



The **WATCHTOWER**

**Reasonableness Makes Life
More Enjoyable**

**Profiting from Jonah's
Experience**

**Christian Greatness Comes
from Serving**

DECEMBER 1, 1975

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

December 1, 1975
Vol. 96, Number 23

A watchtower enables a person to see far into the distance and announce to others what is coming. Can a magazine serve similarly in our day? Yes, from its first issue (July 1879) onward, *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's witnesses, has done just that.

How can it benefit you? Consider: Do you long for a better world, one of true justice and free from sorrow, hatred and war? Do you want to live at a time when genuine peace and love prevail among people of all races? Then this magazine can aid you. Using God's Word, the Bible, as its authority, it points out the clear evidence that the present wicked system of things will soon end, destroyed by God. But it also announces the coming in of a righteous new order. There, under the rule of God's kingdom, his heavenly government, people will enjoy life forever in true peace, health and happiness on a paradise earth.

Faithfulness to the Word of God lifts *The Watchtower* above the contradicting religious teachings and philosophies of men. It stays strictly neutral as regards political affairs. It wholeheartedly upholds the highest moral standard—that of man's Maker, Jehovah God. From this source, it shows solutions to the problems of daily life.

We know that many sincere persons would appreciate a discussion of these things in their own home with a qualified person. A minister of Jehovah's witnesses will be glad to call on you free of charge. To arrange for this, simply write the publishers of this magazine or contact Jehovah's witnesses locally.

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REASONABLENESS

JEHOVAH GOD wants people to enjoy life. What he has set forth for our guidance in his Word, the Bible, is designed to promote our lasting welfare. So our heeding that Word will definitely contribute toward making life more pleasant for ourselves and others. This is certainly true when we apply the Bible's admonition: "Let your reasonableness become known to all men."—Phil. 4:5.

According to the Scriptures, reasonableness is a godly quality. At James 3:17 we read that "the wisdom from above is," among other things, "reasonable." Just what does being reasonable mean?

Basically, it means to be yielding, fair, moderate, considerate and forbearing. Reasonable people are well balanced, not given to extremes. They recognize the wisdom of the inspired words: "Do not become righteous overmuch . . . Why should you cause desolation to yourself?" (Eccl. 7:16) Those who are "righteous overmuch" become very narrow and inflexible in their personal views of right and wrong. As a result, even things that are not in themselves improper may look very bad to them. Their conscience is constantly disturbed about what others do or fail to do. Instead of using their powers of reason, their judgment is influenced by prejudice.

The extremes to which being "righteous overmuch" can lead is evident from the way the Pharisees viewed Jesus Christ. In their estimation, he was guilty of a serious crime when he miraculously freed people from their infirmities and afflictions on the sabbath. They lost sight of the whole purpose of the sabbath law. It was to be, not a burden on the people, but a



blessing to them. The sabbath served to provide a day for much-needed rest and refreshment. As Jesus Christ pointed out: "The sabbath came into existence for the sake of man, and not man for the sake of the sabbath." (Mark 2:27) Accordingly, Jesus Christ's performing healings on the sabbath was in full harmony with the merciful spirit of the law. But the Pharisees' unreasonable insistence on the letter of the law according to their traditional interpretation led to a merciless attitude toward those in need.—Matt. 23:23.

The unreasonable application of God's law on which the Pharisees insisted put a great burden on people. (Matt. 23:4) As to those not living by the traditional precepts, they were looked down upon. For example, when officers sent to arrest Jesus came back empty-handed because of having been impressed by his teaching, certain Pharisees said, disparagingly: "You have not been misled also, have you? Not one of the rulers or of the Pharisees has put faith in him, has he? But this crowd that does not know the Law are accursed people."—John 7:47, 48.

The attitude of reasonable persons stands out in stark contrast with that of the Pharisees and other prominent religious leaders of Judaism in the first century

C.E. Reasonable people do not have an exaggerated opinion of themselves nor do they look down on others. They are not "hard to please." (1 Pet. 2:18) They exercise care not to make anyone feel incompetent or ignorant in their presence.

The reasonable person takes into consideration people's limitations and circumstances when encouraging them to make good use of their capabilities. He is not demanding nor does he expect from others far more than they are capable of doing. So he does not become frustrated and irritated with them. Truly the person who displays the fine quality of reasonableness makes life more enjoyable for himself and his fellows.

When we compare reasonable people with unreasonable ones, it is evident that being reasonable depends largely upon the way a person views himself and others. So if we want to be known as reasonable persons, we need to make sure that our estimation of ourselves and of our fellow humans is in harmony with God's Word. The inspired apostle Paul cautioned: "If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he is deceiving his own mind." (Gal. 6:3) "I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think; but to think so as to have a sound mind."—Rom. 12:3.

In the Christian congregation there is no one who is indispensable. Individuals may be a fine source of encouragement to fellow believers. But it is neither natural abilities nor dynamic personalities that are the motivating force behind the work done by the Christian congregation. The work is not that of any man or group of men. It is God's work. With reference to himself and his associates, the apostle Paul acknowledged: "We are God's fellow workers." (1 Cor. 3:9; Acts 5:38, 39) By means of his spirit, Jehovah God is moving his people to do the work that he wants accomplished, to his praise. That spirit is

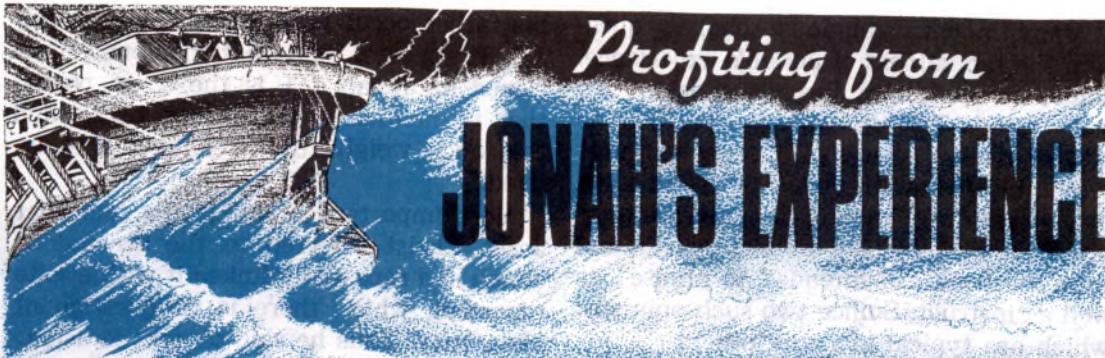
operating on the whole association of brothers throughout the world, not just a few. Since God's spirit operates upon all, we cannot get along without those related to us in the faith.—1 Cor. 12:14-26.

When devoted Christians view one another as fellow workers and slaves of God and Christ, they avoid having an inflated opinion of themselves and their accomplishments. They heed the Bible's admonition to manifest "lowliness of mind considering that the others are superior" to them.—Phil. 2:3.

The person who takes this counsel seriously acknowledges that, in certain abilities and qualities, others are superior to himself. Certain fellow Christians may have a better understanding, insight and discernment than do others when it comes to spiritual matters and helping others. Then there may be those who have remarkable zeal, enthusiasm and drive. Still others may be outstanding in their concern and sympathy for people.

When a person recognizes that he can learn from others and that there may be more than one way to look at matters, he will be far less inclined to insist on his own way as right. He will be yielding, not stubborn. He will not lightly dismiss the suggestions and recommendations of experienced people. Nor will he view himself as being above counsel from others. He appreciates that making decisions based on the composite knowledge of qualified people is a mark of true wisdom. Therefore he acts in harmony with the Bible proverb: "In the multitude of counselors there is accomplishment."—Prov. 15:22.

Surely we should want to be reasonable persons. Reasonableness is what Jehovah God desires to see in his servants because he knows that this will contribute to their having pleasant relationships. So may our striving to be reasonable in all things continue to make life more enjoyable for ourselves and fellow humans.



Profiting from JONAH'S EXPERIENCE

WHAT IS JONAH'S EXPERIENCE?

The Israelite prophet Jonah is commanded by Jehovah God to go to the city of Nineveh and warn its people about their doom because of their wickedness. But instead of obeying, Jonah goes in the opposite direction, taking a boat sailing to Spain. Jehovah causes a great storm to come up, and the mariners cast lots to find out who could be responsible for the storm. The lot falls on Jonah. He confesses his guilt and asks them to hurl him overboard, assuring them that the storm will then abate. Reluctantly they comply and, sure enough, the storm subsides.

But Jonah does not drown. Jehovah has work for him to do and so has prepared a huge fish, which swallows him. After three days it vomits him up on dry land. Again Jonah receives the commission to warn the Ninevites. This time he obeys, goes to Nineveh and warns its inhabitants that in forty days they will be destroyed because of their wickedness. But, wonder of wonders, they all repent, from high

ones to low ones! So God relents. Jonah is highly displeased at this turn of events and goes outside the city to sulk and wait. When he realizes that God has indeed relented, he becomes disgruntled, for which attitude Jehovah rebukes him.

AUTHENTIC?

In considering the value for us of Jonah's experience, we are first of all confronted with the question: Did Jonah actually live and go through the experiences mentioned in the Bible book bearing his name? If not, the message of the book of Jonah would lose much of its value and force for us.



Many modern religious scholars question the factualness of Jonah's experience. Thus one Protestant theologian asks: "Do such things happen in a world such as ours?" And a group of Roman Catholic scholars say that the book of Jonah is "a droll adventure" about "a succession of practical jokes by God on his prophet" and that the book "is intended to amuse" as well as instruct. Suffice two such opinions, which are typical of many others.

But to hold that the book of Jonah is not historical because such things do not happen in our day accords neither with the facts nor with the rest of the Bible. The Bible begins by telling of creation. Do we see creation taking place today? The Bible also tells of miracles, from Genesis through to Revelation. Does the fact that we do not see such miracles taking place today mean that these miracles never happened? The books of the Bible were written under divine inspiration, but do we see a like divine inspiration at work in our day? Surely, it is up to Jehovah God to choose the time and manner of exercising his divine power.

As for the reasons for considering the book of Jonah as historical, note the following: The book of Jonah begins according to the same pattern as that of five other books of the "minor" prophets: "The word of Jehovah began to occur to Jonah." (Jonah 1:1) The ancient Hebrew scholars accepted the book of Jonah as genuine, as historical. This they certainly would not have done in view of its many strange events unless they were convinced as to its authenticity. The book's candor and frankness stamp it as truth. Jonah did not cover up his weaknesses either before or after he preached to the Ninevites. It is also noteworthy that during the reign of Jeroboam II (9th century B.C.E.) Jonah, the son of Amittai, uttered a prophecy that was fulfilled. (2 Ki. 14:23-25) In the Hebrew Scriptures the names of Jonah and

his father occur only there and at Jonah 1:1. It appears, then, that the Jonah mentioned at Jonah 1:1 is the same person that is mentioned at 2 Kings 14:25, and this adds weight to his having actually lived.

Most important of all is the fact that Jesus Christ referred to the account of Jonah and repeatedly linked it with events regarding which there is no question of historicity. Thus he said on one occasion: "Just as Jonah was in the belly of the huge fish three days and three nights, so the Son of man will be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights." (Matt. 12:39, 40) What an argument or comparison to make if Jonah never lived, or if he never spent three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish!

Again, Jesus Christ said that the men of Nineveh would rise in judgment against the Jews of his day because the Ninevites listened to Jonah and repented, whereas the Jews now had a much greater prophet in their midst and yet they were not listening to him. (Matt. 12:41) How could the course of the Jews of Jesus' day be compared unfavorably to that of men who never lived? It does not make sense. But that is not all! In the same connection Jesus condemned the Jews of his day for not listening to him whereas the queen of Sheba traveled a great distance to listen to King Solomon, one who was not nearly as great as Jesus. There is no question that Jesus, the wisest and best-informed man that ever lived, considered the record of the book of Jonah to be just as historical as the record concerning King Solomon and the queen of Sheba. These records describe people who actually lived and events that actually happened.—Matt. 12:42.

JONAH'S CHARACTERISTICS, QUALITIES

What kind of man was Jonah? Quite likely he was diffident and lacked self-

confidence. Some have termed him timid and shy. True, that does seem to be the case, since he ran away from "before Jehovah," instead of carrying out his commission. But let us first note the nature of his commission from Jehovah. He was commanded to go to Nineveh. How far away was that? Well over six hundred miles as the crow flies. Since in those days there were no direct highways from Israel to Assyria, it may well have involved his traveling some seven to eight hundred miles. And how? On foot! At twenty-five miles a day, more or less, it might well have taken him a month to get to Nineveh. What kind of city was Nineveh? It was the capital of the world empire of Assyria, and was filled with 120,000 pagans, reputedly wicked ones at that. No wonder that the thought of going there and preaching Jehovah's warning message seemed such a stupendous commission!

The way Jonah responded to Jehovah God's relenting because the Ninevites repented seemingly puts Jonah in a rather poor light. But was he really that bad, thinking of just himself? Not really. Jonah appears to have been honest, through and through. In his whole account, which, without a doubt, he himself recorded, he does not spare himself, but tells of his weaknesses and shortcomings. However, that is only part of it. He was also a faithful witness to Jehovah God, for when the unbelieving mariners asked him who he was, he boldly replied: "I am a Hebrew, and Jehovah the God of the heavens I am fearing, the One who made the sea and the dry land." In time of trial it took courage to say that, and also to tell them frankly that he had been running away from a commission given to him by Jehovah.

—Jonah 1:9.

Nor is that all. When the lot fell on him, he took it as from Jehovah, for evidently he was familiar with what God's Word had to say about lots. (Prov. 16:33; 18:18) So,

not wanting to see the innocent mariners shipwrecked on account of him, Jonah told them: "Lift me up and hurl me into the sea, and the sea will become still for you; because I am aware that it is on my account that this great tempest is upon you." (Jonah 1:12) Had he been selfish he would no doubt have kept silent, hoping that somehow he and the rest of the men on the boat would manage to outride the tempest. In passing, let it be noted that his witnessing to the true God Jehovah bore fruit, for after the storm subsided the mariners offered a sacrifice to Jehovah and made vows to Him.

We also have reason to believe that Jonah was meek and teachable. Meek persons have a mild temper and are willing to be taught, even as we read: "He [Jehovah] will teach the meek ones his way." (Ps. 25:9) Jonah did not get bitter but repented. He showed he could take such strong discipline as God gave him. This is clear from the prayer he offered while in the fish's belly, which prayer also indicates that Jonah was familiar with the book of Psalms. Among other things he prayed: "When my soul fainted away within me, Jehovah was the One whom I remembered. Then my prayer came in to you, into your holy temple. . . . As for me, with the voice of thanksgiving I will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed, I will pay. Salvation belongs to Jehovah."

—Jonah 2:7, 9; Ps. 50:14; 3:8.

LEARNING FROM JONAH'S EXPERIENCE

What can we learn from Jonah's experience? A great deal! The record magnifies Jehovah's awesome power, showing, for example, how he can cause a great storm to come up to serve his purpose and then have it subside according to his will. It also magnifies Jehovah's interest even in a city filled with pagans and the great mercy he can choose to show toward such people. We also see how long-suffering Je-

hovah was with His prophet Jonah, teaching him much-needed lessons.—Job 37:23; Acts 10:34, 35; Ex. 34:6, 7; Rom. 2:4.

From Jonah's experience we learn that it is the course of wisdom for us to obey Jehovah's commands. Also, we are helped to appreciate more fully that it is Jehovah's will for us to extend mercy to others. This we can do by acquainting them with Jehovah's purpose regarding the earth and man, having confidence that some will respond even as the ancient Ninevites responded to Jonah's preaching. And if, at times, insurmountable obstacles seem to stand in the way, we want to exercise faith, as did Jonah in the fish's belly, that with Jehovah's help we can overcome these and go on to fulfill our commission.—Jas. 3:17; Matt. 5:7; Luke 6:35, 36; 17:5, 6.

We can also learn much from Jonah's course, as to both how we should act and how we should not act. For one thing, we should not beg off when given a difficult assignment or privilege of service. Like Jonah, we may find later that it really is not too difficult to carry out after all. Some have suggested that it may have been a business trip that Jonah decided to take to Tarshish. So we might ask ourselves, Do we at times pursue secular business interests when we could be abounding "in the work of the Lord"? Also, are we choosy as to the kind of people that we preach to or as to the territory that we preach in, as Jonah apparently was? If Je-

hovah had commanded Jonah to preach a warning message to the inhabitants of one of the cities of Judah, no doubt he would not have demurred. Then again, are we, like Jonah, letting the fear of man deter us from doing what we should be doing?—Heb. 12:25; Jas. 4:13-15; 1 Cor. 15:58; Ps. 118:6.

Let us not overlook the fact that Jonah had some admirable qualities that we would do well to imitate. Are we as straightforward, as honest in our everyday lives as Jonah was, both as to his speech with the mariners and as to his writing down all that took place? Are we ever ready to identify ourselves as Jehovah's witnesses, as was Jonah? Are we as willing to put the welfare of others ahead of our own as was Jonah when he acted for the salvation of those mariners by asking them to hurl him overboard, which, as far as Jonah could see, would mean only his sudden death in the watery deep?—Ps. 11:7; 1 Pet. 3:15; Phil. 2:3, 4.

Truly, Jonah's experience is filled with lessons for us, and we can profit by them. Thereby we learn what we should and what we should not do. We learn to imitate the good qualities shown by Jonah, and to avoid his mistakes. We are encouraged to imitate the admirable qualities of Jehovah God, and particularly his mercy, his long-suffering and his love. The dramatic story of Jonah has compelling meaning for us because Jonah actually experienced those things!—Rom. 15:4.

Appreciating the Creator's Handiwork

◆ "I shall laud you because in a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made." (Ps. 139:14) Commenting on these words, the book *The Common Cold* (by Fabricant and Conklin) says: "This verse of David the Psalmist applies with rich emphasis to the study of the anatomy and physiology of the nose, the throat, the lungs, and the parts thereof. No human inventor could ever have conceived of so complex and curious a maze of bones, cartilage, tendons, tissues, membranes, passages, pockets, tubes, and glands as exists in the respiratory tracts of the least as well as of the greatest of men. In one thing are all people approximately equal and that is in their bodies and its parts, the vehicle of the conscious being."

JEHOVAH, an Appreciative God

JEHOVAH GOD is the Source of life. All intelligent creatures in the heavens and on earth owe their existence to him. Nothing anyone can do could change the supreme position Jehovah God occupies toward all creation. As young Elihu pointed out to faithful Job: "If you sin, what injury do you do to God? Even if your offenses are many, how do you hurt him? If you are righteous, what do you give him, or what does he receive from your hand? Your wickedness can affect only a man like yourself; and your justice only a fellow human being."—Job 35:6-8, *New American Bible*.

True, his supreme position is unaffected by what anyone may do or refuse to do. Nevertheless, Jehovah God highly appreciates the faithful service of his intelligent creatures. The Bible tells us: "Jehovah is finding pleasure in those fearing him, in those waiting for his loving-kindness." (Ps. 147:11) "The prayer of the upright ones is a pleasure to him." (Prov. 15:8) Never does Jehovah God unappreciatively forget what his servants have done. The Scriptures give this assurance: "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name." (Heb. 6:10) His past dealings add force to the Biblical assurances that he appreciates what his servants do.

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KING JEHU

Take the case of Israelite King Jehu. He was specifically designated by Jehovah God to execute judgment upon the blood-guilty royal house of Ahab. In appreciation for what Jehu did, Jehovah God promised him: "For the reason that you have acted well in doing what is right in my eyes, and according to all that was in my heart you have done to the house of Ahab, sons themselves to the fourth generation will sit for you upon the throne of Israel."—2 Ki. 10:30.

It is noteworthy that Jehu's record as king was not without flaw. The Bible reports: "Jehu himself did not take care to walk in the law of Jehovah the God of Israel with all his heart. He did not turn aside from the sins of Jeroboam with which he caused Israel to sin." (2 Ki. 10:31) Instead of removing all centers of false worship from his realm, Jehu permitted the calf worship started by King Jeroboam to continue. Furthermore, according to the prophecy of Hosea, Jehu's house became bloodguilty before Jehovah. (Hos. 1:4) Yet, despite the fact that Jehu's life was not without serious derelictions, Jehovah God held true to his promise. In fulfillment of that promise, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam (II) and Zechariah—Jehu's offspring to the "fourth generation"—occupied the throne of the ten-tribe kingdom.

ONE WHO SERVED UNWITTINGLY

Remarkable, too, is the fact that Jehovah does not limit rewards to those who recognize him as God. For instance, Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar rendered a service against the city of Tyre. That city deserved punishment for the treacherous way it had dealt with the Israelites. At one time Tyre had been on very friendly terms with them but in later years allied itself with their enemies.

The siege of Tyre proved to be long and difficult. Whatever spoils were taken evidently fell far short of expectations. It was as though Nebuchadnezzar and his forces received no wages. Though Nebuchadnezzar served only unwittingly as executioner of divine vengeance against Tyre, Jehovah God did not overlook what he did. Through his prophet Ezekiel, Jehovah declared: "Nebuchadrezzar himself, the king of Babylon, made his military force perform a great service against Tyre. . . . But as for wages, there proved to be none for him and his military force from Tyre for the service that he had performed against her. Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said, 'Here I am giving to Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon the land of Egypt, and he must carry off its wealth and make a big spoil of it and do a great deal of plundering of it; and it must become wages for his military force.'" —Ezek. 29:18, 19.

Think of it, Nebuchadnezzar did not even know that he had performed a service that suited God's purpose! Yet Jehovah God did not fail to pay for services rendered. He saw to it that Nebuchadnezzar and his forces were amply compensated. How much more, then, will the Most High show appreciation for what his loyal servants knowingly do!

APPRECIATION FOR LITTLE THINGS

The Creator appreciates even the smallest things. This is evident from what Jesus

Christ told his followers: "He that receives you receives me also, and he that receives me receives him also that sent me forth. He that receives a prophet because he is a prophet will get a prophet's reward, and he that receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will get a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water to drink because he is a disciple, I tell you truly, he will by no means lose his reward." —Matt. 10:40-42.

The giving of a cup of cold water to a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ truly is a small thing. Yet, when such an act is done in recognition of a person's being a disciple of Christ, Jehovah God appreciates this very much. Along with his Son, he views it as being done to him. The rightly motivated individual will, therefore, be richly rewarded spiritually. Though seemingly insignificant, the act of kindness rendered to a disciple of Jesus Christ may be a step leading to the person's gaining an approved relationship before Jehovah God.

IMITATE JEHOVAH

The fact that Jehovah God has time and again shown his appreciation to humans who could in no way change his supreme position should certainly cause us to examine our own attitude. As humans, we are very much dependent upon others. But do we show appreciation for the kindnesses extended to us?

If we desire to be like Jehovah, we should strive to be appreciative. When people do things for us, we should be grateful both to them and to Jehovah God, who created man in a way that makes acts of kindness and generosity possible. Our desire for such persons should be like that of Boaz for Ruth: "May Jehovah reward the way you act, and may there come to be a perfect wage for you from Jehovah." —Ruth 2:12.

Insight on the News

- Just how much influence do celestial bodies have on a child at the moment of birth? That question recently became a matter of public discussion when 186 prominent scientists jointly condemned astrologers as unscientific "charlatans."

Astrology—Science or Hoax? "Smithsonian" magazine reports that Cornell University astronomer Carl Sagan computed the gravitational influence of the attending obstetrician in the delivery room and found it to be greater than that of the planet Mars. And, though computers reveal that the gravitational force of the moon and Jupiter might slightly exceed the doctor's, "the accurate astrologer should more properly consider the configuration of the personnel in the delivery room rather than the celestial configurations to ascertain in detail an individual's astrological makeup." So, what "sign" would the person be born under? The suggestion was made that the sign in the delivery room, "oxygen in use—no smoking," might be appropriate.

Long before modern science, the Bible revealed the futility of astrology. Foretelling pagan Babylon's coming destruction, the prophet Isaiah wrote: "In spite of your many wiles you are powerless. Let your astrologers, your star-gazers who foretell your future month by month, persist, and save you! But look, they are gone like chaff."—Isa. 47:13, 14, "New English Bible."

- The more that scientists learn, the more ludicrous it becomes to claim that the mind-

less chance of evolution produced all the marvelous abilities and qualities

Natural Antifreeze of living things. Consider the resistance to extreme cold observed in both fishes and trees.

Human chemists have produced antifreeze solutions. But in the last five years scientists have learned more about the way that cold-water fish survive winter by producing their own natural "antifreeze"—certain proteins in their bloodstreams. Scientists still do not understand exactly how it works, but they theorize that a high content of the amino acid alanine in these proteins helps to link

"antifreeze" molecules with ice crystals in a way that keeps the crystals from growing. One fact is clear—it works.

And in the far north, after birds and animals head south away from winter's bitter subzero weather, trees remain, rooted to the frozen soil. How do they survive? Well, it is known that salts in solution can greatly lower the freezing point of water. Additionally, scientists have found that very pure water, free from particles on which ice crystals form, can be supercooled to about -40 degrees Fahrenheit before it freezes. In a study of 350 kinds of cold-weather trees, water in the woody tissues of 175 showed that purity, and natural salts in the trees' fluids lowered the freezing point still farther, to almost -50 degrees Fahrenheit! Truly another remarkable instance of the Creator's practical wisdom in operation!

- Thirty years after World War II, some honestly face up to responsibility for lives lost then. Others prefer to keep the 'skeletons in their closets.'

Burying the Past

A Japanese schoolteacher recently declined an invitation to the first alumni meeting of students that he taught more than thirty years ago. He wrote to Tokyo's "Daily Yomiuri" that "I have felt myself unpardonably responsible for the militaristic education with which I indoctrinated them when they were fifth-year primary pupils in my charge," he said. "I felt that I had no moral right to appear before my former pupils."

In striking contrast, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops recently forced the suppression of a book published by the National Council of Catholic Laity. Why? For one thing, the book, "A Question of Values," raised searching questions about the Church's own role in that world conflict. It asked: "Where was the church when Fascism and Nazism were on the rise in Europe? Where was it when the Jews were being rounded up and shipped to oblivion in cattle-cars?"

Apparently the bishops prefer to sweep such questions under the rug. Complained Cardinal Krol of Philadelphia: "It is not the type of material which could be used for discussion."

CHRISTIAN GREATNESS

Comes from Serving

SERVICE lies at the very heart of true Christianity. When on earth, God's Son said that he came, not "to be served, but to serve, and to give up his life as a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:28, *New English Bible*) His life stands in strong contrast to the self-seeking, ambitious attitude of so many today who are insensitive to the needs of others. By a life of unselfish service, Jesus set the perfect model for all his genuine followers to copy. Their lives, like his, should be distinguished by service and the spirit of giving.

¹⁸ The word translated "serve" that the Bible writer Matthew used when quoting Jesus is of interest to us. In the original Greek it is the verb *di-a-ko-ne'o*. There are other Greek verbs that refer to service and each has its own "flavor" or emphasis on a certain aspect of service. One verb may emphasize the *subjection* involved in serving as a slave (*dou-leu'o*; Col. 3:24), another, the *sacredness* of religious service (*lat-treu'o*; Matt. 4:10), and another, the *public nature* of the service rendered (*lei-tour-ge'o*; Acts 13:2). *Di-a-ko-ne'o*, on the other hand, lays emphasis on the very *personal nature* of the service that is rendered to another. As one authority says, in this verb there "is a stronger approximation to the concept of a service of love."

—*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. II, page 81.

1. How does Jesus' life stand in contrast to that of many persons today?

2, 3. (a) What is distinctive about the word for "serve" used at Matthew 20:28 as compared with other Greek words relating to service? (b) What are we now interested in finding out?

"Among you, whoever wants to be great must be your servant."
—Matt. 20:26, *New English Bible*.

³ What, then, does Christian service embrace? Is it limited to such activities as preaching God's Word, making disciples of others or serving the strictly spiritual needs of those in the congregation? What does the word under consideration (*di-a-ko-ne'o*) show?

WAITING ON AND CARING FOR OTHERS

* The Bible's use of this word aptly illustrates the basic sense of personal service (expressed not only by the Greek verb but also by the related nouns *di-a'ko-nos* [servant, minister] and *di-a-ko-ni'a* [service, ministry]).* One early use of the word refers to 'waiting on tables.' Luke uses it that way in quoting Jesus' words about a slave's 'preparing his master's supper and then waiting on [*di-a-ko-ne'o*] him while he had his meal.' (Luke 17:7-10, NE) At Luke 12:35-38 (NE) Jesus gave his disciples an illustration in which the

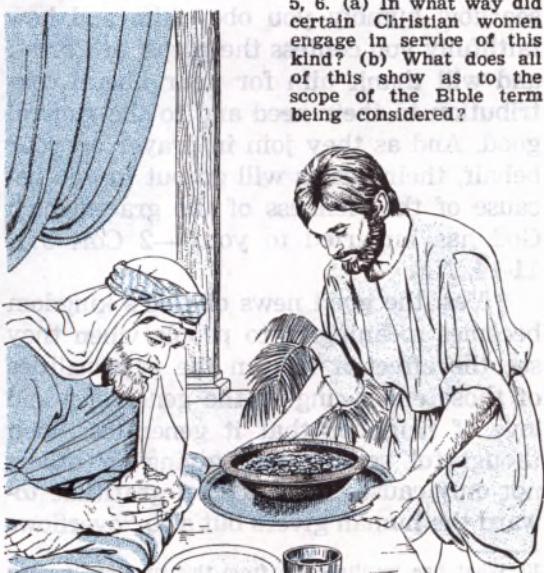
* According to lexicographers, the term *di-a'ko-nos* comes from the Greek word *di-a'*, meaning "through," and the Greek word *ko'nis*, meaning "dust," hence describing a servant who is dusty due to performing some duty or errand for his master.

4. How does the Bible aptly illustrate the basic sense of the Greek word for "serve" that we are considering?

master, representing Jesus himself, traded roles with his slaves who had faithfully awaited his arrival from his wedding feast. Jesus said of the master in the illustration: "He will fasten his belt, seat them at table, and come and wait on [di-a-ko-ne'o; serve, Kingdom Interlinear Translation; minister to, New World Translation] them."*

* Not only 'waiting on tables,' however, but all services of a similar personal nature came to be embraced by the term. The Bible tells of certain Christian women who "provided for," "waited on" or 'ministered to' the needs of Jesus and his apostles "from their belongings," both in Galilee and in Jerusalem. (Luke 8:1-3; Matt. 27:55; Mark 15:41; NE, NW) They may have done shopping and cooking, the mending and washing of clothes, or performed other services of a similar nature, even

* We find other examples of this kind of serving ("ministering," NW) in the account of the wedding feast in Cana (John 2:1-9), in the serving done by Peter's mother-in-law (Matt. 8:14, 15), and in that done by Martha.—Luke 10:40; John 12:2; see *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*.



The Greek word di-a-ko-ne'o emphasizes the personal nature of a service that is rendered to another

using their own funds and possessions to supply needed materials.

* We see, then, that this term is not restricted to purely "religious" activity but embraces a wide scope of service.

SERVING NEEDY BROTHERS

We should never doubt that Jehovah God and his Son Jesus Christ give real importance to this kind of service. Jesus personally experienced human needs such as hunger and thirst. He undoubtedly appreciated it greatly when, after forty days of fasting, "angels appeared and waited on [di-a-ko-ne'o] him." (Matt. 4:11, NE) In a parable given toward the close of his earthly service, Jesus described his judgment upon two classes of persons, one class likened to "sheep," the other to "goats." The "sheep," who were approved and blessed, came to the aid of Christ's brothers when they saw them in need. But the "goats," who were condemned, saw these in hunger and thirst, in need of hospitality or lodging, lacking clothing or ill or in prison and 'did not come to their help [di-a-ko-ne'o; did not "serve" or "minister" to them, Int; NW].'—Matt. 25:31-46, *Jerusalem Bible*.

* True disciples of Jesus during the first century C.E. proved themselves "sheep-like" in attitude and action. When Christians in Macedonia and Achaia heard that their brothers in Judea were in need, they gathered relief supplies and sent these to them, performing a "relief ministration [di-a-ko-ni'a]." (Acts 11:29; 12:25, NW) For they recognized that the Judean brothers had rendered them precious spiritual service and that they had a corresponding 'debt' that made it fitting for them to "do them a service in material ways" (An-

7. Why can we be sure that Jehovah God and Jesus Christ give real importance to this kind of service, not underestimating it?

8, 9. (a) How did Christians in the first century show that they appreciated clearly the importance of serving the physical needs of their brothers? (b) How did the apostle Paul show his concern that this "service" be performed in a proper way?



Christian service includes attention to material needs of Christians who experience a shortage; such giving results in praise to God

ers, "delegates of our congregations," were 'duly appointed to travel' with Paul and Titus (whom Paul called "my partner and my associate").—2 Cor. 8:19-23, NE.

¹⁰ Paul himself later experienced refreshing help from men like Onesiphorus and Onesimus as they 'served' and 'looked after' (*di-a-ko-ne'o*) him in times of trial. (2 Tim. 1:16-18; Philem. 10-13, NE) When writing to the Corinthians, he showed them what fine results all such kind, unselfish serving brings to God's praise and the advancement of the good news. Of the "provision of aid" (*di-a-kon'i'a*; "service," *Int*; "ministry," NW) for the Judean brothers, he said: "Through our action such generosity will issue in thanksgiving to God, for as a piece of willing service this is not only a contribution towards the needs of God's people; more than that, it overflows in a flood of thanksgiving to God. For through the proof which this affords, many will give honour to God when they see how humbly you obey him and how faithfully you confess the gospel of Christ; and will thank him for your liberal contribution to their need and to the general good. And as they join in prayer on your behalf, their hearts will go out to you because of the richness of the grace which God has imparted to you."—2 Cor. 9:1, 11-14, NE.

¹¹ Yes, the good news of God's kingdom becomes meaningful to people when they see the effect it has on the personalities of those embracing it, the generosity and love of neighbor that it generates. Such thoughtful service and giving to others not only causes these to feel gratitude toward the human givers but also "overflows

American Translation); to "minister publicly to these with things for the fleshly body" (NW). (Rom. 15:25-27) This was especially commendable on the part of the Macedonian congregations. Though themselves in a state of poverty, they proved to be "lavishly open-handed." As Paul says: "Going to the limit of their resources, as I can testify, and even beyond that limit, they begged us most insistently, and on their own initiative, to be allowed to share in this generous service [*di-a-kon'i'a*; ministry, NW] to their fellow-Christians." (2 Cor. 8:2-4, NE) What a powerful example of unselfish service for us today! ⁹The apostle Paul was very concerned that this relief measure should be conducted in a fine manner, so that there would be no "criticism of our handling [*di-a-ko-ne'o*; administering, JB] of this generous gift," whether from those on the giving end or those on the receiving end of the project. For that reason, oth-

10. What fine results come from this unselfish serving of others' needs, as shown by 2 Corinthians 9:1, 11-14?
11. (a) In what ways does our thoughtful care for the physical needs of others contribute to the expansion of pure worship? (b) What is one of the ways that we can show 'love of God's name,' according to Hebrews 6:10?

in a flood of thanksgiving to God." It recommends true Christianity as the finest way of life, as true worship of a kind and loving God. (Compare James 1:26, 27; 2:14-17; 1 John 3:16-18.) No wonder, then, that Paul could write to Hebrew Christians who had come to the aid of their brothers and assure them that "God would not be so unjust as to forget all that you did for love of his name, when you rendered service [di-a-ko-ne'o; ministered, NW] to his people, as you still do."—Heb. 6:10, NE; compare 10:32-34; 1 Corinthians 16:15, 16.

¹² Because these Greek words for serving were expanded to include, not just 'waiting on tables,' but all kinds of personal service, they can be applied even to worldly governments. For that reason the "superior authorities" of the present system of things are called God's "servants" in a particular sense. At Romans 13:4 (*An American Translation*) the inspired apostle says of such governmental authority: "They are God's agents [di-a'ko-nos; it is God's minister, NW] to do you good. But if you do wrong you may well be afraid, for they do not carry swords for nothing. They are God's servants [di-a'ko-nos], to execute his wrath upon wrong-doers." God allows these political systems to continue for a time and to render certain services that benefit his people on earth and that contribute to a measure of order and protection against lawlessness. In that sense they are his "servants."

¹³ These worldly governments, however, do not serve out of love for God or for his Son's true disciples. Rather, they render these public services indiscriminately for the benefit of any and all citizens under them. Their services, therefore, do not bring them the reward that comes to those

12, 13. (a) In what way can worldly governments be described as God's "servants"? (b) What is the difference between their service and that rendered by Jesus' disciples?

who serve Jehovah God out of love for him and for their neighbor.

AN EVEN MORE VITAL SERVICE

¹⁴ From what we have considered it is clear that to care for the physical and material needs of others, particularly our Christian brothers, is a vital part of Christian serving. None of us should ever view it as "beneath" us to serve humbly in these ways, or underestimate the importance in God's eyes of such serving. And yet, there is an even more vital aspect of service that genuine Christians will be very concerned to render. What is that? It is the serving of the direct spiritual needs of others.

¹⁵ The relative importance of serving others' physical needs as compared with serving their spiritual needs is made clear by the account at Acts 6:1-4 (NE). A problem developed after Pentecost of 33 C.E. because a measure of partiality was causing some widows to be "overlooked in the daily distribution [di-a-ko-ni'a; daily serving of food, *New American Standard Bible*]." The apostles, when informed, "called the whole body of disciples together and said, 'It would be a grave mistake for us to neglect the word of God in order to wait at table [di-a-ko-ne'o; to keep accounts, AT].'" So they called on the brothers to search out seven men "of good reputation from your number," so that the apostles, with appointive power, could "appoint them to deal with these matters, while we devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry [di-a-ko-ni'a; the service, *Int.; delivering, AT*] of the Word."

¹⁶ To care for providing food supplies to these overlooked widows was certainly a necessary part of Christian service. So, it was not an extra-congregational activity, but it had a spiritual aspect to it. The dis-

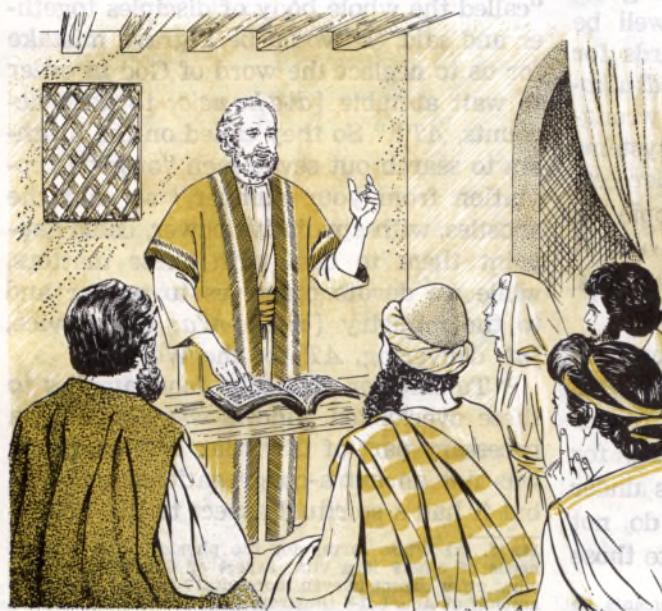
14, 15. (a) While caring for the physical and material needs of others is a vital aspect of Christian service, what other aspect is even more vital? (b) How does the account at Acts 6:1-4 illustrate this?

16. Did the apostles take the position described because the providing of food supplies to those widows was an extra-congregational activity?

ciple James' words at James 1:26, 27 show that this is a definite part of clean "worship." Still the apostles recognized that it would show a lack of discernment for them to spend their time in the actual handling of these *material* supplies instead of concentrating on the handling of things of a *directly spiritual* nature, particularly the providing of spiritual food and guidance for the brothers from God's Word.

"As congregations developed in places outside Jerusalem, this principle was observed. Primary attention was given to serving the directly spiritual needs while not overlooking or failing to give due importance to physical or material matters. Bodies of elders were appointed to serve as spiritual shepherds and overseers in the congregations. (Acts 20:17, 28) And, to make it possible for these to concentrate on upbuilding and counseling the brothers, bodies of assistants worked under their direction in caring for duties not so directly spiritual.—Phil. 1:1.

17. How did congregations elsewhere follow the lead of the Jerusalem congregation in such matters?



Early Christians gave primary attention to serving the spiritual needs of others

¹⁸ Thus, after instructing Timothy on the qualifications of those who would be appointed as elders, the apostle Paul goes on to say: "Assistants [di-a'ko-nos; servants, *Int*; ministerial servants, *NW*; deacons, *NE*], in turn, must be serious, straightforward men, not addicted to wine or dishonest gain, but holding the divine truth of the faith with a clear conscience. They should first be tested, and afterward, if there is no fault to be found with them, they can serve as assistants [di-a-ko-ne'o; serve as ministers, *NW*]. . . . Those who do good service as assistants [who minister in a fine manner, *NW*] gain a good standing for themselves and great confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus."—1 Tim. 3:8-13, *AT*.

¹⁹ So, in the same manner that the Greek word *pre-sby-te-ros*, which simply means an "older man," came to be a designation of a man with a congregational assignment of service, namely, that of being an "elder," so the word *di-a'ko-nos*, which simply means a "servant," came to designate a man with another congregational assignment. Commenting on the different uses of the Greek term *di-a'ko-nos*, the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Volume II, page 89, says, under the heading "B. The Deacon as a Church Official," this:

"1. A distinction may be made between all these general uses and the employment of the term as the 'fixed designation for the bearer of a specific office' as *diakonos* in the developing constitution of the Church. This is found in passages where the [Latin] Vulgate has the

18. Could just anyone serve as one of the ministerial servants (*di-a'ko-nos*) in the congregation? How does this show that the service these performed was no light matter in God's eyes?

19, 20. (a) What special use, therefore, was made of the Greek word *di-a'ko-nos* (servant) in the early congregation? (b) What question now arises as to the relationship between such congregational "servants" and those appointed as elders?

loan-word *diaconus* instead of the [Latin] minister used elsewhere (cf. Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8, 12).

"Members of the [Christian] community who are called deacons in virtue of their regular activity are first found in Phil. 1:1, where Paul sends greetings to all the saints in Philippi *syn episko'pois kai diako'nois* [together with overseers and servants, *Int.*]. Already in this phrase there emerges a decisive point for our understanding of the office, namely, that the deacons are linked with the bishops [overseers] and mentioned after them. At the time of this epistle there are thus two co-ordinated offices.

"... the description of office has here become a definite designation."

²⁰ These brothers, then, were designated as congregational "servants," humbly serving the needs of their brothers in assigned duties. Did this give the brothers who were "elders" justification to assume a superior attitude toward them (the ones appointed to serve as a *di-a'ko-nos*) as though the elders were now their "bosses"?

NO ROOM FOR A SUPERIOR ATTITUDE

²¹ No, for that certainly would not be in accord with Jesus' counsel and the principle he taught his apostles. Actually, all those who served as "elders" were also servants of their brothers, including those called congregation "servants" ("ministerial servants," NW). Jesus Christ himself had come, 'not to be served, but to serve.' The inspired apostle Paul stated that Jesus "became a servant [*di-a'ko-nos*] of the Jewish people to maintain the truth of God." (Matt. 20:28; Rom. 15:8, NE) Paul referred to himself (as well as to his co-workers, Timothy and others) as a "servant" (*di-a'ko-nos*). (Eph. 3:7; Col. 1:23, *Int*) By this he did not mean that he was part of a body of congregational servants ("ministerial servants" or "deacons") in a particular congregation but, rather, that he had been assigned to serve in behalf of the Christian congregation as a whole.

Speaking of that congregation, he says: "I

²¹ Why is there no reason for any elder to view himself as "above" those serving as congregational "servants"?

became its servant [*di-a'ko-nos*; minister, NW] by virtue of the task assigned to me by God for your benefit: to deliver his message in full."—Col. 1:24-26, NE.

²² To be the "servant" of another could call for one to bear up humbly under hardships, endure unpleasant circumstances. Whether one would be willing to do this or not would demonstrate the genuineness of his service to the one served. Because some were inclined to disparage Paul's worth in comparison with others, he set forth proof of his being a bona fide servant of Christ and of God. To Christians in Corinth, where some of his detractors were located, he wrote: "As God's servants [*di-a'ko-nos*; ministers, NW], we try to recommend ourselves in all circumstances by our steadfast endurance: in distress, hardships, and dire straits; flogged, imprisoned, mobbed; overworked, sleepless, starving."—2 Cor. 6:4, 5, NE.

²³ Of those making light of him, he asked, "Are they servants [ministers, NW] of Christ?" and then went on to say, "I can outdo them. More overworked than they, scourged more severely, more often imprisoned, many a time face to face with death. Five times the Jews have given me the thirty-nine strokes; three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I have been shipwrecked, and for twenty-four hours I was adrift on the open sea. I have been constantly on the road; I have met dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my fellow-countrymen, dangers from foreigners, dangers in towns, dangers in the country, dangers at sea, dangers from false friends. I have toiled and drudged, I have often gone without sleep; hungry and thirsty, I have often gone fasting; and I have suffered from cold and exposure."—2 Cor. 11:23-27, NE.

22, 23. (a) How does a person show that he is a true servant of another? (b) What kind of evidence did the apostle Paul point to as proof of his being a genuine servant of God and of Christ?

²⁴ Here, indeed, was real evidence of being a genuine servant! No boasting of impressive accomplishments in which to take human pride, such as the construction of mighty edifices; no recitation of drawing great crowds to hear him speak; no taking of personal credit for the marvelous expansion that had been accomplished in the spread of the good news. Rather, a record of humble service, like a servant who, without any fanfare, goes out even in dark of night, braving storm, discomfort and danger, to accomplish some errand on which his master sends him. We can think of this when estimating the genuineness of our own service to God. However, we can also remind ourselves that Paul also called attention to his letters of recommendation, namely, the Christian disciples whom he had made as proof of his servanthood.

—2 Cor. 3:1-3.

²⁵ Paul was never guilty of elevating himself or wanting others to look on him with deference as a 'chief one' among them. To those Corinthians, among whom he had labored for a year and a half, he

24. How does the apostle thus help us to keep the right viewpoint in estimating the genuineness of our own service?

25. How did Paul express his humility in writing to those in Corinth, where he had labored so diligently?

said of himself and a fellow worker: "What is Apollos? Or what is Paul? Just servants [di-a'ko-nos, ministers, NW] through whom you came to have faith, as the Lord gave each of us opportunity. I did the planting, Apollos the watering, but it was God who made the plants grow. So neither the planter nor the waterer counts for anything, but only God who makes the plants grow.... We are fellow-laborers for God, and you are God's farm, God's building."—1 Cor. 3:5-9, AT.

²⁶ Certainly, seeking to be great in this way, not by gaining prominence, prestige or power, but by giving of oneself in humble service, is a desirable goal. It is an evidence, not of ambition or pride or selfishness, but of love, love for God and love for neighbor. May all of us today seek such greatness, to the praise of Jehovah God, who established this rule of greatness, and in honor of his Son, who exemplified it as no one else ever has done. Our seeking Christian "greatness" will bring grand benefits to ourselves and to others. It will bring a rich outpouring of God's holy spirit, which will, in turn, contribute to splendid unity and harmony among us, as the following article explains.

26. How can we seek to be great and still be free from selfish ambition and pride?

Serving Unitedly as AN ASSOCIATION OF BROTHERS

"You are all brothers . . . do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ."—Matt. 23:8-11,
New American Standard Bible.

THE concept of a life of humble service is not an easy one for most imperfect humans to accept and apply. Witness what has taken place in Christendom,

where men claiming to be representatives of Christ Jesus and ordained servants (or

1, 2. (a) What illustrates the difficulty most find in living a life of humble service like that of God's Son? (b) Did Jesus' apostles make this adjustment without difficulty?

"ministers") of God set themselves apart from the "ordinary" members of the congregation, the "laity." These clergymen view themselves as superior to the rest of the flock and accept titles conveying this sense of superiority. But this is not the way to true unity.

² Even among Jesus' true disciples in the first century, the adjusting to this teaching of God's Son was not without its difficulties. On several occasions Jesus had to correct his disciples because they were concerned about rank and had a desire for positions of superiority.

³ Toward the close of the third year of Jesus' public service, when walking back to Capernaum, his disciples got into an argument. About what? Mark's account relates: "When he [Jesus] was indoors, he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the way?' They were silent, because on the way they had been discussing who was the greatest. He sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, 'If anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and servant [minister, NW] of all.'"—Mark 9:33-35, *New English Bible*.

⁴ Incredible that, after nearly three years of Jesus' teaching, they should do such a thing? No, not when we remember their human imperfection and their circumstances. For their concern over personal greatness reflected, not only the tendencies of the imperfect flesh, but also the background of their times. One historical observation about the customs and attitudes prevailing among the first-century practitioners of the Jewish religion says: "At all points, in worship, in the administration of justice, at meals, in all dealings, there constantly arose the question who was the greater, and estimating the honour due to each was a task which had to be constantly fulfilled and which was felt to be very important."—*Theological Dictionary*

3, 4. What argument did Jesus' disciples have on the way to Capernaum, and why is this not surprising?

nary of the New Testament, Vol. IV, page 532; compare Matthew 23:6, 7.

BECOMING LIKE YOUNG CHILDREN

⁵ Matthew's account of the same incident tells that Jesus called a child and set him in front of the disciples and said: "I tell you this: unless you turn round and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven. Let a man humble himself till he is like this child, and he will be the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me. But if a man is a cause of stumbling to one of these little ones who have faith in me, it would be better for him to have a millstone hung round his neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea."—Matt. 18:1-6, *New English Bible*.

⁶ Yes, Jesus showed them that their thinking was leading them down the wrong road. Perhaps Peter, due to Jesus' promise about giving him certain "keys" to the kingdom, felt that he held some superiority over the other disciples. Or James and John, because of being among the three Jesus selected to be with him at the time of the transfiguration on the mount, may have had similar ideas. (Matt. 16:19; 17:1-9) Whatever the case, Jesus told them all to "turn round and become like children," that is, as modest, free from pretension or ambition as small children are by nature. They were not just to act like children by making an outward show of these qualities, but they were to put on these qualities, so as actually to have the same spirit that characterizes humble children. Small children have no thought of rank among themselves but view one another as equals. And so, to the extent that Jesus' disciples put on humility of heart, to the extent that they felt small

5. What counsel did Jesus give to them to correct their wrong attitude?

6. (a) What idea of superiority might some of his disciples have had? (b) What would it mean for them to "turn round and become like children"?



To teach his disciples to have humility of heart, Jesus told them to become like children

before God and their brothers, to that extent they would be great as regards his kingdom.

⁷ A measure of their humility would be the way they treated those who were spiritually like "babes" in the truth (due to having recently become disciples), or those who were like small children in having little prominence or position of responsibility among them. If someone, particularly a Christian elder, were to display self-importance or deal with others in a domineering way, he could be a source of stumbling for such humble ones. This could have serious consequences, indeed, for the one causing the stumbling, as Jesus' words show. He would be watching; so would God's angels.—Matt. 18:6, 10; Rev. 2:23.

⁸ "He that conducts himself as a lesser one [the least, NE; lowliest, *New American Bible*, margin] among all of you is the one that is great." (Luke 9:48) Though this was so contrary to the world's think-

7. How would the way they 'received the little ones' demonstrate the measure of their humility, and what made this so serious?

8. How is it true that the 'one conducting himself as a lesser one' is actually the one who is great among Christians? "Nobility will smother the human soul" of

ing, do we not find this true in our relationships with others? Who is the one that is most valuable to us, whom would we miss the most if he were to leave us or die—the one who shows self-importance and wants others to defer to him, or the one who is very considerate, helpful and kind? Clearly it is the latter one.

⁹ As we have seen in the preceding article, the apostle Paul imitated Jesus' own example of humble service. (1 Cor. 11:1) Talking to the elders of the city of Ephesus, Paul could truthfully say to them: "You know how, from the day that I first set foot in the province of Asia, for the whole time that I was with you,

I served the Lord in all humility amid the sorrows and trials that came upon me . . . Remember how for three years, night and day, I never ceased to counsel each of you, and how I wept over you. . . . you all know that these hands of mine earned enough for the needs of myself and my companions. I showed you that it is our duty to help the weak in this way, by hard work, and that we should keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, who himself said, 'Happiness lies more in giving than in receiving.' " No wonder that, on their learning that they might not see Paul again, "there were loud cries of sorrow from them all" and they also embraced and kissed him. He had a large place in their heart, not simply due to his being an apostle, but, rather, because of the kind of person he was. He was an example for all Christian elders.—Acts 20:18, 19, 31-37, NE; compare 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 2:5-9.

9. (a) In what ways did the apostle Paul exemplify this Christian principle? (b) How did the brothers manifest that Paul had a large place in their heart, and what can we learn from this?

NO COPYING OF THE WORLD'S WAYS

¹⁰ A few months after the disciples' argument over greatness, Jesus again found it necessary to counsel them. His disciples envisioned his kingdom as an earthly rule. (Acts 1:6) They knew that under the Israelite monarchy, kings sat on thrones and had their royal courtiers with varying degrees of honor. They saw around them in their own time worldly rulers and other men who wielded power over the people. So, two of Jesus' apostles, James and John (with and through their mother), made the request that Jesus grant them 'top' positions in his kingdom.—Matt. 20:20-23; Mark 10:35-40.

¹¹ Their fellow disciples became "indignant." Yet their previous dispute over greatness showed that they themselves were not fully free from ambition. So Jesus called them all to him and said: "You know that in the world, rulers lord it over their subjects, and their great men make them feel the weight of authority [make their importance felt, *New American Bible*]; but it shall not be so with you. Among you, whoever wants to be great must be your servant [minister, *NW*], and whoever wants to be first must be the willing slave of all—like the Son of Man; he did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give up his life as a ransom for many."—Matt. 20:24-28, *NE*.

¹² Yes, it might seem the natural thing to copy the methods of worldly rulers, executives and administrators. But Jesus said: "It shall not be so with you." Whatever the apparent success of the mighty and wealthy of the world and their political and commercial systems, these were

10. What second occasion caused Jesus to give further counsel on humility to his disciples?

11. Were the rest of the apostles free from blame in this, and what counsel did Jesus give them?

12, 13. (a) Why should we not transfer into the Christian congregation worldly methods of administration that are apparently successful? (b) How does the apostle's counsel at Romans 12:2, 3, 10, 16 harmonize with Jesus' counsel?

not to be the guiding example for the Christian congregation.

¹³ Harmonizing with this is the apostle Paul's later counsel: "Do not model yourselves on the behaviour of the world around you, but let your behaviour change, modelled by your new mind." Paul evidently was thinking of the same problem on which Jesus counseled, for he went on to say: "I want to urge each one among you not to exaggerate his real importance. Each of you must judge himself soberly by the standard of the faith God has given him. Love each other as much as brothers should, and have a profound respect for each other. Treat everyone with equal kindness; never be condescending but make real friends with the poor [go about with humble folk, *NE*; associate with the lowly, *New American Standard Bible*; be led along with the lowly things, *NW*]. Do not allow yourself to become self-satisfied [do not keep thinking how wise you are, *NE*]." —Rom. 12:2, 3, 10, 16, *Jerusalem Bible*.

¹⁴ Since Jesus' apostles, as a body, were to serve as a foundation for the Christian congregation when it was established, it was most important that they learn well the lesson he taught them. (Eph. 2:19, 20) Only if they cleaned out ideas of superiority of rank among themselves could they function as a united body, free from strife and rivalry. (Compare Romans 12:4-8, 10; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 12-25, 31; 13:1-3.) That is also why one of the qualifications for those serving on congregational bodies of elders is that they not be "self-willed." (Titus 1:7) The Greek term here means, literally, "self-pleasing" ("presumptuous," *Moffatt*; "arrogant," *Revised Standard Version*; *AT*; *JB*; "overbearing," *NE*; "aggressive," *Phillips*; "self-assertive," *The Expositor's Greek Testament*). The apostle's qualification, then, calls for the elder's

14. (a) What factors made it very important that Jesus' apostles learn well the lesson he was teaching them?

(b) What relationship to unity among elders does the requirement of not being "self-willed" have?

not being "self-sufficient" or "self-reliant" due to having a very high opinion of his own abilities and judgment. A self-willed person would find it difficult to work harmoniously and humbly with others as a body. And he would be a source of difficulty to his fellow members in that body.

¹⁵ If a Christian elder begins to feel that he is superior to his fellow elders in wisdom, he would do well to meditate on what the disciple James wrote at James 3:13: "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show out of his fine conduct his works with a mildness [modesty, NE; humility, AT] that belongs to wisdom." Yes, the genuinely wise person is one who knows enough to know that—no matter how much experience and knowledge he has—he still knows very little and has so very much yet to learn. He knows, too, that—no matter how much he knows—there is no person but that he can learn something from him, whoever that one may be or however humble his position. He treats all such ones with due respect.

NO SEPARATION THROUGH TITLES OF SUPERIORITY

¹⁶ Just three days before his death, Jesus warned his disciples against imitating the scribes and Pharisees in their love of prominence. These men were often called "Rabbi" by others, a word meaning, literally, "great one." It was "a term for someone who occupies a high and respected position. . . . The one called Rabbi is recognized thereby to be higher in rank than the speaker." (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. VI, page 961) Jesus, however, told his disciples: "Do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. . . . And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader,

that is, Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant [minister, NW]." (Matt. 23:6-12, *New American Standard Bible*) Properly, Jesus let himself be called "Rabbi."—John 1:38, 49; 20:16; Matt. 26:49; Mark 9:5.

¹⁷ Notably, in all the designations of assignments within the Christian congregation after its founding at Pentecost—designations such as "shepherd," "teacher," "evangelizer," and "prophet" (literally, one who speaks forth [Acts 15:32])—the emphasis here is more heavily on Christ's objective in giving these "gifts in men," namely, the edification and unification of the congregation, than on the official position of those human "gifts." (Eph. 4:12-16) Even the word "apostle" means simply a "sent-forth one," that is, someone sent off as a representative on a mission of service. While applying in a special way to the twelve apostles who were direct appointees of God's Son, it was also used of other men sent out on missions of service, at times by congregations. (Compare Acts 13:1-4; 14:14; 2 Corinthians 8:23.) So, the designation "apostle" gave emphasis to their assignment of service rather than to position or rank. It implied trust and confidence deposited in them, true. But it did not elevate the ones "sent forth" as superior to those whom they would serve, any more than a master's sending out his servant to bear an important message to another person would make the servant superior to the receiver of the message. However, the receiver would be indebted to the message bearer. Also, the ones sent forth had a responsibility to those sending them, whether it was the body of elders in Jerusalem or that of any other congregation. They humbly reported on what they had done. (Com-

15. How will the inspired words at James 3:13 help elders to avoid feelings of superiority and self-reliance?
16. What is the meaning of the title "Rabbi," and why was it not to be applied to any of Jesus' disciples?

17. (a) On what do the Scriptural designations for those assigned responsibilities within the congregation lay emphasis? (b) How is this true even of the designation "apostle," and why did those so designated have no reason to feel superior to their brothers?

pare John 13:16; Ephesians 6:21, 22; Colossians 1:7; 4:7-9.) Temporary "sent-forth" ones did not, of course, remain "apostles" throughout life as did Christ's twelve apostles and Paul.—Rev. 21:14; Eph. 2:20, 21.

"GIFTS IN MEN"

¹⁸ All such men, whatever service they rendered, were given to the Christian congregation as "gifts in men" by Christ Jesus after his ascension to his Father's heavenly presence. (Eph. 4:8) Ephesians 4:11-13 (NE) points to the purpose of all of this, saying: "And these were his gifts: some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors [shepherds] and teachers, to equip God's people for work in his service [so that the saints together make a unity in the work of service, *Jerusalem Bible*], to the building up of the body of Christ. So shall we all at last attain to the unity inherent in our faith and our knowledge of the Son of God—to mature manhood, measured by nothing less than the full stature of Christ."

¹⁹ United service to God and his Son, by those serving as "gifts" and by all their fellow disciples, was to be the goal of all such "gifts in men." They would achieve this goal, not by 'making their importance felt,' by domineering ways or coercion, but by setting the example of humble service, giving of themselves for the good of all. So, rather than those in the congregation saying, in effect, "I am Paul's man", or "I am for Apollos"; 'I follow Cephas', or 'I am Christ's,' as some in Corinth were saying, the right attitude to take was stressed by the apostle Paul when he said to the brothers there: "Everything belongs to you—Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, the world, life, and death, the present and the

18. What gifts did the glorified Christ Jesus give to the Christian congregation, and for what purpose?

19, 20. (a) How should the men so 'given' work toward the accomplishment of the desired goal? (b) How does the apostle Paul make clear the right attitude for all such ones to maintain?

future, all of them belong to you—yet you belong to Christ, and Christ to God." —1 Cor. 1:12; 3:21-23, NE.

²⁰ Yes, despite the splendid service Paul performed, he kept in mind that he, too, was one of the "gifts in men," and that he, in effect, 'belonged' to the congregation and not the congregation to him. (Compare 2 Corinthians 1:24.) Surely viewing oneself in this way does not allow for any servant of God to act as the "boss" over his brothers, no matter what the service is that he performs.

BEING LIKE "THE YOUNGEST"

²¹ Just how ingrained in humans is the craving for superiority can be seen from the fact that, on the last night of his earthly life, Jesus found it necessary to restate these principles to his apostles. On that very night these men again engaged in heated controversy over which one of them "should rank highest." Repeating what he had earlier told them and adding to it, Jesus said: "In the world, kings lord it over their subjects; and those in authority are called their country's 'Benefactors'. Not so with you: on the contrary, the highest among you must bear himself like the youngest [the junior, *New American Bible*], the chief of you like a servant [the one ministering, NW]. For who is greater—the one who sits at table or the servant [the one ministering, NW] who waits on him? Surely the one who sits at table. Yet here am I among you like a servant."—Luke 22:24-27, NE; compare 2 Peter 1:12-15.

²² What would it mean to bear oneself like "the youngest" or "the junior"? Young men were often assigned tasks of less prominence, though nonetheless nec-

21. (a) When and why did Jesus find it necessary to counsel his disciples yet another time on the need for humility? (b) What additional points did he make this time?

22. What does it mean to conduct oneself like "the youngest," and how is this illustrated in the Scriptural accounts?

essary. For example, when both Ananias and his wife expired through divine action, it was "the younger men" who carried them off and buried them. (Acts 5: 5, 6, 10) The apostle Peter, after urging his fellow elders to serve as humble examples to the flock, said: "In like manner, you younger men, be in subjection to the older men." (1 Pet. 5:1-5) Timothy, who was quite young in comparison to the apostle Paul, is spoken of as among those serving Paul as his "assistants" or "helpers" or 'ministering' to him. (Acts 19:22, NE; AT; JB; NW) Onesimus, the runaway slave, whom the aged Paul called "my child," had 'looked after or waited on Paul,' "ministering" to him, as a son would for a father, while Paul was in prison. (Philem. 9, 10, 13, NE; AT; NW; compare 2 Timothy 1:16-18.) By working humbly along with these older, more experienced servants of God, the younger men gained rich benefits and training.

²³ Though their tasks may have appeared to be of little honor or prestige, their course is one that exemplifies the right attitude for all to have, of whatever age they

23. Are only younger ones to display such lowliness of mind?

may be. The apostle Peter, therefore, after counseling younger men to be subordinate to their elders, goes on to say: "But all of you gird yourselves with lowliness of mind toward one another, because God opposes the haughty ones [superior appearing ones, *Int*], but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones."—1 Pet. 5:5.

²⁴ How pleasant it is to serve together when a humble and modest spirit prevails in a congregation! What a force for persons effectively working together as a body the spirit of brotherhood proves to be when it is manifested by Christian elders, eliminating tendencies toward time-wasting contention or angry debates! (1 Tim. 2:8) Surely there is much here for all of us to meditate upon. Do we seek the genuine greatness that comes from such humble service motivated by brotherly love? Let us each show it by our being helpful, considerate, interested in all, including the lowly ones, granting to all their due measure of personal dignity and worth. (Rom. 12:10, 15, 16) We thereby prove ourselves true disciples of the One who excels in service, God's Son, Christ Jesus.

24. What grand benefits result from this course, and how does it contribute markedly to Christian unity?

What Does It Mean

WHEN you see or hear the word "minister" in some languages, of what do you think? In the language of some lands, the corresponding word refers only to a political official, such as a "Minister of Justice" or a "Prime Minister." But in lands with lan-

1, 2. (a) What ideas does the word "minister" bring to mind in different countries? (b) What do we need to note about the modern use of the word as compared with its earlier use?

A "MINISTER"?

guages that are based on or strongly influenced by Latin (where the term originated), the word "minister" may also call to one's mind a religious official, generally a Protestant or Evangelical clergyman.

² Actually, the word "minister" as used

today and as understood by most people has a meaning quite different from what it had in the early centuries of the Common Era. And in the same way it has a meaning that is quite different from the meaning of the Greek word *di-a'ko-nos* as used in the inspired Greek Scriptures of the Bible, though this Greek word is often translated in various languages as "minister." What is the difference, and how did it come about?

* Back in the early centuries of the Common Era the Greek word *di-a'ko-nos* and the Latin word *minis'ter* meant basically the same thing: a servant, such as an attendant, a waiter, or other personal servant. And so, when the Bible began to be translated into Latin, *minis'ter* was the word generally chosen for rendering *di-a'ko-nos*. But in course of time the idea of humble service began to disappear from the term as it was used. In considerable measure this was because of the apostasy from true Christianity that took place.

* Speaking to Ephesian elders, the apostle Paul forewarned them that, after his going away, "oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness, and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves." Such selfish men would not operate on the principle that "there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:29, 30, 35) Their course would betray that they were not God's servants but servants of his adversary.—2 Cor. 11:12-15, *Int.*

* This foretold apostasy is what eventually produced Christendom, with its many religions and its clergy and laity divisions. However, there were no such dis-

tinctions in the early congregation, as M'Clintock and Strong's *Cyclopaedia* (Vol. VIII, pp. 355, 356) points out with regard to "elders":

"As no specific account is given of the mode of their first appointment, we are left to infer that it may have occurred as a natural designation of respect for seniority . . . , somewhat after the analogy of eldership among the Jews."

The *Cyclopaedia* goes on to say that later "the apostles recognized, possibly appointed," elders, and adds:

"There would exist in every body of elders the necessity of a presidency or primacy for the purpose of general superintendence and direction. Thus one of the number would be designated, either by seniority or formal choice, as a *primus inter pares* [first among equals], who should serve as overseer (*ἐπίσκοπος*) of the body and the flock under them."

Further, the *Cyclopaedia* states concerning the overseer's position:

"Nothing in its original character would prevent its being held in rotation by several elders in the same church or diocese, yet a successful administration of it would tend to its perpetuation in the same individual. Hence it soon became an office for life."

So, one elder or overseer came to exercise permanent primacy over the others, excluding others from privileges enjoyed. In this way congregational direction by a body of elders was gradually eliminated.*

* Thus a "monarchical" arrangement developed, that is, a system where administrative authority and privilege were vested

* Douglas' *New Bible Dictionary* (p. 158) also suggests that "monarchical episcopacy [overseership] appeared in the local congregations when some gifted individual acquired a permanent chairmanship of the board of presbyter-bishops [elder-overseers]."

Also, the *Jerusalem Bible*, in its footnote on Titus 1:5, says that "In the earliest days each Christian community was governed by a body of elders," and refers to "the transformation of a local assembly ruled by a body . . . into an assembly ruled by a single bishop [overseer]."

6. (a) What is meant by a "monarchical" arrangement as regards the congregations, and what contributed to the development of such an arrangement? (b) Do the Scriptures show that concentration of authority in one person is the Christian way to maintain genuine unity of faith and belief? If not, then what is the means by which to do so?

3, 4. (a) What was the original sense of the Latin word *minis'ter*, and so what use was made of it in translating the Bible? (b) What change took place in the use of the term, and due to what circumstances?

5. What did the Scripturally foretold apostasy result in, and what effect did it have on the superintendence and direction of the Christian congregations?

in one person to the exclusion of others. (Compare 1 Corinthians 4:8.) Jerome (of the fourth century C.E.) is quoted as saying that the supremacy of a single overseer (*epi'sko-pos*) came about 'by custom rather than by the Lord's actual appointment,' being a means used to prevent divisions. Hence, the view was that unity could best be maintained by placing great authority in one person who would, by his increased power, be able to 'keep in line' any who disagreed. (Compare 1 Samuel 8:4-7, 19, 20.) By contrast, the apostle Peter urged fellow elders to shepherd the flock in their mutual care, not "as lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock," humbly submitting to one another. (1 Pet. 5: 1-6) The apostle Paul also shows that it would be by 'holding firmly to the faithful word in his teaching' that an overseer would be able to "exhort by the teaching that is healthful and to reprove those who contradict." They were to show faith in the power of the truth and of God's holy spirit.—Titus 1:7, 9-11, 13; compare 2 Timothy 2:24-26.

⁷ Because of the apostasy, the Bible terms used for those serving their brothers in responsible positions in the congregation in time came to take on a different meaning. The Greek term *epi'sko-pos*, meaning "overseer," originally described each and all of the elders who had the duty of looking out for or overseeing the interests of the congregation, caring for their spiritual welfare like a shepherd. (Acts 20:28) But the English word "bishop" (drawn from *epi'sko-pos* through the Latin *epi'sco-pus*) came to stand for a religious official who exercised dominant authority over many congregations in a wide area. This culminated in the development of the papacy in which one overseer, the

7. What effect did the apostasy have on the use of the Scriptural terms for those having congregational assignments of responsibility? And how was this true of the Greek term for "overseer"?

bishop of Rome, claimed primacy and the sole right to preside over and direct all Christian overseers and congregations everywhere.

⁸ Similarly with the word "minister." In Latin this word was used to translate the Greek *di'a'ko-nos* and, hence, originally meant a "servant," and, in a religious sense, one of the body of congregational "servants" that worked along as assistants to the body of elders. Since then "minister" has come to refer to a religious official who generally has sole and complete administrative authority over a congregation or church (though larger groups might have 'assistant pastors'). He is thus viewed as God's special servant (minister) in that congregation. In many countries today the word "minister" is used almost exclusively of Protestant clergymen, as distinguished from Catholic priests (the term "priest" being drawn from the Greek *pre-sby'teros* [elder] through the Latin *pres-by-ter*). In Latin America, for example, if a person introduces himself as a "minister" he is often thought of as a Protestant preacher, one who teaches a congregation from a pulpit in a Protestant church building.

⁹ Thus a term that initially expressed humility and lowliness has come to be one that implies a relatively high position in the community. In ancient times a Latin-speaking person who introduced himself as a *minister* might mean thereby that he worked as somebody's house servant, like a butler or maid. But today the title of "minister" is generally one of considerable worldly eminence and prestige, according the person a standing along with men such as doctors, lawyers and professional men in various fields. This is very different from the sense in which the word *di'a'ko-*

8. What similar change took place as regards the term "minister"?

9. Contrast the modern idea conveyed by the word "minister" with the meaning the term had in Latin back in the early centuries of the Common Era.

nos is used in quotations of Jesus' statements. As we have seen in preceding articles, in his statements a *di-a'ko-nos* (servant or minister) is placed along with a "slave" and as the opposite of those viewed as "great" or "first." (Matt. 20:26-28) So, just as with the word "bishop" (*e-pi'sko-pos*, overseer), ecclesiastical usage has obscured the original meaning of the Latin word *minis'ter* in the minds of most persons.

¹⁰ What does it mean for us if we are sincere students of God's Word? It means that whenever we read the term "minister" in a translation of the Bible we need to adjust our thinking and recall the original meaning of that term, otherwise we will fail to get the point of Jesus' counsel and of the inspired expressions of his apostles and disciples. Rather than our getting the mental picture of a person in fine or formal dress, having unusual speaking ability and administrative ability, we would get a more fitting mental picture of a *di-a'ko-nos* or minister (in the original Latin sense of the term) as being that of an unpretentious servant of God walking down a dusty road in the heat of the sun, or perhaps of someone wearing an apron as he served others at a table.—Compare 2 Corinthians 10:10; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; Luke 17:8.

¹¹ It is also worthy of mention that many, in fact, most, languages have no term that corresponds to the English word "minister" in its religious sense. Latin-based languages, such as Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese, do have such a term. But in languages such as German or Dutch or in the languages of Scandinavia (Nor-

wwegian, Swedish, Danish) and in the Slavic languages (Polish, Russian and others), as well as in languages of Asia and other parts of the world, there is no corresponding word for "minister." In Germany the ordained clergyman is called "religious servant."

¹² To illustrate, in the English edition of the book *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose*, page 223, reference is made to the claim that "all of Jehovah's witnesses who regularly and customarily teach and preach the gospel are ministers." In the German edition, the last portion of this statement says that they are "preachers, that is clergymen," and the English word "ministers" is inserted in brackets (*Prediger bzw. Geistliche* [ministers]). On the same page, in quoting from a communication of the Selective Service System of the United States, in which the term "ministers of religion" is used, the German edition of this book again uses the German word for "preachers" and follows it by the German word for "clergymen" in brackets ("*Prediger*" [*Geistliche*]).

¹³ Similarly in other cases, when the New World Translation of the Bible was translated into such languages as Danish, German, Dutch and Japanese, in all instances where the English words "minister," "ministry," and the verb forms of "to minister" were used, it was necessary to translate these by terms meaning "servant," "service," or forms of "to serve" in those languages.

¹⁴ In Japanese, for example, a composite word, *ho-shi-sha* ("humbly-serving person") is used to translate *di-a'ko-nos*. The expression "ministerial servants" found in the English edition of the *New World Translation* is rendered in Danish by a Danish word meaning "congregational ser-

10. (a) What do these ecclesiastical perversions make necessary for us as students of God's Word? (b) If a Bible translation uses the word "minister" to translate the Greek word *di-a'ko-nos*, what mental picture should the word then bring to our minds?

11, 12. (a) How extensive is the use of the term "minister" in a religious sense throughout the world? (b) How does the German translation of the book *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose* illustrate problems that can arise in translating this term?

13, 14. (a) Where the *New World Translation* has been translated into languages not based on or influenced by Latin, what terms are used in place of "minister" and "ministry"? (b) In place of "ministerial servant," what expressions do some of these translations use?

vants"; in Swedish the expression "assisting servant" is used; while in German the term *Dienstamtgehilfe* appears, meaning, literally, "service office assistant."

¹⁵ Words are simply vehicles used to convey ideas from one mind to another. The important thing is that the correct idea be transmitted. Among Christians in particular, unity of thought and harmony of viewpoint is vital. As the inspired apostle says at 1 Corinthians 1:10: "You should all speak in agreement, and . . . there should not be divisions among you, but [you should] be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought."

¹⁶ This gives added reason for our keeping in mind the Bible thought of a humble servant, rather than the common thought of a religious preacher, if we read or make use of the term "minister" as standing for the Greek term *di-a'ko-nos*. As part of a worldwide congregation, we will try not to formulate our ideas of Christianity or of its standards on the basis of any one term, especially if that term is peculiar to certain languages, but is not found in others. We will always seek to use expressions that are understandable and that clearly express the correct thought. To the degree possible and to the extent that translation allows, these should be expressions that are easily grasped by people of all kinds, wherever they may live or whatever language they may speak. For, as the apostle Paul also said: "Unless you through the tongue utter speech easily understood, how will it be known what is being spoken? You will, in fact, be speaking into the air."—1 Cor. 14:9.

WHERE DOES "ORDINATION" FIT IN?

¹⁷ As used in English, the word "ordain" means "to invest with ministerial or sac-

15, 16. (a) While not quibbling about words, what proper concern should Christians have as to the use of Bible terms? (b) How will they manifest this in their presentation of the good news to people of all nations?

17. What does the word "ordain" mean?

erotal [priestly] functions: introduce into the office of the Christian ministry by the laying on of hands or by other forms: set apart by the ceremony of ordination."—*Webster's Third New International Dictionary*.

¹⁸ All those becoming genuine disciples of Christ Jesus become "servants" of God. According to the old meaning of the Latin word, they could all be called "ministers," for the Latin word originally meant the same thing: "servants." As we have seen, however, the Bible does show that some are "servants" in an *appointive* sense, having a congregational 'appointment' to serve in a particular assignment of service, as in the instance of elders or assistant servants.—Titus 1:5; 1 Tim. 3:1-13.

¹⁹ These do not receive such appointment through baptism. The apostle Paul was not referring to baptism when he wrote Timothy, "Never lay your hands hastily upon any man," but was referring to the action of appointing a man to a congregational assignment of service and the responsibility that went with it. (1 Tim. 5:22; compare 1 Timothy 3:1-15.) Paul himself, along with Barnabas, had been 'set apart' for a certain work by holy spirit. The body of elders at Antioch, in recognition of this, then "laid their hands upon them."—Acts 13:1-5; compare the action of the apostles in 'appointing' the "seven certified men" to handle a certain assignment of service, as recorded at Acts 6:1-6.

²⁰ So, while all true Christians (brothers and sisters alike) serve (or "minister"), only some of them are appointed to a particular service in a congregation. But this

18, 19. (a) In what sense might all true disciples of Christ Jesus be said to be "ministers"? (b) Do all those who become baptized servants of God receive an "appointment" to particular assignments of congregational service and responsibility?

20, 21. How do the examples of Paul, Timothy and Archippus illustrate that certain congregation members are "servants" or "ministers" in an appointive sense, by congregational assignment?

does not mean that the brothers and sisters who do not have such an appointment are a laity class. When the apostle Paul said: "I set no store by life; I only want to finish the race, and complete the task [di-a-ko-ni'a; the service, *Int*; the ministry, *NW*] which the Lord Jesus assigned to me, of bearing my testimony to the gospel," he was evidently referring to the special assignment of service he received to "bring [Jesus'] name before the nations" or Gentiles. (Acts 20:24; 9:15, *NE*; compare Acts 21:19; 1 Timothy 1:12; Colossians 1:25.) At Romans 11:13 he says: "Forasmuch as I am, in reality, an apostle to the nations, I glorify my ministry [di-a-ko-ni'a; service, *Int*]."—Compare also Acts 1:15-17, 20-25.

²¹ Similarly, when Paul wrote to Timothy, "do all the duties of your calling [fully accomplish your ministry (*di-a-ko-ni'a*), *NW*]," he was referring to the particular assignment of service entrusted to Timothy in Ephesus, where he was left to help correct certain congregational problems. (2 Tim. 4:5; *NE*; 1 Tim. 1:3, 4) At Colossians 4:17 (*NE*) Paul gave "this special word" to Archippus: "Attend to the duty [*di-a-ko-ni'a*; ministry, *NW*] entrusted to you in the Lord's service, and discharge it to the full." While all the other disciples there in Colossae were servants of God, Archippus had evidently received some kind of specific assignment of service, doubtless accompanied by the laying on of hands by a body of elders.

"ORDAINED" SERVANTS IN CONGREGATIONS

²² What do we see then? That, though Jesus had many disciples, he selected twelve, 'choosing' and 'appointing' them, as apostles. (Mark 3:14, 15; Luke 6:12, 13; John 15:16) We see that Paul and

22. In the sense that the word "ordained" is used today, to whom would it apply, in harmony with Scriptural precedents set by Christ Jesus and his apostles?

Barnabas were specially "appointed" from among the disciples in Antioch to carry the good news to the nations. (Acts 13:47) Also, that Paul told the Ephesian elders that they were "appointed" by holy spirit to serve the rest of the congregation. (Acts 20:17, 28) In all these cases such appointment came, not at the time of their baptism, but subsequent thereto. So today there are, in the congregations of God's people, men (usually baptized for some time) who are appointed to serve the congregation in certain assigned capacities. Those who have received such congregational appointments to particular services may be said to be "ordained," in the sense in which the word is used today.*

²³ In view of all of this, what should one do if, as at times occurs, a governmental agency inquires into the profession or position of citizens? By them, the expression "ordained minister" is understood to mean one who is an appointed caretaker and server of spiritual things to a congregation, one who acts as a "pastor" or shepherd of a congregation. Dictionaries, for example, give the generally understood ecclesiastical definition of a "minister" as "one authorized to conduct religious services." By the term "minister" such governmental agencies do not describe or mean the service that every individual Christian may perform in his or her personal efforts to share the good news with others. In answering the inquiries, then, one would reasonably reply in harmony with what the official inquirers are seeking to know, rather than imposing one's own definition on such terms.

* Acts 14:23 speaks of the work of Paul and Barnabas in cities of Asia Minor and says that they "appointed older men [elders] for them in [each] congregation." Here, for the word "appointed," the *Authorized Version* says "ordained."

23, 24. (a) How do governmental agencies generally understand the expression "ordained minister" as applying, and if this expression came up in an inquiry by them, how should one reply? (b) Would it be reasonable to refer to people in a territory where public witnessing is done as one's "congregation" and to their doorsteps as one's "pulpit"?

²⁴ People would not expect, for example, a house-to-house publisher to say that the "congregation" that he serves consists of the families in a territory where witnessing is done, inasmuch as the people living in that area may not themselves recognize or accept the one doing the witnessing as their "minister," and may, in fact, belong to a religion of their own. Similarly, would they properly understand the reply if we refer to the doorstep of the people there as the "pulpit" of the bearer of the good news, even if he gives what he calls a 3-minute or a 5-minute "sermon"? Such "pulpit" is generally understood to be the speaker's stand in the building to which the public in general are invited to come.

²⁵ Of course, if one actually has been appointed by the duly authorized men to a particular position of service, he can so reply and can give, as the time of his "ordination," the date—not of his baptism—but of the time when the Christian appointive body, in effect, 'laid hands upon

²⁵ If one does have a congregational appointment to service, what date could he give as his date of "ordination"?

him' by giving him such appointment.

²⁶ In the early Christian congregation all baptized believers were "anointed" with holy spirit, having a heavenly calling. Yet not all were apostles, prophets, teachers, elders or ministerial servants. So not all received an official appointment to some particular service after their baptism. Yet all served together, even as a body has many members that all cooperate together and have "the same care for one another," as the apostle points out at 1 Corinthians 12:12-30.

²⁷ So, then, whether we have qualified for and received such an official appointment to a particular service and responsibility or not, may all of us serve together shoulder to shoulder to accomplish God's will for our time. Let us all treasure and zealously use the privilege we hold in common of speaking the truth to others, sharing with others the good news that has brought light and hope into our lives.

²⁶ Did all early Christians have a congregational appointment (or "ordination") to a particular assignment of service, and did this affect their unity?

²⁷ What healthful attitude, then, should all of us gladly take today as regards our service to God and to our fellowman?

A Long Search Ended

JESUS CHRIST on one occasion said: "Keep on seeking, and you will find." (Matt. 7:7) Hence, the person who sincerely and diligently seeks to come into an approved relationship with the Creator will succeed in this. At times, however, this may call for much perseverance in not giving up the search for truth.

This is illustrated in the case of a woman living in a predominantly Moslem country of the Middle East. As a little girl, Melek (Angel) was taught that God provided four books to instruct mankind about his will. These books are the Tevrat (the Law or five books of Moses), Zebur (the Prophets and Haglographa), Incil (the New Testament or Christian Greek Scriptures) and the Koran. Her curiosity in the Tevrat, Zebur and Incil having been aroused by the instructor, Melek asked him why only the Koran was used even though the other

three books had also come from God. He encouraged her not to concern herself about them, pointing out that the Koran was given last and therefore superseded the Tevrat, Zebur and Incil. Melek, however, was not satisfied with this answer.

As she progressed through school, Melek asked other religious instructors about the Tevrat, Zebur and Incil. The answer was always the same, 'These three books are unnecessary.' Upon finishing school, Melek moved to a larger city. There she inquired at various bookstores about the Tevrat, Zebur and Incil, but all her searching was in vain.

Though many years passed, Melek's desire to find the three other holy books mentioned by her instructor did not diminish. Late one night she approached three young women waiting at a bus stop. "What are you three young girls

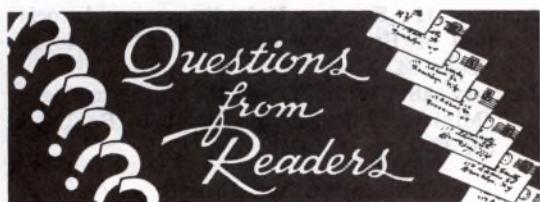
doing out so late at night?" she asked. "We are coming from studying the holy books," they replied. Hopefully, Melek inquired, "Which holy books?" Although now sixty years of age, she was overjoyed when they replied, "Why, the Tevrat, Zebur and Incil." "Those are the books I have been looking for for almost fifty years!" she exclaimed.

But Melek's happiness quickly turned to dismay. Just then the bus pulled up and the girls had to leave. There was no time to exchange addresses or even names.

After having searched for so long, Melek, however, was not going to give up easily. For weeks thereafter she would go to the same bus

stop on the same night, waiting and waiting in the hope that she would meet the girls again. But her efforts were fruitless.

Then, one day, Melek entered a tailor's shop. Who should be sitting right across from her? Why, it was one of the three girls! Melek rushed up to her, embraced her, kissed her and declared, "You are the one who has the three holy books. Would you please give them to me?" The young woman, one of Jehovah's witnesses, replied that she would both give them to her and study them with her. Her life's search ended, Melek herself is now helping others to benefit from the three holy books that make up the complete Bible.



- How can Acts 7:16, which ascribes to Abraham the purchase of a burial place in Shechem, be harmonized with Genesis 23:15-19?

It might seem that there is a conflict, with Acts 7:16 saying Abraham bought a burial place in Shechem but Genesis 23:15-19 reporting that he purchased such a plot in Machpelah near Hebron. There are a number of possible explanations. Let us note some of the details.

Soon after Abraham entered the Promised Land (1943 B.C.E.) he resided for a time in Shechem, which was in the northern area where Samaria was later built. (Gen. 12:6-8) When Abraham's wife Sarah later died (1881 B.C.E.), he purchased as a burial place the field and cave of Machpelah, which was near Hebron to the south of Jerusalem. "Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah in front of Mamre, that is to say, Hebron, in the land of Canaan." (Gen. 23:15-19) In time Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah and Leah were also buried there.—Gen. 25:9; 49:29-32.

Abraham's grandson Jacob also dwelt for a while near Shechem, and he there purchased a tract of land and built an altar. (Gen. 33:18-20) When he was near death in Egypt, Jacob commanded his sons that he be buried, not in Shechem, but with his fathers in the plot that

Abraham had purchased near Hebron. (Gen. 49:29-32; 50:12, 13) As to a burial in Shechem, Joshua 24:32 says that after the Israelites entered the Promised Land they buried Joseph's bones "in Shechem in the tract of the field that Jacob had acquired," which came to be in the territory of Joseph's son Manasseh.

With this history in mind, we can note Acts 7:15, 16. In his masterful defense the Christian disciple Stephen said: "Jacob went down into Egypt. And he deceased; and so did our forefathers, and they [the "forefathers"] were transferred to Shechem and were laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a price with silver money from the sons of Hamor in Shechem." So it might appear that Stephen was saying that Abraham, rather than Jacob, purchased land in Shechem. Yet Genesis 23:17, 18 tells us that Abraham bought a burial place in Machpelah near Hebron.

Certain scholars believe that in addition to

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the purchase of the plot of land in Hebron, Abraham could have also obtained the land in Shechem where Jehovah appeared to him and where he then built an altar. (Gen. 12:7) If so, then this may have been the same land that Genesis 33:18, 19 mentions Jacob as buying from those who controlled it at that time. This view would eliminate any seeming problem with Acts 7:16.

Another approach is that Stephen may simply have been condensing two accounts, combining Abraham's transaction at Genesis 23:15-19 and the purchase by Jacob mentioned at Genesis 33:18, 19. Giving some weight to this possibility is the fact that at Acts 7:7 Stephen evidently combined into one statement something God said to Abraham and something He said to Moses. (Gen. 15:14; Ex. 3:12) Thus Acts 7:16 may just be a condensed or elliptical statement that was sufficient for Stephen's purpose, as was Acts 7:7.

Another possible solution can be considered. Abraham was Jacob's grandfather. So, even though Genesis 33:18, 19 says that Jacob pur-

chased land at Shechem, Stephen could have ascribed the purchase to Abraham the patriarchal head. Giving credence to this are other instances in the Bible where the names of forefathers were applied to and used for the descendants.—Hos. 11:1, 3, 12; Matt. 2:15-18.

Each one of these possibilities may be the solution to the seeming conflict between Acts 7:16 and Genesis 23:15-19. The fact that a number of plausible explanations are available emphasizes how unreasonable it would be for anyone today who does not have all the facts to conclude that Stephen was in error.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

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- January 11: Serving Unitedly as an Association of Brothers. Page 722. Songs to Be Used: 64, 14.
- January 18: What Does It Mean to Be a "Minister"? Page 728. Songs to Be Used: 29, 32.

Another approach to this question is to consider the context of the statement. In the original Hebrew text, the word "servant" is used in the sense of "one who works for another". This concept is clearly expressed in the verse, "Jacob said, 'I will do your work for you, because I am your servant'." (Gen. 29:16) The word "servant" here refers to a slave, not to a hired laborer. In this context, the word "servant" means "slave". So if we take this into account, we see that the statement in Genesis 23:15-19 is referring to Abraham as a slave, not to his son Isaac. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Abraham is referred to as a "servant" in the very next verse, where he is described as "the servant of the Most High God".

Christian apologists prefer to interpret the statement in this way.

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