

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

MAY 1, 2006

**Who
Will Help
the Poor?**



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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POVERTY

THE SITUATION TODAY

VICENTE* can often be seen pulling a heavily loaded cart through the streets of São Paulo, Brazil. He gathers cardboard, scrap metal, and plastic. When it begins to get dark, he places a layer of cardboard under his cart and lies down to sleep. He seems oblivious to the noise of cars and buses on the busy street where he spends the night. He once had a job, a home, and a family—but he lost them all. Now he ekes out a meager living on the street.

Unfortunately, millions of people worldwide, like Vicente, live in abject poverty. In developing nations, many are forced to live on the street or in shantytowns. Beggars—the lame, the blind, women nursing their babies—are a common sight. At traffic lights, children run between the stopped

cars, trying to sell candies in hopes of getting a few coins.

It is difficult to justify such poverty. The British magazine *The Economist* commented: "The human race has never been richer, or better armed with the medical knowledge, technological prowess and intellectual firepower needed to beat poverty." Many have certainly benefited from this know-how. The streets of the big cities in a number of developing countries are packed with gleaming new cars. Shopping malls are full of the latest gadgets, and there is no lack of people to buy them. Two shopping centers in Brazil ran a special promotion. They stayed open overnight from December 23 to 24, 2004. One of the centers hired samba dancers to entertain prospective buyers. The event attracted nearly 500,000 shoppers!

Still, vast numbers of people do not benefit from the wealth that some enjoy. The stark contrast between the affluent and the

* Name has been changed.



impoverished has led many to conclude that there is an urgent need to combat poverty. The Brazilian magazine *Veja* stated: "This year [2005] the battle against poverty should be the principal subject on the global agenda." *Veja* also reported on the proposal of a new Marshall Plan intended to help the poorest countries, especially in Africa.* However, while such proposals give an impression of progress, the same magazine added: "There are also abundant reasons for questioning the results. If the majority of

* The Marshall Plan was a U.S.-sponsored program designed to aid the economic recovery of Europe after the second world war.

countries are reluctant to contribute, it is because the funds rarely reach the people for whom they are intended." Unfortunately, because of corruption and bureaucratic red tape, a large part of the funds provided by governments, international agencies, and individuals never reaches the people who really need it.

Jesus knew that poverty would be an ongoing problem. He said: "You always have the poor with you." (Matthew 26:11) Does this mean that poverty will always be part of the world scene? Can nothing be done to improve the situation? What can Christians do to help the poor?

FOLLOW JESUS' EXAMPLE AND SHOW CONCERN FOR THE POOR

POVERTY and oppression are almost as old as mankind. While God's Law to Israel sought to protect the poor and mitigate their suffering, that Law was often disregarded. (Amos 2:6) The prophet Ezekiel denounced the way the poor were being treated. He said: "The people of the land themselves have carried on a scheme of defrauding and have done a tearing away in robbery, and the afflicted one and the poor one they have maltreated, and the alien resident they have defrauded without justice."—Ezekiel 22:29.

The situation was no different when Jesus was on earth. The religious leaders showed a complete lack of concern for the poor and needy. The religious leaders were described

as "money lovers" who 'devoured the houses of the widows' and who were more concerned about keeping their traditions than caring for the aged and the needy. (Luke 16:14; 20:47; Matthew 15:5, 6) It is of interest that in Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan, a priest and a Levite on seeing an injured man walked past him on the opposite side of the road rather than turn aside to help him.—Luke 10:30-37.

Jesus Showed Concern for the Poor

The Gospel accounts of Jesus' life show that he fully comprehended the difficulties of the poor and was extremely sensitive to their needs. Although Jesus had lived in heaven, he emptied himself, took up hu-

man life, and ‘became poor for our sakes.’ (2 Corinthians 8:9) On seeing the crowds, Jesus “felt pity for them, because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd.” (Matthew 9:36) The account of the needy widow shows that Jesus was impressed, not by the large gifts of the rich, who gave “out of their surplus,” but by the poor widow’s tiny contribution. What she did touched his heart because she “out of her want dropped in all the means of living she had.”—Luke 21:4.

Not only did Jesus feel compassion for the poor but he also took a personal interest in their needs. He and his apostles had a common fund from which they gave to needy Israelites. (Matthew 26:6-9; John 12:5-8; 13:29) Jesus encouraged those who wanted to be his followers to recognize their obligation to assist needy ones. He told a rich young ruler: “Sell all the things you have and distribute to poor people, and you will have treasure in the heavens; and come be my follower.” The fact that the man was unwilling to part with his possessions showed that his love for riches was greater than his love for God and fellowman. Thus, he did not have the qualities required to be a disciple of Jesus.—Luke 18:22, 23.

Jesus took a personal interest in the needs of the poor



Christ's Followers Are Concerned About the Poor

After Jesus' death, the apostles and other followers of Christ continued to show concern for the poor among them. In about 49 C.E., the apostle Paul met with James, Peter, and John and discussed the commission he had received from the Lord Jesus Christ to preach the good news. They agreed that Paul and Barnabas should go to “the nations,” concentrating on the Gentiles in their preaching. However, James and his companions urged Paul and Barnabas to “keep the poor in mind.” And that is what Paul “earnestly endeavored to do.”—Galatians 2:7-10.

During Emperor Claudius' reign, a severe famine came upon various parts of the Roman Empire. In response, Christians in Antioch “determined, each of them according as anyone could afford it, to send a relief ministration to the brothers dwelling in Judea; and this they did, dispatching it to the older men by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.”—Acts 11:28-30.

True Christians today also recognize that followers of Jesus must show concern for the poor and needy, especially among fellow believers. (Galatians 6:10) Therefore, they manifest real concern for the material needs of deprived ones. In 1998, for example, a severe drought ravaged much of northeastern Brazil. The drought destroyed the rice, bean, and maize crops, leading to widespread famine—the worst in 15 years. In some places, even drinking water came to be in short supply. Jehovah's Witnesses in other parts of the country immediately organized relief committees, and in a short time, they had gathered tons of food and had paid the cost of transporting the supplies.

Witnesses supporting the relief efforts wrote: “We are very happy to have been able to help our brothers, especially because we

are sure that we have made Jehovah's heart rejoice. We never forget the words of James 2:15, 16." Those Bible verses state: "If a brother or a sister is in a naked state and lacking the food sufficient for the day, yet a certain one of you says to them: 'Go in peace, keep warm and well fed,' but you do not give them the necessities for their body, of what benefit is it?"

In one of the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in the city of São Paulo, a humble



The Bible's message brings real hope

and zealous Witness who is poor materially often struggles to make ends meet. She says: "Even though I live in poverty, the Bible's message has given real meaning to my life. I do not know what would have happened to me if I had not received help from my fellow Witnesses." Some time ago, this hardworking Christian woman needed surgery but was unable to pay the hospital bill. In this particular instance, Christian brothers and sisters in the congregation were in a position to cover the cost of the surgery. Giving help to fellow believers in need is practiced by true Christians worldwide.

No matter how heartwarming such experiences may be, however, it is clear that such

sincere efforts will not eradicate poverty. Even powerful governments and large international relief agencies, while having had some success, have not been able to eliminate the age-old problem of poverty. Therefore, the question arises, What will be the definitive solution to poverty and other problems that plague mankind?

Bible Teachings Provide Lasting Help

The Gospel accounts relate that Jesus Christ regularly performed good deeds for those who were poor or who had other needs. (Matthew 14:14-21) To what activity, though, did he give priority? On one occasion, after having spent some time helping those in need, Jesus told his disciples: "Let us go somewhere else, into the village towns nearby, that I may *preach* there also." Why did Jesus interrupt his work in behalf of the sick and needy in order to resume his preaching activity? He explained by saying: "It is for this purpose [that is, to preach] I have gone out." (Mark 1:38, 39; Luke 4:43) Although doing good deeds for people in need was important to Jesus, preaching about God's Kingdom was his primary mission.—Mark 1:14.

Since the Bible urges Christians "to follow [Jesus'] steps closely," Christians today have clear guidance when it comes to setting priorities in their efforts to help others. (1 Peter 2:21) Like Jesus, they help people in need. However, also like Jesus, they make the work of teaching the Bible's message about the good news of God's Kingdom their top priority. (Matthew 5:14-16; 24:14; 28:19, 20) Why, though, should preaching the message found in God's Word take priority over other forms of helping others?

Real-life experiences from around the world demonstrate that when people understand and follow the Bible's practi-

cal counsel, they are better equipped to deal with the daily problems of life, including poverty. Moreover, the Bible's message of God's Kingdom that is preached by Jehovah's Witnesses today gives people a hope for the future—a hope that makes life worth living, even under the most trying circumstances. (1 Timothy 4:8) What hope is that?

God's Word assures us regarding our future: "There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to [God's] promise, and in these righteousness

is to dwell." (2 Peter 3:13) When the Bible speaks of "the earth," it is at times referring to the people who live on the earth. (Genesis 11:1) So the righteous "new earth" that is promised to come is a society of people who have God's approval. God's Word further promises that under the rule of Christ, those approved by God will receive the gift of everlasting life and will live a satisfying life in an earthly paradise. (Mark 10:30) That wonderful future is available to all, including the poor. In that "new earth," the problem of poverty will be solved forever.

HOW WILL JESUS "DELIVER THE POOR ONE"?

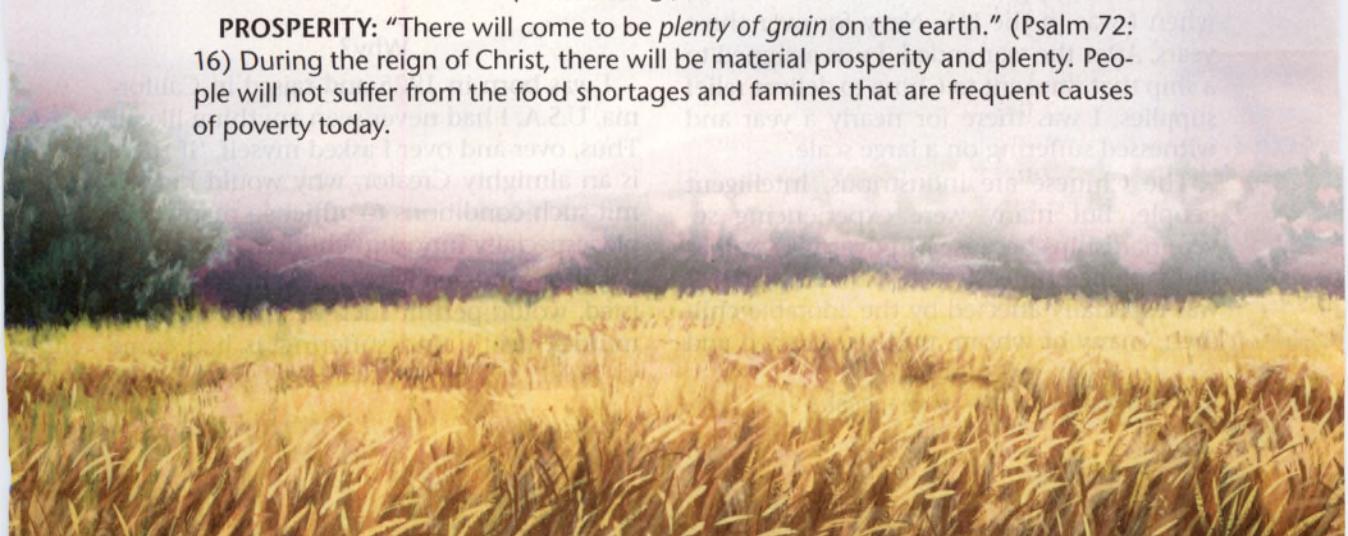
—Psalm 72:12

JUSTICE: "Let him judge the afflicted ones of the people, let him save the sons of the poor one, and let him crush the defrauder." (Psalm 72:4) During Christ's reign over the earth, there will be justice for all. There will be no place for corruption, a scourge that reduces many potentially rich countries to poverty.

PEACE: "In his days the righteous one will sprout, and the abundance of peace until the moon is no more." (Psalm 72:7) Much of the poverty in the world results from human conflicts and war. Christ will bring perfect peace to the earth, thereby eliminating one of the main causes of poverty.

COMPASSION: "He will feel sorry for the lowly one and the poor one, and the souls of the poor ones he will save. From oppression and from violence he will redeem their soul, and their blood will be precious in his eyes." (Psalm 72:12-14) The lowly, poor, and oppressed will become part of one happy human family, unified under the leadership of the King Jesus Christ.

PROSPERITY: "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth." (Psalm 72:16) During the reign of Christ, there will be material prosperity and plenty. People will not suffer from the food shortages and famines that are frequent causes of poverty today.





LEARNING WHY GOD PERMITS SUFFERING CHANGED MY LIFE

AS TOLD BY
HARRY PELOYAN

Why does God permit suffering? That question had bothered me ever since I was a little boy. My parents were hardworking, honest, and family-oriented. But my father was not religious, and my mother, only a little. So they could not provide me with the answer to that question.

I WONDERED about that question even more during and after World War II, when I was in the U.S. Navy for over three years. After the war ended, I was assigned to a ship that was sent to China to deliver relief supplies. I was there for nearly a year and witnessed suffering on a large scale.

The Chinese are industrious, intelligent people. But many were experiencing severe hardships because of poverty as well as the violence unleashed by World War II. I was especially affected by the adorable children, many of whom, undernourished and

in rags, would beg from us when we went ashore.

Why?

I was born in 1925 and raised in California, U.S.A. I had never seen anything like it. Thus, over and over I asked myself, 'If there is an almighty Creator, why would he permit such conditions to afflict so many people, especially innocent children?'

I also wondered why God, if he indeed existed, would permit such destruction, mass murder, death, and suffering as had come

upon mankind over the centuries—particularly during World War II, when over 50 million people lost their lives. Moreover, throughout that war, why would people of the same religion, encouraged by their clergy, kill one another because their nationality was different?

The Telescope

When World War II began in 1939 and wholesale slaughter came upon the human family, I felt that there could not be a God. Then, in a science course in high school, each of us students was required to build something of a scientific nature. Since I was interested in astronomy, I undertook building a large reflecting telescope with an eight-inch-diameter mirror.

To build this telescope, I bought a piece of glass over an inch thick and eight inches wide and had a glass cutter make it round. Then I began the laborious task of grinding it by hand to make it into a concave mirror. That took all my free time for an entire semester. When the mirror was finished, I mounted it in a long metal tube and fitted the telescope with eyepieces of various strengths.

On a clear, moonless night, I took my completed telescope outside for the first time and focused it on the stars and on the planets of our solar system. I was astounded

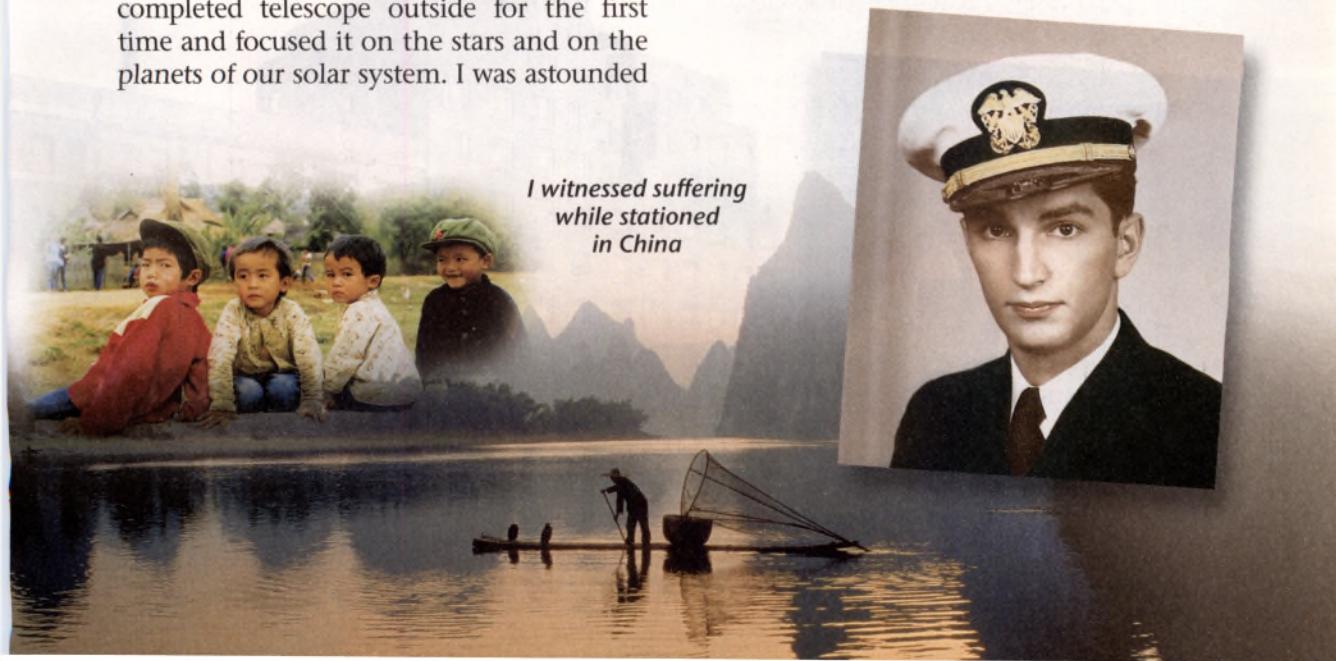
at how many heavenly bodies there were and how well-organized everything was. Then, when I learned that some "stars" were, in fact, galaxies like our Milky Way, each containing billions of stars, I was even more astounded.

'Surely,' I thought, 'all of this could not have happened just by itself. Nothing that is organized happens by accident. The universe is so well-organized that it looks as if a genius made it. Could there be a God after all?' The experience with the telescope caused me to back away somewhat from the dogmatic atheistic viewpoint that I previously held.

I then asked myself: 'If there is indeed a God powerful and wise enough to create this amazing universe, could he not correct the pitiful situation on earth? Why did he permit all this misery in the first place?' When I put such questions to religious people, they could not provide satisfactory answers.

After high school and several years in college, I joined the U.S. Navy. However, chaplains in the military could not really answer my questions either. Too often, those who were religious said something like, "The Lord works in mysterious ways."

I witnessed suffering while stationed in China



My Search Continues

After I left China, the questions I had about why God permits suffering persisted. I could not get them out of my mind, especially when I saw military cemeteries on the various islands we stopped at on our way home across the Pacific. Almost all the graves were for young men whose lives had barely begun.

When I arrived back in the United States and was released from the navy, I had one year of school to finish at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. I graduated after that year and got my degree, but I did not go home to California. I decided to stay on the East Coast for a while to try to find answers to my questions. I had in mind going to New York City, where there were many religions, in order to attend some religious services to see what was taught.

In New York my aunt, Isabel Kapigian, invited me to stay at her home. She and her two daughters, Rose and Ruth, were Jehovah's Witnesses. As I did not think that I

would be interested in their beliefs, I began attending the services of other religions, talking to people and reading their literature. I would ask them why God permits suffering, but they did not know the answer any more than I did. I concluded that perhaps there was no God after all.

Finding Answers

Then I asked my aunt and her daughters if I could read some of their literature to learn the views of Jehovah's Witnesses. When I read the publications, I quickly saw that the Witnesses were very different from other religions. The answers came from the Bible and were very satisfying. In a short time, my questions about why God permits suffering were answered.

Not only that, but I could see that Jehovah's Witnesses backed up their Bible-based answers with actions. For example, I asked my aunt what the young men of Jehovah's Witnesses did in Germany during World

*Since 1957, I have been serving
at the headquarters of Jehovah's
Witnesses in Brooklyn*



War II. Did they join the armed forces there, say "Heil Hitler!," and salute the swastika flag? Her answer was no, they did not. And because of their neutral stand, they were sent to concentration camps, where many of them were murdered. She explained that during the war the position of Jehovah's Witnesses everywhere was the same—that of neutrality. Even in democratic countries, young men of Jehovah's Witnesses were put in jail for their neutral stand.

My aunt then asked me to read John 13:35, which states: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." True Christians must have that identifying mark of love on an international scale. Never would they be found on opposing sides in war, killing one another because their nationality was different! She asked: "Could you imagine Jesus and his disciples taking opposing sides in Rome's wars, killing one another?"

I was also directed to 1 John 3:10-12. It says: "The children of God and the children of the Devil are evident by this fact: Everyone who does not carry on righteousness does not originate with God, neither does he who does not love his brother. . . . We should have love for one another; not like Cain, who originated with the wicked one and slaughtered his brother."

The Bible is clear. True Christians love one another, no matter which nation they live in. Thus, they would never be found killing their own spiritual brothers or anyone else for that matter. That is why Jesus could say of his followers: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." —John 17:16.

Why Permitted

I soon learned that the Bible tells us why God has permitted suffering. It explains that

when God created our first parents, he made them perfect and put them in a paradise garden. (Genesis 1:26; 2:15) He also gave them a very desirable gift—free will. But they had to use that faculty responsibly. If they obeyed God and his laws, they would continue to live in perfection in a paradise. They would extend the boundaries of that paradise until it encompassed the entire earth. Their offspring would also be perfect, so that in time, this earth would be a glorious paradise inhabited by perfect, happy people.—Genesis 1:28.

However, if Adam and Eve chose to go their independent way, apart from God, then he would no longer sustain them in perfection. (Genesis 2:16, 17) Unfortunately for mankind, our first parents abused their free will and chose to be independent from God. They were spurred on by a rebellious spirit creature who came to be known as Satan the Devil. He coveted independence from God and the worship that rightly belongs to God alone.—Genesis 3:1-19; Revelation 4:11.

Satan thus became "the god of this system of things." (2 Corinthians 4:4) The Bible states: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) Jesus called Satan "the ruler of the world." (John 14:30) The disobedience of Satan and our first parents brought imperfection,

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

What Is God's Purpose for the Earth?

Do You Have "Freeness of Speech"?

Are You Prepared for Survival?

violence, death, sorrow, and suffering to all mankind.—Romans 5:12.

"It Does Not Belong to Man"

To demonstrate what the ignoring of the Creator's laws would mean for the human family, God has permitted its consequences for thousands of years. This time period has provided ample opportunity for all mankind to observe the truthfulness of what the Bible says:

"To earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step. Correct me, O Jehovah."—Jere-miah 10:23, 24.

Now, after all these centuries, we can see that rulership independent of God has been a disaster. Thus, God purposes to let mankind continue this ruinous experiment of independence from him and his laws no longer.

A Marvelous Future

Very soon, Bible prophecy shows, God will bring this vicious, cruel system of things to an end: "Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more . . . But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—Psalm 37:10, 11.

A prophecy at Daniel 2:44 declares: "In the days of those kings [all forms of rulership now existing] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." Never

again will human rule be permitted. All the earth will be ruled by God's Kingdom. Under its administration, the entire earth will be made a paradise and mankind will grow to perfection to live forever in happiness. The Bible promises: "[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore." (Revelation 21:4) What a marvelous future God has in store for us!

A Different Life

Finding satisfying answers to my questions changed my life. From then on, I wanted to serve God and help others find these answers. I understood the seriousness of what 1 John 2:17 says: "The world [this present system of things ruled by

Satan] is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever." I keenly wanted everlasting life in God's new world. I decided to stay in New York and began to associate with a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses there, having many good experiences helping others learn what I had learned.

In 1949, I met Rose Marie Lewis. She, her mother Sadie, and her six sisters were all Jehovah's Witnesses. Rose was serving God full-time in the preaching work. She had many good qualities, and I was drawn to her immediately. We were married in June 1950 and stayed in New York. We were happy in what we were doing and rejoiced in the hope of living forever in God's new world.

In 1957, Rose Marie and I were invited to serve full-time at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses, in Brooklyn, New York. By June 2004 we had been happily married for 54 years, 47 of them at the Brook-

I married
Rose Marie
in 1950



lyn headquarters. They were blessed years of serving Jehovah and working alongside thousands of fellow believers.

My Worst Suffering

Sadly, in early December 2004, Rose Marie was diagnosed with a cancerous tumor in one of her lungs. Experts agreed that it was fast growing and had to be removed. The surgery was performed later in December, and about a week afterward, the surgeon came into Rose's hospital room while I was there and said: "Rose Marie, go home! You're healed!"

However, only a few days after coming home, Rose Marie began to have severe pains in her stomach area and elsewhere. These persisted, so she went back to the hospital for further tests. It was found that for some reason, a number of her vital organs were producing blood clots that were preventing those organs from getting the necessary oxygen. The doctors did everything humanly possible to counteract this but were unsuccessful. Only a few weeks later, on January 30, 2005, I suffered the most crushing blow of my whole life. My dearest Rose Marie died.

At the time, I was almost 80 years old and had observed the suffering of people all my life, but this was different. Rose Marie and I were, as the Bible says, "one flesh." (Genesis 2:24) I had seen the suffering of others and had suffered myself when friends and relatives died. But the suffering I experienced when my wife died has been far more intense and long lasting. I now fully realize what immense sorrow the death of loved ones has brought to the human family for so long.

Nevertheless, my understanding of the origin of suffering and how it will end has come to my rescue. Psalm 34:18 says: "Jehovah is near to those that are broken at heart;

and those who are crushed in spirit he saves." A key to enduring this suffering is knowing that the Bible teaches that there will be a resurrection, that those in the graves will come forth and have the opportunity to live forever in God's new world. Acts 24:15 says: "There is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." Rose Marie loved God intensely. I am sure that he loved her the same way and that he will remember her and will



On our 50th wedding anniversary, in 2000

bring her back in his due time, hopefully very soon.—Luke 20:38; John 11:25.

While grief at the loss of a loved one is great, joy at receiving back a loved one in the resurrection will be greater. (Mark 5:42) God's Word promises: "Your dead ones will live. . . . The earth itself will let even those impotent in death drop in birth." (Isaiah 26:19) Many among "the righteous" mentioned at Acts 24:15 will likely be resurrected early. How wonderful that time will be! And among those brought back will be Rose Marie. What a welcome she will receive from her loved ones! How satisfying it will be at that time to live in a world where there is no suffering!

HAVE NO FEAR Jehovah Is With You!

USAF photo

MORE than 50 years ago, shortly after the first nuclear bombs exploded, Nobel Prize-winning scientist Harold C. Urey said of the future: "We will eat fear, sleep fear, live in fear and die in fear." Today, our world is, indeed, glutted with fear, and no wonder! On a daily basis, newspapers herald forth horrifying accounts of terrorism, violent crimes, and mysterious illnesses.

As Christians, we know what such conditions mean. They indicate that we are living in "the last days" of this wicked system, which the Bible foretold would be characterized by "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1) Our confidence is thus strengthened that Jehovah God will soon bring about a new world in which righteousness will dwell. (2 Peter 3:13) In the meantime, though, are we immune to fear?

Fear and God's Servants

Jacob, David, and Elijah were among Jehovah's servants who experienced a degree of fear when faced with potential danger. (Genesis 32:6, 7; 1 Samuel 21:11, 12; 1 Kings 19:2, 3) These men did not lack faith. On the contrary, they demonstrated steadfast reliance on Jehovah. Nevertheless, Jacob, David, and Elijah were human; hence, they were susceptible to fear. "Elijah was a man with feelings like ours," wrote the disciple James.—James 5:17.

We too might feel apprehensive as we contemplate an obstacle that we are facing now or one that we may encounter in the future. Such fear is understandable. After all, the Bible says that Satan the Devil is determined to

"wage war" with those "who observe the commandments of God and have the work of bearing witness to Jesus." (Revelation 12:17) While those words apply specifically to anointed Christians, Paul wrote: "All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted." (2 Timothy 3:12) Still, fear need not paralyze us when we are confronted with problems. Why?

"A God of Saving Acts"

The psalmist David wrote: "The true God is for us a God of saving acts." (Psalm 68:20) Jehovah has repeatedly demonstrated his ability to save his people, either by delivering them from perilous situations or by giving them the strength to endure. (Psalm 34:17; Daniel 6:22; 1 Corinthians 10:13) From your study of the Bible, how many of such "saving acts" can you recall?

Using the *Watch Tower Publications Index*,* why not do research on such true-life events as the global Deluge of Noah's day, the deliverance of Lot and his daughters from Sodom and Gomorrah, Israel's Exodus from Egypt and trek through the Red Sea, or Haman's foiled plot to destroy the Jews? Reading and then meditating on these thrilling accounts will strengthen your faith that Jehovah is a God of saving acts. This, in turn, will help you to face tests of your faith fearlessly.

Present-Day Examples

Can you think of present-day examples of endurance in your own area? It might be

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.



someone who has been imprisoned for a faithful course. You might know of an elderly Christian who is serving Jehovah despite poor health. Or think of youths who remain separate from the world despite tremendous pressure from their schoolmates. Then there are single parents, who without a mate are raising children, or unmarried individuals who serve Jehovah despite feelings of loneliness. What do you learn from such ones? Contemplating their faithful course can help you to endure and to remain fearless despite whatever trials you may face.

Fearlessness is needed not only if we confront opposition and persecution but also if we begin to doubt Jehovah's love for us. We need to cultivate confidence that Christ's ransom applies to us as individuals. (Galatians 2:20) Then we can approach Jehovah without inappropriate fear or dread. If we feel unworthy of Jehovah's love, we can reflect on Jesus' words to his followers: "Do not two sparrows sell for a coin of small value? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's knowledge. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore have no fear: you are worth more than many sparrows."—Matthew 10:29-31.

The *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines often publish experiences of modern-day Witnesses of Jehovah who have faced challenges fearlessly. This does not mean that they did not have negative emotions about their plight. But they did not let such feelings cause them to stop serving Jehovah. Their published accounts can help you to endure fearlessly too. Consider two examples.

An Injury Changed His Life

The April 22, 2003, issue of *Awake!* contained the article "How an Injury Changed My Life." In it, Stanley Ombeva, one of Jehovah's Witnesses in Kenya, outlines the challenges he faced as a result of being struck by a speeding vehicle. As his health deteriorated, he lost his job and all benefits. "As the reality of my condition sank in," Brother Ombeva admits in his account, "I became negative, self-centered, and irritable. At times, I was angry and bitter." Despite his ordeal, this Christian man remained fearless. He did not let disappointment overwhelm him and cause him to give up entirely. Instead, he relied on Jehovah. "He always supported me in all that I went through—so much so, that I was ashamed of myself at times," Brother Ombeva says. "I made a strong resolve to read and meditate on scriptures I knew to be comforting in my situation."

Brother Ombeva's frank comments enabled many others to endure trials fearlessly. "I wept when I read this article," wrote one Christian sister. "I felt that through this article Jehovah was demonstrating his warmth and loving care and providing me with comfort." Another Witness wrote: "Articles like this give great encouragement to those of us who are experiencing similar situations and who suffer in silence."

Coping With Emotional Distress

Another moving experience is that of Herbert Jennings, related in the article "You Do Not Know What Your Life Will Be

Tomorrow.”* Brother Jennings copes with bipolar disorder. Reflecting on the early days of his illness, he says: “It was a real struggle just to attend Christian meetings. Nevertheless, I was absolutely convinced of the value of spiritual association. To cope, I usually entered the Kingdom Hall after the crowd settled down and left just before it began to stir at the end of the program.”

Preaching was also difficult. “Sometimes, even after arriving at a house, I simply could



Like Stanley Ombeva (above) and Herbert Jennings (right), many are serving Jehovah fearlessly



not bring myself to the point of ringing the doorbell,” Brother Jennings relates. “I would not quit, however, because I realized that our ministry means salvation to ourselves and to any who respond favorably. (1 Timothy 4:16) After a while, I would be able to bring my emotions under control, go to the next door, and try again. By continuing to share in the ministry, I maintained reasonable spiritual health, and that increased my ability to cope.”

Brother Jennings’ candid account helped many readers to face their distresses with similar fearlessness. For example, one Christian

sister wrote: “In the 28 years that I have been reading the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines, I have never been as deeply moved as I was when I read this article. I had to discontinue my full-time service and felt very guilty, feeling that if I had had more faith, I could have continued. Reading how Brother Jennings had to give up an assignment to care for his illness helped me to view my situation in a balanced way. This was truly an answer to my prayers!”

Similarly, a Christian brother wrote: “After serving as a congregation elder for ten years, I had to relinquish my privilege because of a mental illness. My feelings of failure were such that it was often too depressing for me to read the life-story articles, which often recount extraordinary accomplishments of Jehovah’s people. But Brother Jennings’ perseverance was uplifting to me. I’ve read the article countless times.”

Moving Forward With Confidence

Like Brothers Ombeva and Jennings, many of Jehovah’s Witnesses continue fearlessly worshipping Jehovah God despite daunting obstacles. If you are among them, you are to be commended. Be assured: “God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name, in that you have ministered to the holy ones and continue ministering.”—Hebrews 6:10.

Just as Jehovah helped his faithful people of ancient times to conquer their foes, he can help you to gain the victory over any obstacle that you may encounter. Therefore, take to heart the words that Jehovah spoke through the prophet Isaiah: “Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Do not gaze about, for I am your God. I will fortify you. I will really help you. I will really keep fast hold of you with my right hand of righteousness.”—Isaiah 41:10.

* See *The Watchtower* of December 1, 2000, pages 24-8.



SHEPHERDS WHO ARE “EXAMPLES TO THE FLOCK”

“Shepherd the flock of God in your care . . . willingly . . . , eagerly . . . , becoming examples to the flock.”—1 PETER 5:2, 3.

SOME time before Pentecost 33 C.E., Peter and six other disciples were eating a breakfast that Jesus had prepared on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. This was not the first time Peter had seen the resurrected Jesus, and he was no doubt thrilled to know that Jesus was alive. But Peter may also have been anxious. After all, just a few days earlier, he had publicly denied ever knowing Jesus. (Luke 22:55-60; 24:34; John 18:25-27; 21:1-14) Did Jesus reprimand the repentant Peter for his lack of faith? No. Instead, he entrusted Peter with the privilege of feeding and shepherding Jesus’ “little sheep.” (John 21:15-17) As the Bible account of the history of the first-century Christian congregation shows, Jesus’ confidence in Peter was not misplaced. Together with the other apostles and older men in Jerusalem, Peter went on to shepherd the Christian congregation through a period of intense trials and rapid expansion.—Acts 1:15-26; 2:14; 15:6-9.

² Today, Jehovah through Jesus Christ has appointed qualified men to serve as spiritual shepherds to lead His sheep through the most critical times in human history. (Ephesians 4:11, 12; 2 Timothy 3:1) Has such confidence been misplaced? The peaceful Christian brotherhood that exists worldwide

1, 2. (a) Jesus entrusted the apostle Peter with what privilege, and why was Jesus’ confidence not misplaced? (b) How does Jehovah feel about appointed shepherds?

proves otherwise. True, these shepherds are fallible humans, as was Peter. (Galatians 2:11-14; James 3:2) Even so, Jehovah trusts them to care for the sheep that “he purchased with the blood of his own Son.” (Acts 20:28) Jehovah has deep affection for these men, considering them “worthy of double honor.”—1 Timothy 5:17.

³ How do spiritual shepherds maintain a willing and eager spirit, thus becoming examples to the flock? Like Peter and the other first-century shepherds, they rely on God’s holy spirit, which gives them the strength they need in order to carry their load of responsibility. (2 Corinthians 4:7) Holy spirit also produces in them the fruitage of the spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22, 23) Let us consider some specific ways in which shepherds can set an example in displaying this fruitage as they shepherd the flock of God under their care.

Love Both the Flock and Each Individual Sheep

⁴ The foremost quality produced by God’s spirit is love. Jehovah manifests his love for

3. How do spiritual shepherds maintain a willing and eager spirit?

4, 5. (a) How do Jehovah and Jesus show love for the flock? (b) What are some ways in which spiritual shepherds display love for the flock?

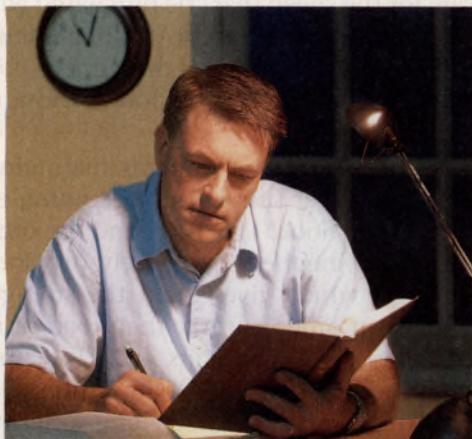
the flock as a whole when he provides it with an abundance of spiritual food. (Isaiah 65:13, 14; Matthew 24:45-47) Yet, he does more than just feed the flock. He feels a personal attachment to each individual sheep. (1 Peter 5:6, 7) Jesus too loves the flock. He surrendered his soul in its behalf, and he knows each sheep personally, "by name."—John 10:3, 14-16.

⁵ Spiritual shepherds imitate Jehovah and Jesus. They display love for God's flock as a whole by "applying [themselves] to teaching" the congregation. Their Bible-based talks help feed and protect the flock, and

their hard work in this regard is visible to all. (1 Timothy 4:13, 16) Less visible is the time they spend maintaining records, processing correspondence, making schedules, and caring for numerous other details in order to ensure that congregation meetings and other activities take place "decently and by arrangement." (1 Corinthians 14:40) Much of this work is done out of public view and may receive little recognition. It is truly a labor of love.—Galatians 5:13.

⁶ Loving Christian shepherds endeavor to show personal interest in each sheep in the congregation. (Philippians 2:4) One way shepherds become better acquainted with individual sheep is by working side by side with them in the public preaching work. Jesus often had his followers with him in the preaching work and used such occasions to give encouragement. (Luke 8:1) One experienced Christian shepherd says: "I find that one of the best ways to get to know and encourage a brother or a sister is by working with him or her in the field ministry." If you have not recently had the opportunity to work with one

6, 7. (a) What is one way in which shepherds become better acquainted with the sheep? (b) Why is it sometimes beneficial to share our feelings with an elder?



Elders are motivated by love to serve the congregation

They also spend time with their families both in recreation ...



... and in the ministry



of the elders in the field ministry, why not make arrangements to do this soon?

7 Love moved Jesus to share in the joys and sorrows of his followers. For example, when 70 of his disciples returned with joy from their preaching, Jesus became "overjoyed." (Luke 10:17-21) However, when he saw the effect Lazarus' death had on Mary and her family members and friends, "Jesus gave way to tears." (John 11:33-35) Likewise, caring shepherds today are not emotionally distant from the sheep. Love moves them to "rejoice with people who rejoice" and to "weep with people who weep." (Romans 12:15) If you experience either joy or sadness in your life, feel free to share your feelings with Christian shepherds. Hearing of your joy will encourage them. (Romans 1:11, 12) Learning about your trials will enable them to strengthen and comfort you.—1 Thessalonians 1:6; 3:1-3.

8 The love a shepherd has for the flock is particularly evident in the way he treats his own family. (1 Timothy 3:1, 4) If he is married, the love and honor he shows his wife sets an example for other husbands to imitate. (Ephesians 5:25; 1 Peter 3:7) Consider the comments of a Christian woman named Linda. Her husband served as an overseer for more than 20 years before his death. She says: "My husband was always very busy caring for the congregation. But he made me feel that I was part of a team. He often expressed appreciation for my support, and he spent his spare time with me. As a result, I felt loved and was not jealous of the time he spent serving the congregation."

9 If a Christian shepherd has children, the way he lovingly disciplines and regularly commends these little ones provides a model for other parents to follow. (Ephesians 6:4) In

8, 9. (a) How did one elder show love for his wife? (b) How important is it for a shepherd to display love for his family?

fact, the love he shows for his family furnishes ongoing evidence that he lives up to the trust conferred upon him by reason of his appointment by holy spirit.—1 Timothy 3:4, 5.

Promote Joy and Peace by Communicating

10 The holy spirit can produce joy and peace in the heart of an individual Christian, among a body of elders, and in the congregation as a whole. However, a lack of open communication can have a negative impact on this joy and peace. Solomon of old observed: "There is a frustrating of plans where there is no confidential talk." (Proverbs 15:22) On the other hand, respectful and frank communication promotes joy and peace. For example, when the circumcision issue threatened to disrupt the peace of the first-century congregation, the governing body in Jerusalem sought the direction of holy spirit. They also expressed their differing views on the subject. After much lively discussion, they arrived at a decision. When they communicated their unanimous decision to the congregations, the brothers "rejoiced over the encouragement." (Acts 15:6-23, 25, 31; 16:4, 5) Joy and peace were promoted.

11 Likewise today, shepherds promote joy and peace in the congregation by being good communicators. When problems threaten the peace of the congregation, they meet together and openly express their feelings. They respectfully listen to their fellow shepherds' comments. (Proverbs 13:10; 18:13) After praying for holy spirit, they base their decisions on Bible principles and on guidelines published by "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45-47; 1 Corinthians 4:6) Once

10. (a) What can have a negative impact on the joy and peace of the congregation? (b) What issue threatened the peace of the first-century congregation, and how was that issue resolved?

11. How can elders promote joy and peace in the congregation?

a Scripturally sound decision has been made by the body of elders, each elder yields to the direction of holy spirit by supporting that decision even if his personal opinion was not endorsed by the majority. Such modesty promotes joy and peace and sets a fine example for the sheep in how to walk with God. (Micah 6:8) Are you modestly cooperating with the Bible-based decisions made by the shepherds in the congregation?

Be Long-Suffering and Kind

¹² Jesus was long-suffering and kind in his dealings with the apostles, despite their repeated failings. For example, time and again Jesus tried to impress upon them the need to be humble. (Matthew 18:1-4; 20:25-27) Yet, on the final night of Jesus' earthly life, after he had just given them a lesson in humility by washing their feet, "there also arose a heated dispute among them over which one of them seemed to be greatest." (Luke 22:24; John 13:1-5) Did Jesus berate the apostles? No, he kindly reasoned with them, stating: "Which one is greater, the one reclining at the table or the one ministering? Is it not the one reclining at the table? But I am in your midst as the one ministering." (Luke 22:27) Jesus' long-suffering and kindness—coupled with his good example—eventually touched the apostles' hearts.

¹³ Similarly, a spiritual shepherd may need to offer counsel repeatedly to a person regarding a certain failing. The shepherd could be-

12. Why did Jesus need to be long-suffering and kind in his dealings with the apostles?

13, 14. When especially must shepherds be kind?

Good communication among the elders promotes joy and peace in the congregation

come exasperated with the individual. However, keeping in mind his own failings as he 'admonishes the disorderly,' he is able to show long-suffering and kindness toward his brother. That way he imitates Jesus and Jehovah, who show these qualities toward all Christians—including shepherds.—1 Thessalonians 5:14; James 2:13.

¹⁴ At times, shepherds may need to offer strong counsel to one who has committed a serious sin. If the individual is unrepentant, the shepherds must remove the erring one from the congregation. (1 Corinthians 5:11-13) Even so, the manner in which they deal with that person shows that they hate the sin, not the sinner. (Jude 23) A kind manner on the part of the shepherds may make it easier for a straying sheep eventually to return to the fold.—Luke 15:11-24.

Good Acts Are Motivated by Faith

¹⁵ "Jehovah is good to all," even to those who do not appreciate what he does for them. (Psalm 145:9; Matthew 5:45) Jehovah's goodness is especially evident in that he sends his people to preach the "good news of the kingdom." (Matthew 24:14) Shepherds reflect God's goodness by taking the lead in this preaching work. What motivates their tireless efforts? Strong faith in Jehovah and in his promises.—Romans 10:10, 13, 14.

15. What is one way in which shepherds imitate Jehovah's goodness, and what motivates them to do so?



¹⁶ In addition to working “what is good toward all” by preaching, shepherds have the responsibility to work what is good “especially toward those related to [them] in the faith.” (Galatians 6:10) One way they do this is by making encouraging shepherding visits. “I enjoy making shepherding visits,” says one elder. “They give me the opportunity to commend the brothers and sisters for their efforts and to help them realize that their hard work is appreciated.” At times, shepherds may suggest ways in which an individual can improve in his service to Jehovah. In doing so, wise shepherds imitate the apostle Paul. Consider the way he appealed to the brothers in Thessalonica: “We have confidence in the Lord regarding you, that you are doing and will go on doing the things we order.” (2 Thessalonians 3:4) Such expressions of confidence appeal to the good inclinations of the sheep and make it easier for them to “be obedient to those who are taking the lead.” (Hebrews 13:17) When you receive an encouraging shepherding visit, why not express appreciation for it?

Mildness Requires Self-Control

¹⁷ Jesus was mild-tempered, even when he was provoked. (Matthew 11:29) When he was betrayed and arrested, Jesus displayed mildness and great self-control. Impulsively, Peter drew a sword and retaliated. But Jesus reminded him: “Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father to supply me at this moment more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matthew 26:51-53; John 18:10) Peter learned the lesson well and later reminded Christians: “Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely. . . . When he was being reviled, he did not go reviling in return. When he was suffering, he did not go threatening.”—1 Peter 2:21-23.

16. How can shepherds “work what is good” toward the sheep?

17. What lesson did Peter learn from Jesus?

¹⁸ Likewise, effective shepherds are mild-tempered even when they are treated unfairly. For instance, some whom they try to help in the congregation may not react favorably. If the individual in need of help is spiritually injured or sick, he may respond to counsel by “speaking thoughtlessly as with the stabs of a sword.” (Proverbs 12:18) However, like Jesus, shepherds do not retaliate with sharp words or vengeful actions. Instead, they exercise self-restraint and still show fellow feeling, which may prove to be a blessing to the one in need of help. (1 Peter 3:8, 9) Do you learn from the example of the elders and display mildness and self-control when you receive counsel?

¹⁹ Without a doubt, Jehovah and Jesus appreciate the hard work of the thousands of shepherds who willingly tend the worldwide flock. Jehovah and his Son also have deep affection for the thousands of ministerial servants who support the elders in ‘ministering to the holy ones.’ (Hebrews 6:10) Why, then, may some baptized brothers hesitate to reach out for this “fine work”? (1 Timothy 3:1) And how does Jehovah train those whom he appoints as shepherds? We will consider these questions in the next article.

18, 19. (a) When particularly must shepherds display mildness and self-control? (b) What questions will we consider next?

Do You Recall?

- What are some ways in which shepherds show love for the flock?
- How can all in the congregation promote joy and peace?
- Why are shepherds long-suffering and kind when giving counsel?
- How do elders display goodness and faith?

JEHOVAH TRAINS SHEPHERDS FOR HIS FLOCK

"Jehovah himself gives wisdom; out of his mouth there are knowledge and discernment."—PROVERBS 2:6.

"I WAS very happy when I was appointed as an elder," says Nick, who has served as an overseer for seven years. "I saw this privilege as an opportunity to expand my service to Jehovah. I felt that I owed him a debt of gratitude for all that he has done for me. I also wanted to help the members of the congregation to the fullest extent possible, to assist them in the same way that other elders have assisted me." However, mingled with his joy were some concerns. "Since I was only in my late 20's when I was appointed," Nick continues, "I worried that I would lack the needed skills—the discernment and wisdom—to shepherd the congregation effectively."

² Those whom Jehovah appoints to care for his flock have many reasons to be happy. The apostle Paul reminded the elders from Ephesus of one reason when, quoting Jesus, he said: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) Serving as a ministerial servant or as an elder provides baptized men with additional ways to give to Jehovah and to the congregation. Ministerial servants, for example, work along with the elders. These servants also care for numerous other time-consuming but necessary assignments. Such brothers are motivated by love for God and neighbor to render valuable service.—Mark 12:30, 31.

³ What about a Christian man who may

- 1, 2. Why do baptized men reach out for increased responsibility in the congregation?
3. Why may some hesitate to reach out for congregation privileges?

hesitate to reach out for the privilege of being a servant and eventually an elder because he feels inadequate? Like Nick, he may worry that he does not have the needed skills to be an effective shepherd. As a baptized brother, are you among those who feel this way? Such concerns are not groundless. Jehovah holds appointed shepherds accountable for the way they treat the flock. Jesus said: "Everyone to whom much was given, much will be demanded of him; and the one whom people put in charge of much, they will demand more than usual of him."—Luke 12:48.

⁴ Does Jehovah expect those whom he appoints as servants and elders to carry the extra load by themselves? On the contrary, he provides practical assistance that enables them not only to cope but also to thrive. As discussed in the preceding article, Jehovah gives them his holy spirit, the fruitage of which helps them to care tenderly for the sheep. (Acts 20:28; Galatians 5:22, 23) In addition, Jehovah gives them wisdom, knowledge, and discernment. (Proverbs 2:6) How does he do this? Let us discuss three ways in which Jehovah trains individuals whom he appoints to care for his sheep.

Trained by Experienced Shepherds

⁵ When the apostles Peter and John stood before the Sanhedrin, the worldly-wise

4. How does Jehovah assist those whom he appoints to care for his sheep?
5. Why were Peter and John effective shepherds?

judges of that court considered the men before them to be "unlettered and ordinary." Oh, they could read and write, but they had not received any rabbinic training in study of the Scriptures. Even so, Peter and John along with the other disciples had proved to be effective teachers, moving many of those who listened to them to become believers. How did these ordinary men become such extraordinary teachers? After listening to Peter and John, the court "began to recognize about them that they used to be with Jesus." (Acts 4:1-4, 13) True, they had received holy spirit. (Acts 1:8) But it was also obvious—even to those spiritually blind judges—that Jesus had trained those men. While he was with them on earth, Jesus taught the apostles not only how to gather sheeplike ones but also how to shepherd them once they became part of the fold.—Matthew 11:29; 20:24-28; 1 Peter 5:4.

⁶ After Jesus was resurrected, he continued to train those appointed as shepherds. (Revelation 1:1; 2:1-3:22) For example, he personally selected Paul and supervised his training. (Acts 22:6-10) Paul appreciated the training he received and passed on to other elders what he had learned. (Acts 20:17-35) For instance, he invested much time and energy in training Timothy to be "a workman" in God's service, "with nothing to be ashamed of." (2 Timothy 2:15) A close bond formed between these men. Earlier, Paul wrote of Timothy: "Like a child with a father he slaved with me in furtherance of the good news." (Philippians 2:22) Paul did not seek to make Timothy or any other person a disciple of himself. Rather, he encouraged fellow believers to become 'imitators of him, even as he was of Christ.'—1 Corinthians 11:1.

6. What example in training others did Jesus and Paul set?

⁷ In imitation of Jesus and Paul, experienced shepherds take the initiative to train baptized brothers, with similar good results. Consider Chad's experience. He was brought up in a religiously divided household but was recently appointed as an elder. He says: "Over the years, several experienced elders helped me to progress spiritually. Because my father was an unbeliever, those elders showed a particular interest in me and became like spiritual fathers to me. They took the time to train me in the ministry, and later, one elder in particular trained me in caring for the congregational assignments I received."

⁸ As Chad's experience shows, discerning shepherds start training prospective ministerial servants and elders long before these have progressed enough to qualify for such privileges. Why so? Because the Bible commands that both ministerial servants and elders attain a high moral and spiritual standard *before* they are appointed to serve. They must be "tested as to fitness first."—1 Timothy 3:1-10.

⁹ If baptized brothers are to be tested, it is only fair that they are first trained. To illustrate: If a student at school was asked to take a difficult examination for which the teachers had provided no specific training, would the student pass the test? Most likely, he would fail. Therefore, training is needed. However, conscientious teachers train students not only to pass a test but also to use the knowledge they gain. Similarly, diligent elders help baptized brothers to cultivate the qualities required of an appointed man by providing them with specific training. They

7, 8. (a) What experience shows the good that results when elders imitate Jesus and Paul? (b) When should elders begin to train prospective ministerial servants and elders?

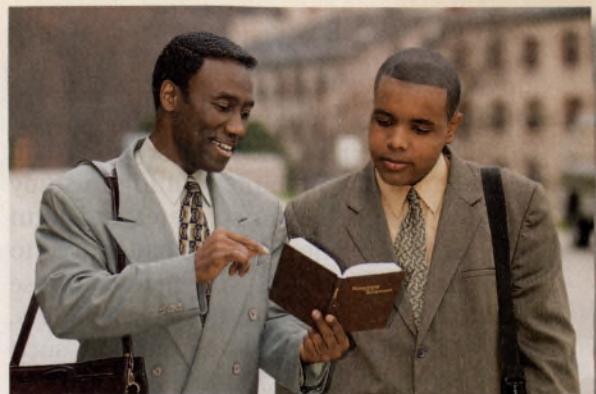
9. What responsibility do mature shepherds have, and why?

do so not merely to help these brothers to be appointed to serve but also to help them to be able to care adequately for the flock. (2 Timothy 2:2) Of course, baptized brothers must do their part and work hard to meet the qualifications required of a ministerial servant or an elder. (Titus 1:5-9) Nevertheless, by willingly training those who are reaching out for responsibility in the congregation, experienced shepherds can help them progress more quickly.

¹⁰ How, specifically, can experienced shepherds train others to care for congregational privileges? To begin with, by taking an interest in the brothers in the congregation—regularly working with them in the field ministry and helping them improve their ability to handle “the word of the truth aright.” (2 Timothy 2:15) Mature shepherds discuss with those brothers the joys to be derived from serving others and the satisfaction they themselves receive from setting and attaining spiritual goals. They also kindly offer specific suggestions on how a brother can improve in becoming an ‘example to the flock.’—1 Peter 5:3, 5.

¹¹ Once a brother is appointed as a ministerial servant, wise shepherds continue training him. Bruce, who has served as an elder for decades, says: “I like to sit down with a newly appointed servant and review with him the instructions published by the faithful and discreet slave. We also read any guidelines regarding his specific assignment, and then I like to work with him until he is familiar with his duties.” As a servant gains experience, he can also be trained in the shepherding work. “When I take a ministerial servant with me on a shepherding call,” Bruce continues, “I help him to choose specific scriptures that will encourage and motivate the individual or the family we are

10, 11. How can shepherds train others for further privileges?



to visit. Learning how to use the Scriptures in such a way that they touch the heart is essential if a servant is to become an effective shepherd.”—Hebrews 4:12; 5:14.

¹² Newly appointed shepherds also benefit greatly from further training. Nick, mentioned earlier, says: “The training I received from two older overseers in particular was very helpful. These brothers usually understood how certain matters should be handled. They always patiently listened to me and seriously considered my viewpoint—even if they did not agree with it. I learned a lot from observing the humble and respectful way they dealt with the brothers and sisters in the congregation. These elders impressed upon me the need to use the Bible skillfully when handling problems or when giving encouragement.”

Trained by God’s Word

¹³ Indeed, God’s Word, the Bible, contains the laws, principles, and examples a shepherd needs in order to become “fully competent, completely equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) A brother may have a good secular education, but it is his knowledge of the Scriptures and how he ap-

12. How can experienced shepherds train newly appointed elders?

13. (a) What does a brother need in order to be an effective shepherd? (b) Why did Jesus say: “What I teach is not mine”?

Christian elders train younger men in the congregation



plies it that help make him an effective shepherd. Consider Jesus' example. He was the most knowledgeable, the most discerning, and the wisest spiritual shepherd ever to walk the earth; yet, even he did not rely on his own wisdom when teaching Jehovah's sheep. He said: "What I teach is not mine, but belongs to him that sent me." Why did Jesus give credit to his heavenly Father? He explained: "He that speaks of his own originality is seeking his own glory."—John 7:16, 18.

¹⁴ Loyal shepherds avoid seeking their own glory. They base their counsel and encouragement, not on their own wisdom, but on God's Word. They appreciate that a shepherd's assignment is to help the sheep gain "the mind of Christ," not the mind of the elders. (1 Corinthians 2:14-16) For example, what if an elder who was helping a couple deal with marital difficulties based his counsel on his own experience rather than on Bible principles and information published by "the faithful and discreet slave"? (Matthew 24:45) His advice might be overly influenced by local customs and restricted by his limited knowledge. Granted, some customs are not bad in themselves, and the elder may have

14. How do shepherds avoid seeking their own glory?

experience in life. But the sheep benefit most when shepherds encourage them to listen to Jesus' voice and to the sayings of Jehovah rather than to men's thoughts or to the dictates of local custom.—Psalm 12:6; Proverbs 3:5, 6.

Trained by "the Faithful and Discreet Slave"

¹⁵ Shepherds such as the apostles Peter, John, and Paul were all members of the group Jesus described as "the faithful and discreet slave." This slave class is composed of Jesus' spirit-anointed brothers on earth, whose hope is to rule with Christ in heaven. (Revelation 5:9, 10) During these last days of this system, the number of Christ's brothers left on earth has inevitably declined. However, the work Jesus commissioned them to accomplish—the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom before the end comes—is now more widely extended than ever. Even so, the slave class has been remarkably successful! Why? In part, because they have trained members of the "other sheep" to assist them in the preaching and teaching work. (John 10:16; Matthew 24:14; 25:40)

15. What commission did Jesus give to "the faithful and discreet slave," and what is one reason for the success of the slave class?



"The faithful and discreet slave" provides abundant training for elders

Today, the bulk of the work is accomplished by this loyal group.

¹⁶ How does the slave class provide this training? In the first century, representatives of the slave class were authorized to train and appoint overseers in the congregations, and they, in turn, trained the sheep. (1 Corinthians 4:17) The same is true today. The Governing Body—the small group of anointed elders who represent the slave class—authorizes its representatives to train and appoint servants and elders in the tens of thousands of congregations worldwide. In addition, the Governing Body organizes schools to train Branch Committee members, traveling overseers, elders, and ministerial servants in how best to care for the

16. How does the slave class train appointed men?

How Would You Answer?

- How do mature spiritual shepherds train others?
- Why do shepherds not teach on the basis of their own thoughts?
- How and why do shepherds show confidence in the slave class?



sheep. Further direction is provided through letters, in articles published in *The Watchtower*, and by means of other publications, such as *Organized to Do Jehovah's Will*.*

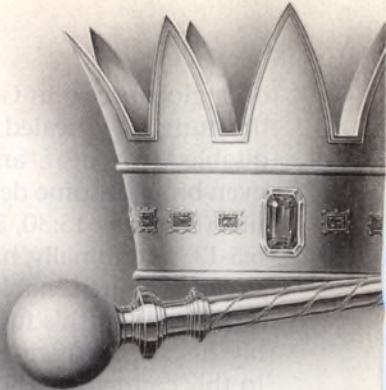
¹⁷ Jesus had so much confidence in the slave class that he appointed it over "all his belongings"—that is, all his spiritual interests on the earth. (Matthew 24:47) Appointed shepherds prove that they too have confidence in the slave class by applying the directions they receive from its Governing Body. Yes, when shepherds train others, when they allow themselves to be trained by God's Word, and when they apply the training provided by the slave class, they promote unity among the flock. How grateful we are that Jehovah has trained men who deeply care for each member of the Christian congregation!

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

17. (a) How has Jesus shown his confidence in the slave class? (b) How can spiritual shepherds show that they have confidence in the slave class?

LOYALLY SERVING CHRIST THE KING

"To him there were given rulership and dignity and kingdom, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him."—DANIEL 7:14.



WHAT ruler could give his life for his subjects yet live again to rule as king? What king could live on earth, building trust and loyalty in his subjects, and then rule from heaven? The only person who could do this—and more—is Jesus Christ. (Luke 1: 32, 33) At Pentecost 33 C.E., after Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, God "made him head over all things to the congregation." (Ephesians 1:20-22; Acts 2: 32-36) Christ thus began to rule but in a limited sense. His initial subjects were spirit-anointed Christians, who made up spiritual Israel, "the Israel of God."—Galatians 6:16; Colossians 1:13.

² Almost 30 years after that Pentecost in 33 C.E., the apostle Paul confirmed that Christ had not yet taken full Kingdom power, but he was "at the right hand of God, from then on awaiting until his enemies should be placed as a stool for his feet." (Hebrews 10:12, 13) Then, near the end of the first century C.E., the aged apostle John foresaw in a vision the Universal Sovereign, Jehovah, installing Christ Jesus as King of the newborn heavenly Kingdom. (Revelation 11:15; 12: 1-5) From our vantage point in history, we can review the overwhelming evidence confirming that Christ began to rule as Messianic King in heaven in 1914.*

* See *Reasoning From the Scriptures*, "Why do Jehovah's Witnesses say that God's Kingdom was established in 1914?" pages 95-7, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

1. How do we know that Christ did not assume full Kingdom power in 33 C.E.?

³ Yes, since 1914 the good news of the Kingdom has taken on a thrilling new aspect. Christ has actively been ruling as King of God's heavenly Kingdom, although "in the midst of [his] enemies." (Psalm 110:1, 2; Matthew 24:14; Revelation 12:7-12) Moreover, throughout the earth, his loyal subjects are responding eagerly to his authority by participating in a global Bible education program unequaled in mankind's history. (Daniel 7: 13, 14; Matthew 28:18) Spirit-anointed Christians, "sons of the kingdom," serve as "ambassadors substituting for Christ." They are loyally supported by a flourishing throng of Christ's "other sheep," who function as envoys of God's Kingdom. (Matthew 13:38; 2 Corinthians 5:20; John 10:16) Even so, we need to analyze whether we as individuals truly recognize Christ's authority. Are we unflinchingly loyal to him? How can we show loyalty to a King who rules in heaven? Let us first discuss, though, what reasons we have for being loyal to Christ.

A King Who Inspires Loyalty

⁴ Our loyalty to Christ is founded on appreciation for what he did as well as for his outstanding qualities. (1 Peter 1:8) While on earth, Jesus as King-Designate displayed on a small scale what he will do as reigning King

3. (a) The good news of the Kingdom has taken on what new aspect since 1914? (b) What questions can we ask ourselves?

4. What did Jesus accomplish as King-Designate during his earthly ministry?

on a global scale in God's due time. He fed the hungry. He healed the sick, the blind, the disabled, the deaf, and the speechless. He even brought some dead individuals back to life. (Matthew 15:30, 31; Luke 7:11-16; John 6:5-13) Additionally, having knowledge of Jesus' life on earth enables us to get to know his qualities as earth's future Ruler—most notably his self-sacrificing love. (Mark 1:40-45) In this connection, Napoléon Bonaparte reportedly said: "Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires, but upon what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded his kingdom upon love, and at this day millions of men would die for him."

⁵ Because Jesus was mild-tempered and lowly in heart, those who were weighed down with pressures and burdens were refreshed by his upbuilding teachings and kind personality. (Matthew 11:28-30) Children were at ease with him. Humble, discerning men eagerly became his disciples. (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 10:13-16) His considerate and respectful manner won him the loyalty of many God-fearing women, a number of whom contributed their time, effort, and material possessions to care for him as he performed his ministry.—Luke 8:1-3.

⁶ Christ revealed some of his most tender feelings when his dear friend Lazarus died. He was so deeply moved by Mary and Martha's anguish that he could not restrain a grief-stricken groan, and he "gave way to tears." He "became troubled"—agitated by great heartache and sorrow—even though he knew that he was shortly going to bring Lazarus back to life. Then, moved by love and compassion, Jesus exercised his God-given authority and raised Lazarus from the dead.—John 11:11-15, 33-35, 38-44.

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5. Why was Jesus' personality so appealing?
 6. What tender emotions did Jesus reveal when Lazarus died?

⁷ We stand in awe of Jesus' strong love for what was right and his abhorrence of hypocrisy and wickedness. Twice he took bold action to clear the temple of greedy merchants. (Matthew 21:12, 13; John 2:14-17) Furthermore, as a human on earth, he was exposed to all kinds of adversity, giving him firsthand insight into the pressures and problems that we face. (Hebrews 5:7-9) Jesus also knew what it was like to be the victim of hatred and injustice. (John 5:15-18; 11:53, 54; 18:38-19:16) Ultimately, he courageously submitted to a brutal death to accomplish his Father's will and give his subjects everlasting life. (John 3:16) Do such qualities of Christ not move you to continue serving him loyally? (Hebrews 13:8; Revelation 5:6-10) But what is required to be a subject of Christ the King?

Qualifying to Be a Subject

⁸ Think of this comparison: Becoming a citizen of another country usually entails meeting certain basic qualifications. Prospective citizens may be required to be of good character and to meet certain health standards. Similarly, subjects of Christ need to maintain high standards of morality and good spiritual health.—1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-23.

⁹ Jesus Christ also rightly requires that his subjects are loyal to him and his Kingdom. They show such loyalty by living in harmony with what he taught when he was on earth as King-Designate. For instance, they put Kingdom interests and God's will ahead of material concerns. (Matthew 6:31-34) They also earnestly try to reflect a Christlike personality, even under the most trying circumstances. (1 Peter 2:21-23) Further, Christ's subjects

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7. Why is Jesus worthy of our loyalty? (See also box on page 31.)
 8. What is required of subjects of Christ?
 9. How can we show that we are loyal to Christ?

follow his example by taking the initiative to do good to others.—Matthew 7:12; John 13:3-17.

¹⁰ Jesus' followers also show their loyalty to him by reflecting his qualities in the family. For instance, husbands show loyalty to their heavenly King by the Christlike way they treat their wives and children. (Ephesians 5:25, 28-30; 6:4; 1 Peter 3:7) Wives show loyalty to Christ by chaste conduct and by displaying "the quiet and mild spirit." (1 Peter 3:1-4; Ephesians 5:22-24) Children are loyal to Christ when they follow his example of obedience. As a youth, Jesus remained subject to his parents, even though they were imperfect. (Luke 2:51, 52; Ephesians 6:1) Christ's subjects loyally endeavor to imitate him by "showing fellow feeling, having brotherly affection" and by being "tenderly compassionate." They strive to be like Christ, "humble in mind, not paying back injury for injury or reviling for reviling."—1 Peter 3:8, 9; 1 Corinthians 11:1.

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10. How can loyalty to Christ be displayed in
(a) the family and (b) the congregation?

By showing love for one another, we loyally submit to "the law of the Christ"

Law-Abiding Subjects

¹¹ Just as prospective citizens of a country abide by the laws of their new land, Christ's subjects submit themselves to "the law of the Christ" by harmonizing their lives with all that Jesus taught and commanded. (Galatians 6:2) In particular, they loyally live by "the kingly law" of love. (James 2:8) What do these laws involve?

¹² Christ's subjects are not free of imperfections and failings. (Romans 3:23) Hence, they need to keep cultivating "unhypocritical brotherly affection" so as to "love one another intensely from the heart." (1 Peter 1:22) "If anyone has a cause for complaint against another," Christians loyally apply the law of the Christ by "putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely." Obeying this law helps them to keep overlooking imperfections and to find reasons to love one another. Do you not appreciate being with those who in loyal submission to our loving King clothe themselves with love, the "perfect bond of union"?—Colossians 3:13, 14.

¹³ Furthermore, Jesus explained that the love he exemplified went beyond the love people commonly show for one another.

11. To which laws do Christ's subjects submit themselves?

- 12, 13. How do we loyally submit to "the law of the Christ"?



(John 13:34, 35) If we love only those who love us, we would not be doing any “extraordinary thing.” In that case our love would be incomplete and defective. Jesus urged us to imitate his Father’s love by having principled love even for enemies who hate and persecute us. (Matthew 5:46-48) This love also moves subjects of the Kingdom to persevere loyally in their main work. What is that?

Loyalty Put to the Test

¹⁴ Subjects of God’s Kingdom now have the crucial work of “bearing thorough witness concerning the kingdom of God.” (Acts 28:23) Doing so is vital because the Messianic Kingdom will vindicate Jehovah’s universal sovereignty. (1 Corinthians 15:24-28) When we preach the good news, hearers have the opportunity to become subjects of God’s Kingdom. Further, the way people react to that message provides a touchstone, or standard, against which Christ the King can judge mankind. (Matthew 24:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10) Hence, a prime way in which we show our loyalty to Christ is by obeying his command to tell others about the Kingdom.—Matthew 28:18-20.

¹⁵ Of course, Satan resists the preaching work in any way he can, and human rulers do not acknowledge Christ’s God-given authority. (Psalm 2:1-3, 6-8) Hence, Jesus warned his

14. Why is the preaching work so important?
15. Why does the loyalty of Christians come under test?

Can You Explain?

- Why does Christ deserve our loyalty?
- How do Christ’s subjects show their loyalty to him?
- Why do we want to be loyal to Christ the King?

disciples: “A slave is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also.” (John 15:20) Christ’s followers, therefore, find themselves in a spiritual warfare that puts their loyalty to the test.—2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-12.

¹⁶ Nevertheless, subjects of God’s Kingdom remain loyal to their invisible King without disrespecting human authorities. (Titus 3:1, 2) Jesus stated: “Pay back Caesar’s things to Caesar, but God’s things to God.” (Mark 12:13-17) Christ’s subjects, therefore, obey governmental laws that do not conflict with God’s laws. (Romans 13:1-7) However, when the Jewish high court went against God’s laws by ordering Jesus’ disciples to stop preaching, they firmly but respectfully said that they had to “obey God as ruler rather than men.”—Acts 1:8; 5:27-32.

¹⁷ Naturally, it takes much courage for Christ’s subjects to remain loyal to their King in the face of persecution. Nevertheless, Jesus said: “Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake. Rejoice and leap for joy, since your reward is great in the heavens.” (Matthew 5:11, 12) The early followers of Christ experienced the truthfulness of those words. Even when they were flogged for continuing to preach about the Kingdom, they rejoiced “because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name. And every day in the temple and from house to house they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus.” (Acts 5:41, 42) You are to be commended, as you show the same spirit of loyalty when you endure hardships, sickness, bereavement, or opposition.—Romans 5:3-5; Hebrews 13:6.

16. How do subjects of the Kingdom pay back “God’s things to God”?
17. Why can we face tests of loyalty with courage?

MORE OF CHRIST'S OUTSTANDING QUALITIES

Impartiality—John 4:7-30.

Compassion—Matthew 9:35-38; 12:18-21; Mark 6:30-34.

Self-sacrificing love—John 13:1; 15:12-15.

Loyalty—Matthew 4:1-11; 28:20; Mark 11:15-18.

Empathy—Mark 7:32-35; Luke 7:11-15; Hebrews 4:15, 16.

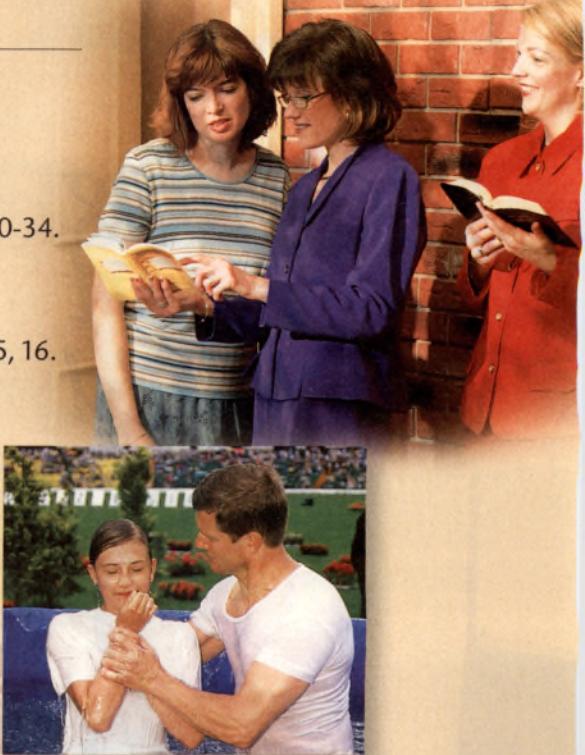
Reasonableness—Matthew 15:21-28.



Do Christ's qualities move you to serve him loyally?

¹⁸ When he was still King-Designate, Jesus explained to the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate: "My kingdom is no part of this world. If my kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought that I should not be delivered up to the Jews. But, as it is, my kingdom is not from this source." (John 18:36) Subjects of the heavenly Kingdom, therefore, neither take up arms against anyone nor take sides in any human conflict. In loyalty to the "Prince of Peace," they remain completely neutral in the partisan affairs of the world.—Isaiah 2:2-4; 9:6, 7.

18. What do Jesus' words to Pontius Pilate indicate?



Everlasting Rewards for Loyal Subjects

¹⁹ Loyal subjects of Christ, the "King of kings," face the future with confidence. They eagerly anticipate his imminent demonstration of supernatural kingly power. (Revelation 19:11-20:3; Matthew 24:30) The remnant of loyal, spirit-anointed "sons of the kingdom" look forward to their priceless inheritance as kings with Christ in heaven. (Matthew 13:38; Luke 12:32) Christ's loyal "other sheep" keenly await their King's approving declaration: "Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the [earthly Paradise realm of the] kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world." (John 10:16; Matthew 25:34) Accordingly, may all subjects of the Kingdom be determined to continue loyally serving Christ the King.

19. Why can Christ's subjects look to the future with confidence?

Reaching the Heart of a Child



HAVE you ever felt sad at seeing a child playing war games? Such scenes have become commonplace even among the very young, since violence has invaded the world of entertainment. How would you help a youngster to exchange toys of war for toys of peace? Waltraud, a longtime missionary of Jehovah's Witnesses in Africa, found a way to help one boy to do just that.

Because of warfare, Waltraud had to leave the country where she was living and move to another country in Africa. There she began to study the Bible with the mother of a five-year-old boy. Whenever she visited the mother, the boy was playing with a small plastic gun, the only toy he had. Waltraud never saw him aim it at any target, but he was always busy opening and closing the gun, as if he were reloading it.

Waltraud said to the boy: "Werner, do you know why I live in your country? It is because of war—I had to flee mine to escape dangerous men who were shooting at people with guns that look like yours. Do you think such shooting is good?"

"No, it isn't," Werner replied sadly.

"You are quite right," said Waltraud. Then she asked: "Do you know why I visit you and your mother every week? It is because Jehovah's Witnesses want to help others to be at peace, both with God and with their neighbors." With the approval of Werner's mother, Waltraud told him: "If you give me your gun, I will throw it away, and I will make sure that you get a toy truck with four wheels."

Werner handed her his toy gun. He had to wait for four weeks, but then his new toy arrived—a toy truck made of wood, which he accepted with a big smile.

Do you take time to talk with your children, trying to reach their heart so that they are moved to get rid of toys that mimic weapons of war? If so, you will be teaching them a lesson that will benefit them for a lifetime.