

DECEMBER 1, 2005

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

**Do You Know the
Truth About
ARMAGEDDON?**

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

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ARMAGEDDON

A Catastrophic End?

ARMADEDDON! Does this word conjure up images of mass destruction or a cosmic conflagration? Few Bible expressions have become as much a part of everyday speech as "Armageddon" has. The term has been widely used to describe the gloomy prospects facing humans. The entertainment industry has fed people's imagination with horrific scenes of a coming "Armageddon." The word is shrouded in mystery and misconceptions. While ideas as to its meaning abound, most of them are not in line with what the Bible—the source of the expression—teaches about Armageddon.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARMAGEDDON IS?

- A nuclear holocaust
- An environmental disaster
- A collision of a celestial body with the earth
- Divine destruction of the wicked

Since the Bible links Armageddon with "the end of the world," would you not agree that it is vital to have a clear understanding of what the word really signifies? (Matthew 24:3, King James Version) And would it not be reasonable to turn to the ultimate source of truth, God's Word, to find answers about the nature of Armageddon and what it will mean for you and your family?

Such an examination will show that instead of bringing a cataclysmic end, Armageddon will introduce a happy beginning for people who desire to live and thrive in a righteous new world. You will be rewarded with a clear understanding of this vital Scriptural truth as you consider the discussion of Armageddon's real meaning in the next article.

ARMAGEDDON

A Happy Beginning

THE word "Armageddon" has its origin in the Hebrew expression "Har-Magedon," or "Mountain of Megiddo." It is found at Revelation 16:16, which states: "They gathered them together to the place that is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon." Who are assembled to Armageddon, and why? Just two verses earlier, at Revelation 16:14, we read: "The kings of the entire inhabited earth" are gathered together "to the war of the great day of God the Almighty." Naturally, those statements raise additional intriguing questions. Where do these "kings" fight? Over what issue do they battle, and with whom? Will they, as many believe, use weapons of mass destruction? Will there be survivors of Armageddon? Let the Bible provide the answers.

Does the reference to the "Mountain of Megiddo" mean that Armageddon will be fought at a certain mountain in the Middle East? No. For one thing, no such mountain really exists—at the site of ancient Megiddo, there is only a mound rising about 70 feet above the adjacent valley plain. In addition, the area around Megiddo could not begin to hold all "the kings of the earth and their armies." (Revelation 19:19) However, Megiddo was the site of some of the fiercest and most decisive battles in Middle Eastern history. Thus, the name Armageddon stands as a symbol of a decisive conflict, with only one clear victor.—See the box "Megiddo—A Fighting Symbol," on page 5.

Armageddon cannot be just a conflict among earthly nations, since Revelation 16:14 states that "the kings of the entire inhabi-

ted earth" form a united front at "the war of the great day of God the Almighty." In his inspired prophecy, Jeremiah stated that "those slain by Jehovah" will be scattered "from one end of the earth clear to the other end of the earth." (Jeremiah 25:33) Thus, Armageddon is not a human war confined to a particular location in the Middle East. It is Jehovah's war, and it is global.

Note, however, that at Revelation 16:16, Armageddon is called a "place." In the Bible, "place" may signify a condition or a situation—in this case, that the entire world will be united in its opposition to Jehovah. (Revelation 12:6, 14) At Armageddon all earthly nations ally themselves against "the armies that were in heaven" under the military command of the "King of kings and Lord of lords," Jesus Christ.—Revelation 19:14, 16.

What about the claim that Armageddon will be a holocaust involving weapons of mass destruction or a collision with a celestial body? Would a loving God allow such a horrific end to humankind and their home, the earth? No. He expressly states that he did not create the earth "simply for nothing" but "formed it even to be inhabited." (Isaiah 45:18; Psalm 96:10) At Armageddon, Jehovah will not ruin our globe in a cataclysmic conflagration. Rather, he will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth."—Revelation 11:18.

Armageddon—When?

Over the centuries, a pressing question that has generated endless speculation has been, When will Armageddon come? Exam-

ining the book of Revelation in the light of other parts of the Bible can help us determine the timing of this crucial battle. Revelation 16:15 links Armageddon with Jesus' coming as a thief. That word picture is also used by Jesus in describing his coming to execute judgment on this system of things.—Matthew 24:43, 44; 1 Thessalonians 5:2.

As shown by the fulfillment of Bible prophecies, since 1914 we have been living in the last days of this system of things.* Marking the final part of the last days will be the period that Jesus called the "great tribula-

* See *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*, chapter 11, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

MEGIDDO—A FITTING SYMBOL

Ancient Megiddo was strategically situated, overlooking the western section of the fertile Jezreel Valley, in northern Israel. It controlled the international trade and military routes that intersected there. Thus, Megiddo became a place of decisive battles. Professor Graham Davies writes in his book *Cities of the Biblical World—Megiddo*: "The city of Megiddo . . . was easily accessible to traders and migrants from all directions; but at the same time it could, if powerful enough, control access by means of these routes and so direct the course of both trade and

war. It is not surprising therefore that it was . . . a prize often fought over and when secured strongly defended."

The long history of Megiddo began in the second millennium B.C.E. when the Egyptian ruler Thutmose III defeated the Canaanite rulers there. It continued through the centuries to 1918 when British General Edmund Allenby inflicted a stinging defeat on the Turkish army. It was at Megiddo that God enabled Judge Barak to inflict a smashing blow upon Canaanite King Jabin. (Judges 4:12-24; 5:19, 20) In that vi-

tion." The Bible does not say how long that period will be, but the calamities associated with it will be worse than anything the world has ever seen. That great tribulation will culminate at Armageddon.—Matthew 24:21, 29.

Since Armageddon is "the war of the great day of *God the Almighty*," there is nothing that humans can do to postpone it. Jehovah has set an "appointed time" for that war to start. "It will not be late."—Habakkuk 2:3.

A God of Righteousness Wages a Just War

Why, though, would God wage a global war? Armageddon is closely related to one of



Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

cinity Judge Gideon routed the Midianites. (Judges 7: 1-22) It was there, too, that Kings Ahaziah and Josiah were killed.—2 Kings 9:27; 23:29, 30.

Associating Armageddon with that vicinity is thus appropriate, since it was the site of numerous decisive battles. It is a fitting symbol of God's complete victory over all opposing forces.

his cardinal qualities, justice. The Bible declares: "Jehovah is a lover of justice." (Psalm 37:28) He has seen all the acts of injustice perpetrated during man's history. This naturally provokes his righteous displeasure. Thus, he has appointed his Son to wage a just war in order to do away with this entire wicked system.

Only Jehovah is capable of waging a truly just and truly selective war during which righthearted individuals, wherever they may be on earth, will be preserved. (Matthew 24: 40, 41; Revelation 7:9, 10, 13, 14) And only he has the right to impose his sovereignty over all the earth, for it is his creation.—Revelation 4:11.

What forces will Jehovah use against his enemies? We simply do not know. What we do know is that he has at his disposal the means to devastate the wicked nations completely. (Job 38:22, 23; Zephaniah 1:15-18) However, God's earthly worshippers will not participate in the battle. The vision in Revelation chapter 19 indicates that only heavenly armies will share with Jesus Christ in the warfare. None of Jehovah's Christian servants on earth will take part.—2 Chronicles 20:15, 17.

A God of Wisdom Gives Ample Warning

What about survivors? Indeed, no one needs to perish at Armageddon. The apostle Peter observed: "Jehovah . . . does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9) And the apostle Paul stated that God's "will is that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth."—1 Timothy 2:4.

To that end, Jehovah has wisely made sure that the "good news of the kingdom" is proclaimed far and wide, in hundreds of languages. People everywhere are being given the opportunity for survival and salvation.

(Matthew 24:14; Psalm 37:34; Philippians 2: 12) Those who respond favorably to the good news can survive Armageddon and live forever in perfection on a paradise earth. (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; Zephaniah 2:3; Romans 10:13) Is this not what one would expect from a God who is love?—1 John 4:8.

Can a God of Love Fight?

Many wonder, however, why a God who is the very embodiment of love would inflict death and destruction on much of humankind. The situation might be compared to that of a pest-infested house. Would you not agree that a conscientious homeowner should safeguard the health and well-being of his family by exterminating the pests?

Similarly, it is because of Jehovah's deep affection for humans that the battle of Armageddon has to be fought. God's purpose is to make the earth a paradise and to elevate mankind to perfection and peace, with "no one making them tremble." (Micah 4:3, 4; Revelation 21:4) What, then, is to be done with those who threaten the peace and security of their fellow humans? God must eliminate such "pests"—the incorrigibly wicked—for the sake of the righteous ones.—2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9; Revelation 21:8.

Much of the strife and bloodshed today is caused by imperfect human rulership and the selfish striving for nationalistic interests. (Ecclesiastes 8:9) Seeking to expand their influence, human governments totally disregard God's established Kingdom. There is no indication that they will relinquish their sovereignty to God and Christ. (Psalm 2: 1-9) Such governments must therefore be removed to pave the way for the righteous rule of Jehovah's Kingdom under Christ. (Daniel 2:44) Armageddon must be fought in order to resolve once and for all the issue of who has the right to rule this planet and humankind.



Jehovah's active intervention at Armageddon will be with mankind's best interests at heart. In the face of worsening world conditions, only God's perfect rulership will completely satisfy mankind's needs. Only by means of his Kingdom will true peace and prosperity prevail. What would world conditions be like if God forever refrained from taking action? Would not hatred, violence, and wars continue to plague mankind as they have throughout the centuries of human rulership? The battle of Armageddon is actually one of the best things that could happen to us!—Luke 18:7, 8; 2 Peter 3:13.

The War to End All Wars

Armageddon will accomplish something that no other war has ever accomplished—the end of all wars. Who does not yearn for the day when warfare will be a thing of the past? However, the end of war has eluded all human efforts. Such repeated failure of human attempts to end war merely emphasizes the truth of Jeremiah's words: "I well know, O Jehovah, that to earthling man his way does



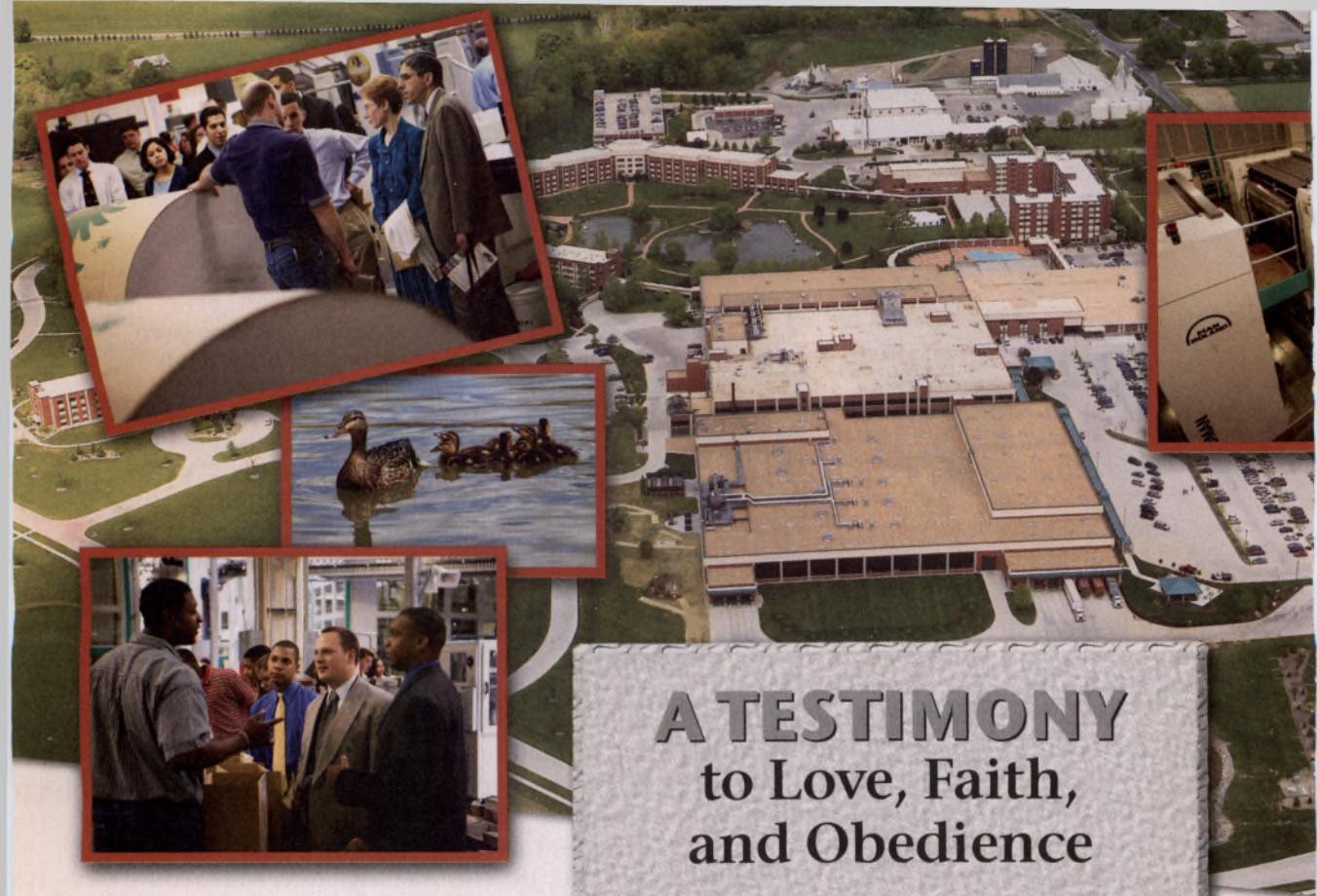
Worldwide, people are being given a warning and the opportunity to survive Armageddon

not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." (Jeremiah 10:23) Regarding what Jehovah will accomplish, the Bible promises: "He is making wars to cease to the extremity of the earth. The bow he breaks apart and does cut the spear in pieces; the wagons he burns in the fire."—Psalm 46:8, 9.

As the nations use their deadly weapons on one another and threaten to destroy the environment, the Maker of the earth will take action—at the Biblical Armageddon! (Revelation 11:18) This war, therefore, will accomplish what God-fearing men throughout the ages could only hope for. It will vindicate the rightful rulership of earth's Owner, Jehovah God, over all his creation.

Thus, Armageddon is not to be feared by people who love righteousness. Rather, it provides a basis for hope. The war of Armageddon will cleanse the earth of all corruption and wickedness and open the way for a righteous new system of things under the rule of God's Messianic Kingdom. (Isaiah 11:4, 5) Instead of being a frightening cataclysmic end, Armageddon will signal a happy beginning for righteous individuals, who will live forever on a paradise earth.—Psalm 37:29.

Armageddon will signal a happy beginning



A TESTIMONY to Love, Faith, and Obedience

THE morning of May 16, 2005, was pleasantly cool and bright at Watchtower Farms in Wallkill, New York. The manicured lawns and flower beds glistened from a predawn rain. A duck with eight ducklings glided quietly on the calm water near the edge of the pond. Visitors marveled at the beauty. They spoke softly, as if not wanting to spoil the tranquillity of the morning.

The visitors were Jehovah's Witnesses who had come from 48 countries around the world. But they had not come to see the scenery. They were interested in what was happening inside an expansive red-brick building, the most recent addition to the United States Bethel complex at Wallkill. Inside that building, they marveled again, though the scene was neither quiet nor tranquil.

From a mezzanine, the visitors gazed down upon a maze of machinery. Five massive presses spread over a polished concrete floor larger than nine football fields. It is here that Bibles, books, and magazines are printed. Huge rolls of paper, weighing 3,800 pounds each, spin like the wheels of a fast-moving truck. Each 14-mile roll of paper unwinds and passes through the press in just 25 minutes. In that time, the press applies and dries the ink and cools the paper so that it can be folded into magazines that speed along overhead conveyors to be boxed and shipped to congregations. Other presses are busy printing book signatures, which are swiftly moved to a floor-to-ceiling storage area until they



are sent to the bindery. The operation is a computer-directed symphony of precise movements.

Leaving the pressroom, the visitors toured the bindery. Here machines produce hardcover books and deluxe Bibles at a rate of up to 50,000 copies per day. Book signatures are collated, bound, and trimmed. Covers are then attached. Cartons are slipped over stacks of finished books. The cartons are automatically sealed, labeled, and stacked on a pallet. Additionally, a paperback-book line assembles and packs as many as 100,000 books per day. This too is a world of machinery—countless motors, conveyors, gears, wheels, and belts—all moving at astounding speed to produce Bible literature.

Operating with the precision of a well-made watch, the printery's high-speed, state-of-the-art machinery is a marvel of modern technology. As we will see, it is also a testimony to the love, faith, and obedience of God's people. Why, though, were the printing operations moved from Brooklyn, New York, to Wallkill?

A major reason was to simplify printing and shipping by centralizing operations at one location. For years, books were printed and shipped from Brooklyn, and magazines were printed and shipped from Wallkill. Combining operations would reduce personnel and make better use of dedicated funds. Furthermore, since the presses in Brooklyn were getting old, two new MAN Ro-

land Lithoman printing presses were ordered from Germany. These presses were too large to fit into the printery in Brooklyn.

Jehovah Backs the Work

The purpose of the printing has always been to further the good news of God's Kingdom. It has been evident that Jehovah's blessing has been on the work from the very beginning. From 1879 to 1922, the books were printed by commercial printing establishments. In 1922, a six-story building at 18 Concord Street in Brooklyn was rented and equipment purchased for the printing of books. At that time, some doubted whether the brothers could handle the task.

One of those doubters was the president of the company that had printed most of our books. When visiting Concord Street, he said: "Here you are with a first-class printing establishment on your hands, and nobody around the place that knows a thing about what to do with it. In six months the whole thing will be a lot of junk; and you will find out that the people to do your printing are those that have always done it, and make it their business."

The printery overseer at the time, Robert J. Martin, observed: "That sounded logical enough, but it left out the Lord; and he has always been with us. . . . It was not long before we were making books." During the next 80 years, Jehovah's Witnesses printed billions of pieces of literature on their own printing presses.

Then on October 5, 2002, at the annual meeting of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, it was announced that the Governing Body had approved the moving of printing operations of the United States branch to Wallkill. Two new presses had been ordered, with a delivery date of February 2004. The brothers would need to design and expand the printery and be ready



within 15 months to receive the new presses. Then, the installation of new bindery and shipping operations would have to be completed within the following nine months. Some may have had doubts when they heard the timetable—the task seemed daunting. Yet, the brothers knew that with Jehovah's blessing, it could be done.

"A Happy Spirit of Cooperation"

Knowing that Jehovah's people would offer themselves willingly, the brothers started the project. (Psalm 110:3) Its magnitude required more workers than were available from within the Bethel construction departments. From the United States and Canada, over 1,000 brothers and sisters with construction skills volunteered to serve from one week to three months as part of a temporary volunteer program. Others from the international servant and volunteer programs were invited to share in the project. Regional Building Committees also contributed greatly.

For many, volunteering for the Wallkill project meant a significant expenditure on travel and time away from secular employment. Yet, they joyfully made these sacrifices. Housing and feeding these many additional volunteers provided opportunities for the Bethel family to exert themselves in support of the project. Over 535 Bethel family members from Brooklyn, Patterson,

and Wallkill volunteered to work on the project on Saturdays, in addition to their normal weekday assignments. The overwhelming support that God's people gave to this historic endeavor was possible only because Jehovah was backing the project.

Others contributed financially. For example, the brothers received a letter from nine-year-old Abby. She wrote: "I am so grateful for all the work you do—making all the wonderful books. I might be coming over soon. My daddy said next year! I'll wear a badge so you know who I am. Here's 20 dollars for the new printing press! It's my allowance money, but I want to give it to you brothers."

A sister wrote: "Please accept my gift of crocheted hats that I made with my own two little hands. I would like these hats to be given to the workers who are working on the Wallkill project. An almanac said it's going to be a very bad winter. Whether they're right or not, I don't know. But I know that much of the work at Wallkill will be done outside, and I want to make sure that my brothers and sisters will keep their head warm. I don't have any of the skills that the brothers are looking for, but I can crochet, so I decided to use this skill to contribute what I could." Enclosed were 106 crocheted hats!



EXPANSION OF PRINTING IN THE UNITED STATES

The printery was completed on schedule. John Larson, printery overseer, said: "There was such a happy spirit of cooperation. Who could doubt that Jehovah was blessing the work? Things moved so quickly. I recall standing in the mud in May 2003 watching the brothers lay the foundation of the building. Less than a year later, I stood on the same spot observing a printing press in operation."

Dedication Program

The program to dedicate the new printery, along with three residence buildings, was held at Wallkill on Monday, May 16, 2005. The Bethel complexes at Patterson and Brooklyn, as well as Canada Bethel, were tied in by video line. In all, 6,049 enjoyed the program. Theodore Jaracz, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, served as chairman and gave a brief overview of the history of the printing work. By means of interviews and video presentations, Branch Committee members John Larson and John Kikot reviewed the history of both the construction project and the printing operations in the United States. John Barr of the Governing Body delivered the final talk, dedicating the new printery and three residence complexes to Jehovah God.

During the week that followed, Bethelites from Patterson and Brooklyn were given the opportunity to tour the new facilities. In all, 5,920 visited during that time.

How Do We View the Printery?

In the dedication talk, Brother Barr reminded his listeners that the printery, impressive though it may be, is not about machinery. It is about people. The literature we print has a profound impact on people's life.



◀ 1920: Magazines printed with first rotary press, at 35 Myrtle Avenue, Brooklyn.



▲ 1922: The printery relocated to a six-story building at 18 Concord Street. Books now printed.



▼ 1927: Printery moved to a new building erected at 117 Adams Street.



◀ 1949: A nine-story addition doubled printery size.



▲ 1956: Adams Street printery doubled again when new building is erected at 77 Sands Street.



◀ 1967: Ten-story building erected, making possible an interconnected printery ten times larger than original building.



◀ 1973: Subsidiary printery at Wallkill built, primarily for magazine production.

2004: All printing, binding, and shipping operations in the United States consolidated at Wallkill.

Each of the new presses can print a million tracts in just over an hour! Yet, a single tract can have a far-reaching effect on someone's life. For example, in 1921 a team of railroad-maintenance men in South Africa worked their way along a stretch of railway track. One of them, a man named Christiaan, noticed a piece of paper wedged under a rail. It was one of our tracts. Christiaan read it with intense interest. He ran to meet his son-in-law and announced excitedly: "Today I have found the truth!" Shortly afterward, they wrote for more information. The South Africa branch sent additional Bible literature. The two men studied, got baptized, and shared Bible truth with others. As a result, many accepted the truth. In fact, by the early 1990's, more than a hundred of their descendants were Witnesses of Jehovah—all the result of one man's discovering a single tract on a railroad track!

The literature that we print, Brother Barr said, brings people into the truth, keeps them in the truth, motivates them to greater zeal, and unifies the brotherhood. And most of all, the literature, which we all have a share in distributing, glorifies our God, Jehovah!

How Does Jehovah View the Printery?

Brother Barr also asked the audience to consider how Jehovah views the printery. He certainly does not depend on it. He could make the stones preach the good news! (Luke 19:40) Furthermore, he is not impressed by the complexity, size, speed, or capabilities of machinery. Why, he created the universe! (Psalm 147:10, 11) Jehovah knows more advanced ways to produce literature, ways that have been neither devised nor even imagined by humans. So, what does Jehovah see that he truly values? Surely he sees in this printery the precious qualities of his people—their love, faith, and obedience.

The aspect of love was illustrated. A girl bakes a cake for her parents. Likely, the par-

ents will be touched. Yes, however the cake turns out, what touches the parents is their child's love, as shown by her generous act. Similarly, when Jehovah looks at this new printery, he sees beyond the building and the machinery. Primarily, he sees it as an expression of love for his name.—Hebrews 6:10.

Furthermore, just as Jehovah viewed the ark as an expression of Noah's faith, he sees this printery as tangible evidence of our faith. Faith in what? Noah had faith that what Jehovah foretold would come true. We have faith that we are living in the last days, that the good news is the most important message being sounded on earth, and that it is vital for people to hear it. We know that the Bible's message can save lives.—Romans 10:13, 14.

Doubtless, Jehovah also sees in this printery an expression of our obedience. As we know, it is his will that the good news be preached worldwide before the end comes. (Matthew 24:14) This printery, along with those in other regions of the globe, will play a role in fulfilling that commission.

Yes, the love, faith, and obedience shown in the financing, construction, and operation of these facilities is also reflected in the zealous activity of Jehovah's people everywhere as they continue to proclaim the truth to all who will listen.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Christmastime—What Is Its Focus?

The Bible in Italian
—A Troubled History

Now Is the Time for Decisive Action



DETERMINED TO CONTINUE SERVING MY CREATOR

AS TOLD BY
CONSTANCE BENANTI

It all happened so quickly! Within a span of six days, Camille, our 22-month-old daughter, developed a high fever and died. My grief was unbearable. I wanted to die too. Why did God permit such a thing?

I was confused.

MY PARENTS were immigrants from Castellammare del Golfo, a town in Sicily, Italy. They came to New York City, where I was born on December 8, 1908. Our family consisted of my father and mother and their eight children, five boys and three girls.*

In 1927 my father, Santo Catanzaro, started attending the meetings of a small group of Bible Stu-



Camille

dents, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then called. Giovanni De Cecca, an Italian brother serving at the Brooklyn, New York, headquarters (called Bethel), held meetings where we lived, in nearby New Jersey. In time, Father began preaching and took up the full-time ministry, continuing in that work until his death in 1953.

When Mother was young, she wanted to be a nun, but her parents would not permit it. At first, I was influenced by Mother not to share with Father in

* The experience of my brother Angelo Catanzaro was published in the April 1, 1975, issue of *The Watchtower*, pages 205-7.



On our wedding day, 1931

Bible study. Soon, though, I noticed changes in him. He became calmer, milder, and there was more peace in the family. I liked that.

Meanwhile, I met Charles, a man my age who was born in Brooklyn. His family, like mine, came from Sicily. We soon became engaged, and following Father's return from the 1931 convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in Columbus, Ohio, we were married. Within a year, our daughter Camille was born. When she died, I was inconsolable. One day Charles, who was crying, said to me: "Camille was as much my daughter as she was yours. Why can't we just go ahead with our lives, comforting each other?"

We Accept Bible Truth

Charles reminded me that Father had spoken of the resurrection hope when he gave

the talk at Camille's funeral. "Do you really believe in the resurrection?" I asked.

"I do!" he answered. "Why don't we find out more about what the Bible has to say?"

That night I couldn't sleep. At six in the morning, before Father left for work, I went to him and told him that Charles and I wanted to study the Bible. He was delighted and hugged me. Mother, who was still in bed, overheard us talking. She asked me what had happened. "Nothing," I said. "Charles and I have simply decided to study the Bible."

"We all need to study the Bible," was her answer. So all of us, including my brothers and sisters—11 in total—began to study together as a family.

The Bible study gave me comfort, and slowly my mental confusion and grief gave way to hope. A year later, in 1935, Charles and I began to share Bible truths with others. In February 1937, after hearing a talk at headquarters in Brooklyn that explained the Scriptural significance of wa-

ter baptism, we were baptized at a nearby hotel along with many others. I took this step not only because I hoped to see my daughter again someday but also because I desired to serve our Creator, whom I had come to know and love.

Entering the Full-Time Ministry

Speaking to others about what I had learned was exciting and rewarding, especially since many at that time responded to the Kingdom message and shared in proclaiming it. (Matthew 9:37) In 1941, Charles and I be-



Not interested at first, Mother agreed that we all should study the Bible

With Brother Knorr at Gilead graduation, 1946

came pioneers, as Jehovah's Witnesses call their full-time ministers. Not long afterward, we bought a trailer, and Charles left our family's pants factory in the hands of my brother Frank. In time, we were excited to receive a letter informing us that we had been assigned as special pioneers. Initially, we served in New Jersey, and later we were sent to New York State.

In 1946, while attending a convention in Baltimore, Maryland, we were asked to report to a meeting with special representatives of Jehovah's Witnesses. There we met Nathan H. Knorr and Milton G. Henschel. They spoke to us about the missionary work and, in particular, about the preaching work in Italy. They invited us to consider the possibility of attending the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead.

"Think about it," we were told, "and then give us your answer." After leaving the office, Charles and I exchanged glances, turned around, and went right back in. "We thought about it," we said. "We're ready for Gilead." Ten days later, we were attending the seventh class of Gilead.

Our months of training were unforgettable. What particularly impressed us was the patience and love of the instructors, preparing us to face difficulties in the foreign field. After graduating in July 1946, we were assigned to preach for a while in New York City, where there was a sizable Italian population. Then came the great day! On June 25, 1947, we left for Italy, our missionary assignment.

Getting Settled in Our Assignment

We made the crossing in a ship that had previously been used for military purposes. After 14 days at sea, we docked at the Italian port of Genoa. The city bore the scars of



World War II, which had ended only two years earlier. The train station, for example, did not have any windowpanes because of the bombings. From Genoa we proceeded by freight train to Milan, where the branch office and a missionary home were located.

The living conditions in postwar Italy were very poor. Reconstruction efforts were under way, but poverty was rampant. Soon, I developed a serious health problem. According to one doctor, my heart was in such bad condition that he thought it would be best for me to return to the United States. I am glad that he got it all wrong. After 58 years, I'm still in my assignment in Italy.

We had been in our assignment only a few years when my brothers in the United States wanted to provide us with a car. But Charles turned their offer down, a decision I appreciated. To our knowledge, no Witness in Italy had a car then, and Charles felt that it was best for us to maintain a standard of living comparable to that of our Christian brothers. Not until 1961 did we get a small car.

Our first Kingdom Hall in Milan was in a basement with an earthen floor. There was no bathroom, and the only water was under our feet when it rained. We also had the company of little mice that darted here and there. Two light bulbs provided illumination

for our meetings. Despite such inconveniences, it was encouraging to see sincere ones come to our meetings and eventually join us in the ministry.

Missionary Experiences

We once left the booklet *Peace—Can It Last?* with a man. As we were leaving, his wife, Santina, arrived laden with grocery bags. She was a little irritated, saying that she had eight daughters to care for and did not have any time to spare. When I called on Santina again, her husband was not at home, and she was knitting. "I don't have time to listen," she said. "Besides, I don't know how to read."

I prayed silently to Jehovah and then asked if I could pay her to knit a sweater for my husband. Two weeks later, I had the sweater, and Santina and I began to study the Bible regularly with the aid of the book "*The Truth Shall Make You Free.*" Santina learned to read, and despite her husband's opposition, she made progress and was baptized. Five of her daughters became Witnesses, and Santina has also helped many others to accept Bible truth.

In March 1951, along with two other missionaries—Ruth Cannon* and Loyce Callahan, who later married Bill Wengert—we were transferred to Brescia, where there were no Witnesses. We found a furnished apartment, but two months later, the landlord asked us to leave the house within 24 hours. Since there were no other Witnesses in the area, we had no choice but to go to a hotel, where we stayed for almost two months.

Our diet was limited: cappuccino and croissants for breakfast, fruit and bread sticks with cheese for lunch, and fruit and bread sticks with cheese for supper. Despite the

inconveniences, we were really blessed. In time, we found a small apartment, and at the Memorial of Christ's death in 1952, 35 were present in the small room that we used as a Kingdom Hall.

Coping With Challenges

During that time, the clergy still wielded great power over the people. For example, while we were preaching in Brescia, some boys were encouraged by the priest to throw rocks at us. In time, however, 16 persons started studying the Bible with us, and within a short time, they became Witnesses. And who was among them? One of the boys who had threatened to throw rocks at us! He now serves as an elder in one of the congregations in Brescia. In 1955 when we left Brescia, 40 Kingdom publishers were sharing in the preaching work.

After that, we served for three years in Leghorn (Livorno), where most of the Witnesses were women. This meant that we sisters had to take care of congregation duties that are usually assigned to brothers. We next moved to Genoa, where we started out 11 years earlier. By now, there was a congregation. The Kingdom Hall was on the first floor in the building where our apartment was located.

Upon our arrival in Genoa, I started a study with a lady whose husband was a former boxer and the manager of a boxing gym. The lady made spiritual progress and soon became our Christian sister. Her husband, however, was opposed and remained so for a long time. Then he started to accompany his wife to the meetings. Rather than enter the hall, he sat outside and listened. Later on, after we had left Genoa, we learned that he had asked for a Bible study. In time, he was baptized and became a loving Christian overseer. He remained faithful till his death.

* For her life story, see *The Watchtower*, May 1, 1971, pages 277-80.

With Charles shortly before his death

I also studied the Bible with a woman who was engaged to a policeman. Initially, he showed some interest, but after the wedding, his attitude changed. He opposed her, and she stopped studying. When she later resumed the Bible study, her husband threatened her, saying that if he ever found us studying, he would shoot us both. Well, she made spiritual progress and became a baptized Witness. Needless to say, he never shot us. In fact, years later when I was attending an assembly in Genoa, someone came up to me from behind, covered my eyes with his hands, and asked if I could guess who he was. I could not hold back the tears when I saw the husband of that woman. After giving me a hug, he told me that he had symbolized his dedication to Jehovah by getting baptized that very day!

From 1964 to 1972, I had the privilege of accompanying Charles when he visited congregations to strengthen them spiritually. We served in almost all of northern Italy—in Piedmont, Lombardy, and Liguria. Then we resumed pioneer service near Florence and later in Vercelli. In 1977, there was only one congregation in Vercelli, but when we left in 1999, there were three. That year, I turned 91, and we were encouraged to move to the missionary home in Rome, a beautiful little building in a comparatively peaceful area.

Another Sad Occasion

In March 2002, Charles, who had always enjoyed good health, suffered a collapse. His health deteriorated until he died on May 11, 2002. For 71 years, we cried together during sad times and rejoiced together when blessings came our way. His death was an immense and grievous loss for me.

I often picture Charles in my mind, with his double-breasted suit and his 1930's hat. I



imagine his smile, or I seem to hear his familiar laugh. With Jehovah's help and thanks to the love of many dear Christian brothers and sisters, I have been able to endure over this sad period. I eagerly await the time when I will see Charles again.

Continuing My Service

Serving my Creator has been the most wonderful thing in my life. Over the years, 'I have tasted and seen that Jehovah is good.' (Psalm 34:8) I have felt his love and experienced his care. Even though I lost my baby, Jehovah has given me many spiritual sons and daughters—scattered throughout Italy—who have brought joy to my heart and to his.

Speaking to others about my Creator is what I have always loved to do the most. That is why I continue to preach and conduct Bible studies. Sometimes I regret that I cannot do more because of my health. But I realize that Jehovah knows my limitations and that he loves me and appreciates what I am able to do. (Mark 12:42) I strive to make mine the words of Psalm 146:2: "I will praise Jehovah during my lifetime. I will make melody to my God as long as I am."*

* Sister Benanti passed away on July 16, 2005, as this article was being prepared. She was 96.

Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Highlights From the Book of Second Chronicles

AS THE Bible book of Second Chronicles opens, Solomon is ruling as king over Israel. The book ends with these words of Persian King Cyrus to the exiled Jews in Babylonia: “[Jehovah] himself has commissioned me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all his people, Jehovah his God be with him. So let him go up [to Jerusalem].” (2 Chronicles 36:23) Completed by the priest Ezra in 460 B.C.E., the book covers 500 years—from 1037 B.C.E. to 537 B.C.E.

Cyrus' decree makes it possible for the Jews to return to Jerusalem and reestablish Jehovah's worship there. However, the long years of Babylonian captivity have taken their toll. The returned exiles lack knowledge of their national history. Second Chronicles provides them with a vivid summary of events under kings of the royal line of David. The narrative is also of interest to us because it highlights

the blessings that come from obedience to the true God and the consequences of disobedience to him.

A KING BUILDS A HOUSE TO JEHOVAH (2 Chronicles 1:1–9:31)

Jehovah gives King Solomon the request of his heart—wisdom and knowledge—along with riches and honor. The king builds a magnificent house to Jehovah in Jerusalem, and the people are “joyful and feeling good at heart.” (2 Chronicles 7:10) Solomon comes to be “greater than all the other kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.” —2 Chronicles 9:22.

After ruling over Israel for 40 years, Solomon ‘lies down with his forefathers, and Rehoboam his son begins to rule in his place.’ (2 Chronicles 9:31) Ezra does not record Solomon’s deviation from true worship. The only negative points mentioned

about the king are his unwise acquisition of many horses from Egypt and his marriage to the daughter of Pharaoh. The chronicler thus presents the account from a positive standpoint.

Do you know why bulls were a fitting representation in the base of the molten sea?



Scriptural Questions Answered:

2:14—Why is the lineage of the craftsman described here different from the one found at 1 Kings 7:14? First Kings refers to the craftsman's mother as "a widowed woman from the tribe of Naphtali" because she had married a man of that tribe. She herself, though, was from the tribe of Dan. After her husband's death, she married a man of Tyre, and the artisan was an offspring of that marriage.

2:18; 8:10—These verses state that the number of deputies serving as overseers and as foremen over the labor force was 3,600 plus 250, whereas according to 1 Kings 5:16; 9:23, they numbered 3,300 plus 550. Why do the numbers differ? The difference seems to be in the way the deputies are classified. It may be that Second Chronicles differentiates between 3,600 non-Israelites and 250 Israelite deputies, while First Kings distinguishes 3,300 foremen from 550 chief supervisors of higher rank. In any case, the total number of those serving as deputies was 3,850.

4:2-4—Why was the representation of bulls used in the construction of the base of the molten sea? In the Scriptures, bulls are a symbol of strength. (Ezekiel 1:10; Revelation 4:6, 7) The choice of bulls as a representation was fitting because the 12 copper bulls supported the huge "sea," which weighed some 30 tons. The making of bulls for this purpose did not in any way violate the second commandment, which prohibited the making of objects for worship.—Exodus 20:4, 5.

4:5—What was the total capacity of the molten sea? When filled, the sea could hold three thousand bath measures, or about 17,400 gallons. The normal level, however, was probably about two thirds of its capacity. First Kings 7:26 states: "Two thousand bath

measures [11,600 gallons] were what [the sea] would contain."

5:4, 5, 10—What furniture from the original tabernacle became part of Solomon's temple? The only item from the original tent of meeting that was kept in Solomon's temple was the Ark. After the construction of the temple, the tabernacle was taken from Gibeah to Jerusalem and was apparently stored there.—2 Chronicles 1:3, 4.

Lessons for Us:

1:11, 12. Solomon's request showed Jehovah that gaining wisdom and knowledge was close to the king's heart. Our prayers to God indeed reveal what is close to our heart. We are wise to analyze their content.

6:4. Heartfelt appreciation for Jehovah's loving-kindness and goodness should move us to bless Jehovah—that is, praise him with affection and gratitude.

6:18-21. Though God cannot be contained in any building, the temple was to serve as the center of Jehovah's worship. Today, Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's Witnesses are centers of true worship in the community.

6:19, 22, 32. Jehovah was accessible to all—from the king to the least ones in the nation—even to a foreigner who came to him in earnest.*—Psalm 65:2.

SUCCESSION OF KINGS IN THE LINE OF DAVID (2 Chronicles 10:1-36:23)

The united kingdom of Israel is divided in two—the northern ten-tribe kingdom and the southern two-tribe kingdom of Judah and Benjamin. The priests and the Levites in all Israel place loyalty to the Kingdom covenant above nationalism and take their stand with Solomon's son Rehoboam. In a little

* For questions pertaining to the inauguration of the temple and other lessons from Solomon's prayer on that occasion, see *The Watchtower*, July 1, 2005, pages 28-31.

over 30 years after its completion, the temple is robbed of its treasures.

Of the 19 kings who follow Rehoboam, 5 are faithful, 3 start out well but become unfaithful, and one turns around from his wrong course. The rest of the rulers do what is bad in Jehovah's eyes.* The activities of the five kings who place their confidence in Jehovah are emphasized. The accounts of Hezekiah reviving temple services and Josiah arranging for a great Passover must have been of great encouragement to the Jews interested in reestablishing Jehovah's worship in Jerusalem.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

13:5—What is meant by the expression “a covenant of salt”? Because of its preserving properties, salt became a symbol of permanence and immutability. “A covenant of salt,” then, denotes a binding agreement.

14:2-5; 15:17—Did King Asa remove all “the high places”? Apparently, he did not. It may be that Asa removed only the high places associated with the worship of false gods but not those where people worshipped Jehovah. It could also be that high places were built again in the latter part of Asa's reign. These his son Jehoshaphat removed. Actually, the high places did not disappear completely, even during Jehoshaphat's reign.—2 Chronicles 17:5, 6; 20:31-33.

15:9; 34:6—What was the standing of the tribe of Simeon with respect to the division of the kingdom of Israel? Having received as an inheritance various enclaves in Judah, the tribe of Simeon was geographically within the kingdom of Judah and Benjamin. (Joshua 19:1) Religiously and politically, however, the tribe aligned itself with the northern kingdom. (1 Kings 11:30-33; 12:20-24)

* For a chronological list of Judah's kings, see *The Watchtower*, August 1, 2005, page 12.

Hence, Simeon was counted with the ten-tribe kingdom.

16:13, 14—Was Asa cremated? No, the “extraordinarily great funeral burning” refers, not to the cremation of Asa, but to the burning of spices.—Footnote.

35:3—From where did Josiah have the holy Ark brought into the temple? Whether the Ark was removed earlier by one of the wicked kings or was relocated by Josiah for safekeeping during the extensive repair work of the temple, the Bible does not say. The only historical reference to the Ark after Solomon's day is when Josiah brought it into the temple.

Lessons for Us:

13:13-18; 14:11, 12; 32:9-23. What a lesson we can learn about the importance of leaning on Jehovah!

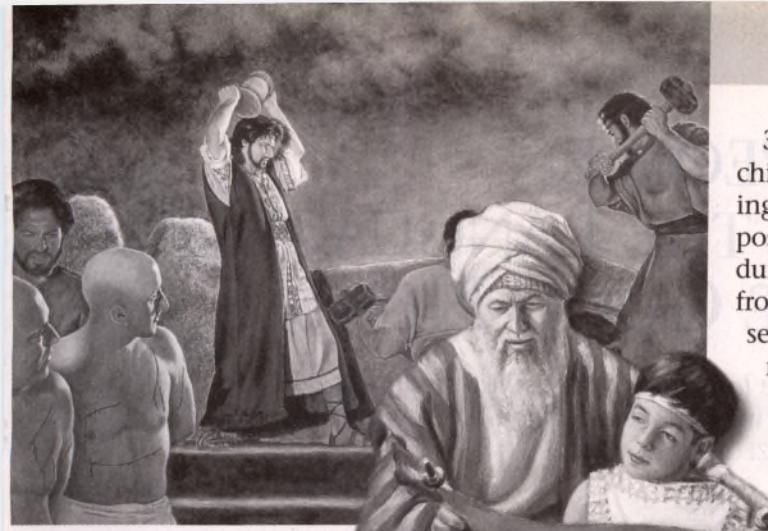
16:1-5, 7; 18:1-3, 28-32; 21:4-6; 22:10-12; 28:16-22. Alliances with foreigners or non-believers have tragic consequences. We are wise to avoid any unnecessary involvement with the world.—John 17:14, 16; James 4:4.

16:7-12; 26:16-21; 32:25, 26. Haughtiness caused King Asa to behave badly during the last years of his life. A haughty spirit led to Uzziah's downfall. Hezekiah acted unwisely and perhaps proudly when he showed Babylonian emissaries his treasury. (Isaiah 39:1-7) “Pride is before a crash,” warns the Bible, “and a haughty spirit before stumbling.”—Proverbs 16:18.

16:9. Jehovah helps those whose heart is complete toward him, and he is eager to use his power in their behalf.

18:12, 13, 23, 24, 27. Like Micaiah, we should be courageous and bold in speaking about Jehovah and his purposes.

19:1-3. Jehovah looks for the good in us even when we give him reasons to be angry with us.



Though he had limited help as a child, Josiah grew up to be faithful to Jehovah

20:1-28. We can be confident that Jehovah will let himself be found by us when we humbly turn to him for direction.—Proverbs 15:29.

20:17. To “see the salvation of Jehovah,” we need to “take [our] position” in active support of God’s Kingdom. Rather than take matters into our own hands, we must “stand still,” placing our implicit trust in Jehovah.

24:17-19; 25:14. Idolatry proved to be a snare for Jehoash and his son Amaziah. Today, idolatry can be equally seductive, particularly when it comes in the subtle form of covetousness or nationalism.—Colossians 3:5; Revelation 13:4.

32:6, 7. We too must be courageous and strong as we “put on the complete suit of armor from God” and carry on spiritual warfare.—Ephesians 6:11-18.

33:2-9, 12, 13, 15, 16. A person shows true repentance by abandoning a wrong course and putting forth a determined effort to do what is right. On the basis of genuine repentance, even a person who has acted as wickedly as King Manasseh can receive Jehovah’s mercy.

34:1-3. Any negative circumstances of childhood need not prevent us from coming to know God and serving him. A positive influence Josiah may have had during his early years could have come from his repentant grandfather, Manasseh. Whatever positive influences Josiah might have had eventually produced fine results. So it can be with us.

36:15-17. Jehovah is compassionate and patient. However, his compassion and patience are not limitless. People must respond favorably to the Kingdom-preaching work if they are to survive when Jehovah brings an end to this wicked system of things.

36:17, 22, 23. Jehovah’s word always comes true.—1 Kings 9:7, 8; Jeremiah 25:9-11.

Moved to Action by a Book

“Josiah removed all the detestable things out of all the lands that belonged to the sons of Israel,” states 2 Chronicles 34:33, “and he had all who were found in Israel take up service, to serve Jehovah their God.” What moved Josiah to do this? When Shaphan the secretary brought the newly discovered book of Jehovah’s Law to King Josiah, the king had it read aloud. So touched was Josiah by what he heard that he zealously promoted pure worship throughout his life.

Reading God’s Word and meditating on what we read can affect us profoundly. Does not reflecting on the account of the kings in the Davidic line encourage us to imitate the examples of those who made Jehovah their confidence and avoid the conduct of those who did not? Second Chronicles stimulates us to give our exclusive devotion to the true God and remain faithful to him. Its message certainly is alive and exerts power.—Hebrews 4:12.

PEOPLE “OUT OF ALL THE LANGUAGES” HEAR THE GOOD NEWS

“Ten men out of all the languages of the nations will [say]: ‘We will go with you people, for we have heard that God is with you people.’”

—ZECHARIAH 8:23.

THE timing and the setting could not have been better. It was the day of Pentecost 33 C.E. Weeks earlier, Jews and proselytes from at least 15 regions of the far-flung Roman Empire and beyond had packed Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. On that day, thousands of them heard—not in confusion, as those at ancient Babel did, but with understanding—ordinary people filled with holy spirit proclaim the good news in numerous languages spoken in the empire. (Acts 2:1-12) That occasion marked the birth of the Christian congregation and the start of a multilingual, international educational work that has continued down to this day.

² Jesus' disciples could probably speak common Greek, the popular language of the day. They also used Hebrew, the language spoken at the temple. However, on that Pentecost day, they “astonished” their diverse audience by speaking in the native languages of those people. What was the result? The hearts of the listeners were touched by the vital truths that they heard in their mother tongue. By the end of the day, the small group of disciples had grown to be a vast company of more than 3,000!—Acts 2:37-42.

1. How did Jehovah provide the best timing and setting for the multilingual and international launch of Christianity?
2. How did the disciples of Jesus ‘astonish’ their diverse audience at Pentecost 33 C.E.?

³ Soon after that momentous event, a wave of persecution broke out in Jerusalem, and “those who had been scattered went through the land declaring the good news of the word.” (Acts 8:1-4) For example, we read in Acts chapter 8 about Philip, apparently a Greek-speaking evangelizer. Philip preached to the Samaritans. He also preached to an Ethiopian official who responded to the message about Christ.—Acts 6:1-5; 8:5-13, 26-40; 21:8, 9.

⁴ As the Christians moved and searched for places to rebuild their lives outside the confines of Jerusalem, Judaea, and Galilee, they encountered new ethnic and language barriers. Some of them might have witnessed only to Jews. But the disciple Luke reports: “There were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene that came to Antioch and began talking to the Greek-speaking people, declaring the good news of the Lord Jesus.”—Acts 11:19-21.

An Impartial God—A Message for All

⁵ Such developments are in keeping with God's ways; favoritism is alien to him. After the apostle Peter was helped by Jehovah to

- 3, 4. How did the preaching work expand as the disciples moved out from Jerusalem, Judaea, and Galilee?
5. How is Jehovah's impartiality seen in connection with the good news?

adjust his view of people of the nations, he appreciatively noted: "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34, 35; Psalm 145:9) When the apostle Paul, formerly a persecutor of Christians, declared that God's "will is that all sorts of men should be saved," he reaffirmed that God is free from bias. (1 Timothy 2:4) The Creator's impartiality is seen in that the Kingdom hope is open to people of any gender, race, nationality, or language.

At Pentecost 33 C.E., people from 15 regions of the Roman Empire and beyond heard the good news in their native languages



⁶ This international expansion was foretold centuries earlier. According to Daniel's prophecy, "there were given [to Jesus] rulership and dignity and kingdom, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him." (Daniel 7:14) The fact that this magazine is published in 151 languages and distributed worldwide, enabling you to read about Jehovah's Kingdom, reflects the fulfillment of that Bible prophecy.

⁷ The Bible foretold a time when people of diverse languages would hear its life-giving message. Describing how true worship would attract many, Zechariah prophesied: "It will be in those days that ten men *out of all the languages of the nations* will take hold, yes, they will actually take hold of the skirt of a man who is a Jew [spirit-anointed Christian, part of "the Israel of God"], saying: 'We will go with you people, for we have heard that God is with you people.'" (Zechariah 8:23; Galatians 6:16) And relating what he saw in a vision, the apostle John said: "Look! a great crowd, which no man was

6, 7. What Bible prophecies foretold the international, multilingual spread of the good news?



able to number, *out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues*, standing before the throne and before the Lamb." (Revelation 7:9) We have seen such prophecies coming true!

Reaching People of All Sorts

⁸ Today, people have become increasingly mobile. Globalization has opened a new era of migration. Doves of people from war zones and economically depressed areas have moved to more stable places, seeking a materially secure way of life. In many lands, an influx of immigrants and refugees has resulted in the formation of foreign-speaking enclaves. For instance, in Finland more than 120 languages are spoken; in Australia the number is over 200. In just one city in the United States—San Diego—over 100 languages can be heard!

8. What modern-day reality has called for adjustments in our witnessing work?

⁹ Do we as Christian ministers view the presence of such people who speak different languages as an impediment to our ministry? Not at all! Rather, we see this as a welcome expansion of our ministerial territory—"fields white for harvesting." (John 4:35) We endeavor to care for people who are conscious of their spiritual need, regardless of their nationality or language. (Matthew 5:3) As a result, each year a growing number of people of 'every tongue' are becoming disciples of Christ. (Revelation 14:6) For example, as of August 2004, the preaching work in Germany was being carried out in about 40 languages. At the same time, the good news was preached in Australia in close to 30 languages, up from 18 just ten years ago. In Greece, Jehovah's Witnesses were reaching people in almost 20 different languages. Worldwide, about 80 percent of Jehovah's Witnesses speak a language other than English, the prevalent international language.

9. What view should we take of the presence in our territory of people who speak different languages?



¹⁰ Indeed, Jesus' command to "make disciples of people of *all the nations*" is being carried out! (Matthew 28:19) Eagerly embracing that commission, Jehovah's Witnesses are active in 235 lands, distributing literature in more than 400 languages. While Jehovah's organization provides the material needed to reach the people, the individual Kingdom publisher must take the initiative to convey the Bible's message to "people of all sorts" in the language they can best understand. (John 1:7) This united effort enables millions of people of various language groups to benefit from the good news. (Romans 10:14, 15) Yes, each one of us plays a vital role!

Rising to the Challenge

¹¹ Today, many Kingdom publishers would like to learn another language, but they cannot depend on or expect miraculous gifts of God's spirit. (1 Corinthians 13:8) Learning a new language is a major undertaking. Even those who already speak a second language may have to adjust their thinking and approach in order to make the Bible's message appealing to people who speak that language but have different backgrounds and cultures. Then, too, new immigrants are often shy and timid; to understand their way of thinking takes hard work.

¹² Nonetheless, the holy spirit is still operative among Jehovah's servants in their efforts to help people who speak other languages. (Luke 11:13) Rather than imparting miraculous linguistic abilities, the spirit can heighten our desire to communicate with people who do not speak our language. (Psalm 143:

10. What is the individual publisher's role in making disciples of people of "all the nations"?

11, 12. (a) What challenges must be met, and how does the holy spirit help? (b) Why is preaching to people in their mother tongue often helpful?

Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses

Salón del Reino de los Testigos de Jehová
Salão do Reino das Testemunhas de Jeová
Αίθουσα Βασιλείας των Μαρτύρων του Ιεχωβά¹³
यहोवा के साक्षियों का राज्यगृह

A Kingdom Hall sign
in five languages

10) Preaching or teaching the Bible's message to people in a language they are not familiar with may reach their mind. However, in order to touch the heart of our listeners, it is often better to use their mother tongue—the language that speaks to their deepest aspirations, motives, and hopes.—Luke 24:32.

¹³ Many Kingdom publishers have taken up the ministry in a foreign-language field when they observe the fine response to Bible truth. Others feel invigorated when their service becomes more challenging and interesting. "Many of those who come from Eastern Europe are thirsting for the truth," states a branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in southern Europe. How satisfying it is to help such receptive individuals!—Isaiah 55:1, 2.

¹⁴ To have a meaningful share in this work, however, we need determination and self-sacrifice. (Psalm 110:3) For instance, a number of Japanese Witness families have given up comfortable homes in large cities and have moved to remote areas to help groups of Chinese immigrants understand the Bible. On the west coast of the United States, publishers regularly drive from one to two hours to conduct Bible studies with people in the Filipino field. In Norway, a couple studies

13, 14. (a) What motivates some to take up the ministry in another language? (b) How is the spirit of self-sacrifice seen?

with a family from Afghanistan. The Witness couple uses the English and Norwegian editions of the brochure *What Does God Require of Us?*^{*} The family read the paragraphs in Persian, a language closely related to their native Dari. They converse in English and Norwegian. Such a spirit of self-sacrifice and adaptability is richly rewarded when foreigners respond to the good news.[#]

¹⁵ Can you have a share in this multilingual activity? Why not start by noting which foreign languages are commonly spoken in your territory? Then you might carry some tracts or brochures in those languages. The booklet *Good News for People of All Nations*, released in 2004, has already been instrumental in spreading the Kingdom hope by its simple, positive message in numerous languages.—See the article “Good News for People of All Nations,” on page 32.

“Loving the Alien Resident”

¹⁶ Whether we learn another language or not, we can all help with the spiritual

* Published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

For further examples, see “Small Sacrifices Brought Us Great Blessings,” in *The Watchtower*, April 1, 2004, pages 24-8.

15. How can all of us share in the multilingual preaching effort?
16. How can responsible brothers manifest selfless interest in helping foreign-speaking people?

Can You Explain?

- How can we imitate Jehovah in showing impartiality to all people?
- How should we view people in our territory who do not speak our language?
- Why is it helpful to preach to people in their mother tongue?
- How can we show concern for the foreigners among us?

education of foreigners in our area. Jehovah instructed his people to “love the alien resident.” (Deuteronomy 10:18, 19) For example, in one large city in North America, five congregations meet in the same Kingdom Hall. As in many halls, there is a yearly rotation of meeting times that would have moved the Chinese meetings there to a later hour on Sunday. However, this would mean that many of the immigrants who work at restaurant-related jobs would not be able to attend. The elders in the other congregations graciously made adjustments so that the Chinese meetings could be held earlier on Sunday.

¹⁷ Loving overseers commend qualified and skilled brothers and sisters who want to move to assist other language groups. Such experienced Bible teachers may be missed locally, but the overseers feel as did the elders in Lystra and Iconium. Those elders did not hold Timothy back from traveling with Paul, even though Timothy was an asset to their own congregations. (Acts 16:1-4) In addition, those who take the lead in the preaching work are not deterred by the different mentality, customs, or manners of foreigners. Instead, they embrace the diversity and seek ways to cultivate good relations for the sake of the good news.—1 Corinthians 9:22, 23.

¹⁸ As prophesied, the good news is being preached in “all the languages of the nations.” Wonderful potential for increase still exists in foreign-language fields. Thousands of resourceful publishers have entered this “large door that leads to activity.” (1 Corinthians 16:9) Yet, more is needed in order to cultivate such territories, as the next article will show.

17. How should we feel when some decide to move to help another language group?
18. What large door of activity is open to all?

BECOMING PROGRESSIVE AND ADAPTABLE MINISTERS

"I have become all things to people of all sorts, that I might by all means save some." —1 CORINTHIANS 9:22.

HE WAS at ease with sophisticated intellectuals and with humble tentmakers. He was persuasive to Roman dignitaries and to Phrygian peasants. His writings were motivating to liberal Greeks and to conservative Jews. His logic was as unassailable as his emotional appeal was powerful. He tried to find common ground with everyone so that he might bring some to Christ.—Acts 20:21.

² The man was the apostle Paul, without a doubt an effective and progressive minister. (1 Timothy 1:12) He received from Jesus the commission to “bear [Christ’s] name to the nations as well as to kings and the sons of Israel.” (Acts 9:15) What was his attitude toward this assignment? He declared: “I have become all things to people of all sorts, that I might by all means save some. But I do all things for the sake of the good news, that I may become a sharer of it with others.” (1 Corinthians 9:19-23) What can we learn from Paul’s example that can help us to be more effective in our preaching and teaching?

A Changed Man Met the Challenge

³ Had Paul always been a long-suffering, considerate person, fit for the assignment he received? By no means! Religious fanaticism had made Saul (as Paul was formerly known) a violent persecutor of Christ’s followers. As a young man, he approved the murder of

1, 2. (a) In what ways was the apostle Paul an effective minister? (b) How did Paul describe his own attitude toward his assignment?

3. What was Paul’s feeling toward Christians before his conversion?

Stephen. Afterward, Paul ruthlessly hunted down Christians. (Acts 7:58; 8:1, 3; 1 Timothy 1:13) He continued to breathe “threat and murder against the disciples of the Lord.” Not being content to pursue believers in Jerusalem only, he began spreading his hate campaign as far north as Damascus.—Acts 9:1, 2.

⁴ At the root of Paul’s intense hatred of Christianity might well have been the conviction that the new faith would corrupt Judaism by mixing it with foreign, undesirable ideas. After all, Paul had been “a Pharisee,” the very name meaning “separated one.” (Acts 23:6) Imagine how shocked Paul must have been when he learned that God had chosen him to preach Christ to—of all people—the Gentiles! (Acts 22:14, 15; 26:16-18) Why, Pharisees refused even to eat with those whom they considered to be sinners! (Luke 7:36-39) No doubt it required great effort on his part to reevaluate his viewpoint and to bring it into harmony with God’s will that all sorts of people should be saved.—Galatians 1:13-17.

⁵ We might have to do the same. As we meet an increasing variety of people in our international, multilingual field, we need to make a conscious effort to check our attitude and rid ourselves of any prejudice. (Ephesians 4:22-24) Whether we realize it or not, we are shaped by our social and educational upbringing. This can instill in us views

4. What adjustment did Paul have to make to fulfill his assignment?

5. How can we imitate Paul in our ministry?

and attitudes that are biased, prejudiced, inflexible. We must overcome such sentiments if we are to have success in finding and helping sheeplike ones. (Romans 15:7) That is what Paul did. He accepted the challenge to expand his ministry. Motivated by love, he developed teaching skills that are worthy of imitation. Indeed, a study of the ministry of the “apostle to the nations” shows that he was attentive, flexible, and resourceful in preaching and teaching.*—Romans 11:13.

* For examples of such qualities in Paul’s ministry, consider Acts 13:9, 16:42; 17:2-4; 18:1-4; 19:11-20; 20:34; Romans 10:11-15; 2 Corinthians 6:11-13.



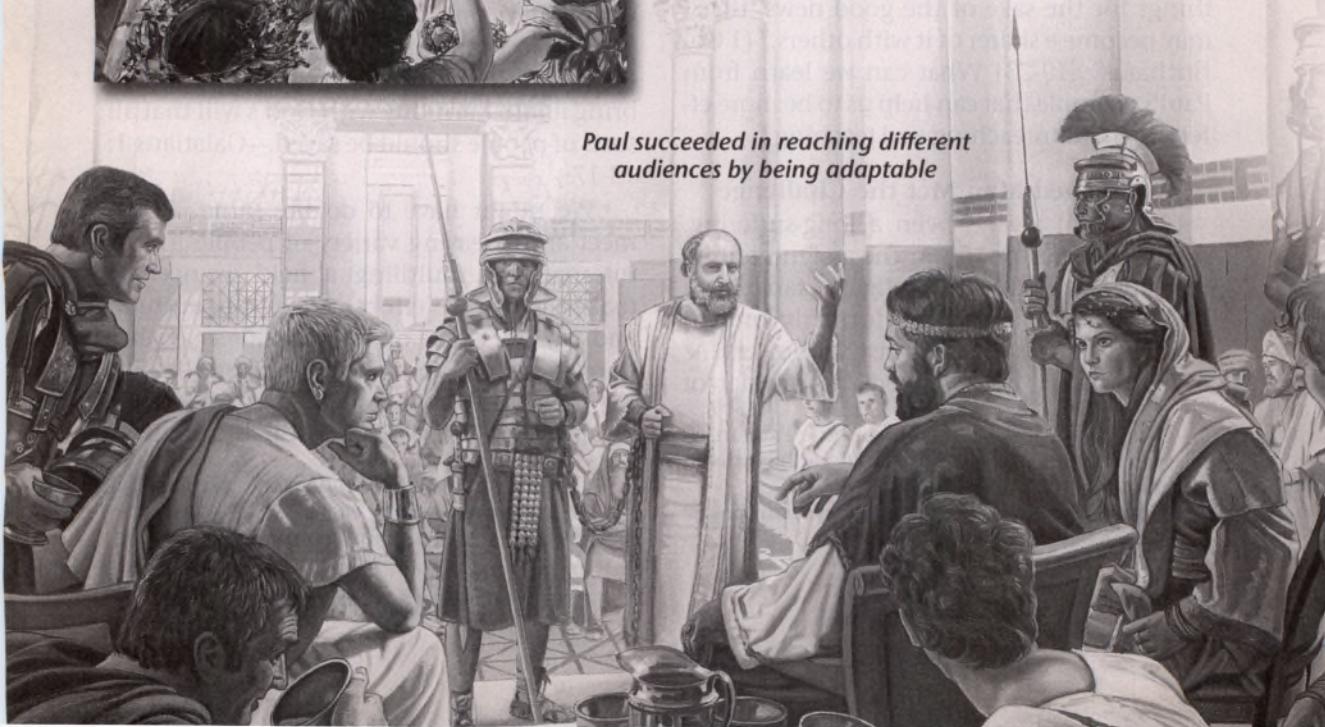
Paul succeeded in reaching different audiences by being adaptable

A Progressive Minister in Action

⁶ Paul was attentive to the beliefs and background of his listeners. When addressing King Agrippa II, Paul acknowledged that the king was an “expert on all the customs as well as the controversies among Jews.” Then Paul skillfully used his knowledge of Agrippa’s beliefs and discussed with him matters that the king understood very well. The clarity and conviction of Paul’s reasoning was such that Agrippa said: “In a short time you would persuade me to become a Christian.”—Acts 26:2, 3, 27, 28.

⁷ Paul was also flexible. Note how different his approach was when he tried to dissuade a crowd in the city of Lystra from worshipping him and Barnabas as gods. It has been said that these people, who spoke Lycaonian, were among the less educated and more superstitious of the population. According to Acts 14:14-18, Paul pointed to the creation and its natural bounties as evidence of the su-

6. How was Paul attentive to the background of his listeners, and with what result?
7. How did Paul show flexibility when preaching to a crowd in Lystra?



periority of the true God. The argument was easy to follow, and it apparently "restrained the crowds from sacrificing" to Paul and Bar-nabas.

⁸ Of course, Paul was not perfect, and at times, he had strong feelings about certain things. For example, on one occasion when he was attacked in a humiliating and unjust way, he lashed out against a Jew named Ananias. But when Paul was told that he had unknowingly insulted the high priest, he immediately apologized. (Acts 23:1-5) In Athens, he was at first "irritated at beholding that the city was full of idols." Yet, in his speech on Mars' Hill, Paul betrayed no such irritation. Instead, he addressed the Athenians at their forum, building on common ground by referring to their altar "To an Unknown God" and citing one of their poets.—Acts 17:16-28.

⁹ In dealing with different audiences, Paul manifested remarkable resourcefulness. He took into account the culture and environment that shaped the thinking of his audience. When he wrote to the Christians in Rome, he was well-aware that they lived in the capital of the greatest power of the day. A major point of Paul's letter to Christians in Rome was that the power of Adam's sin to corrupt is conquered by Christ's power to redeem. He spoke to the Roman Christians and those around them in language that would appeal to their heart.—Romans 1:4; 5:14, 15.

¹⁰ What did Paul do when he wanted to explain deep Bible truths to his listeners? The apostle was adept at using common, easily understood illustrations to clarify complex spiritual ideas. For example, Paul knew that the people in Rome were acquainted with the

8. In what ways did Paul show that he was flexible in spite of his strong feelings at times?
9. How did Paul demonstrate resourcefulness when dealing with different audiences?
- 10, 11. How did Paul tailor his illustrations to his listeners? (See also footnote.)

system of slavery throughout the Roman Empire. In fact, many of the people to whom he was writing were probably slaves. Paul therefore used slavery as an illustration to bolster his powerful argument about a person's choice of submission either to sin or to righteousness.—Romans 6:16-20.

¹¹ "Among the Romans," says one reference work, "an owner could free a slave outright, or the slave could purchase his freedom by paying his owner. Freedom could also be arranged if ownership was transferred to a god." A freed slave could continue to work for his master for wages. Paul evidently alluded to this practice when he wrote of the individual's choice of which master to obey—sin or righteousness. Christians in Rome had been

The apostle Paul was attentive, flexible, and resourceful in preaching and teaching

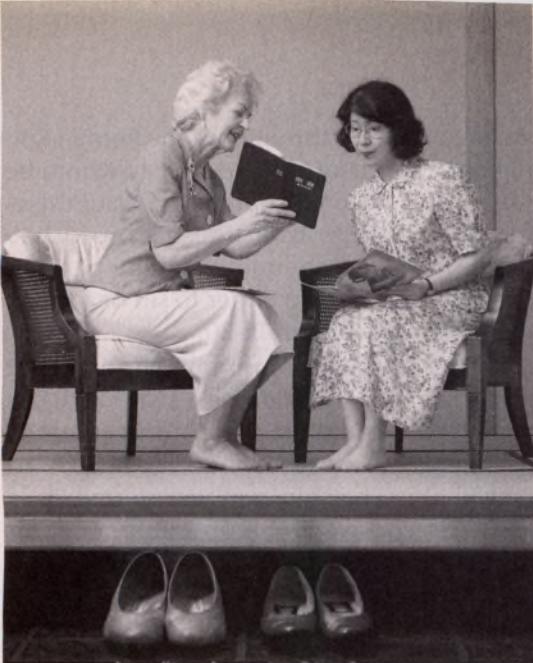
freed from sin and were now owned by God. They were free to serve God, yet they could still choose to serve sin—the former master—if they so desired. That simple but familiar illustration would prompt those Christians in Rome to ask themselves, 'Which master am I serving?'*

Learning From Paul's Example

¹² Like Paul, we must be attentive, flexible, and resourceful in order to reach the heart of

* Similarly, in explaining the new relationship between God and his spirit-anointed "sons," Paul used a legal concept quite familiar to his readers in the Roman Empire. (Romans 8:14-17) "Adoption was essentially a Roman usage, and was closely connected with the Roman ideas of family," says the book *St. Paul at Rome*.

12, 13. (a) What effort is needed today in order to reach the heart of our diverse audience? (b) What have you found to be effective when preaching to people from different backgrounds?



Effective ministers consider the cultural background of their listeners

our diverse audience. To help our listeners get the sense of the good news, we desire to do more than make superficial contact, deliver a prepared message, or leave some Bible literature. We endeavor to discern their needs and concerns, their likes and dislikes, and their fears and prejudices. Though this requires a great deal of thought and effort, Kingdom publishers around the world are eagerly doing so. For example, the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Hungary reports: "The brothers show respect for the customs and lifestyle of people of other nations and

do not expect them to adapt to local customs." Witnesses elsewhere endeavor to do the same.

¹³ In one country in the Far East, most people are concerned with health, child training, and education. Kingdom publishers there try to highlight these subjects instead of discussing such matters as deteriorating global conditions or complex social issues. Similarly, publishers in a large city in the United States noticed that people in a particular neighborhood in their territory are concerned with such matters as corruption, traffic congestion, and crime. The Witnesses successfully use these subjects to start Bible discussions. Effective Bible teachers make sure that regardless of the topic they choose, they remain positive and encouraging, stressing the practical value of applying Bible principles now and the bright prospects that God offers for the future.—Isaiah 48:17, 18; 52:7.

¹⁴ It is also helpful to vary our approach in the ministry, since people have vastly different cultural, educational, and religious backgrounds. Our approach to people who believe in a Creator but not in the Bible will differ from that used to talk to those who believe that God does not exist. With someone who feels that all religious literature is an indoctrination tool, the presentation we use will be different from the one we use for a person who accepts what the Bible teaches. Flexibility is also needed in dealing with the wide variety of educational levels of the people we talk to. Skillful teachers will use reasoning and illustrations appropriate to the situation at hand.—1 John 5:20.

14. Describe ways in which we can adapt to people's differing needs and circumstances.



Help for New Ministers

¹⁵ Paul was not concerned with improving only his own teaching methods. He saw the need for training and preparing those of a younger generation, such as Timothy and Titus, to become effective ministers. (2 Timothy 2:2; 3:10, 14; Titus 1:4) Similarly, a pressing need to provide and receive training exists today.

¹⁶ In 1914, there were approximately 5,000 Kingdom publishers earth wide; today, *each week* about 5,000 new ones are baptized! (Isaiah 54:2, 3; Acts 11:21) When new ones begin to associate with the Christian congregation and wish to share in the ministry, they need training and direction. (Galatians 6:6) It is vital that we use the methods of the Master, Jesus, in teaching and training disciples.*

¹⁷ Jesus did not just find a crowd and tell his apostles to start talking. He first emphasized the need for the preaching work and encouraged a prayerful attitude. Then he made three basic provisions: a partner, a territory assignment, and a message. (Matthew 9:35-

* Currently, the Pioneers Assist Others program is available in all congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. The program utilizes the experience and training of full-time ministers in assisting less-experienced publishers.

15, 16. Why is there a need for training new ministers?

17, 18. How can we help new ones gain confidence in the ministry?

Progressive ministers help new ones prepare for the ministry

38; 10:5-7; Mark 6:7; Luke 9:2, 6) We can do the same. Whether we are helping our own child, a new student, or someone who has not shared in the preaching activity for a while, it is appropriate to make an effort to provide training in this way.

¹⁸ New ones need considerable help to gain confidence in presenting the Kingdom message. Can you assist them to prepare and practice a simple, appealing presentation? In the field, let them learn from your example as you take the first few calls. You can follow the pattern of Gideon, who said to his fellow fighters: "You should learn from watching me, and that is how you should do." (Judges 7:17) Then give the new one the opportunity

Jesus made three basic provisions for his disciples: a partner, a territory assignment, and a message

to participate. Warmly commend new ones for their efforts, and when appropriate, offer brief suggestions for improvement.

¹⁹ In order to 'accomplish our ministry fully,' we are determined to become more flexible in our approach, and we want to train new ministers to do the same. When we consider the importance of our goal—to impart the very knowledge of God that leads to salvation—we are convinced that it is worth all the effort it takes to become "all things to people of all sorts, that [we] might by all means save some."—2 Timothy 4:5; 1 Corinthians 9:22.

19. What is your determination as you strive to 'accomplish your ministry fully'?

Good News for People of All Nations



SHOWN above is a booklet released at the 2004/05 "Walk With God" District Conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses. One edition of it is a 96-page booklet that contains a brief message in 92 languages, ranging from Afrikaans to Zulu, and is designed to help spread the Kingdom good news to as many people as possible. (Matthew 24:14) The following are typical of the results when the booklet is used.

- After receiving the booklet at the convention, a Witness family visited three national parks. There they met people from India, the Netherlands, Pakistan, and the Philippines. The husband noted: "Though all these people spoke some English, they were



impressed when we showed them the message in their own language, since they were thousands of miles from home. The worldwide nature of our work as well as our unity became clear to them."

- A Witness showed the booklet to a coworker from India. He was excited to see all the languages in it and read the message in his own language. This led to more discussions about the Bible. A coworker from the Philippines was amazed to find her native language in the booklet and became interested in learning more about Jehovah's Witnesses.

- In Canada, a lady from Nepal agreed to study the Bible with a Witness over the phone but was reluctant to invite the sister to her home. However, when the Witness told the lady about the booklet with a message in Nepali, she excitedly invited the sister to come over. She just had to see for herself the message in her mother tongue! The Bible study has been held at the lady's home ever since.