

DECEMBER 1, 1993

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

NATURAL DISASTERS

Is God Responsible?

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

December 1, 1993

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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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Natural Disasters

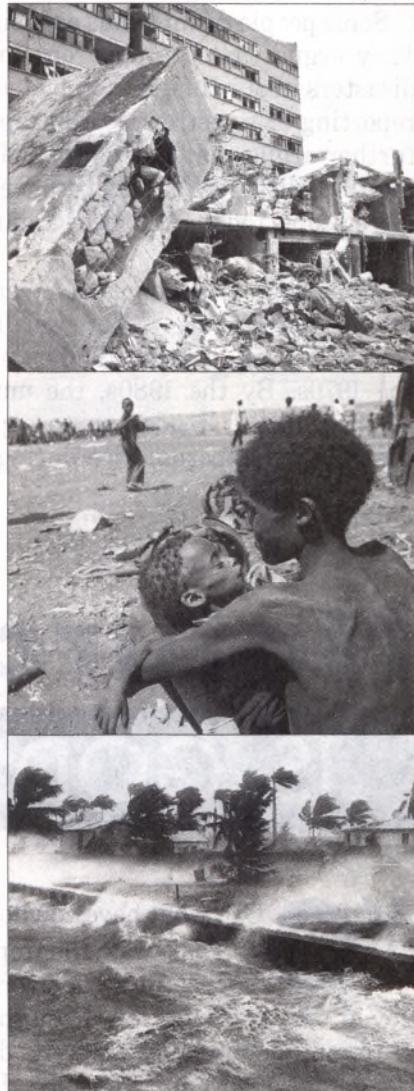
A SIGN OF THE TIMES?

NATION will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another. All these things are a beginning of pangs of distress." With these words Jesus Christ explained to his disciples 19 centuries ago that such disastrous events, together with an increase of lawlessness and the worldwide preaching of the good news of God's Kingdom, would introduce a composite sign marking "the conclusion of the system of things."—Matthew 24:3-14.

In view of that, we must ask, Are we seeing more catastrophic earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, droughts, and famines than did generations past? And in spite of advances in science and technology, are proportionately more people suffering as a result?

To many the answer is yes. For example, the magazine *New Scientist* warns that "the world can expect more disasters in the 1990s than in past decades." Similarly, in the *UN Chronicle* of June 1991, the director of the World Meteorological Organization stated: "The trend is quite clear. From the 1960s to the 1980s . . . , there has been a fivefold increase in the frequency of great natural disasters, and a threefold increase in total economic losses." Providing a little perspective on the subject, *World Health*, the magazine of the UN World Health Organization, observed: "Examples of natural disasters and their devastating effects can be traced throughout history. However, as the 21st century approaches, we face a changing mix of demographic, ecological and technological conditions which make many populations more vulnerable to the impact of both natural and man-made catastrophes."

Middle photo: Mark Peters/Sipa Press



WHO/League of Red Cross

Anyone who pays attention to current events is not surprised at such statements. The news media are never short of sensational stories, be it a volcanic eruption in the Philippines, an earthquake in California, a flood in Bangladesh, a famine in Somalia, a hurricane in Hawaii, or a tidal wave in Nicaragua. Hardly a month goes by without a report of a disaster in one corner of the world or another.

Some people dismiss this as insignificant. They argue that the apparent increase in disasters in our time is merely due to better reporting or to better record keeping. They further argue that more people are suffering from disasters simply because there are more people today. Are these arguments the whole story?

Note what is said in the *New Scientist* article quoted above. "There were 523 disasters reported in the 1960s and 767 in the 1970s. By the 1980s, the number had reached 1387." It goes on to explain that "part of the apparent rise during the past

decade can be accounted for by the greater openness in reporting disasters in China and the Soviet Union." Then it adds: "Even so, the number is growing." The precipitous rise in the number of disasters cannot be explained away by better reporting or better record keeping alone.

Further, the *UN Chronicle* of March 1992 reports: "During the past two decades, some 3 million people have lost their lives and 800 million more have been affected by 'the havoc, hardship and suffering' brought about by natural disaster." This means that about 1 in every 7 persons living on earth has been touched by some kind of disaster or tragedy. That is truly staggering and leaves little room for doubt that ours is an age of upheaval and unrest.

Since the Bible foretells such a time of great distress, does it mean that God is responsible for the disasters and the suffering resulting from them? Many people think so. But what do the facts show? And more important, what does the Bible show?

Natural Disasters

IS GOD RESPONSIBLE?

GOD, what have you done to us?" That was the reported response of a survivor who surveyed the destruction brought by the eruption of snowcapped Nevado del Ruiz in Colombia on November 13, 1985. The result-

ing mud slide buried the entire city of Armero and killed over 20,000 people in one night.

It is understandable that the survivor might react that way. Helpless in the face of awesome natural forces, people from the

earliest times have attributed such disastrous events to God. Primitive people made offerings, even human sacrifices, to appease their gods of the sea, sky, earth, mountain, volcano, and other sources of danger. Even today, some simply accept the consequence of catastrophic natural events as fate or an act of God.

Is God really responsible for the disasters that bring so much human suffering and loss around the world? Is he to blame? To find the answers, we need to take a closer look at what is involved in such disasters. In fact, we need to reexamine some familiar ground.

What Is a "Natural Disaster"?

When an earthquake struck Tangshan, China, and according to official Chinese reports killed 242,000 people, and when Hurricane Andrew slammed into South Florida and Louisiana in the United States and caused billions of dollars in damage, such natural disasters made international headlines. Yet, what if that earthquake had struck in the uninhabited Gobi Desert, 700 miles northwest of Tangshan, or what if Hurricane Andrew had taken a different course and had spent itself at sea, missing land altogether? They would hardly be remembered now.

Clearly, then, when we speak of natural disasters, we are not simply speaking of dramatic displays of natural forces. Every year there are thousands of earthquakes, large and small, and dozens of storms, cyclones, hurricanes, typhoons, volcanic eruptions, and other violent phenomena that do nothing more than become statistics in some record book. However, when such events cause great destruction of life and property and the disruption of the normal way of life, they become disasters.

It should be noted that the damage and the resulting loss are not always proportionate to the natural forces involved. The greatest disaster is not necessarily caused by the most powerful display of natural forces. For example, in 1971 an earthquake measuring 6.6 on the Richter scale hit San Fernando, California, United States, and killed 65 people. A year later a 6.2 quake in Managua, Nicaragua, killed 5,000 people!

Thus, when it comes to the increasing destructiveness of natural disasters, we must ask, Have the natural elements become more violent? Or have human factors contributed to the problem?

Who Is Responsible?

The Bible identifies Jehovah God as the Grand Creator of all things, including the natural forces of this earth. (Genesis 1:1; Nehemiah 9:6; Hebrews 3:4; Revelation 4:11) This does not mean that he causes every movement of wind or every rain shower. Rather, he has set in motion certain laws that govern the earth and its environment. For example, at Ecclesiastes 1:5-7, we read about three of the fundamental operations that make life on earth possible—the daily rising and setting of the sun, the unchanging pattern of winds, and the water cycle. Whether mankind is aware of them or not, for thousands of years these natural systems, and others like them, involving the climate, geology, and ecology of the earth have operated. In fact, the writer of Ecclesiastes was calling attention to the great contrast between the unchanging and endless ways of creation and the transitory and temporary nature of human life.

Not only is Jehovah the Creator of natural forces but he also has the power to control them. Throughout the Bible we find accounts of Jehovah's controlling or

manipulating such forces to accomplish his purpose. These include the parting of the Red Sea in Moses' day and the halting of the sun and moon in their paths across the heavens in the time of Joshua. (Exodus 14: 21-28; Joshua 10:12, 13) Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the promised Messiah, also demonstrated his power over natural forces as, for instance, when he calmed a storm on the Sea of Galilee. (Mark 4:37-39) Accounts like these leave no doubt that Jehovah God and his Son, Jesus Christ, can fully control all that affects life here on earth.—2 Chronicles 20:6; Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 19:26.

That being the case, can we hold God responsible for the increased havoc and devastation that have resulted from natural disasters in recent times? To answer this question, we must first consider whether there is evidence that the forces of nature have recently become dramatically more violent, perhaps even out of control.

In this regard, note what the book *Natural Disasters—Acts of God or Acts of Man?* has to say: "There is no evidence that the climatological mechanisms associated with droughts, floods and cyclones are changing. And no geologist is claiming that the earth movements associated with earthquakes, volcanoes and tsunami (earthquake waves) are becoming more violent." Similarly, the book *Earthshock* observes: "The rocks of every continent contain a record of innumerable major and minor geological events, every one of which would be a catastrophic disaster to mankind if they occurred today—and it is scientifically certain that such events *will* occur again and again in the future." In other words, the earth and its dynamic forces have more or less remained the same throughout the ages. Hence, whether or not some statistics indicate an increase of some forms of geologic or other

activity, the earth has not become uncontrollably violent in recent times.

What, then, accounts for the increase in the frequency and destructiveness of natural disasters that we read about? If the forces of nature are not to blame, the finger of guilt seems to point to the human element. And, indeed, authorities have recognized that human activities have made our environment both more prone to natural disasters and more vulnerable to them. In the developing nations, a growing need for food forces farmers to overcultivate what land they have or to reclaim land by clearing away vital forest covering. This leads to serious soil erosion. Expanding population also hastens the growth of slums and shantytowns haphazardly built in unsafe areas. Even in the more developed nations, people, like the millions living along the San Andreas Fault in California, have exposed themselves to danger in spite of clear warnings. In such circumstances, when an unusual turn of events—a storm, a flood, or an earthquake—occurs, can the disastrous result really be called "natural"?

A typical example is the drought in the African Sahel. We normally think of drought as the lack of rain or water, leading to famine, starvation, and death. But is the massive famine and starvation in that area due simply to lack of water? Says the book *Nature on the Rampage*: "Evidence gathered by scientific and relief agencies indicates that today's famine persists not so much from prolonged drought as from prolonged abuses of land and water resources.

. . . The continuing desertification of the Sahel is largely a man-caused phenomenon." A South African newspaper, *The Natal Witness*, observes: "Famine is not about lack of food; it is about lack of access to food. In other words, it is about poverty."

The same can be said of much of the destruction resulting from other catastrophes. Studies have shown that the poorer nations suffer disproportionately higher death rates from natural disasters than do the richer nations of the world. For example, from 1960 to 1981, according to one study, Japan had 43 earthquakes and other disasters and lost 2,700 lives, averaging 63 deaths per disaster. In the same period, Peru had 31 disasters with 91,000 deaths, or 2,900 per disaster. Why the difference? Natural forces may have provided the triggers, but it is human activity—social, economic, political—that must bear the responsibility for the large difference in the loss of life and destruction of property that resulted.

What Are the Solutions?

Scientists and experts have tried for many years to devise ways to cope with natural disasters. They probe deep into the earth to seek an understanding of the workings of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. With space satellites they observe the weather patterns to track the paths of cyclones and hurricanes or predict floods and drought. All this research has given them information that they hope will enable them to lessen the impact of these natural forces.

Have such efforts paid off? Regarding this kind of expensive, high-tech measure, one watchdog organization observes: "These have their place. But if they consume a disproportionate amount of money and effort—if they serve as an excuse to ignore the hazards built into the victims' societies which make disasters worse—then they can do more harm than good." For example, while it is useful to know that the coastal delta of Bangladesh is constantly threatened by floods and tidal waves, that knowledge does not prevent millions of

Bangladeshis from being forced to live there. The result is repeated disasters with death tolls numbering into the hundreds of thousands.

Clearly, technical information can be useful only to a point. Another thing that is needed is the ability to alleviate the pressures that leave people with little choice but to live in areas particularly exposed to dangers or to live in ways that devastate the environment. In other words, to mitigate the damage done by the elements would take a thorough reshaping of the social, economic, and political system under which we live. Who can accomplish such a task? Only the One who can control even the forces that trigger natural disasters.

Acts of God Ahead

Jehovah God will not just deal with the symptoms but he will get to the root cause of human misery. He will put an end to the greedy and oppressive political, commercial, and religious systems that have "dominated man to his injury." (Ecclesiastes 8:9) Anyone familiar with the Bible will not fail to note that throughout its pages there are numerous prophecies pointing to the time when God will take action to rid the earth of wickedness and suffering and to restore an earthly paradise of peace and righteousness.—Psalm 37:9-11, 29; Isaiah 13:9; 65:17, 20-25; Jeremiah 25:31-33; 2 Peter 3:7; Revelation 11:18.

That, in effect, is what Jesus Christ taught all his followers to pray for, namely, "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matthew 6:10) The Messianic Kingdom will remove and replace all imperfect human rule, as the prophet Daniel foretold: "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be



passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."

—Daniel 2:44.

What will God's Kingdom accomplish that the nations today cannot? The Bible provides a fascinating foregleam of what is to come. Rather than conditions illustrated on these pages, such as famine and poverty, "there will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow," and "the tree of the field must give its fruitage, and the land itself will give its yield, and they will actually prove to be on their soil in security." (Psalm 72:16; Ezekiel 34:27) Regarding the natural environment, the Bible tells us: "The wilderness and the waterless region will exult, and the desert plain will be joyful and blossom as the saffron. . . . For in the wilderness waters will have burst out, and torrents in



the desert plain. And the heat-parched ground will have become as a reedy pool, and the thirsty ground as springs of water." (Isaiah 35:1, 6, 7) And wars will be no more.—Psalm 46:9.

How Jehovah God will accomplish all of that, and how he will deal with all the natural forces so that they will no longer be the cause of any harm, the Bible does not say. What is certain, however, is that all who live under that righteous government "will not toil for nothing, nor will they bring to birth for disturbance; because they are the offspring made up of the blessed ones of Jehovah, and their descendants with them."

—Isaiah 65:23.

In the pages of this magazine, as well as in other publications of the Watch Tower Society, Jehovah's Witnesses have repeatedly pointed out that God's Kingdom was established in heaven in the year 1914.

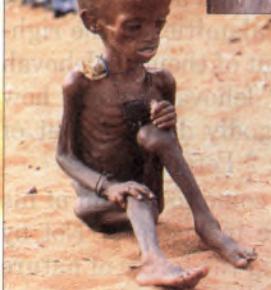
Human activities have made our environment more prone to natural disasters

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Under the direction of that Kingdom, a global witness has been given for nearly 80 years, and today we are at the threshold of a promised "new heavens and a new earth." Mankind will be freed not only from the ravages of natural disasters but also from all the pain and suffering that have been plaguing humanity for the last six thousand

years. Of that time it can truly be said, "the former things have passed away."—2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:4.

What, though, about now? Has God been acting in behalf of those in distress due to natural circumstances or otherwise? Most certainly he has but not necessarily in the way that most people might expect.

Jehovah's Saving Acts Now

THE Bible tells us this about Jehovah: "Many are the calamities of the righteous one, but out of them all Jehovah delivers him" and, "Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial."—Psalm 34:19; 2 Peter 2:9.

How does Jehovah come to the aid of his people when they are in distress? Not by miraculously reversing the forces of nature or by some other supernatural act, as many persons think he should, but by another force that most people do not truly comprehend—love. Yes, Jehovah loves his people, and he has nurtured among them a love for one another so strong that he is able to accomplish for them what appears to be almost miraculous.—1 John 4:10-12, 21.

Some may argue that at a time of emergency, what is needed is food, medicine, and equipment—not love. Of course, food, medicine, and equipment are important. However, the apostle Paul reasons this way: "If I have all the faith so as to transplant

mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my belongings to feed others, and if I hand over my body, that I may boast, but do not have love, I am not profited at all."—1 Corinthians 13:2, 3.

Often we read of relief material sitting on piers rotting or being eaten by rodents while people in need perish from disease and starvation. Or worse still, such material may fall into the hands of greedy and unscrupulous people who make personal profit out of it. Thus, it is one thing to have supplies available, but it is quite another to see that those in distress benefit from them. Genuine love and concern can make the difference.

Love in Action

In September 1992, Hurricane Iniki hit the Hawaiian island of Kauai, population 55,000. Packing winds of 130 miles per hour and gusts up to 160 miles per hour, it killed 2 people and injured 98, damaged 75 percent of the homes, left 8,000 people home-

less, and caused an estimated \$1 billion worth of destruction. Among those living on this small island were some 800 of Jehovah's Witnesses in six congregations. How did they fare?

Before Iniki actually hit, the congregation elders, under the direction of the traveling overseer, had already contacted all the members of the congregations to make sure that they were safe and secure, ready for the onslaught. Such loving care was instrumental in preventing serious injury or death among the Witnesses.—Compare Isaiah 32:1, 2.

Even though communication and transportation were badly disrupted, three representatives of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society's branch office in Honolulu were among the first to arrive on the scene following the hurricane, having been granted special permission by civil defense to fly to Kauai. Immediately, they contacted the local Witnesses and, the next morning, organized a meeting to map out the strategy for relief. A relief committee was set up to assess the needs and to obtain the needed materials through the branch office in Honolulu. Working around the clock, they directed the work of getting supplies to those in need and cleaning up and repairing homes that were damaged.

Witnesses on the other islands responded quickly to their brothers in need. As soon as the airport on Kauai was opened, 70 Witnesses flew in to help. Relief supplies valued at \$100,000, including generators, camp stoves, lanterns, and food, were shipped. One of the Kingdom Halls on the island was used as a depot; however, there was some fear that it might be looted. Then some Army trucks pulled up at the Kingdom Hall parking lot, and the drivers asked if they could park their trucks there. The

soldiers posted to protect the trucks also eliminated the problem of looting the relief supplies.

The brothers took the generators from house to house, running them at each home for two or three hours to help people keep their freezers usable. Groups of brothers were dispatched to various homes to help clean up and repair the damage. When they worked on the house of a sister whose husband had opposed her fiercely in the past, the husband was so moved that all he could do was stand by and cry. A visitor from the mainland who saw another group of Witnesses working was so impressed by their conduct and organization that he approached them and asked what made them so different. When a brother explained that it was their love for God and for their fellow Christians, the man responded: "How can I get to know God?" (Matthew 22:37-40) Then he added: "You people are so organized you will probably have someone waiting for me when I return to Florida!"

In all, Jehovah's Witnesses assisted in cleaning up and repairing 295 homes on Kauai. Of these, 207 required minor repairs, but 54 were severely damaged, and 19 were totally destroyed. Their work also included calling on every known Witness on the island to make sure that each one was cared for. When supplies were delivered to a sister, a Buddhist neighbor observed that he had not received even a tea bag from his group. Another lady, who had her house cleaned by a Witness team, said: "You have been coming to my door for a long time, and I thought of you as good neighbors, but this expression of neighborly love shows me what your organization is about. Thanks for all your hard work."

Besides caring for the material needs of all their fellow Christians, those in charge

of relief were equally concerned about their spiritual well-being. Less than two days after the hurricane, several congregations were already holding their meetings. Quickly, small book study groups were back into operation. Ten elders from the other islands came to Kauai to assist the local elders so that shepherding calls could be made on every Witness on the island. The next Sunday, all six congregations had a *Watchtower* Study, a 30-minute talk on relief procedures by a member of the Relief Committee, and a concluding 30-minute talk by a member of the Branch Committee who had come over from Honolulu for this purpose. An on-the-scene report states: "All were comforted by the fine direction given and felt spiritually ready to tackle

their remaining problems. There were very few dry eyes in the audience as the program concluded, and applause was spontaneous."

A Worldwide Brotherhood

Such love and concern is a mark of Jehovah's people worldwide. When Cyclone Val swept through Western Samoa about a year earlier, it caused quite a lot of damage, but Jehovah's Witnesses in other parts of the world quickly came to the aid of their brothers there. Later, when the government provided funds for all the religions—including Jehovah's Witnesses—to repair their premises, the Witnesses returned the funds with a letter stating that all their damage was already fixed, and the funds could be used to repair some government buildings. Their action was reported in a



Witnesses came from far and near to help flood victims



local newspaper. Noting this, a government official told a Witness that he felt rather ashamed of his own church because they had accepted the money from the government even though all their buildings that were damaged during the cyclone were covered by insurance.

Similarly, in September 1992, when the Ouvèze River in southeastern France flooded and devastated Vaison-la-Romaine and 15 surrounding communities, the Witnesses responded quickly. Overnight, the flood had claimed 40 lives, destroyed 400 homes, damaged hundreds of others, and left thousands of families without water or electricity. Early the next morning, Witnesses from the local congregations were the first to come to the aid of flood victims. Those in need of shelter were lovingly taken in by Witness families in the region. Hundreds of Witnesses came from far and near to offer assistance. A relief committee was set up in the nearby city of Orange to coordinate the efforts of four teams of volunteers, who removed mud and cleaned houses, washed mountains of mud-soaked clothes, and prepared and delivered food and drinking water throughout the affected areas. They even volunteered to clean up a local school and several municipal buildings. Their tireless efforts were appreciated by their brothers and people in the community alike.

In many other places, Jehovah's Witnesses have suffered from disasters, such as floods, storms, and earthquakes, just as everyone else has. Understanding that these are the consequences of unforeseen or unpreventable circumstances, they do not blame God or anyone else. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) Rather, they are confident that the self-sacrificing love of their fellow believers will come to their rescue no matter what dire circumstances may befall them. Such

loving acts are a result of the faith they share in common. The disciple James explains: "If a brother or a sister is in a naked state and lacking the food sufficient for the day, yet a certain one of you says to them: 'Go in peace, keep warm and well fed,' but you do not give them the necessities for their body, of what benefit is it? Thus, too, faith, if it does not have works, is dead in itself."—James 2:15-17.

The Source of True Protection

Rather than expect miracles in the form of divine intervention of some sort, Jehovah's Witnesses realize that protection is to be found in their worldwide Christian brotherhood. As a matter of fact, what that brotherhood is able to accomplish in times of distress is nothing less than miraculous. They remember Jesus' words found at Matthew 17:20: "If you have faith the size of a mustard grain, you will say to this mountain, 'Transfer from here to there,' and it will transfer, and nothing will be impossible for you." Yes, mountainous obstacles disappear when true Christian faith, coupled with love, goes into action.

Jehovah's people worldwide feel the protective hand of their God in these unstable and perilous times. They feel as did the psalmist: "In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for you yourself alone, O Jehovah, make me dwell in security." (Psalm 4:8) Confidently, they focus their attention on the task at hand: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14) And with certainty they look forward to the realization of Jehovah's promise of a peaceful, righteous new world, in which they will no longer experience disasters of any kind, man-made or natural.—Micah 4:4.

EXAMPLES OF HUMILITY TO IMITATE

"Your own humility will make me great."—PSALM 18:35.

JOSEPH F. RUTHERFORD had a commanding presence, being more than six feet tall and weighing well over 200 pounds. He also had a powerful voice, which he used not only to make known the name of Jehovah as it had never been made known before but also to expose the duplicity of the religious leaders of Christendom, terming their religion "a snare and a racket." But as powerful as his speeches were, when he prayed with the headquarters Bethel family, he sounded just like a small boy talking to his daddy, thus giving evidence of both his intimate relationship with his Maker and his humility. Yes, he was as humble as a little child.—Matthew 18:3, 4.

² Undoubtedly, all true servants of Jehovah God are humble. In this regard they stand in striking contrast with people of the world. Today, more than ever before, it is filled with proud individuals. The high and the mighty, the rich and the learned, and even many of the poor and those disadvantaged in other ways are proud.

³ Pride causes no end of strife and misery. Indeed, all the woe in the universe got started because a certain angel became proud, wanting to be worshiped the way that was

1. What evidence of humility could be seen in a former president of the Watch Tower Society?
2. In what particular respect do Jehovah's servants stand in striking contrast with individuals in the world?
3. What can be said about the fruits of pride?

uniquely due the Creator, Jehovah God. (Matthew 4:9, 10) Moreover, that one, who made himself the Devil and Satan, succeeded in seducing the first woman, Eve, by appealing to her pride. He promised her that if she ate of the forbidden fruit, she could be like God himself, knowing both good and bad. Had she been humble, she would have said, 'Why should I want to be like God?' (Genesis 3:4, 5) When we consider the wretched state that mankind is in, physically, mentally, and morally, how inexcusable is pride on the part of humans! No wonder we read that Jehovah hates "self-exaltation and pride"! (Proverbs 8:13) In striking contrast with all proud ones are the examples of humility that are found in God's Word, the Bible.

Jehovah God Is Humble

⁴ Jehovah God—the Most High, the Universal Sovereign, the King of eternity—is humble. (Genesis 14:22) Could that possibly be so? Yes, indeed! King David said, as recorded at Psalm 18:35: "You will give me your shield of salvation, and your own right hand will sustain me, and your own humility will make me great." Clearly, King David credited Jehovah's humility with making him, David, great. Then again, we read at Psalm 113:6 that Jehovah "is condescending to look on heaven and earth." Other

4. What scriptures show that Jehovah is humble?

translations read, “stoops down to look,” (*New International Version*) “deigns to look down so low.”—*The New English Bible*.

⁵ Jehovah God certainly condescended in the way he dealt with Abraham, allowing Abraham to question His righteousness in purposing to destroy the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.* (Genesis 18:23-32) And when Jehovah expressed his inclination to wipe out the nation of Israel—one time for idolatry, another time for rebellion—Moses on each occasion reasoned with Jehovah as if he were talking to another human. Each time Jehovah responded favorably. It showed humility for Him to grant Moses’ pleas regarding His people Israel. (Exodus 32:9-14; Numbers 14:11-20)

Other examples of Jehovah’s humbly deal-

* “Condescend” is often used with the meaning “assume an air of superiority.” But its main meaning—and its meaning in the *New World Translation*—is “unbend,” “waive the privileges of rank.”—See *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*.

5. What incidents testify to Jehovah’s humility?

Jesus gave a fine demonstration of humility

ing with humans on a person-to-person basis, as it were, are to be seen in his relations with Gideon and Jonah, as recorded at Judges 6:36-40 and Jonah 4:9-11.

⁶ In fact, at least nine times, Jehovah is said to be “slow to anger.”* Jehovah’s being long-suffering, slow to anger, in dealing with imperfect human creatures down through the millenniums is further proof of his being humble. Proud persons are impatient, quick to express rage, far different from long-suffering. How Jehovah’s humility makes the pride of imperfect humans look absurd! Since we are told to ‘be imitators of God as beloved children,’ we must be humble even as he is humble.—Ephesians 5:1.

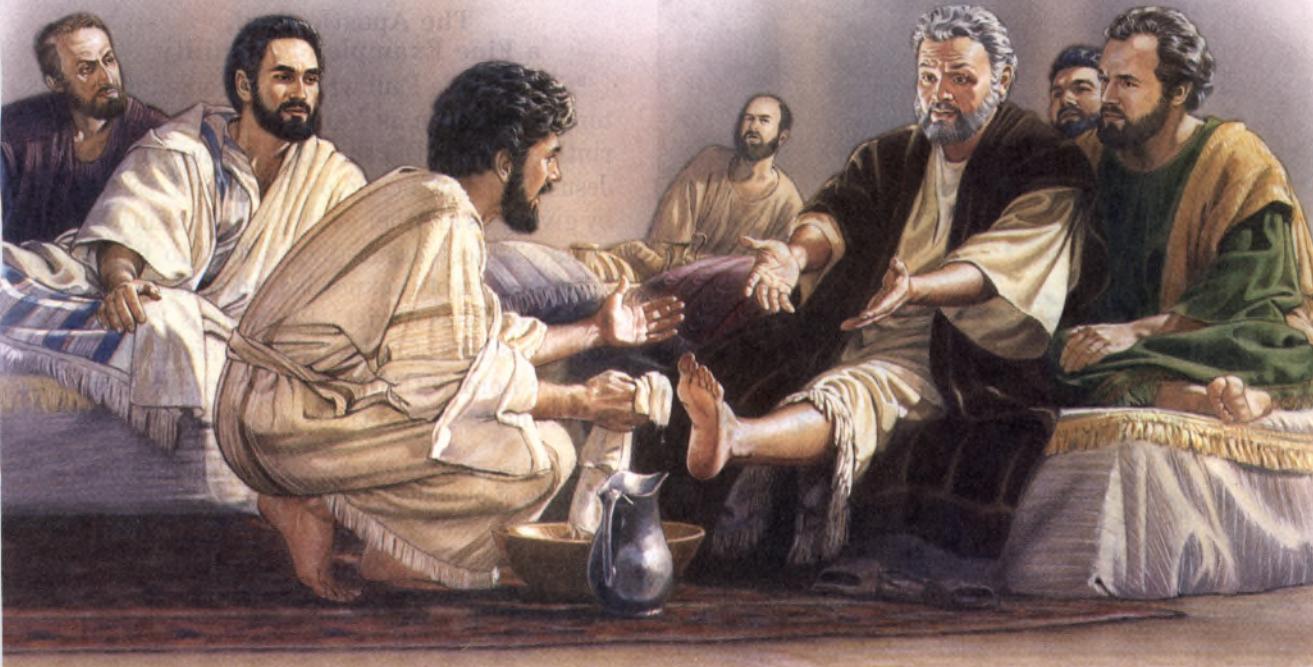
Christ’s Example of Humility

⁷ The second most striking example of humility for us to imitate is mentioned at 1 Peter 2:21: “In fact, to this course you

* Exodus 34:6; Numbers 14:18; Nehemiah 9:17; Psalm 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Nahum 1:3.

6. What characteristic of Jehovah further reveals his humility?

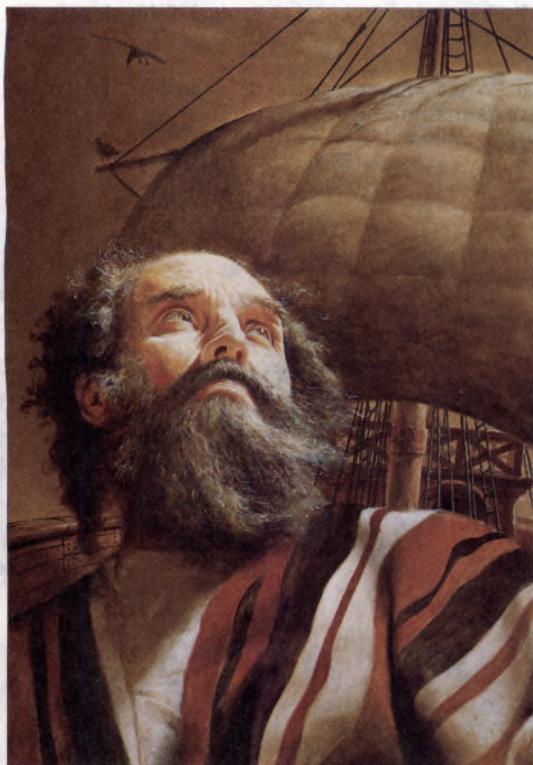
7, 8. What do the Scriptures say about the humility of Jesus Christ?



were called, because even Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely." Long before he came to earth as a man, it was prophesied concerning him at Zechariah 9:9: "Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem. Look! Your king himself comes to you. He is righteous, yes, saved; humble, and riding upon an ass." Had Jesus Christ been proud, he might well have accepted the Devil's offer of all the kingdoms in the world in exchange for one act of worship. (Matthew 4:9, 10) He also showed his humility by ascribing to Jehovah all credit for his teaching, saying: "When once you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing of my own initiative; but just as the Father taught me I speak these things."

—John 8:28.

Paul set a fine example of humility



⁸ Well could he say to his listeners: "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls." (Matthew 11:29) And what a fine example of humility he set by washing the feet of his apostles on the last evening that he was with them as a man! (John 13:3-15) Most fittingly, at Philippians 2:3-8, the apostle Paul counsels Christians to have "lowness of mind," citing Jesus Christ as an example: "Keep this mental attitude in you that was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he was existing in God's form, gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God. No, but he emptied himself and took a slave's form and came to be in the likeness of men. More than that, when he found himself in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient as far as death, yes, death on a torture stake." When faced with the greatest crisis of his life, he humbly prayed to his Father: "Not as I will, but as you will." (Matthew 26:39) Without the shadow of a doubt, for us to be imitators of Jesus Christ, following closely in his footsteps, we must be humble.

**The Apostle Paul,
a Fine Example of Humility**

⁹ The apostle Paul wrote: "Become imitators of me, even as I am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1) Did the apostle Paul imitate Jesus Christ by being lowly in mind, thereby giving us another example of humility to imitate? Most assuredly he did. To begin with, he humbly acknowledged that he was a slave of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:1) He told the elders of Ephesus about his 'slaving for the Lord with the greatest lowness of mind and tears and trials that befell him by

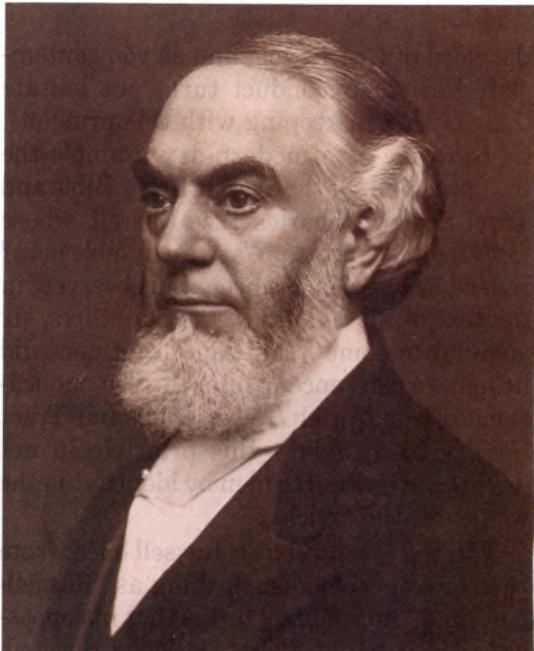
9-12. In what ways did the apostle Paul set a fine example of humility?

the plots of the Jews.' (Acts 20:17-19) Had he not been humble, he would never have written the words found at Romans 7: 18, 19: "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells nothing good . . . For the good that I wish I do not do, but the bad that I do not wish is what I practice."

¹⁰ Also indicative of Paul's humility is what he wrote to the Christians at Corinth, as recorded at 1 Corinthians 2:3: "I came to you in weakness and in fear and with much trembling." Humbly referring to his past course before becoming a Christian, he wrote: "Formerly I was a blasphemer and a persecutor and an insolent man. . . . Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Of these I am foremost."—1 Timothy 1: 13, 15.

¹¹ Further showing his humility is his ascribing to Jehovah God all success in his efforts. He wrote concerning his ministry: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God kept making it grow; so that neither is he that plants anything nor is he that waters, but God who makes it grow." (1 Corinthians 3: 6, 7) He also asked his brothers to pray for him that he might give a good witness, as we read at Ephesians 6:18-20: "Carry on prayer . . . for me, that ability to speak may be given me . . . that I may speak in connection with [the sacred secret of the good news] with boldness as I ought to speak."

¹² Paul also showed his humility in the way he cooperated with the other apostles: "James and Cephas and John . . . gave me and Barnabas the right hand of sharing together, that we should go to the nations, but they to those who are circumcised." (Galatians 2:9) He further showed his willingness to cooperate with the elders of the Jerusalem congregation by accompanying four young men to the temple and paying their expenses as they fulfilled a vow.—Acts 21: 23-26.



Brother Russell did not take credit to himself for the things he wrote

¹³ Paul's humility is all the more remarkable when we note how mightily he was used by Jehovah God. For example, we read that "God kept performing extraordinary works of power through the hands of Paul." (Acts 19:11, 12) More than that, he was given supernatural visions and revelations. (2 Corinthians 12:1-7) We should also not overlook his being inspired to write 14 of the 27 books (actually letters) of the Christian Greek Scriptures. All of that did not go to his head, so to speak. He kept humble.

Modern-Day Examples

¹⁴ At Hebrews 13:7, we read the apostle Paul's counsel: "Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken

13. What made Paul's humility so remarkable?
- 14-16. (a) How was the first president of the Watch Tower Society a fine example of humility? (b) His example stands in striking contrast with that of whom?

the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out imitate their faith." In keeping with this principle, we can take as a modern-day example the first president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Charles Taze Russell, whose faith we may imitate. Was he a humble man? Indeed he was! As has been well observed, in the text of his *Studies in the Scriptures*, six volumes of some 3,000 pages, not once did he make a reference to himself. The publications of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society today follow this principle in not drawing attention to men by identifying the writers of the articles.

¹⁵ In the *Watch Tower*, Russell once wrote that he knew of no such thing as "Russellism" and "Russellite," terms that his opposers used but that he categorically rejected. He wrote: "Our work . . . has been to bring together long scattered fragments of truth and present them to the Lord's people—not as *new*, not as *our own*, but as the Lord's. . . . The work in which the Lord has been pleased to use our humble talent has been less a work of origination than a work of reconstruction, adjustment, harmonization." Truly, he voiced the sentiments of the apostle Paul, as found at 1 Corinthians 3:5-7.

¹⁶ His attitude was entirely opposite that of Charles Darwin. In his first edition of *The Origin of Species* in 1859, Darwin repeatedly referred to "my" theory, ignoring what others before him had said about evolution. A noted writer of that century, Samuel Butler, lambasted Darwin, pointing out that many others had previously advanced the evolution hypothesis; by no means was it original with Darwin.

¹⁷ Another faithful servant in modern times whom Jehovah God used mightily was

17. What are further examples of Brother Rutherford's humility?

Joseph F. Rutherford, mentioned at the outset. He was a bold advocate of Bible truth and in particular of the name of Jehovah. Though widely known as Judge Rutherford, he was at heart a humble man. For example, he once made some dogmatic statements as to what Christians could expect in 1925. When events failed to support his expectations, he humbly told the Brooklyn Bethel family that he had made a fool of himself. An anointed Christian who had quite close association with him testified that time and again he heard Brother Rutherford apologize in the spirit of Matthew 5:23, 24, both in public and in private, for having hurt a fellow Christian by some ill-advised expression. It takes humility for one in a position of authority to apologize to those who are in subjection to him. Brother Rutherford set a fine example for all overseers, whether in a congregation, in the traveling work, or in one of the Society's branches.

¹⁸ The third president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Nathan H. Knorr, also showed that, prominent as he was among Jehovah's people, he did not feel exalted because of his position. Although he excelled in organizing ability and in public speaking, he had great respect for what others did. Thus, he once visited a member of the Writing Department in his office and stated: "Here is where the most important as well as the most difficult work takes place. That's why I do so little of it." Yes, he was humbly applying the counsel at Philippians 2:3, that 'with lowliness of mind a person should consider that others are superior to him.' He appreciated that although serving as the president of the Society was important, other tasks were also important. It took humility on his part to feel that way

18. What expression revealing a humble state of mind did the third president of the Society make?

and to express it in so many words. He was another fine example for all to imitate, especially those who may have a prominent position of oversight.

¹⁹ The fourth president of the Society, Fred W. Franz, was also a fine example of humility. As vice president of the Society for some 32 years, he did much of the writing for the magazines and for the convention programs; yet in this regard he always kept in the background, never seeking to occupy the spotlight. A comparable ancient example might be cited. When Joab defeated the Ammonites at Rabbah, he made sure that King David received the credit for the victory.—2 Samuel 12:26-28.

19, 20. (a) What example of humility did the fourth president of the Society set? (b) What help will the next article give as to our exercising humility?

²⁰ Truly, there are many fine examples, past and present, giving us powerful reasons to be humble. However, there are many more reasons for us to be humble, and these as well as aids to our being humble will be considered in the following article.

Do You Remember?

- What have been the fruits of pride?
- Who has set the finest example in humility?
- What shows who was the second greatest example of humility?
- What fine example of humility did the apostle Paul set?
- What prominent modern-day examples of humility do we have?

HAPPY ARE THE HUMBLE

“God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones.”—1 PETER 5:5.

ARE being happy and being humble related? In his most famous sermon, Jesus Christ, the greatest man who ever lived, describes nine happinesses, or felicities. (Matthew 5:1-12) Did Jesus relate being happy to being humble? Yes, he did, for being humble is involved in a number of the happinesses that he mentioned.

1, 2. How did Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount relate the matter of being happy to that of being humble?

For example, a person has to be humble to be conscious of his spiritual need. Only the humble are hungering and thirsting for righteousness. And the proud are not mild-tempered and not merciful, nor are they peacemakers.

² The humble are happy because it is right and honest to be humble. Moreover, the humble are happy because it is wise to be humble; it makes for good relations with Jehovah God and fellow Christians.

Furthermore, humble people are happy because it is an expression of love on their part to be humble.

³ Why does honesty require us to be humble? For one thing, because all of us inherit imperfection and keep making mistakes. The apostle Paul said of himself: "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells nothing good; for ability to wish is present with me, but ability to work out what is fine is not present." (Romans 7:18) Yes, all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23) Candor will keep us from being proud. To admit a mistake takes humility, and honesty will help us to accept the blame whenever we make a mistake. Since we keep falling short of what we strive to do, we have sound reason to be humble.

⁴ The apostle Paul gives us another reason why honesty should make us humble. He says: "Who makes you to differ from another? Indeed, what do you have that you did not receive? If, now, you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as though you did not receive it?" (1 Corinthians 4:7) There is no question about it, for us to take glory to ourselves, to be proud of our possessions, abilities, or attainments, would not be honest. Honesty contributes to our having a good conscience before God, so that we may "conduct ourselves honestly in all things." —Hebrews 13:18.

⁵ Honesty helps us to be humble when we make a mistake. It will make us readier to accept the blame, instead of trying to justify ourselves or shift the blame onto someone else. Thus, while Adam blamed Eve,

3. Why does honesty obligate us to be humble?
4. What compelling reason is given at 1 Corinthians 4:7 for our being humble?
5. How will honesty also help us when we have made a mistake?

David did not blame Bath-sheba, saying, 'She should not have bathed herself in full view. I could not help being tempted.' (Genesis 3:12; 2 Samuel 11:2-4) Really, it might be said that on the one hand, being honest helps us to be humble; on the other hand, being humble helps us to be honest.

Faith in Jehovah Helps Us to Be Humble

⁶ Faith in Jehovah will also help us to be humble. Appreciating how great the Creator, the Universal Sovereign, truly is will prevent us from taking ourselves too seriously. How well the prophet Isaiah reminds us of this! At Isaiah 40:15, 22, we read: "Look! The nations are as a drop from a bucket; and as the film of dust on the scales they have been accounted. . . . There is One who is dwelling above the circle of the earth, the dwellers in which are as grasshoppers."

⁷ Faith in Jehovah will also help us when we feel we have suffered an injustice. Rather than fret over the matter, we will humbly wait upon Jehovah, as the psalmist reminds us at Psalm 37:1-3, 8, 9. The apostle Paul makes the same point: "Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath; for it is written: 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay,' says Jehovah." —Romans 12:19.

Humility—The Course of Wisdom

⁸ There are many reasons why being humble is the course of wisdom. One is that, as already indicated, it makes for good relations with our Maker. God's Word plainly states at Proverbs 16:5: "Everyone that is proud in heart is something detestable to Jehovah." We also read at Proverbs 16:18: "Pride is before a crash, and a haughty spir-

- 6, 7. How does faith in God assist us to be humble?
8. Why does humility make for a good relationship with Jehovah?

it before stumbling.” Sooner or later the proud come to grief. It simply has to be that way because of what we read at 1 Peter 5:5: “All of you gird yourselves with lowliness of mind toward one another, because God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones.” You will find the same point in the illustration that Jesus gave of the Pharisee and the tax collector who were each praying. It was the humble tax collector who was proved more righteous.—Luke 18:9-14.

⁹ Humility is the course of wisdom because humility makes it easier for us to heed

9. What help is humility in times of adversity?

Job humbly submitted himself to Jehovah. He did not “curse God and die”



the counsel found at James 4:7: “Subject yourselves, therefore, to God.” If we are humble, we will not rebel when Jehovah permits us to suffer adversity. Humility will enable us to be content with our circumstances and to endure. A proud person is discontented, always wants more, and rebels at grievous circumstances. On the other hand, the humble person endures hardships and trials, even as Job did. Job suffered the loss of all his possessions and was smitten with a painful malady, and then his wife even counseled him to take the course of pride, saying: “Curse God and die!” How did he respond? The Bible record tells us: “He said to her: ‘As one of the senseless women speaks, you speak also. Shall we accept merely what is good from the true God and not accept also what is bad?’ In all this Job did not sin with his lips.” (Job 2:9, 10) Because Job was humble, he did not rebel but wisely submitted to whatever Jehovah allowed to come upon him. And finally he received a rich reward.—Job 42:10-16; James 5:11.

Humility Makes for Good Relations With Others

¹⁰ Humility is the course of wisdom because it makes for good relations with our fellow Christians. Well does the apostle Paul counsel us: “[Do] nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind considering that the others are superior to you, keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just your own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others.” (Philippians 2:3, 4) Humility will wisely keep us from competing with others or trying to outshine others. Such mental attitudes make problems for us and for our fellow Christians.

10. How does humility improve our relations with fellow Christians?

¹¹ Time and time again humility will help us to avoid making mistakes. How so? Because humility will keep us from being over-confident. Rather, we will appreciate Paul's counsel at 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall." The proud person is too self-confident, so he is prone to make mistakes because of outside influences or his own weaknesses.

¹² Humility will help us to meet the requirement of being in subjection. At Ephesians 5:21, we are counseled: "Be in subjection to one another in fear of Christ." Really, do not all of us need to be in subjection? Children need to be subject to their parents, wives to their husbands, and husbands to the Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:22; 6:1) Then, in any Christian congregation, all, including the ministerial servants, have to show subjection to the elders. Is it not also true that elders are in subjection to the faithful slave class, especially as represented by the circuit overseer? Then again, the circuit overseer needs to be in subjection to the district overseer, and the district overseer to the Branch Committee of the land where he is serving. What about the Branch Committee members? They must be "in subjection to one another" and also to the Governing Body representing the faithful and discreet slave class, which, in turn, is accountable to Jesus, the enthroned King. (Matthew 24:45-47) As in any body of elders, members of the Governing Body have to respect the others' points of view. For example, one may think he has a fine idea. But unless a sufficient number of the other members agree

11. Why can humility help us to avoid making mistakes?

12. Humility will move us to meet what Scriptural obligation?

with his suggestion, he just has to put the matter aside. Truly, all of us need humility, for all of us are in subjection.

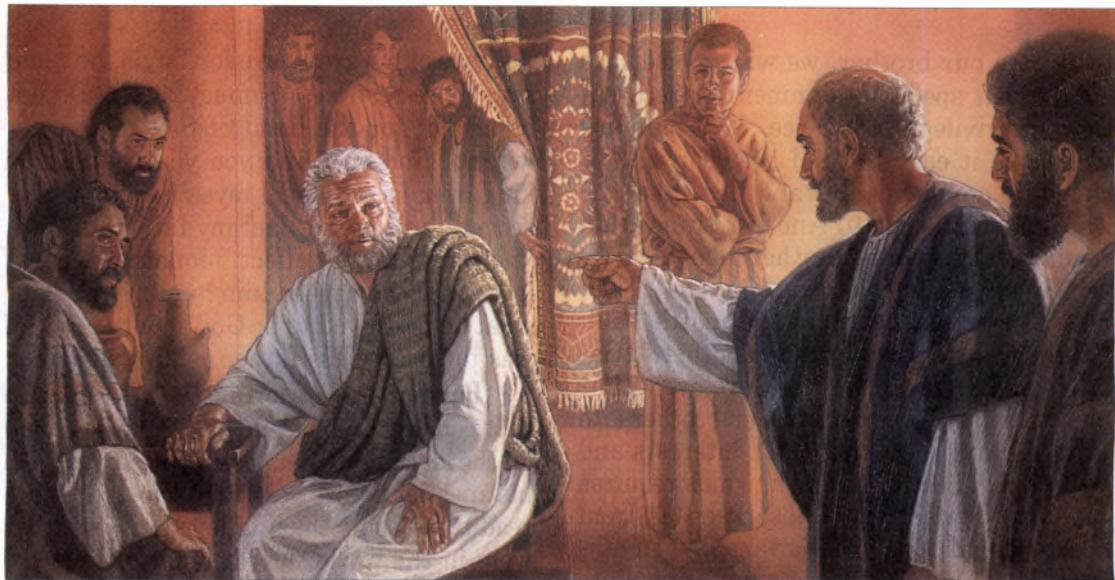
¹³ Especially is humility seen to be the course of wisdom in that humility makes it easier for us to accept counsel and discipline. Each of us needs discipline at times, and we do well to heed the counsel at Proverbs 19:20: "Listen to counsel and accept discipline, in order that you may become wise in your future." As has been well stated, humility takes the sting out of reproof or discipline. Additionally, the apostle Paul, at Hebrews 12:4-11, counsels us about the wisdom of humbly submitting to discipline. Only in this way can we hope to direct our future course wisely and in return gain the prize of everlasting life. What a happy outcome that will be!

¹⁴ In this regard we might point to the example of the apostle Peter. He received severe counsel from the apostle Paul, as we learn from the account at Galatians 2:14: "When I saw they were not walking straight according to the truth of the good news, I said to Cephas [Peter] before them all: 'If you, though you are a Jew, live as the nations do, and not as Jews do, how is it that you are compelling people of the nations to live according to Jewish practice?'" Did the apostle Peter feel offended? Not lastingly, if at all, as can be seen from his later reference to "our beloved brother Paul" at 2 Peter 3:15, 16.

¹⁵ There is also the matter of being self-sufficient, content. We simply cannot be happy unless we are content with our lot, our privileges, our blessings. The humble Christian takes the attitude: "If God per-

13, 14. (a) In what particular circumstance will humility help us? (b) What example did Peter set in regard to accepting counsel?

15. What is the relationship between our being humble and our being happy?



Peter humbly submitted when Paul counseled him in public

mits it, I can take it," which is really what the apostle Paul says, as we read at 1 Corinthians 10:13: "No temptation has taken you except what is common to men. But God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out in order for you to be able to endure it." So we see again how humility is the course of wisdom, for it helps us to be happy regardless of what our lot may be.

Love Will Help Us to Be Humble

¹⁶ More than anything else, unselfish love, *a·ga'pe*, will help us to be humble. Why was Jesus able to endure so humbly his torture-stake experience that Paul describes to the Philippians? (Philippians 2:5-8) Why did he give no consideration to being equal with

16, 17. (a) What Scriptural example highlights the greatest quality in helping us to be humble? (b) What secular example also illustrates this point?

God? Because, as he himself said: "I love the Father." (John 14:31) That is why he at all times directed glory and honor to Jehovah, his heavenly Father. Thus, on another occasion he stressed that only his heavenly Father was good.—Luke 18:18, 19.

¹⁷ Illustrating this point is an incident in the life of one of America's early poets, John Greenleaf Whittier. This man had a childhood sweetheart, and once at a spelling bee, she spelled a word right, whereas he spelled it wrong. She felt very bad about it. Why? As the poet recollects, she said: "I'm sorry that I spelled that word. I hate to go above you . . . because you see, I love you." Yes, if we love someone, we will want that one to be above, not beneath, us because love is humble.

¹⁸ This is a good lesson for all Christians, especially brothers. When it comes to a special privilege of service, will we rejoice that our brother received it instead of us, or will we feel a tinge of jealousy and envy? If we

18. Humility will help us to heed what Scriptural counsel?

truly love our brother, we will rejoice that he got that special assignment or recognition or privilege of service. Yes, humility will make it easy to heed the counsel: "In showing honor to one another take the lead." (Romans 12:10) Another translation reads: "Honor one another above yourselves." (*New International Version*) Then again, we are counseled by the apostle Paul: "Through love slave for one another." (Galatians 5:13) Yes, if we have love, we will be glad to be at the service of our brothers, to slave for them, putting their interests and well-being ahead of our own, which requires humility. Humility will also keep us from boasting and thus avoid awakening in others the spirit of jealousy or envy. Paul wrote that love "does not brag, does not get puffed up." Why not? Because the motive behind bragging and getting puffed up is selfish, egotistical, whereas love is the very essence of unselfishness.—1 Corinthians 13:4.

¹⁹ David's relationship with King Saul and his son Jonathan is a striking example of how love and humility go hand in hand and how pride and selfishness likewise go hand in hand. Because of David's successes in battle, the women of Israel sang: "Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." (1 Samuel 18:7) Not being humble at all but, rather, being consumed with pride, Saul from then on nursed a murderous hatred for David. How different this was from the spirit of his son Jonathan! We read that Jonathan loved David as his own soul. (1 Samuel 18:1) So how did Jonathan respond when, in the course of events, it was apparent that Jehovah was blessing David and that he, not Jonathan, would succeed Saul as king of Israel? Did Jonathan feel jealous or envious? Not at all!

19. What Bible examples illustrate that humility and love go hand in hand, as do pride and selfishness?

Because of his great love for David, he could say, as we read at 1 Samuel 23:17: "Do not be afraid; for the hand of Saul my father will not find you, and you yourself will be king over Israel, and I myself shall become second to you; and Saul my father also has knowledge to that effect." Jonathan's great love for David caused him humbly to accept what he perceived to be God's will as to who was to succeed his father as king of Israel.

²⁰ Further underscoring the relationship between love and humility is what happened on the last night that Jesus Christ was with his apostles before he died. At John 13:1, we read that Jesus, "having loved his own that were in the world, loved them to the end." Following that, we read, Jesus washed his apostles' feet, acting like a menial servant. What a powerful lesson in humility!—John 13:1-11.

²¹ Truly, there are many reasons to be humble. It is the right, the honest thing to be humble. It is the course of faith. It makes for good relations with Jehovah God and with our fellow believers. It is the course of wisdom. Above all, it is the course of love and brings true happiness.

20. How did Jesus show the close relationship between love and humility?
21. In summary, why should we be humble?

How Would You Answer?

- In what ways is honesty a help in being humble?
- Why can faith in Jehovah help us to be humble?
- What shows that being humble is the course of wisdom?
- Why is love especially helpful to our being humble?

Gilead Training in the Most Holy Faith

OUR students have been well trained in the most holy faith." These were the opening remarks at the graduation program of the 95th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, held on Sunday, September 12, 1993. On that morning the 4,614 invited guests and members of the Bethel family who were gathered at the Jersey City Assembly Hall were led in an opening prayer by George Gangas. Brother Gangas has been a member of the Bethel family for 65 years and at 97 is the oldest member of the Governing Body.

Albert Schroeder, also of the Governing Body and chairman of the program, stated: "For five months the Gilead course has been based on the most holy faith." But what is the "most holy faith"? He explained that this "most holy faith," mentioned at Jude 20, is the whole range of Bible truth. So the Gilead course is based on Jehovah's Word, the Bible, which is its principal textbook.

Students Receive More Instruction

The first speaker was John Stuefloten of the Watchtower Farms Committee, who spoke on the theme "Benefiting From the Influence of Wise Persons." The Bible says that those who are "walking with wise persons will become wise." (Proverbs 13:20) During the Gilead course, the students spent over 900 hours studying the Bible. Brother Stuefloten asked the students: "How will Jehovah's influence affect you in the future? You are going to 18 countries with a combined population of some 170 million people. So how will you influence those people?" By reflecting the wisdom of Jehovah, the new

missionaries will be able to help others to become worshipers of Jehovah, the Source of boundless wisdom.

"Becoming All Things to All Men" was the theme of the following talk, developed by Lloyd Barry of the Governing Body. (1 Corinthians 9:22, *King James Version*) Some 45 years ago, Brother Barry himself was a student in the 11th class of Gilead. Now the 95th class appreciated receiving practical counsel from a former missionary with years of experience in a foreign land. He encouraged the students to identify quickly with the people in their new foreign territory by getting to know the local culture and learning the vernacular language. He said that this can best be done by mingling and working with the local people as well as by learning their customs and adopting them whenever appropriate.

Next, Dean Songer of the Factory Committee spoke on the intriguing theme "Set Free From Duty." After more than 35 years of full-time service, Brother Songer understands what it means to live a focused, simple life, concentrating on the work at hand, free from material concerns. And that was the essence of his counsel to the students. The singers at Jehovah's temple were set free from duties common to other Levites in order to devote themselves fully to their special assignment. (1 Chronicles 9:33) Similarly, Gilead missionaries have been set free from such ordinary matters as secular work so that they can concentrate on their special service. Brother Songer concluded with this admonition: "Keep your outlook focused and your life simple. Your responsibility as those



95th Graduating Class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead

In the list below, rows are numbered from front to back, and names are listed from left to right in each row.
(1) Buelow, D.; Donzé, V.; Innes, S.; Fulk, N.; Billingsby, M.; Hoddinott, L.; Nygren, B.; Eriksson, L. (2) Boker, J.; Thomas, M.; Stedman, S.; Billingsby, D.; Waugh, I.; Purves, M.; Luttrell, M. (3) Jacobsen, T.; Boker, J.; Martínez, L.; Nilsson, E.; Purves, P.; Holt, L.; Larsen, M.; Jones, L. (4) Numminen, P.; Numminen, H.; Buelow, M.; Olson, W.; Holt, S.; Donzé, G.; DesJardins, C.; DesJardins, D. (5) Larsen, K.; Martínez, D.; Nygren, P.; Waugh, P.; Jones, D.; Hoddinott, J.; Thomas, G. (6) Innes, B.; Fulk, R.; Eriksson, A.; Nilsson, S.; Stedman, J.; Olson, K.; Jacobsen, F.; Luttrell, J.

set free from duty is to be in the work by day and by night, praising Jehovah."

Governing Body member Daniel Sydlik followed with the theme "Teaching Others How to Get the Best Out Of Life." He encouraged the students "not only to teach doctrine but to be bold enough to show the people what they must do to bring their lives into harmony with the will of God." Good teachers must inspire and motivate. "Be conscious of building Christian values rather than merely teaching rules and regulations," he said and added in conclusion: "Above all things, dear brothers, teach yourselves and teach others how to love, for it is a perfect bond of union."—1 Corinthians 13: 1-3; Colossians 3:14.

After months of training, the students grew especially fond of their two Gilead instructors. Jack Redford, a former missionary himself, spoke first, on the subject "You Have Made the Right Choice." In the ancient Jewish world, before becoming a Christian apostle, Paul had position, prestige, influ-

Class Statistics

- Number of countries represented: 7
- Number of countries assigned to: 18
- Number of students: 46
- Number of married couples: 23
- Average age: 30.06
- Average years in truth: 12.92
- Average years in full-time ministry: 9.4

ence, and financial security. But at Philippians 3:8, Paul described all of this as "a lot of refuse," or "garbage," according to the *Philips* translation. His heart was in the ministry, and he made the right choice. In contrast, the majority of mankind today show by their choices in life that they consider their material possessions to be of greater value than everlasting life. Gilead missionaries have made the right choice. Jack Redford concluded by saying: "There is nothing that the Devil's world can offer you that compares with missionary service. Take care of that inestimable privilege, and let the world take care of its garbage!"

For the past 32 years, Ulysses Glass has been a Gilead instructor. He gave the students some parting counsel with the theme "Only God Can Make a Tree," basing his talk on Psalm 1:3. Modern technology has never been able to rival the construction of a tree, designed by God. In a sense, true Christians are like trees, planted and irrigated by Jehovah. Brother Glass noted that for five months, the students had been "regularly irrigated from the fountain of life-giving waters in God's Word," like trees in a spiritual grove or paradise. Yet, as missionaries, they must guard their "spiritual root system against any damage." They were exhorted to "continue drinking the water of life from Jehovah because only God can make a tree."

The final talk was given by Carey Barber, a member of the Governing Body. After 70 years of full-time service, Brother Barber could confidently speak on the subject "Give Jehovah Exclusive Devotion." The vast majority of mankind have not given Jehovah exclusive devotion. (Deuteronomy 5:9) However, as Brother Barber indicated, in spite of our imperfection, "it is quite possible to be wholly devoted to God." He added: "No one can really say: 'The Devil made me do it.'" But the Devil can defeat us if we fail to

oppose him. (James 4:7) Keeping busy in Jehovah's work is the foremost way to oppose Satan and his world and give Jehovah exclusive devotion.

Appointed as Missionaries

The morning program concluded with the official appointment of all 46 students as missionaries. The 23 couples received diplomas stating in part that the graduates are "specially qualified to engage in educational work, promoting goodwill and working in behalf of permanent peace and the law of perfect order and righteousness among all peoples." The 95th class of Gilead will surely endeavor to accomplish this lofty mission in the 18 countries to which they have been assigned. The assignments span the world and include countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

In the afternoon, after an abbreviated *Watchtower* Study conducted by Charles Woody of the Service Department Committee, the new Gilead graduates presented their student program, with the theme "Gilead Has Prepared Us to Teach as Missionaries." The session concluded with the drama "The Choices Facing Us."

After this stimulating program, the new missionaries were now ready to be sent to the four corners of the earth to share with others the "most holy faith."

In Our Next Issue

Was Jesus Born in the Snow?

Trust in Jehovah!

Rahab—Declared Righteous
by Works of Faith

The Giver of “Every Good Gift”

“On one occasion I was called upon by a minister of the Reformed church. He wanted to know how I managed my church. I said to him: . . . ‘We pay no salaries; there is nothing to make people quarrel. We never take up a collection.’ ‘How do you get the money?’ he asked. I replied, ‘Now, Dr.—, if I tell you what is the simplest truth you will hardly be able to believe it. When people get interested in this way, they find no basket placed under their nose. But they see there are expenses. They say to themselves, “This hall costs something. . . . How can I get a little money into this cause?”’ He looked at me as if he thought, ‘What do you take me for—a greenhorn?’ I said, ‘Now, Dr.—, I am telling you the plain truth. . . . When one gets a blessing and has any means, he wants to use it for the Lord. If he has no means, why should we prod him for it?’”

—Charles T. Russell, first president of the Watch Tower Society, “The Watch Tower,” July 15, 1915.

WE GIVE because Jehovah God was the first to give. His giving started untold aeons ago with creation—his very first creation, his “only-begotten Son.” (John 3:16) Out of love, he gave the gift of life to others.

The Son of God, Jesus Christ, is Jehovah’s greatest gift to us. But the Son of God is, in himself, not the end of God’s giving. “The surpassing undeserved kindness of God” is what the apostle Paul calls Jehovah’s “indescribable free gift.” (2 Corinthians 9:14, 15) This gift evidently includes the sum total of all the goodness and loving-kindness that God extends to his people through Jesus. Such undeserved kindness is so marvelous that it surpasses human power of description or expression. Yet, there is still more to God’s giving.

A long time ago, a king wisely and humbly acknowledged that whatever good things he gave as gifts really belonged to Jehovah. He said: “For everything in the

heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Jehovah, the One also lifting yourself up as head over all. . . . And yet, who am I and who are my people, that we should retain power to make voluntary offerings like this? For everything is from you, and out of your own hand we have given to you.”—1 Chronicles 29:11-14.

God’s Example

James, a disciple of Jesus Christ, knew that Jehovah God is the source of anything that is altogether good in every respect. Only perfect gifts come from him. James wrote: “Every good gift and every perfect present is from above, for it comes down from the Father of the celestial lights, and with him there is not a variation of the turning of the shadow.”—James 1:17.

Even in the matter of gift giving, James saw how different God is from humans. Humans can give good gifts but do not always do so. These gifts may spring from a

selfish motive, or they may be used to tempt a person to do something bad. With Jehovah there is no variation; he does not change. Hence, the nature of his gifts do not change. They are always pure. They always promote the welfare and happiness of humankind. They are always kind and helpful, never destructive.

Motives for Giving Gifts

In the days of James, the popular religious leaders practiced gift giving solely to be seen by men. They gave out of a bad motive. Eager for the applause of men, they compromised their righteous standards. Christians, however, were to be different. Jesus counseled them: "When you go making gifts of mercy, do not blow a trumpet ahead of you, just as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be glorified by men. Truly I say to you, They are having their reward in full. But you, when making gifts of mercy, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, that your gifts of mercy may be in secret; then your Father who is looking on in secret will repay you."

—Matthew 6:2-4.

A Christian's reason for gift giving is to help others fill a need or to make them happy or to promote true worship. It is not for self-glorification. Jehovah's eyes, after all, can penetrate into the deepest corner of our heart. He can see the innermost motive behind our gifts of mercy.

Jehovah's Witnesses endeavor to follow the example of Jehovah and his Son in gift giving. They give of what they have. They have the Kingdom good news, and they give this to the blessing of others. They know that Proverbs 3:9 states: "Honor Je-

hovah with your valuable things and with the firstfruits of all your produce." Because every branch office, congregation, and individual earnestly seeks to contribute to the welfare of all, the entire brotherhood is made spiritually strong and prosperous. Material prosperity does not lead to spiritual prosperity, but spiritual prosperity does bring material prosperity sufficient for the needs of Jehovah's work.

Ways to Share

There are many ways in which everyone can contribute personally to support the good news. One way is with respect to Kingdom Halls. All members of the congregation use the Kingdom Hall. Someone has provided funds for its construction or rental, lighting, temperature control, and upkeep. Since congregation support by everyone is necessary, contribution boxes are placed in the Kingdom Hall, and the voluntary donations received are used to defray the expenses of the congregation. From the surplus, contributions to the local Watch Tower branch may be made, according to the congregation's decision.

Contributions can be made to the Society's branch itself for training and supporting missionaries and special pioneers in parts of the world where the good news has not reached the general population. Other expenses in the spreading of the good news are in connection with the work of traveling overseers. The apostle Paul, who set the example in the traveling work in the first century, commended the congregation in Philippi: "You sent something to me both once and a second time for my need." (Philippians 4:14-16) Besides the cost of these features of full-time service, which all branches have, there is the

maintaining of each Bethel home and those who live and work there. The writing and printing of literature that contains the beautiful message of the good news are indeed privileges given by God, but distribution of the literature is also necessary, and it entails expenses. Then there is the expense of assemblies and conventions, not to mention court cases that have been fought to 'defend and legally establish the good news.'—Philippians 1:7.

The time spent in preaching the good news by each servant of Jehovah is voluntary, and so is his giving of material funds. The regular setting aside of money to be used in support of the expansion of true

worship is advised by the apostle Paul: "Now concerning the collection that is for the holy ones, . . . every first day of the week let each of you at his own house set something aside in store as he may be prospering."—1 Corinthians 16:1, 2.

When a person makes a donation, he does not always know exactly how it will be used, but he sees the results in the expansion of Kingdom preaching. Reports in the 1993 *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* show that the Kingdom good news is being preached in more than 200 lands and islands of the sea by more than 4,500,000 Christian ministers. These reports are heartwarming. Any gift then, regardless of

HOW SOME MAKE DONATIONS TO THE KINGDOM-PREACHING WORK

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WORLDWIDE WORK:

Many set aside or budget an amount that they place in the contribution boxes labeled: "Contributions for the Society's Worldwide Work—Matthew 24:14." Each month congregations forward these amounts either to the world headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, or to the nearest branch office.

GIFTS: Voluntary donations of money may be sent directly to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201, or to the Society's local branch office. Jewelry or other valuables may also be donated. A brief letter stating that such is an outright gift should accompany these contributions.

CONDITIONAL-DONATION ARRANGEMENT: Money may be given to the Watch Tower Society to be held in trust until the donor's death, with the provision that in the case of personal need, it will be returned to the donor.

INSURANCE: The Watch Tower Society may be named as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or in a retirement/pension plan. The Society should be informed of any such arrangement.

BANK ACCOUNTS: Bank accounts, certificates of deposit, or individual retirement accounts may be placed in trust for or made payable on death to the

Watch Tower Society, in accord with local bank requirements. The Society should be informed of any such arrangements.

STOCKS AND BONDS: Stocks and bonds may be donated to the Watch Tower Society either as an outright gift or under an arrangement whereby the income continues to be paid to the donor.

REAL ESTATE: Salable real estate may be donated to the Watch Tower Society either by making an outright gift or by reserving a life estate to the donor, who can continue to live therein during his or her lifetime. One should contact the Society before deeding any real estate to the Society.

WILLS AND TRUSTS: Property or money may be bequeathed to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania by means of a legally executed will, or the Society may be named as a beneficiary of a trust agreement. A trust benefiting a religious organization may provide certain tax advantages. A copy of the will or trust agreement should be sent to the Society.

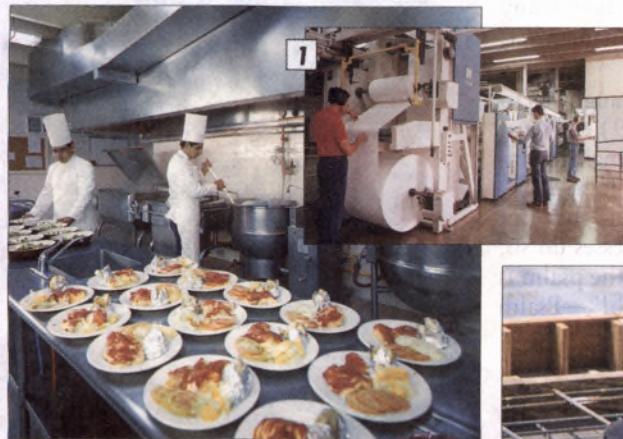
For more information regarding such matters, write to the **Treasurer's Office, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201**, or to the Society's local branch office.

size, assists in the spreading of the good news worldwide.

This work is financed by the combined giving of all. Some are able to give more, which assists the preaching work to a greater degree. Others give less. But those who make modest donations need not feel ashamed or feel that their share is too insignificant. Jehovah certainly does not feel that way. Jesus made this quite clear when he showed how much Jehovah appreciated the widow's mite. "Then he saw a certain needy widow drop two small coins of very little value there, and he said: 'I tell you truthfully, This widow, although poor,

dropped in more than they all did. For all these dropped in gifts out of their surplus, but this woman out of her want dropped in all the means of living she had.'"—Luke 21:2-4.

No matter what our financial situation may be, we can give in ways that please Jehovah. The psalmist well sums up how we can give glory to our King and Judge. He states: "Ascribe to Jehovah the glory belonging to his name; carry a gift and come into his courtyards." (Psalm 96:8) Therefore, may we imitate the loving example of our heavenly Father by our cheerful gift giving because he first gave to us.



How your donations are used:

1. Bethel volunteers
2. Branch office construction
3. Disaster relief
4. Kingdom Halls
5. Missionaries



The Name of God

"Unless Jehovah builds the house, the builders labor in vain." So reads this Latin inscription. The words are based on Psalm 127:1 in the Bible, and they contain a profound truth: Any endeavor that does not have Jehovah's blessing will ultimately be in vain.

The inscription, dated 1780, is found on a building in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and it is notable because it contains God's name, Jehovah. (See photo.) In earlier centuries that name was widely used. It was often inscribed on secular buildings, churches, even coins. Missionaries used God's name when they took the Bible to distant lands, which doubtless accounts for this inscription in Sri Lanka.

How different things are today! Few professed Christians care about God's name. Some scholars even criticize Jehovah's Witnesses for emphasizing it. Why? According to some, because its Hebrew pronunciation is not precisely known. But how many know the original Hebrew pronunciation of Jesus' name? Yet, his name is universally used and respected.

To Jesus, God's name was vitally important. He taught us to pray: "Let your name be sanctified." (Matthew 6:9) And just before his death, he said to God: "I have made your name manifest to the men you gave me out of the world." (John 17:6) True Christians are footprint followers of Jesus. Should they not also 'make God's name manifest'? Jehovah's Witnesses do so, and Jehovah richly blesses their "house." For them the psalm is true: "Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!"—Psalm 144:15.

