled against God and induced the first human couple to join him. (Genesis 3:1-6) Nothing good came out of their sinful course. Rather, from the day



Adam and Eve sinned against Jehovah God, they began to suffer the bad consequences of corruption. Their bodies began the slow process of deterioration, leading to inevitable death. (Genesis 3:16-19) Since then, history abounds with examples of bribery, deception, and fraud. Yet, most perpetrators seem to get away with it.

Unlike ordinary criminals, corrupt executives and politicians rarely go to jail or make restitution for their ill-gotten gain. Because of the secret nature of bribes, kickbacks, and payoffs, it is often difficult to expose high-level corruption. But this does not mean that a world without corruption is an impossible dream.

Rescue from corruption will come from man's Creator, Jehovah God. Divine intervention is the only solution. Why? Because mankind's unseen enemy, Satan the Devil, continues to mislead mankind. As we read at 1 John 5:19, "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." What else could explain the increase in corruption—much of that carried out with impunity?

No amount of human effort can overpower Satan and his demons. Only divine intervention can guarantee obedient mankind



"the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Romans 8:21) Jehovah promises that soon Satan will be restricted so that he cannot deceive mankind anymore. (Revelation 20:3) In the meantime, if we desire to live in God's corruption-free new world, we must reject this world's corrupt ways.

People Can Change

In the days of Jesus Christ, there were those who abused their power and oppressed their fellowmen. For instance, tax collectors were notorious for their corrupt practices. This was despite God's explicit law: "You are not to accept a bribe, for the bribe blinds clear-sighted men and can distort the words of righteous men." (Exodus 23:8) Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector, admitted that he had extorted by false accusation. But instead of promoting social reform on a broad scale, Jesus entreated individuals to repent and abandon their corrupt ways. As a result, reputedly corrupt tax collectors such as Matthew and Zacchaeus gave up their former life-style.—Matthew 4:17; 9:9-13; Luke 19:1-10.

Those involved in dishonest practices today can likewise reject corruption by put-

Corruption often affects dealings with public officials

ting on "the new personality which was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty." (Ephesians 4:24) It may not be easy to pay taxes honestly or to stop sharing in questionable schemes. Still, the benefits are worth any effort.

No longer conditioned by this corrupt world, those who are concerned with the well-being of others enjoy inner peace. There is no fear of being caught in wrongdoing. Rather, they enjoy a good conscience. They imitate the Bible example of Daniel the prophet. The Bible account says that high officials were constantly seeking to find some pretext against Daniel. "But there was no pretext or corrupt thing at all that they were able to find, forasmuch as he was trustworthy and no negligence or corrupt thing at all was found in him."—Daniel 6:4.

Jehovah's Promise

Jehovah promises that "although a sinner may be doing bad a hundred times and continuing a long time as he pleases, yet I am also aware that it will turn out well with those fearing the true God, because they were in fear of him. But it will not turn out well at all with the wicked one, neither will he prolong his days that are like a shadow, because he is not in fear of God."—Ecclesiastes 8:12, 13.

What a relief when corruption no longer causes unhappiness! What a blessing to live forever in a world without corruption! This is not impossible. The Bible speaks of the "hope of the everlasting life which God, who cannot lie, promised before times long lasting." (Titus 1:2) If you hate corruption and love righteousness, you may well see the fulfillment of God's promise of a world without corruption.

ALTHOUGH GRIEVING, WE ARE NOT WITHOUT HOPE

"We do not want you to be ignorant concerning those who are sleeping in death; that you may not sorrow just as the rest also do who have no hope."

—1 THESSALONIANS 4:13.

HAVE you lost a loved one in death? Regardless of age, most of us have been saddened by the loss of a relative or a friend. Perhaps it was a grandparent, a parent, a mate, or a child. Old age, sickness, and accidents reap a regular harvest. Crime, violence, and war add to the misery and grief. Every year around the world, an average of over 50 million people die. The daily average in 1993 was 140,250. Death's toll affects friends and family, and the feeling of loss is deep.

² Can we not sympathize with the parents in California, U.S.A., who tragically lost a pregnant daughter in a freak vehicle accident? At one stroke, they lost their only daughter and the baby who was to be their first grandchild. The victim's husband lost a wife and his first son or daughter. For parents to suffer the death of a child, whether still young or older, is somehow unnatural. It is not normal for children to die before their parents do. All of us love life. Therefore, death is truly an enemy.—1 Corinthians 15:26.

Death Enters the Human Family

³ Sin and death have reigned as kings for some six thousand years of human history,

1. What does mankind experience on a regular basis?
2. What seems abnormal about children dying?
3. How may Abel's death have affected Adam and Eve?

ever since the rebellion of our first human parents, Adam and Eve. (Romans 5:14; 6:12, 23) The Bible does not tell us how they reacted to the murder of their son Abel by his brother Cain. For more than one reason, it must have been a devastating experience for them. Here, for the first time, they looked human death in the face, reflected in the face of their own son. They saw the fruitage of their rebellion and of the continued misuse of free will. Cain, in spite of warnings from God, had chosen to commit the first fratricide. We know that Eve must have been deeply affected by Abel's death because when she gave birth to Seth, she said: "God has appointed another seed in place of Abel, because Cain killed him." —Genesis 4:3-8, 25.

⁴ Our first human parents also saw the reality of God's sentence on them—that if they rebelled and were disobedient, they would "positively die." In spite of Satan's lie, apparently the myth of the immortal soul had not yet developed, so they could not draw any false comfort from that. God had said to Adam: "You will . . . return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For dust you are and to dust you will return." He had made no mention of a future existence as an immortal soul in heaven, hell, Limbo, purgatory, or anywhere else. (Gen-

4. Why could the immortal-soul myth have been of no comfort after Abel's death?

esis 2:17; 3:4, 5, 19) As living souls who had sinned, Adam and Eve would eventually die and cease to exist. King Solomon was inspired to write: "The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all, neither do they anymore have wages, because the remembrance of them has been forgotten. Also, their love and their hate and their jealousy have already perished, and they have no portion anymore to time indefinite in anything that has to be done under the sun."—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6.

5 How true those words are! Really, who recalls ancestors of two hundred or three hundred years ago? Often even their graves are unknown or long neglected. Does that mean that there is no hope for our dead loved ones? No, not at all. Martha said to Jesus regarding her dead brother, Lazarus: "I know he will rise in the resurrection on the last day." (John 11:24) The Hebrew people believed that God would resurrect the dead at a future time. Yet, that did not stop them from grieving over the loss of a loved one.

—Job 14:13.

5. What is the true hope for the dead?



Faithful Ones Who Grieved

6 Nearly four thousand years ago, when Abraham's wife Sarah died, "Abraham came in to bewail Sarah and to weep over her." That faithful servant of God showed his deep feelings over the loss of his beloved and loyal wife. Although he was a brave man of action, he was not ashamed to express his grief in tears.—Genesis 14:11-16; 23:1, 2.

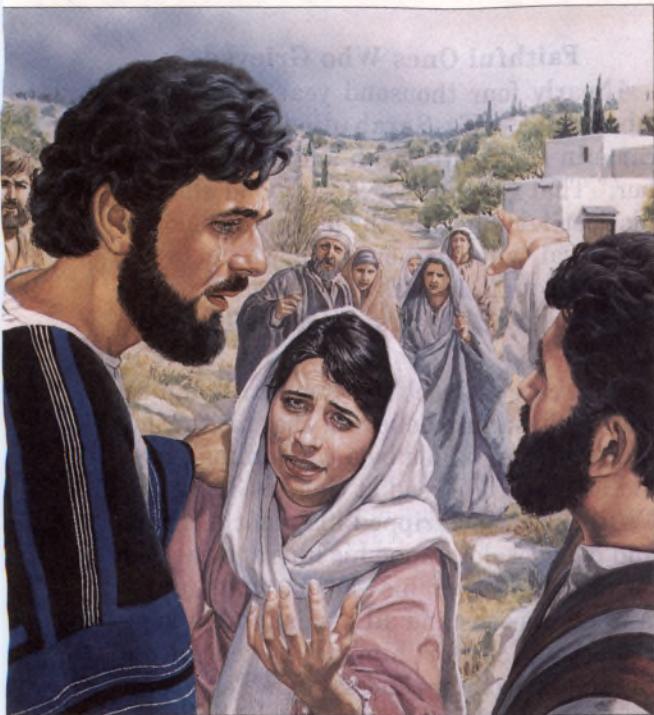
7 The case of Jacob was similar. When he was deceived into believing that his son Joseph had been killed by a wild animal, how did he react? We read at Genesis 37:34, 35: "With that Jacob ripped his mantles apart and put sackcloth upon his hips and carried on mourning over his son for many days. And all his sons and all his daughters kept rising up to comfort him, but he kept refusing to take comfort and saying: 'For I shall go down mourning to my son into Sheol!' And his father continued weeping for him." Yes, it is both human and natural to express grief when a loved one dies.

8 Some might think that by modern or local standards, Jacob's reaction was exaggerated and melodramatic. But he was a product of a different time and culture. His expression of grief—wearing sackcloth—is the first mention of this practice in the Bible. However, as described in the Hebrew Scriptures, mourning was also expressed by wailing, by composing dirges, and by sitting down in ashes. Evidently the Hebrews were not inhibited in their genuine expressions of grief.*—Ezekiel 27:30-32; Amos 8:10.

* For more information on mourning in Biblical times, see *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, pages 446-7, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

6, 7. How did Abraham and Jacob react to death?

8. How did the Hebrews often express their grief?



When Lazarus died, Jesus wept

Grief in Jesus' Time

⁹ What can we say of Jesus' early disciples? For example, when Lazarus died, his sisters Martha and Mary mourned his death with tears and weeping. How did the perfect man Jesus react when he arrived on the scene? John's account says: "Mary, when she arrived where Jesus was and caught sight of him, fell at his feet, saying to him: 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' Jesus, therefore, when he saw her weeping and the Jews that came with her weeping, groaned in the spirit and became troubled; and he said: 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him: 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus gave way to tears."—John 11:32-35.

9, 10. (a) How did Jesus react to the death of Lazarus? (b) What does Jesus' reaction tell us about him?

Practical Help for Those Who Grieve

At the "Godly Fear" Conventions during 1994-95, the Watch Tower Society announced the release of a new brochure entitled *When Someone You Love Dies*. This encouraging publication has been designed to bring comfort to people of all nations and languages. As you may have already seen, it presents the Bible's simple explanation of death and the condition of the dead. Even more important, it

¹⁰ "Jesus gave way to tears." Those few words speak volumes about Jesus' humanity, his compassion, his feelings. Even though fully aware of the resurrection hope, "Jesus wept." (John 11:35, *King James Version*) The account continues by saying that onlookers commented: "See, what affection he used to have for [Lazarus]!" Certainly, if the perfect man Jesus wept at the loss of a friend, it is no shame if a man or a woman mourns and weeps today.—John 11:36.

What Hope for the Dead?

¹¹ What can we learn from these Biblical examples? That it is human and natural to grieve and we should not feel ashamed to let our grief be manifest. Even when tempered by the hope of the resurrection, the death of a loved one is still a traumatic loss, which is deeply felt. Years, perhaps decades, of close companionship and sharing are suddenly and tragically ended. True, we do not grieve as do those without hope or as do those with false hopes. (1 Thessalonians 4:13) Also, we are not misled by any myths of man's possessing an immortal soul or continuing to exist by reincarnation. We do know that Jehovah has promised 'new heavens and a new earth in which righteous-

11. (a) What can we learn from Biblical examples involving mourning? (b) Why do we not grieve as do those without hope?

highlights God's promise, through Christ Jesus, of a resurrection to life on a cleansed, paradise earth. It truly brings comfort to those who mourn. Therefore, it should be a helpful tool in the Christian ministry and should serve to stir interest, resulting in many more home Bible studies. The questions for study have been placed discreetly in boxes toward the end of each section so that an easy review of the points covered can be made with any sincere, mourning person.

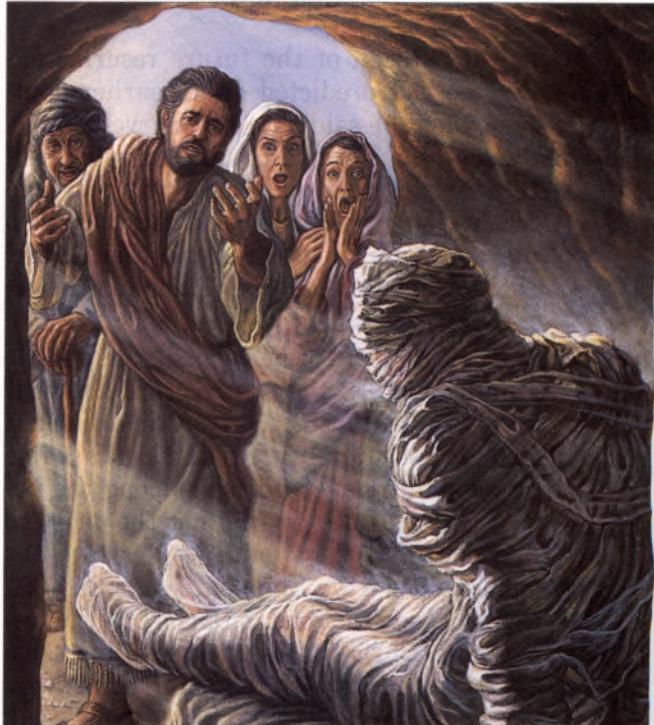
ness is to dwell.' (2 Peter 3:13) God "will wipe out every tear from [our] eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."—Revelation 21:4.

¹² What hope is there for those who have died?* The Christian writer Paul was inspired to give us comfort and hope when he wrote: "As the last enemy, death is to be brought to nothing." (1 Corinthians 15:26) *The New English Bible* states: "The last enemy to be abolished is death." Why could Paul be so sure of that? Because he had been converted and taught by one who was raised from the dead, Jesus Christ. (Acts 9:3-19) That is also why Paul could state: "Since death is through a man [Adam], resurrection of the dead is also through a man [Jesus]. For just as in Adam all are dying, so also in the Christ all will be made alive." —1 Corinthians 15:21, 22.

¹³ Jesus' teaching gives us great comfort and hope for the future. For example, what did he do in the case of Lazarus? He went

* For more information on the resurrection hope found in the Bible, see *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, pages 783-93.

12. How did Paul express his faith in the resurrection?
13. How did eyewitnesses react to the resurrection of Lazarus?



Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead

to the tomb where Lazarus' body had been lying for four days. He uttered a prayer, "and when he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice: 'Lazarus, come on out!' 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.'" Can you imagine the looks of surprise and joy on the faces of Martha and Mary? How the neighbors must have been astonished when they saw this miracle! Little wonder that many onlookers put faith in Jesus. His religious enemies, however, "took counsel to kill him." —John 11:41-53.

¹⁴ Jesus performed that unforgettable resurrection in front of many eyewitnesses.

14. Of what was Lazarus' resurrection a token?

It was a token of the future resurrection that he had predicted on an earlier occasion, when he said: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear [the Son of God's] 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.

¹⁵ As previously mentioned, the apostle Paul believed in the resurrection. On what basis? He had formerly been the infamous Saul, persecutor of Christians. His name and reputation spread fear among the believers. After all, was he not the one who had approved the stoning to death of the Christian martyr Stephen? (Acts 8:1; 9:1, 2, 26) Yet, on the road to Damascus, the resurrected Christ brought Saul to his senses, striking him with temporary blindness. Saul heard a voice say to him: "'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' He said: 'Who are you, Lord?' He said: 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.'" The same resurrected Christ then instructed Ananias, living in Damascus, to go to the house where Saul was praying and to restore his sight. Thus, from personal experience, both Saul and

15. What evidence did Paul and Ananias have of Jesus' resurrection?

Can You Answer?

- Why can it be said that death is an enemy?
- How did servants of God in Bible times manifest their grief?
- What hope is there for dead loved ones?
- What basis did Paul have for believing in the resurrection?

Ananias had every reason to believe in the resurrection.—Acts 9:4, 5, 10-12.

¹⁶ Notice how Saul, the apostle Paul, answered when, as a persecuted Christian, he was brought before Governor Felix. We read at Acts 24:15: "I have hope toward God . . . that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." Obviously, Paul did not believe in the pagan Greek concept of the inherent immortality of the human soul, which supposedly passed into some mythological afterlife or underworld. He believed in and taught faith in the resurrection. That would mean for some the gift of immortal life as spirit creatures in heaven with Christ and for the majority a return to life on a perfect earth.—Luke 23:43; 1 Corinthians 15: 20-22, 53, 54; Revelation 7:4, 9, 17; 14:1, 3.

¹⁷ Thus the Bible gives us a clear promise and a solid hope that by means of the resurrection, many will see their loved ones again here on earth but under very different circumstances.—2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-4.

Practical Help for Those Who Grieve

¹⁸ Now we have our memories and our grief. What can we do to survive this trial-some bereavement period? What can others do to help those who are grieving? Furthermore, what can we do to help those sincere ones we meet in our field ministry who are without any real hope and who also grieve? And what further comfort can we derive from the Bible regarding our loved ones who have fallen asleep in death? The following article will offer some suggestions.

16, 17. (a) How do we know that Paul did not believe in the Greek concept of the inherent immortality of the human soul? (b) What solid hope does the Bible give? (Hebrews 6:17-20)
18. (a) What helpful tool was released at the "Godly Fear" Conventions? (See box.) (b) What questions now need to be answered?

CONSOLATION FROM “THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT”

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation.”

—2 CORINTHIANS 1:3, 4.

GRIEVING people need genuine comfort—not platitudes and clichés. All of us have heard that ‘time will heal wounds,’ but in the early stages of bereavement, what grief-stricken person is comforted by that thought? Christians know that God has promised a resurrection, but that does not prevent the deep hurt and trauma of a sudden loss. And certainly if you have lost a child, other surviving children are no substitute for that precious one.

² In times of loss, we are most helped by genuine comfort, comfort that has a solid basis in God’s promises. We also need empathy. This has surely been true for the people of Rwanda, and especially for the hundreds of families of Jehovah’s Witnesses there who lost loved ones in that diabolic ethnic massacre. From whom can all who grieve draw comfort?

Jehovah—The God of Comfort

³ Jehovah has set the example in giving all of us comfort. He sent his only-begotten Son, Christ Jesus, to the earth to give us everlasting comfort and hope. Jesus taught: “God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that every-

1, 2. What kind of comfort do grieving people need?

3. How has Jehovah set the example in giving comfort?

one exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) He also told his followers: “No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his soul in behalf of his friends.” (John 15:13) On another occasion he said: “The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many.” (Matthew 20:28) And Paul stated: “God recommends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8) By means of these and many other texts, we perceive the love of God and of Christ Jesus.

⁴ The apostle Paul was especially aware of Jehovah’s undeserved kindness. He had been snatched out of a spiritually dead condition, from being a rabid persecutor of Christ’s followers to being a persecuted Christian himself. (Ephesians 2:1-5) He describes his experience: “I am the least of the apostles, and I am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the congregation of God. But by God’s undeserved kindness I am what I am. And his undeserved kindness that was toward me did not prove to be in vain, but I labored in excess of them all, yet not I but the undeserved kindness of God that is with me.”—1 Corinthians 15:9, 10.

4. Why was the apostle Paul especially indebted to Jehovah?

⁵ Appropriately then, Paul wrote: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those in any sort of tribulation through the comfort with which we ourselves are being comforted by God. For just as the sufferings for the Christ abound in us, so the comfort we get also abounds through the Christ. Now whether we are in tribulation, it is for your comfort and salvation; or whether we are being comforted, it is for your comfort that operates to make you endure the same sufferings that we also suffer. And so our hope for you is unwavering, knowing as we do that, just as you are sharers of the sufferings, in the same way you will also share the comfort.”—2 Corinthians 1:3-7.

⁶ What inspiring words! The Greek word here rendered “comfort” is linked to “a calling to one’s side.” Therefore, “it is the standing beside a person to encourage him when he is undergoing severe testing.” (*A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*) One Biblical scholar wrote: “The word . . . always means far more than soothing sympathy. . . . The Christian comfort is the comfort which brings courage, the comfort which enables a man to cope with all that life can do to him.” It also includes comforting words that are based on a solid promise and hope—that of the resurrection of the dead.

Jesus and Paul —Compassionate Comforters

⁷ What a wonderful example Paul was in giving comfort! He could write to the brothers in Thessalonica: “We became gentle in

5. What did Paul write about comfort from God?
6. What is implied by the Greek word rendered “comfort”?
7. How was Paul comforting to his Christian brothers?

the midst of you, as when a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, having a tender affection for you, we were well pleased to impart to you, not only the good news of God, but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us. In harmony with that you well know how, as a father does his children, we kept exhorting each one of you, and consoling and bearing witness to you.” Just like loving, caring parents, all of us can share our warmth and understanding with others in their time of need.—1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8, 11.

⁸ In showing such care and kindness, Paul was only imitating his great Exemplar, Jesus. Remember the compassionate invitation that Jesus extends to all as recorded at Matthew 11:28-30: “Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls. For my yoke is kindly and my load is light.” Yes, Jesus’ teaching is refreshing because it holds out hope and a promise—the promise of the resurrection. This is the hope and the promise that we are offering to people, for example, when we leave with them the brochure *When Someone You Love Dies*. This hope can help all of us, even if we have been grieving a long time.

How to Comfort Those Who Grieve

⁹ Grief is not limited to some set time period immediately after the death of the loved one. Some people carry the burden of their grief all through their lives, especially those who have lost children. A faithful Christian couple in Spain lost their 11-year-

8. Why is Jesus’ teaching a comfort for those who grieve?
9. Why should we not be impatient with people who grieve?

old son in 1963 as a victim of meningitis. To this day, they still shed a tear when talking about Paquito. Anniversaries, photos, souvenirs, may bring back sad memories. Hence, we should never be impatient and think that others ought to be over their loss by now. A medical authority admits: "Depression and emotional swings may last as long as several years." Remember, therefore, that just as physical scars on the body may stay with us for life, so do many emotional scars.

¹⁰ What are some practical things we can do to comfort those who grieve in the Christian congregation? In all sincerity we might say to a brother or a sister in need of comfort, "If there's anything I can do to help, just let me know." But how often does a bereaved person actually call us to say, "I've thought of something you can do to help me"? Obviously, we need to take the appropriate initiative if we are to comfort the bereaved. So, what can we do in a useful way? Here are a few practical suggestions.

¹¹ Listen: One of the most helpful things you can do is to share the bereaved one's pain by listening. You may ask, "Would you care to talk about it?" Let the person decide. One Christian recalls when his father died: "It really helped me when others asked what happened and then *really listened*." As James counseled, be quick to listen. (James 1:19) Listen patiently and sympathetically. "Weep with people who weep," recommends the Bible at Romans 12:15. Remember that Jesus wept with Martha and Mary.—John 11:35.

¹² Provide reassurance: Keep in mind that the bereaved person may at first feel guilty,

10. What must we do to help grieving ones?
11. How can our listening be a comfort to others?
12. What kind of reassurance can we offer to those who mourn?

thinking that perhaps there was more that he could have done. Assure the person that likely all that was possible was done (or whatever else you know to be *true and positive*). Reassure him that what he feels is not at all uncommon. Tell him of others you know who successfully recovered from a similar loss. In other words, be sensitive and sympathetic. Our kind help can mean so much! Solomon wrote: "As apples of gold in silver carvings is a word spoken at the right time for it."—Proverbs 16:24; 25:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14.

¹³ Be available: Make yourself available not just for the first few days when many friends and relatives are present but for months later if necessary, when others have returned to their normal routine. The grieving period can vary greatly, depending on the individual. Our Christian interest and sympathy can mean so much in any time of need. The Bible says that "there exists a friend sticking closer than a brother." Thus, the saying, "A friend in need is a friend indeed," is a truism that we should live up to.—Proverbs 18:24; compare Acts 28:15.

¹⁴ Talk about the good qualities of the deceased person: This is another great help when offered at the right moment. Share positive anecdotes that you recall about the individual. Do not be afraid to use the person's name. Do not act as if the lost loved one never existed or was a nonentity. It is comforting to know what a publication from the Harvard Medical School stated: "A kind of recovery is achieved when the bereaved can finally think of the dead person without overwhelming sadness . . . As the new reality is acknowledged and assimilated, grief fades into treasured memories." "Treasured

13. If we make ourselves available, how can that help?
14. What can we talk about to comfort the bereaved?

memories"—how comforting to recall those precious moments spent with a loved one! A Witness who lost his father some years ago said: "A special memory for me is reading the Bible with Dad shortly after he began to study the truth. And lying on a riverbank talking over some of my problems. I only saw him every three or four years, so those occasions were precious."

¹⁵ Take the initiative when appropriate: Some grieving people can cope better than others. So, depending on the circumstances, take practical steps to help. One grieving Christian woman recalled: "Many said, 'If there's anything I can do, let me know.' But one Christian sister did not ask. She went right into the bedroom, stripped the bed, and laundered the soiled linens. Another took a bucket, water, and cleaning supplies and scrubbed the rug where my husband had vomited. These were true friends, and I shall never forget them." Where there is an obvious need for help, take the initiative—perhaps by preparing a meal, helping with the cleaning, or running errands. Of course, we should be careful not to be intrusive when the bereaved person wants privacy. Thus, we should take to heart Paul's words: "Accordingly, as God's chosen ones, holy and loved, clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, and long-suffering." Kindness, patience, and love never fail.—Colossians 3:12; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

¹⁶ Write a letter or send a comforting card: Often overlooked is the value of a condolence letter or a beautiful sympathy card. Its advantage? It can be read over and over again. Such a letter need not be long, but it should show your compassion. It should also reflect a spiritual tone but without being

15. How can one take the initiative to help?
16. Why can a letter or a card provide comfort?

preachy. Just the basic message "We are here for you" can be a consolation.

¹⁷ Pray with them: Do not underestimate the value of your prayers with and for bereaved fellow Christians. The Bible says at James 5:16: "A righteous man's supplication . . . has much force." For example, when the grieving hear us pray in their behalf, it helps them resolve a negative feeling such as guilt. In our moments of weakness, of demoralization, Satan tries to undermine us with his "machinations," or "crafty acts." This is when we need the comfort and support of prayer, as Paul stated: 'With every form of prayer and supplication carry on prayer on every occasion in spirit. And to that end keep awake with all constancy and with supplication in behalf of all the holy ones.'—Ephesians 6:11, 18, *Kingdom Interlinear*; compare James 5:13-15.

What to Avoid

¹⁸ When a person is grieving, there are also things not to do or say. Proverbs 12:18 warns: "There exists the one speaking thoughtlessly as with the stabs of a sword,

17. How can prayer bring comfort?

- 18, 19. How can we show tact in our conversations?

Do You Recall?

- How is Jehovah "the God of all comfort"?
- How did Jesus and Paul comfort grieving ones?
- What are some things we can do to comfort those who grieve?
- What should we avoid when dealing with the bereaved?
- What are your favorite texts for comfort in times of loss?

Tactfully take the initiative to help those who grieve

but the tongue of the wise ones is a healing.” Sometimes, without realizing it, we fail to show tact. For example, we might say, “I know how you feel.” But is that really the case? Have you suffered the exact same loss? Then too, people react in different ways. Your reactions may not have been identical to those of the grieving person. It might be more sensitive to say, “I really feel for you because I went through a similar loss when my . . . died some time ago.”

¹⁹ It would also show sensitivity to avoid commenting about whether the deceased will be resurrected or not. Some brothers and sisters

have been deeply hurt by judgmental remarks made about the future possibilities for a dead unbelieving spouse. We are not the judges of who will or will not be resurrected. We can be relieved that Jehovah, who sees the heart, will be far more merciful than most of us would ever be.—Psalm 86:15; Luke 6:35-37.

Texts That Comfort

²⁰ One of the greatest sources of succor, when offered at the right time, is a consideration of Jehovah’s promises for the dead. These Biblical thoughts will be useful whether the bereaved person is already a Witness or is a person we meet in the min-

^{20, 21}. What are some texts that can console the bereaved?



istry. What are some of these texts? We know that Jehovah is the God of all comfort, for he said: “I—I myself am the One that is comforting you people.” He also said: “Like a man whom his own mother keeps comforting, so I myself shall keep comforting you people.”—Isaiah 51:12; 66:13.

²¹ The psalmist wrote: “This is my comfort in my affliction, for your own saying has preserved me alive. I have remembered your judicial decisions from time indefinite, O Jehovah, and I find comfort for myself. May your loving-kindness serve, please, to comfort me, according to your saying to your servant.” Note that the word “comfort” is used repeatedly in those passages. Yes, we can find true comfort for ourselves and for others by turning to Jehovah’s Word in our



time of affliction. This, combined with the love and compassion of the brothers, can help us to live through our loss and fill our lives again with joyful activity in the Christian ministry.—Psalm 119:50, 52, 76.

22 We can also overcome our grief to some extent by being busy helping others in their distress. As we turn our attention to others in need of comfort, we also get the true hap-

22. What prospect lies before us?

piness of giving in a spiritual sense. (Acts 20:35) Let us share with them the vision of the resurrection day when people of all former nations, generation after generation, will be welcoming their lost loved ones back from the dead into a new world. What a prospect! What tears of joy will be shed then as we recall that Jehovah **is** indeed the God “who comforts those laid low”—2 Corinthians 7:6.

Gilead Graduates—"Real Missionaries!"

WHAT is a missionary?" That question was posed by a newspaper editorial nearly four decades ago. The writer argued that true missionaries were instruments of social and economic reform. However, on Sunday, March 5, 1995, at the Jersey City Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, an answer of a very different sort was emphatically given. The occasion? The graduation of the 98th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead—a school that has sent out missionaries all over the world!

After the opening song and prayer, Albert D. Schroeder of the Governing Body warmly welcomed all 6,430 who were in attendance. In his introductory comments, Brother Schroeder made it clear why Gilead graduates are different from others who have called themselves missionaries. He said: "The Bible is the main textbook for Gilead." Graduates of Gilead are trained to be, not social workers, but teachers of God's Word. They are thus uniquely qualified to care for the spiritual needs of people in foreign fields.

Subsequent speakers touched on a number of other areas in which Gilead graduates give proof of being "real" missionaries. Charles Molohan spoke to them on the subject "Continue to Bear Fine Fruit as Missionaries." Drawing on the apostle Paul's words at Colossians 1:9, 10, Brother Molohan reminded the graduates that their past five months at Gilead had helped them increase "in the accurate knowledge of God." This would help them to produce fruitage in two ways: by manifesting the fruitage of God's spirit and by sharing Bible truths with others.

Daniel Sydlik of the Governing Body followed with the sobering theme "Do Not Bargain With Your Life." He mentioned Jesus' question: "What will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26) Brother Sydlik observed: "Men have traded their souls for an easier, softer way of life." However, those with a living faith cannot compromise in the face of trials and tests. Jesus' words indicate that one must be willing to "give," that is, sacrifice, in order to gain one's soul, or life. The new missionaries were exhorted to give Jehovah their all, their very best, in his service!

Next, William Van de Wall of the Service Department Committee spoke on the subject "The Apostle Paul—An Example Worthy of Imitation." Brother Van de Wall explained: "Paul spearheaded the missionary work in the first century." Appropriately, then, four areas were highlighted in which the apostle Paul set a good example for missionaries today: (1) Paul's genuine concern and love for people, (2) his effectiveness in the ministry, (3) his modest refusal to promote himself, (4) his unquestioning trust in Jehovah.

"Let Jehovah Search You Through in Your New Assignment" was the subject discussed by Lyman A. Swingle of the Governing Body. Using the day's text, Psalm 139:16, Brother Swingle acknowledged that, as new missionaries, they would encounter problems in their assignments and that Jehovah knows the solutions. "Go to him," he exhorted, "talk to him when you have a problem. Seek out what his will is."

John E. Barr of the Governing Body then spoke on the subject "Your Faith Is Growing



98th Graduating Class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead

In the list below, rows are numbered from front to back, and names are listed from left to right in each row.
(1) Eszlinger, A.; Mann, T.; Rivera, G.; Baruero, M.; Vaz, M.; Durga, K.; Silweryx H.; Alvarado, D. (2) Toth, B.; Segarra, S.; Hart, R.; Rooryck, I.; Escobar, P.; Ejstrup, J.; Sligh, L.; Rivera, E. (3) Archard, D.; Snaith, S.; Marciel, P.; Koljonen, D.; Waddell, S.; Blackburn, L.; Escobar, M.; Archard, K. (4) Hart, M.; Toth, S.; Koljonen, J.; Bergman, H.; Mann, D.; Blackburn, J.; Park, D.; Vaz, F. (5) Segarra, S.; Sligh, L.; Leslie, L.; Bergman, B.; Baruero, W.; Alvarado, J.; Leslie, D.; Park, D. (6) Silweryx, K.; Eszlinger, R.; Waddell, J.; Snaith, K.; Durga, A.; Rooryck, F.; Ejstrup, C.; Marciel, D.

Exceedingly." (2 Thessalonians 1:3) At Luke 17:1, we read that Jesus said: "It is unavoidable that causes for stumbling should come." Some have stumbled over the personalities of fellow missionaries. But Brother Barr encouraged the missionaries to have the faith needed to be forgiving. Indeed, it was in this context that Jesus' disciples begged: "Give us more faith." (Luke 17:2-5) The faith of the missionaries may also be tested by various organizational adjustments. "Have we got the faith to accept these," asked Brother Barr, "or will they become mountainlike obstacles?"

Next came some admonition by two Gil-

ead instructors. Jack Redford urged the graduates to maintain a positive attitude. He told of a missionary who left her assignment in reaction to some teasing by fellow missionaries. The Scriptures, however, warn us against taking needless offense. (Ecclesiastes 7:9) "Have the right attitude,"

Class Statistics:

- Number of countries represented: 8
- Number of countries assigned to: 21
- Number of students: 48
- Average age: 32.72
- Average years in truth: 15.48
- Average years in full-time ministry: 10.91

he exhorted. "Be forgiving of the mistakes and imperfections of others around you."

U. V. Glass, Gilead registrar, then asked: "Are you prepared to cope with 'time and unforeseen occurrence'?" (Ecclesiastes 9:11) "Our life pattern is always subject to changes," noted Brother Glass, "and some can be quite traumatic." Certain missionaries have been unexpectedly faced with failing health, disease, and family problems, forcing some to leave their assignments. "No matter what the unforeseen occurrence may be," said Brother Glass, "we know that Jehovah is aware of it and is concerned. If we put our reliance on him, we know we will come off victorious!"

A lecture entitled "Set Apart for Missionary Service" capped off the morning series of lectures. Theodore Jaracz of the Governing Body addressed the question raised at the outset, namely, "What is a missionary?" In answer, he discussed Acts chapters 13 and 14 about the missionary work of Paul and Barnabas. Clearly, that work focused, not on curing social ills, but on 'declaring the good news.' (Acts 13:32) Brother Jaracz asked: "Don't you agree that Paul and Barnabas demonstrated what a real missionary should be like?" Veteran missionary Robert Tracy of Mexico was then called upon to share some of his own heartwarming experiences as an evangelizer.

The morning program reached its climax as Brother Schroeder distributed diplomas to the 48 graduates. The audience was thrilled to hear the names of the 21 lands to which the missionaries had been assigned: Barbados, Benin, Bolivia, Central African Republic, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Latvia, Leeward Islands, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Senegal, Taiwan, and Venezuela.

After a break for lunch, the audience reconvened and enjoyed a lively study of *The Watchtower*, conducted by Robert P. Johnson of the Service Department. Members of the 98th class answered the questions. This was followed by a delightful series of interviews conducted by Gilead staff members. The audience was greatly encouraged as the graduates shared their experiences in the field and expressed their feelings about their foreign assignments.

For six and a half years, Gilead was located at the Watchtower Society's facilities in Wallkill, New York. In April 1995, however, the school was moved to the new Watchtower Educational Center in Patterson, New York. How did the Bethel family at Wallkill feel about this change? At this graduation a number from Wallkill were interviewed. Their touching expressions made it plain that Gilead students have left a lasting impression with them. Clearly, these willing men and women are *real* missionaries—humble, self-sacrificing, deeply concerned about helping others.

As the graduation drew to a close, all in attendance were confident that Gilead School will continue successfully doing what it has done for over 50 years—produce real missionaries!

In Our Next Issue

Patience—Why So Rare?

What Motivates
You to Serve God?

Singleness in Hard Economic Times

WE WERE GIVEN A PEARL OF VERY HIGH VALUE

AS TOLD BY RICHARD GUNTHER

It was September 1959. We were on the Italian liner *Julio Caesar* crossing the Atlantic Ocean from New York to Cádiz, Spain.

The Watch Tower Society had assigned me, along with my wife, Rita, and Paul and Evelyn Hundertmark, another missionary couple, to that Iberian country. We were going to face many challenges.

But how was it that we had embarked on a missionary career?

RITA and I were baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses in 1950 in New Jersey, U.S.A. Soon after, we made a decision that in time would place in our hands a pearl of very high value. We were in a congregation with sufficient brothers and sisters to serve the territory. So we felt obligated to offer to serve where there was a greater need for preachers. At the international assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses in New York City in the summer of 1958, we applied for missionary service.

Shortly thereafter, we were invited to the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, and within a year we were on our way to Spain as missionaries. Caught up in the many arrangements and overwhelmed with excitement, we did not realize at the time what we had been given. Jesus had spoken of a pearl of very high value. (Matthew 13: 45, 46) Though it was not the point of his parable, our privilege of serving as missionaries was *to us* comparable to such a pearl. Looking back, we now more fully appreciate this precious gift of service in Jehovah's organization.

A Memorable Experience

At that time the Gilead missionary course was conducted in beautiful rural surroundings in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. There, we spent six marvelous months completely immersed in Bible study and real Christian association, isolated from this world's affairs and troubles. Our fellow students were from many parts of the world, including Australia, Bolivia, Britain, Greece, and New Zealand. Soon though, it was graduation day. In August 1959, we bade farewell with tears in our eyes as we sailed off to our respective missionary assignments. A month later we set foot on Spanish soil.

A New Culture

We landed at the southern port of Algeciras, alongside the enormous Rock of Gibraltar. That night four of us, Rita and I along with the Hundertmarks, took the train to Madrid. We went to the Hotel Mercador, there to wait until contacted by members of the Society's clandestine branch office. Spain was under the dictatorial rule of Generalissimo Francisco Fran-

co. This meant that the only legally recognized religion in the country was the Roman Catholic Church. It was illegal to practice any other religion publicly, and the house-to-house preaching work of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned. Even religious meetings were prohibited, so that Jehovah's Witnesses, who numbered about 1,200 in 30 congregations in Spain at the time, could not meet in Kingdom Halls as in other lands. We had to meet secretly in private homes.

Learning Spanish and Getting Started

Our first challenge was to learn the language. The first month we spent 11 hours a day learning Spanish—4 hours every morning in class, then 7 hours studying on our own. The second month was the same in the mornings, but afternoons were devoted to house-to-house preaching. Can you imagine? Still not knowing the language and with just a memorized introduction written on a card, Rita and I went out in the house-to-house work all by ourselves!

I recall knocking on a door in Vallecas, a working-class section of Madrid. With my card in hand, just in case, I said in Spanish: "Good morning. We are doing a Christian work. The Bible says (we would read a text). We would like you to have this booklet." Well, the lady just looked, then took the booklet. When we made the return visit, she invited us in, and as we spoke, she just looked. We started a Bible study with her as best we could, and during the studies, she just listened and looked. After a time she finally told us that she had not understood what we had said on our first visit but had heard the word *Dios* (God) and that this was enough for her to know that it was something good. In time, she took in considerable Biblical knowledge and was baptized, becoming one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Learning Spanish was extremely difficult

for me. While traveling in the city, I used to memorize verb conjugations. What I memorized one week I forgot the next! It was very discouraging. A number of times I almost gave up. Since I spoke such terrible Spanish, the Spanish brothers had to be very patient as I took the lead among them. At one district convention, a brother gave me a handwritten announcement to read from the platform. Having difficulty reading his handwriting, I announced: "Bring your *muletas* (crutches) to the stadium tomorrow." It was supposed to be, "Bring your *maletas* (luggage) to the stadium tomorrow." Of course, the crowd laughed, and naturally I was embarrassed.

Early Tests in Madrid

Those first few years in Madrid were emotionally very difficult for Rita and me. We missed our home and our friends very much. Every time we received a letter from the United States, a wave of homesickness would sweep over us. Those periods of nostalgia were overwhelming, but they passed. After all, we had given up home, family, and friends to receive in their place a pearl of higher value. We needed to adapt.

For our start in Madrid, we found ourselves in a very shabby boardinghouse, or pension. We had our room and three meals a day. It was a small dark room, and the mattresses were of straw. The month's rent consumed our modest monthly allowance. We usually had lunch there at midday, and the landlady used to leave our supper in the oven to keep it warm so that late at night we would have something to eat. However, walking the streets during the day and evening, we would get very hungry. If we had no allowance left, we would spend our limited personal funds to buy the cheapest chocolate bar that we could find. This situation soon changed, however, with the visit of the

Society's zone overseer. He saw our plight and said that we could look for a small apartment to use as a missionary home. Well, this would be a lot better than taking baths standing in a round tub on the floor in the kitchen. Now we would have a shower, a refrigerator to keep food in, and an electric burner on which to make our meals. We were very grateful for the consideration.

Marvelous Experiences in Madrid

The house-to-house preaching was carried out very cautiously. The daily hubbub in Madrid was an advantage, screening us so that we were not too conspicuous. We tried to dress and act like others so that we would not stand out as foreigners. Our method of door-to-door preaching was to enter an apartment house, knock at a door, speak to the person, and then leave the building, the street, and the area. There was always the possibility that the householder would call the police, and therefore it was not wise to stay in the neighborhood. In fact, even as cautious as they were in using this method, Paul and Evelyn Hundertmark were apprehended and expelled from the country in 1960. They went to neighboring Portugal, serving there for several years, with Paul caring for the underground branch office. Today he is the city overseer in San Diego, California.

However, for us an equalizing took place. Just a few months later, six missionaries assigned to Portugal were ordered to leave that country! This brought a happy development because Eric and Hazel Beveridge, who were also in our class of Gilead, were now directed to leave Portugal and come to Spain. So there we were in February 1962, at the Hotel Mercador once again—this time to welcome Eric and Hazel as they arrived.

It was during these early days in Madrid that Rita and I had a personal experi-

ence with religious hypocrisy. We studied the Bible with a couple, Bernardo and Maria, who lived in a shack made out of any discarded pieces of building material Bernardo could find. We studied with them late at night, and after the study, they would offer us bread, wine, and some cheese or whatever they had. I noticed that the cheese was just like American cheese. One night after the study, they brought out the can that the cheese came in. It had written on it in large letters, in English, "From the American people to the Spanish people—not to be sold." How did this poor family receive the cheese? The Catholic Church was used by the government to distribute it to the poor. But the priest was selling it!

Fruitful Ministry With the Military

Soon something wonderful happened that would turn out to be a rich blessing for us and for many others. We received a notice from the branch office asking us to visit a young man by the name of Walter Kiedaisch, who was stationed at the U.S. Air Force base at Torrejón, located a few miles out of Madrid. We visited him and his wife, starting a Bible study with them and another Air Force couple there.

During that time, I was conducting about five Bible studies with U.S. Air Force personnel, all in English, of course. Of those, seven were later baptized, and after returning to the United States, four of the men became congregation elders.

This was a time when there were very few ways to get books, magazines, and Bibles into the country because of the ban on our work. However, some literature was brought in by tourists and by our American contacts. I was assigned by the branch to operate a secret literature depot. It was in a storage room in the back of a stationery store in Vallecas. The owner's wife was one of Jeho-



**With Rita and Paul and Evelyn Hundertmark
(right) outside the Madrid bullring**

vah's Witnesses. Though not a Witness, the owner respected our work, and even at great risk to himself and his business, he allowed me to use this rear area to prepare packages of literature to send to cities throughout the country. Since this room always had to look like what it was supposed to be—a dusty, cluttered room full of cartons—I had to build a workbench and bookshelves that could be set up and ready for work quickly and then concealed in seconds. At the end of the day, I would wait until there was no one in the store and then quickly exit with my packages.

It was a real privilege to share in distributing spiritual material, such as the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines and other literature, to congregations throughout the country. Those were exciting times.

Rita had the joy of conducting 16 home Bible studies, about half of whom became baptized Witnesses of Jehovah. Dolores was a

young married woman who spent the cold winters in bed because of a heart problem. In the spring she could get up and be somewhat active. Dolores' faith was strong, so when the time came for our district convention in Toulouse, France, she wanted very much to go. She was cautioned by the doctor that it would be unwise because of her heart condition. Wearing a housedress and slippers and with no luggage, she went down to the train station to see her husband, her mother, and others off. Tears in her eyes, she could not bear to see them go without her, so she climbed on the train, and off she went to France! Rita did not know that this had happened. But there at the convention, what a surprise when she saw Dolores, smiling from ear to ear!

An Unusual Bible Study

We cannot close this account of our Madrid assignment without including Don Benigno Franco, "*el profesor.*" A local Witness took me to visit an elderly gentleman living with his wife in a very poor apartment house. I started a Bible study with him. After studying for about a year and a half, he asked to be baptized and become one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

This elderly gentleman, Don Benigno Franco, was the cousin of Francisco Franco, the dictator of Spain at that time. It seems that Don Benigno was always a freedom-loving person. During the Spanish Civil War, he sympathized with the Republic and was against his cousin—the general who won the war and established a Catholic dictatorship. Ever since 1939, Don Benigno had been denied the right to work, and he was limited to a very meager living. So it was that the cousin of Generalissimo Francisco Franco, caudillo of Spain, became one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Surprise Invitation

In 1965 the Spain branch office invited us to begin traveling in the circuit work in Barcelona. This meant leaving all the loving brothers whom we had grown very close to in Madrid. Now was to begin not only a new experience but also, for me, a test. The experience was frightening because I have always doubted my ability. I know very well that it was Jehovah who enabled me to be effective in this field of service.

Visiting a congregation each week meant living in the homes of the brothers. We had to live out of suitcases, and almost every two weeks, we moved to another home. This is especially difficult for a woman. But soon José and Roser Escudé, who lived in Barcelona, invited us to stay with them for days at a time. This was very loving on their part, for



Serving a congregation at a "picnic" in the woods

it meant that we would have a permanent place to keep our belongings and a regular location to come home to on Sunday evenings.

Rita and I spent the next four years in circuit work in the province of Catalonia, situated on the Mediterranean Coast. All our Bible meetings were held secretly in private homes, and our house-to-house preaching was also done with discretion so we would not attract attention. Sometimes we

had a whole congregation together on Sunday for a "picnic" in the woods, especially when holding a circuit assembly.

We will always admire the many devoted spiritual brothers who risked their jobs and freedom, exerting themselves to keep the congregations united and active. Many of them took the lead in extending the work into the towns outside the city. This formed the basis for the great increase in Spain after the ban was lifted and religious freedom was granted in 1970.

Having to Leave Our Foreign Assignment

During our ten years in Spain, our enjoying this special blessing of serving Jehovah had been tempered by the situation of our parents. On a number of occasions, we almost had to leave our assignment and go home to take care of my mother and father. However, thanks to loving brothers and sisters back in congregations near my parents, we were able to continue in Spain. Yes, the privilege of serving those years in missionary work was due in part to others who participated with us in putting God's Kingdom interests first.

Finally, in December 1968, we went home to take care of my mother. That very month my father passed away, and my mother was now left alone. Still being relatively free to serve full-time, we received an assignment to serve in the circuit work, but this time in the United States. For the next 20 years, we served Spanish circuits. Though we had lost our missionary pearl of very high value, we had another placed in our hands.

Preaching in the Midst of Drugs and Violence

Now we were serving side by side with many brothers and sisters who were living in crime-ridden parts of the cities. Why, the very first week in circuit work in Brook-

lyn, New York, Rita had her pocketbook snatched from her.

On one occasion Rita and I were with a group engaged in house-to-house preaching work in another section of New York City. Turning a corner, we noticed some people lined up in front of a hole in the wall of an abandoned building. As we took a few strides up the street, we noted a young fellow standing on the sidewalk looking at us. There was another on the far corner looking out for police cars. We had walked into the middle of a drug operation! The first lookout was startled, but then he saw the *Watchtower* magazine and was relieved. After all, I could have been a police officer! He then called out in Spanish, "*;Los Atalayas!* *;Los Atalayas!*" (The Watchtowers! The Watchtowers!) They knew who we were, identifying us with the magazine, and everything was all right. As I passed close to him, I said, "*Buenos días, ¿cómo está?*" (Good morning, how are you?) He replied by asking me to pray for him!

A Tough Decision

In 1990 it became apparent that I would have to be with my mother every day. We had tried hard to stay in the traveling work, but wisdom dictated that it was not possible to fulfill both obligations. We certainly wanted to be sure Mother was lovingly cared for. But once again we were having to give up a pearl of very high value, something that was very precious to us. All the literal gems in the world and all that they can do for one are very little in comparison with the gems of serving as a missionary or as a traveling overseer in Jehovah's organization.

Rita and I are now in our 60's. We are quite content and enjoy serving with a local Spanish-speaking congregation. As we look back over our years in Jehovah's service, we thank him for entrusting us with some pearls of very high value.

GODLY OBEDIENCE in a religiously divided family

"**I**T HURTS much more than any physical blow....

I feel as though I am bruised all over, and yet no one can see it." "Sometimes I feel like giving up on life . . . or leaving and never coming back." "It is hard to think straight sometimes."

Those emotion-filled words reveal feelings of desperation and loneliness. They come from victims of verbal abuse

—accusations, threats, degrading name-calling, the silent treatment—and even physical abuse from mates and family members. Why are these people treated so badly? Simply because of differing religious beliefs. Under these circumstances, living in a religiously divided family makes the worship of Jehovah a real challenge. Yet, many such victimized Christians successfully manifest godly obedience.

Thankfully, such anguish and stress is not found in all religiously divided homes. Nonetheless, it does exist. Does your home fit this description? Then, you may find it difficult to maintain respect for your mate or for your parents. If you are a wife in that situation or children in such an environment, how can you succeed in showing godly obedience in a religiously divided home? What



support can others give? And just how does God view the matter?

Why Is It So Hard to Be Obedient?

The world's self-interest and ingratitude work along with your own imperfect tendencies and make godly obedience a constant struggle. Satan knows this, and he is out to break your spirit. He often uses family members who have little or no appreciation and respect

for godly standards. Your elevated spiritual and moral values are often quite different from those of your unbelieving family. This means conflicting views on conduct and activity. (1 Peter 4:4) The pressure to turn you from the Christian standard may be intense, since you have obeyed the command: "Quit sharing with them in the unfruitful works that belong to the darkness." (Ephesians 5:11) In their eyes nothing you do is right anymore. It is all due to your religion. One mother, when burdened with sick children, asked for help from her husband and got a sarcastic, "You have time for your religion; you don't need help." Such comments add to the challenge of being obedient.

Then there are times when you may disagree over matters that are not in direct violation of the Scriptures. Yet, you realize

that you are part of a family and to that extent have certain obligations. "I get very emotional when thinking of how my father treats us because I realize he feels alone," says Connie. "I have to remind myself often not to resent my father's opposition. I need to tell myself that there is a strong reason why he reacts to or rejects our stand. Satan is the ruler of this system of things." Susan, married to an unbeliever, confides: "In the beginning I used to feel that I wanted to split up—but no longer. I knew Satan was using him to get at me."

Satan's efforts to make you feel worthless may seem almost unrelenting. Days may pass with no communication with your mate. Life can become very lonely. This erodes confidence and self-respect and tests your godly obedience. Children also feel the emotional and physical drain. In one instance, even though their parents objected, three youthful servants of God faithfully attended Christian meetings. One of them, now a full-time minister, acknowledged: "We would feel numb and exhausted; we couldn't sleep; it broke our hearts."

What Does God Expect of You?

Obedience to God always comes first, and relative obedience to the husbandly head must always be as Jehovah directs. (Acts 5:29) That may be difficult, yet it is possible. Keep looking to God for help. He wants you to "worship with spirit and truth" and to listen to and submit to his direction. (John 4:24) Knowledge from God's Word, as it fills the right kind of heart, prompts willing obedience. Although your personal circumstances may change, neither Jehovah nor his Word change. (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17) Jehovah has assigned headship to the husband. This remains true whether he accepts Christ's headship or not. (1 Corinthians 11:3) Although this may be hard to live with if you

face constant abuse and humiliation, the disciple James says: "The wisdom from above is ... ready to obey." (James 3:17) To recognize this headship unequivocally and to accept it require God's spirit, particularly its fruit of love.—Galatians 5:22, 23.

When you love someone, it is easier to show godly obedience toward divinely constituted authority. Ephesians 5:33 counsels: "Let each one of you individually so love his wife as he does himself; on the other hand, the wife should have deep respect for her husband."

Consider Jesus. He was verbally and physically abused, yet he never reviled anyone. He maintained a flawless record. (1 Peter 2: 22, 23) For Jesus to suffer such great indignities, he needed tremendous courage and unyielding love for his Father, Jehovah. But, love "endures all things."—1 Corinthians 13: 4-8.

Paul reminded his fellow worker Timothy, and he reminds us today: "God gave us not a spirit of cowardice, but that of power and of love and of soundness of mind." (2 Timothy 1:7) Deep love for Jehovah and for Jesus Christ can spur you on in godly obedience when the situation seems impossible to endure. Soundness of mind will help you to keep a balanced outlook and keep focused on your relationship with Jehovah and Jesus Christ.—Compare Philippians 3:8-11.

Mates That Succeed in Showing Godly Obedience

Sometimes you must wait a long time to see how Jehovah will take care of your problems. Yet, his hand is never short. "Always do the things Jehovah gives you the right and privilege to do—to worship him at meetings and assemblies, to study, to go in service, and to pray," advises one who is succeeding in showing godly obedience. It is your efforts that Jehovah blesses, not merely your

accomplishments. At 2 Corinthians 4:17, the apostle Paul said that ‘the tribulation is momentary, but it works out for us a glory that is everlasting.’ Meditate on this. It will be a stabilizing element for you. One wife reflects: “My family life is not getting better, and sometimes I wonder if Jehovah is pleased with me. But one thing I take as his blessing is the fact that I come out of these difficult situations better off than my husband. Knowing that our actions are pleasing Jehovah makes the whole trouble worthwhile.”

Jehovah promises that he will not let you go through situations beyond what you can endure. Trust him. He knows better than you do, and he knows you better than you know yourself. (Romans 8:35-39; 11:33; 1 Corinthians 10:13) Praying to Jehovah in difficult circumstances helps. Pray for his spirit to guide you, especially when you do not know which way to go or how to handle a situation. (Proverbs 3:5; 1 Peter 3:12) Constantly supplicate him for patience, self-control, and humility to obey the authority in your life. The psalmist said: “Jehovah is my crag and my stronghold and the Provider of escape for me.” (Psalm 18:2) Remembering this is a strengthening aid for those in religiously divided households.

Above all, put forth every effort to make your marriage a happy one. Yes, Jesus fore-saw that the good news would cause divisions. Pray, though, that any division is never due to your attitude or conduct. (Matthew 10:35, 36) To this end, cooperation minimizes marital problems. Even when only you are displaying this proper attitude, it can go a long way toward preventing problems from getting to the point of excessive friction and dissension. Patience and love are so important. “Be gentle” and “restrained under evil.”—2 Timothy 2:24.

The apostle Paul became “all things to people of all sorts.” (1 Corinthians 9:22) Sim-

ilarly, while not compromising Christian duties, you may sometimes need to adjust your schedule to spend more time with your mate and family. Give as much time as possible to the one with whom you chose to share your life. Show Christian consideration. This is an expression of godly obedience.

A God-fearing and submissive wife who is flexible and sympathetic finds it easier to manifest godly obedience. (Ephesians 5: 22, 23) Words that are gracious, “seasoned with salt,” help to minimize the frequency of potential confrontations.—Colossians 4:6; Proverbs 15:1.

Godly wisdom admonishes you to settle differences quickly and to restore peace with good words that build up, rather than to go to sleep in “a provoked state.” (Ephesians 4: 26, 29, 31) This takes humility. Lean heavily on Jehovah for strength. One Christian wife humbly admitted: “After fervent prayer, I have experienced Jehovah’s spirit lifting my arm to embrace my mate.” God’s Word counsels: “Return evil for evil to no one. . . . Keep conquering the evil with the good.” (Romans 12:17-21) This is wise advice and the course of godly obedience.

Children That Show Godly Obedience

Jehovah’s counsel to you children in religiously divided families is: “Be obedient to your parents in everything, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord.” (Colossians 3:20) Notice that the Lord Jesus Christ is brought into the matter. Hence, obedience to parents is not absolute. In a sense the counsel of Acts 5:29, to “obey God as ruler rather than men,” also pertains to Christian youths. Occasions will arise when you will have to decide what to do on the basis of what you know to be right according to the Scriptures. It may result in some form of punishment for refusing to engage in an act of false worship. While this is an unpleasant prospect, you

can find comfort and can even rejoice in the fact that you are suffering for doing what is right in God's eyes.—1 Peter 2:19, 20.

Since your thoughts are guided by Bible principles, you may differ with your parents on certain issues. This does not make them your enemies. Even if they are not dedicated servants of Jehovah, they deserve proper honor. (Ephesians 6:2) Solomon said: "Listen to your father who caused your birth, and do not despise your mother." (Proverbs 23:22) Try to understand the hurt they feel over your pursuing a faith that seems strange to them. Communicate with them, and "let your reasonableness become known." (Philippians 4:5) Share your feelings and concerns. Be firm for godly principles, yet, "if possible, as far as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men." (Romans 12:18) The fact that you obey parental rule now shows to Jehovah that you desire to continue obedient as a subject of the Kingdom.

What Others Can Do

Christians living in religiously divided families need support and understanding from fellow worshipers. This is evident from the words of one who said: "I feel absolutely hopeless and helpless, since there is nothing anybody can do, and there is nothing I can do to change it. I am trusting in Jehovah to carry out his will in our family, whatever it may be."

Association with spiritual brothers and sisters at Christian meetings is a refuge. This same person described her life as being "like two different worlds. One I have to be in and one I like to be in." The love of the brotherhood is what makes it possible for these afflicted ones to endure and serve in all circumstances. Include them in your prayers. (Ephesians 1:16) Regularly, on every occasion, speak encouraging, positive, and comforting words to them. (1 Thessalonians

5:14) When practical and appropriate, include them in your theocratic and social activities.

Blessings and Benefits of Godly Obedience

Meditate daily on the blessings and benefits of displaying godly obedience in a religiously divided home. Work at being obedient. "Do not tire out." (Galatians 6:9) Endurance of unfavorable circumstances and injustices "because of conscience toward God . . . is an agreeable thing" with God. (1 Peter 2:19, 20) Be obedient to the extent that Jehovah's righteous principles and laws are not compromised. This shows loyalty to Jehovah's arrangement. Your godly conduct may even save the life of your mate, children, or parents.—1 Corinthians 7:16; 1 Peter 3:1.

As you cope with the demands and expectations of a religiously divided family, remember the importance of keeping integrity to Jehovah God and Jesus Christ. You may yield on many points, but to yield integrity is to yield everything, including life itself. The apostle Paul said: "God . . . has at the end of these days spoken to us by means of a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the systems of things." Recognizing this "salvation of such greatness" will fortify you to be obedient. —Hebrews 1:1, 2; 2:3.

Your uncompromising obedience and firmness for right morals and values is a healthy protection for you and your unbelieving mate. Fidelity builds strong family ties. Proverbs 31:11 says of a capable and loyal wife: "In her the heart of her owner has put trust." Your chaste conduct and deep respect may open your unbelieving husband's eyes. It may lead him to accept God's truth.

Godly obedience is indeed precious and lifesaving. Pray for it in your family life. It will result in peace of mind and bring praise to Jehovah.

QUESTIONS FROM READERS

How do the benefits of Christ Jesus' high-priestly services, mentioned at Hebrews 4:15, 16, apply to the "other sheep" now?

Though Jesus' role as High Priest has primary significance for those who will be with him in heaven, Christians with earthly hopes benefit even now from Jesus' priestly services.

Since Adam, humans have been burdened with sin. We suffer from inherited imperfection, as did the Israelites. They turned to a long line of high priests and associate priests, who offered sacrifices for their own sins as well as for those of the people. In time, Jesus was anointed as a priest "according to the manner of Melchizedek." After being resurrected, Jesus appeared before Jehovah to present the value of his perfect human sacrifice.—Psalm 110:1, 4.

What does this mean for us today? In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul discussed Jesus' service as High Priest. At Hebrews 5:1, we read: "Every high priest taken from among men is appointed in behalf of men over the things pertaining to God, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins." Then, in verses 5 and 6, Paul showed that Jesus became a high priest, which can lead to benefits for us.

How so? Paul wrote: "Although he was a Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered; and after he had been made perfect he became responsible for everlasting salvation to all those obeying him." (Hebrews 5:8, 9) At first, that verse might make us think of how we will be able to benefit in the new world, when those loyal to God and Jesus will have their sinful state removed and will gain everlasting life. That is a valid prospect, based on the redemptive value of Jesus' sacrifice and his service as High Priest.

Actually, though, we may benefit right now from his role or service as High Priest. Take note of Hebrews 4:15, 16: "We have as high priest, not one who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tested in all respects like ourselves, but without sin. Let us, therefore, approach with freeness of speech to the throne of

undeserved kindness, that we may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for help at the right time." When would "the right time" be? It is when we need mercy and undeserved kindness. All of us, because of our imperfection, should feel this need now.

Hebrews 4:15, 16 makes the point that Jesus—now a priest in heaven—has also been a human, so he can be empathetic. Toward whom? Toward us. When? Now. When he was a human, Jesus experienced stresses and pressures common to humans. On occasion, Jesus was hungry and thirsty. And despite being perfect, he got tired. That should reassure us. Why? Because Jesus experienced natural weariness, he is aware of how we often feel. Recall, too, that Jesus had to contend with jealous bickering among his apostles. (Mark 9:33-37; Luke 22:24) Yes, he had disappointments. Should that not give us confidence that he understands when we get disappointed, discouraged? Certainly.

When you are discouraged, what can you do? Did Paul say that you just have to wait until, in the new world, your High Priest, Jesus, helps you become perfect in mind and body? No. Paul said: "We may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for help at the right time," and that includes the present. Furthermore, when Jesus was a human, he experienced suffering and hardships, being "tested in all respects like ourselves." So when we face such things, he is ready to help us, based on his understanding of what we are experiencing. Does that not draw you to him?

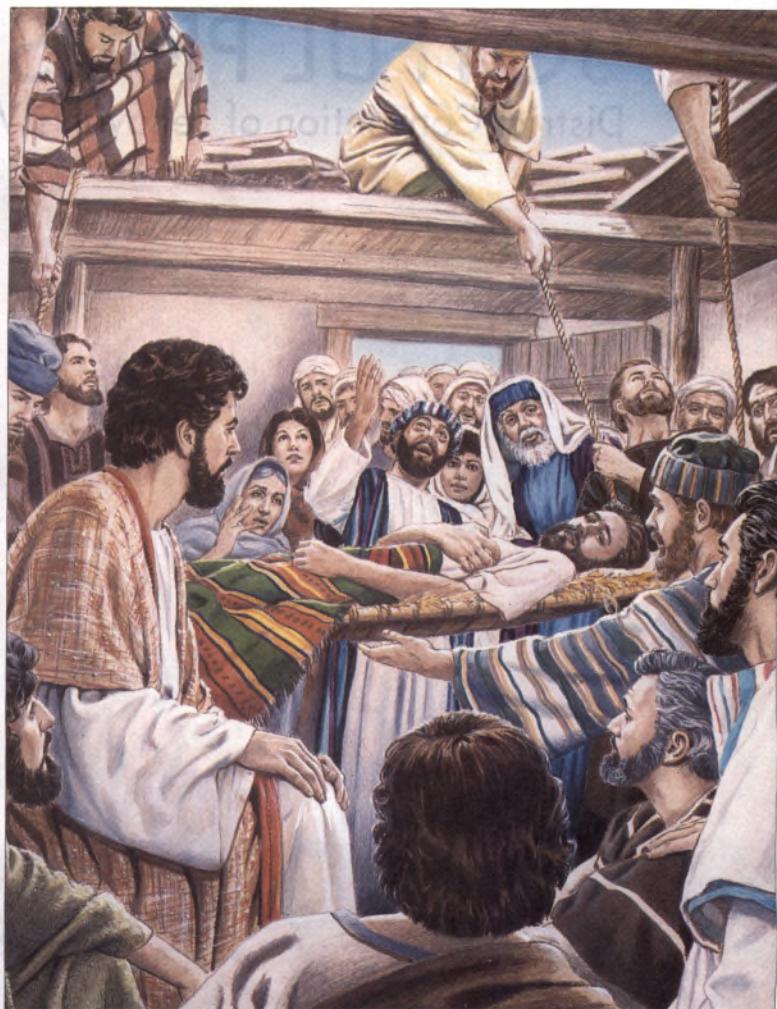
Now note verse 16. Paul says that we—and this includes both the anointed and those of the other sheep—can approach God with freeness of speech. (John 10:16) The apostle did not mean that we in prayer can say just anything we want, even angry, irreverent things. Rather, on the basis of Jesus' sacrifice and his role as High Priest, we can approach God despite our being sinners.

Another way that we can benefit even now from the services of our High Priest, Jesus Christ, involves our sins, or errors. Certainly we do not ex-

pect that in the present system Jesus would apply to us the full merit of his sacrifice. Even if he did, we would still not have everlasting life. Remember the case recorded at Luke 5:18-26, involving the paralyzed man whose bed was let down through an opening in the roof? Jesus told him: "Man, your sins are forgiven you." That did not mean some specific sins that caused the paralysis. It must have meant the man's sins in general, and to some degree it could have involved his inherited imperfection, which causes afflictions.

Based on the sacrifice that he would offer, Jesus could carry away the man's sins, as the goat for Azazel carried away the sins of Israel on the Day of Atonement. (Leviticus 16:7-10) Yet, the paralyzed man was still a human. He would sin again, and in time he died, as sinners must. (Romans 5:12; 6:23) What Jesus said did not mean that the man got eternal life on the spot. But the man was blessed with a degree of forgiveness at that time.

Now consider our situation. Being imperfect, we err daily. (James 3:2) What can we do about that? Well, in heaven we have a merciful High Priest through whom we can approach Jehovah in prayer. Yes, as Paul wrote, all of us can "approach with freeness of speech to [God's] throne of undeserved kindness, that we may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for help at the right time." Consequently, all today who are of the other sheep are certainly gaining wonderful benefits, including a clear conscience, from Christ's high-priestly services.



All Christians with the earthly hope can look forward to grander benefits in the approaching new world. Then our heavenly High Priest will fully apply the merit of his sacrifice, leading to complete forgiveness of sin. He will also extend greater benefits by caring for the physical and spiritual health of the people. And Jesus will greatly expand the education of God's people on earth, since teaching the Law was a major responsibility of the priests in Israel. (Leviticus 10:8-11; Deuteronomy 24:8; 33:8, 10) Hence, while we benefit from Jesus' priestly services now, much more awaits us!

"JOYFUL PRAISERS"

District Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses

