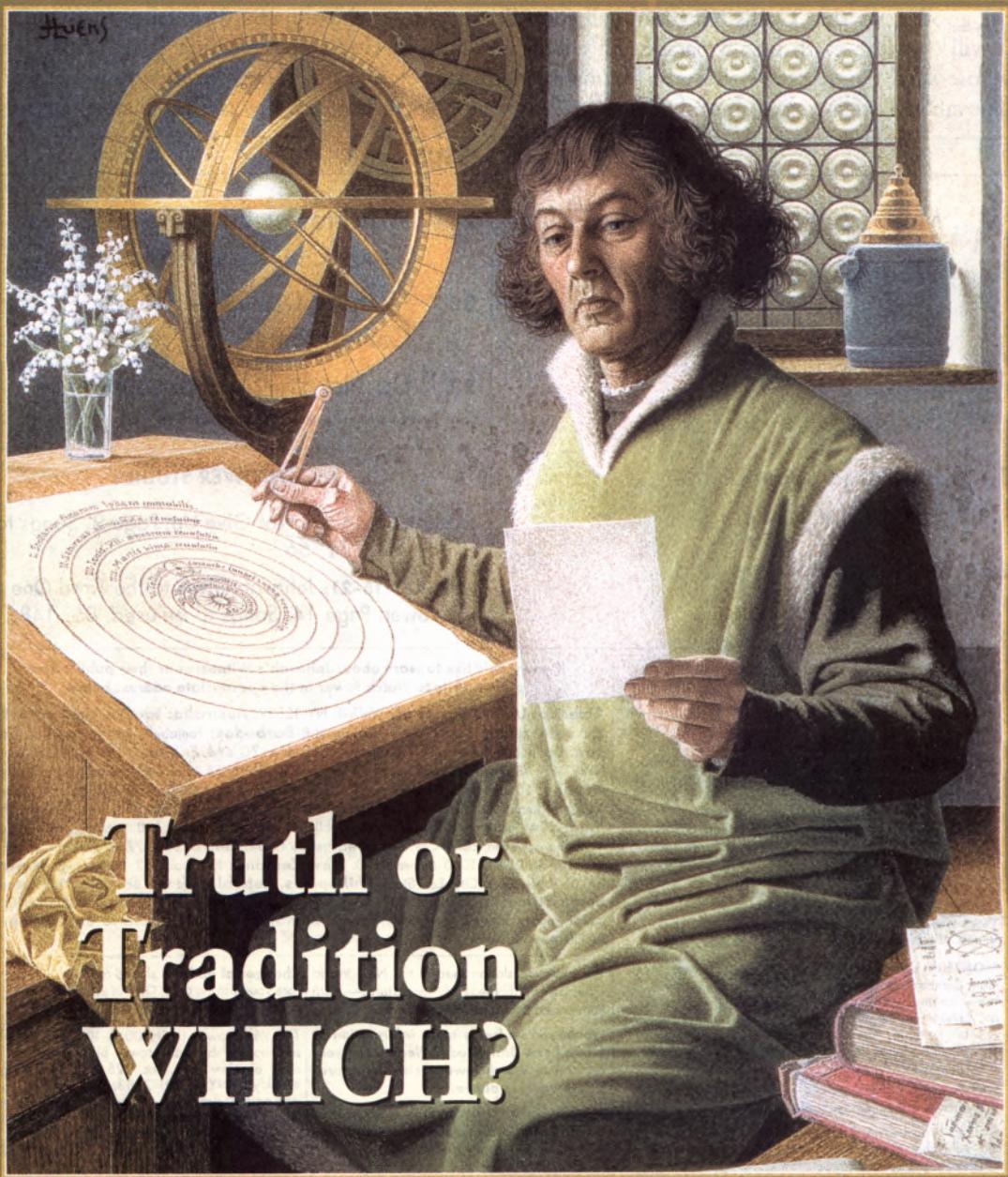


DECEMBER 1, 1995

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



Truth or
Tradition
WHICH?

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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Must Tradition Conflict With Truth?

MARTIN LUTHER was convinced he was right. The Bible, he felt, supported him. Polish astronomer Copernicus, on the other hand, thought that the traditional belief of the day was wrong.

What belief? That the earth was the center of the universe and everything revolved around it. The truth, Copernicus said, was that

the earth itself revolved around the sun. Luther dismissed this, saying: "People give ear to an upstart astrologer who strove to show that the earth revolves, not the heavens or the firmament, the sun and the moon."

—*History of Western Philosophy*.



TRADITIONAL beliefs have often conflicted with facts, with truth. They can even cause people to do harmful things.

This does not mean, of course, that tradition always conflicts with truth. In fact, the apostle Paul encouraged Christians of his day to keep following the traditions that he handed on to them: "Now I commend you because . . . you are holding fast the traditions just as I handed them on to you."



Universität Leipzig

—1 Corinthians 11:2; see also 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6.

What did Paul mean by "traditions"? *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, page 1118, points out that the Greek word he used for "tradition," *pa·ra'do·sis*, means something that is "transmitted by word of mouth or in writing." The English word means "information, doctrines, or practices that have been handed down from parents to children or that have become the established way of thinking or acting."* Because the traditions the apostle Paul handed on came from a good source, Christians did well to hold fast to them.

* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

Obviously, though, tradition can be true or false, good or bad. British philosopher Bertrand Russell, for example, commends people like Copernicus of the 16th century who had the honesty and courage to question traditional beliefs. They developed a "recognition that what had been believed since ancient times might be false." Do you also see the wisdom in not blindly following tradition?—Compare Matthew 15:1-9, 14.

What about religious beliefs and customs, then? Can we take for granted that they are correct and harmless? How can we know? What should we do if we find that religious traditions actually do conflict with truth? The next article will examine these questions.

When Tradition Conflicts With Truth

DANGER—WATER NOT FOR DRINKING. We may be used to seeing such warnings. In many areas people are careful about what they drink because they know that some water supplies are being poisoned by what has been labeled "a witch's brew" of toxic contamination. As a result of this pollution, says one study, instead of being a "sustainer and protector of life," water can become "a transmitter of disease organisms and . . . chemical contaminants."—*Water Pollution*.



Polluting the Waters of Truth

Traditions that conflict with truth are like polluted water supplies. We might innocently hold fast to traditions—information, opinions, beliefs, or customs handed down from one generation to the next—that have, in fact, been contaminated by "a witch's brew" of false, misleading ideas and philosophies. Just like contaminated water, these may cause untold harm—spiritual harm.

Even if we feel that our traditional religious beliefs are based on the

Bible, all of us should take the time to examine them carefully. Remember, when Martin Luther held to the traditional belief of the day and condemned Copernicus, he believed that he had the support of the Bible. Yet, Luther failed to follow the fine example of the ancient Bereans who ‘were noble-minded in carefully examining the Scriptures as to whether these things were so.’—Acts 17:10, 11.

Think of the harm that traditional beliefs caused some of the Jews of Jesus’ day. They fervently believed that their traditions were true. When they protested that Jesus’ disciples did not keep the traditions, Jesus challenged them with the question: “Why is it you also overstep the commandment of God because of your tradition?” (Matthew 15: 1-3) What had gone wrong? Jesus identified the problem when he quoted the words of the prophet Isaiah: “It is in vain that they keep worshiping [God], because *they teach commands of men as doctrines*.”—Matthew 15:9; Isaiah 29:13.

Yes, in place of truths that originated with God, they substituted ideas that originated with men or, worse still, that originated with the demons. For example, *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 1, page 506, explains: “Pharisees at that time taught that once a person declared his possessions to be ‘corban,’ or a gift dedicated to God, he could not use these to satisfy the needs of his parents, however needy they might be, though he could make use of such possessions himself until his own death if he chose to do so.” The human wisdom that contaminated the waters of truth had bad effects on the Jews spiritually. The majority even rejected their long-hoped-for Messiah.

Christendom Adds to the Pollution

Similar spiritual damage was caused after Jesus’ death. Many who claimed to be

his followers appealed to oral tradition as authority for new teachings. According to the *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, by McClintock and Strong, some so-called Christians felt that such tradition was “instruction received from the mouth of the apostles by the first Christian churches, transmitted from the apostolic age, and *preserved in purity until their own time*.”—Italics ours.

In reality many of these traditions were impure, wrong ideas. As the *Cyclopaedia* explains, these new philosophies were “not only at variance with other traditions, but with the very writings of the apostles which they had in their hands.” This was not totally unexpected. The apostle Paul had warned Christians: “Look out: perhaps there may be someone who will carry you off as his prey through the philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ.”—Colossians 2:8.

Today, also, many traditional beliefs are ‘at variance with the very writings of the apostles.’ Christendom has poisoned the waters of truth with numerous demon-inspired ideas, such as the Trinity, hellfire, immortality of the human soul, nationalism, and idolatry.* (1 Timothy 4:1-3) History testifies to the spiritual sickness that has overtaken people who fell prey to the demonic teachings that have become the traditional teachings of Christendom.—Compare Isaiah 1:4-7.

Such contaminating of truth has, in fact, been going on from man’s beginning. Satan has continued the process he started

* See *Reasoning From the Scriptures* for proof that such teachings have no foundation in the Bible. This book is published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

in Eden of poisoning people's minds with lies and deceit. (John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:3) As the human family spread throughout the earth following the Flood of Noah's day, people of all cultures became victims of a deliberate poisoning of the reservoirs of human knowledge with demon-inspired philosophies and ideas.

Effects of Spiritual Pollution

What harm can such spiritual contamination cause? We can compare it to the effects of polluted water on our physical health. Says one authority: "About 200 million people are victims of schistosomiasis (bilharzia) [snail fever, which produces anemia, discomfort, general ill health, and even death], caused by contaminated water on the skin. Five hundred million people have trachoma, one of the main causes of blindness, because of dirty wash water. . . . Some two billion members of the human species do not have safe drinking water." (*Our Country, the Planet*) Millions of people have been spiritually debilitated, blinded, and even killed as a result of following traditions adulterated with false, demonic teachings.—1 Corinthians 10:20, 21; 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4.

Many, for example, are confused or blinded as to the relationship between Jesus Christ and his Father, Jehovah God. It became the custom among some who claimed to be Christians to omit God's sacred name, Jehovah, from the Christian Greek Scriptures. Says George Howard in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*: "This removal of the Tetragram[maton], in our view, created a confusion in the minds of early Gentile Christians about the relationship between the 'Lord God' and the 'Lord Christ.'"

Think, too, of the confusion, superstition, and fear caused by the unscriptural

tradition that the human soul is immortal. (Compare Ecclesiastes 9:5; Ezekiel 18:4.) How many people are in bondage to ancestor worship or live in constant fear that the dead will come back to harm them? This belief has even encouraged people to kill themselves and others.

Many Japanese feel that at death their departed spirits will meet up in the world beyond. Some parents who commit suicide, therefore, have thought it best to kill their children also. *An English Dictionary of Japanese Ways of Thinking* explains: "In Japan suicide is not always condemned, but is often looked on as an acceptable way of apologizing for one's grave error . . . Even family suicides are likely to be reported with sympathetic words."

Test the Traditions

In view of the dangers involved in blindly following traditional beliefs and customs, what should we do? Toward the end of the first century, the apostle John gave this advice to his fellow Christians: "Beloved ones, do not believe every inspired expression, but test the inspired expressions [just as you would test water for purity] to see whether they originate with God, because many false prophets have gone forth into the world." (1 John 4:1; see also 1 Thessalonians 5:21.) How do you know whether a tradition is harmful? You need some kind of authority, some standard of purity, to test what you believe.

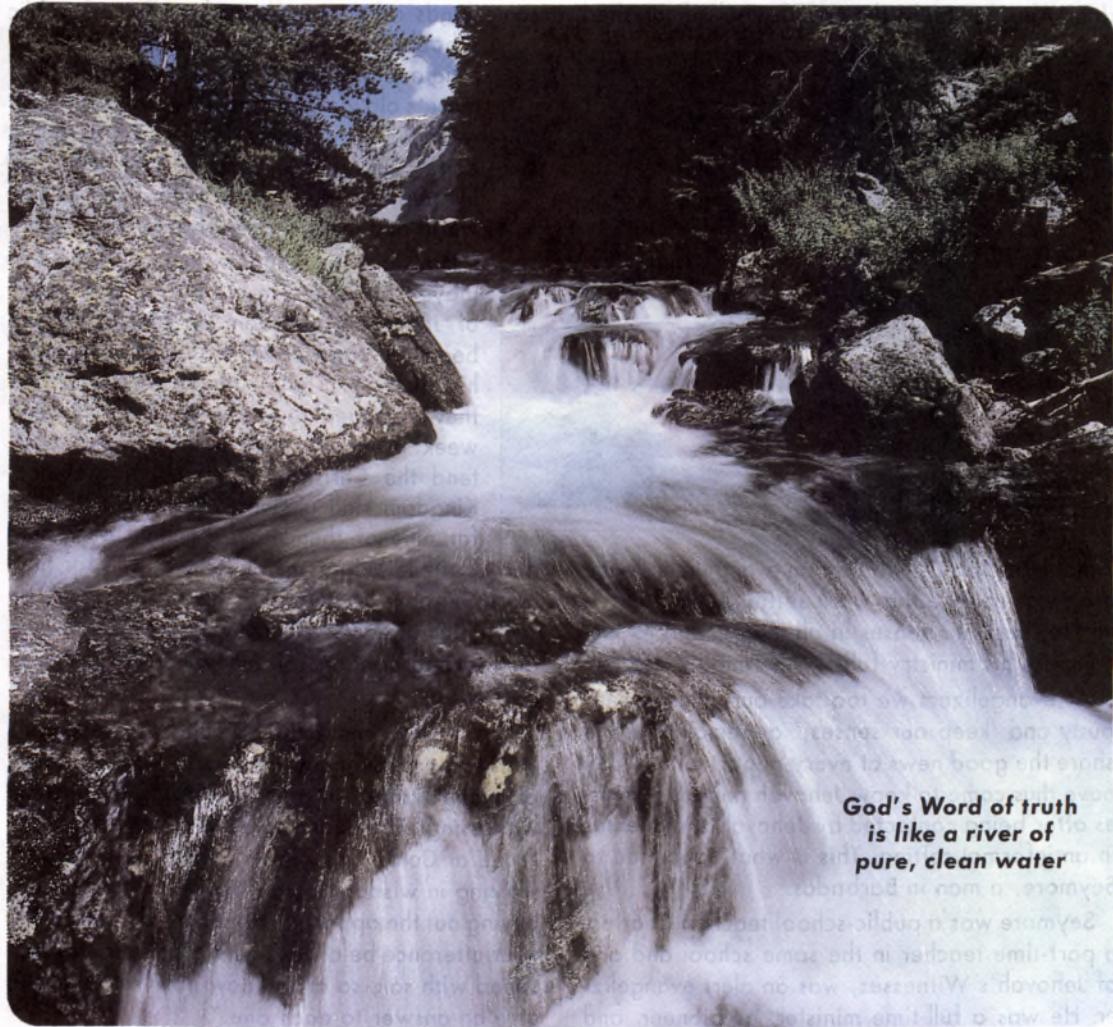
The Bible is such an authority. Jesus Christ stated: "Sanctify them by means of the truth; your word is truth." (John 17:17) He also said: "The hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshipers will worship the Father with spirit and truth." (John 4:23) By using God's inspired Word, you get to the pure waters of truth rather than the

polluted waters of human and demonic philosophy.—John 8:31, 32; 2 Timothy 3:16.

Remember, even minute amounts of pollutants can have dire consequences. Sometimes it takes years before the effects show up. "Dirty water," says Shridath Ramphal, former president of the World Conservation Union, "has become the world's most dangerous killer. At least twenty-five thousand people die every day from their use of

it." Spiritually contaminated traditions are even more dangerous.

Do you have the courage to break free from traditional beliefs that you may have followed for years if it turns out that they conflict with the truth? Heed the warnings. Protect yourself and your family by making sure that your traditions harmonize with God's pure Word of truth.—Psalm 19:8-11; Proverbs 14:15; Acts 17:11.



**God's Word of truth
is like a river of
pure, clean water**

KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

"Do the Work of an Evangelizer"

WHAT does it mean to be an evangelizer? The word is a translation of the Greek *eu-ag-ge-li-stes'*, which is closely related to the word *eu-ag-ge'li-on*, meaning "good news." Hence, an evangelizer is a preacher, or messenger, of good news.

All true Christians are evangelizers because they proclaim the good news about God's Kingdom. Appropriately, the apostle Paul admonished



Timothy to "do the work of an evangelizer." Timothy was to take this work seriously. Paul urged him to 'keep his senses in all things' and to 'accomplish his ministry fully.'—2 Timothy 4:5.

As evangelizers we too take our ministry seriously and 'keep our senses,' or remain alert to share the good news at every opportunity. Many have thus come to know Jehovah and his promises after being contacted by Jehovah's Witnesses in an informal setting. This is what happened to Seymore, a man in Barbados.

Seymore was a public-school teacher. Charles, a part-time teacher in the same school and one of Jehovah's Witnesses, was an alert evangelizer. He was a full-time minister, or pioneer, and

used every opportunity to share the good news with others. It was through Charles' informal witnessing that Seymore heard the Kingdom message for the first time.

Soon Seymore too was determined to share Bible truths with as many as possible. So he started informal conversations with people at his place of employment, especially his students. Though in some lands religion must be kept out of public schools, this man was assigned to teach religious and moral values. But now Seymore's old views on these matters had been replaced by his newly acquired Bible knowledge. During recess periods, he talked to his pupils about God's promise of a new world and the prospect of everlasting life.

How did the children react? Many displayed genuine interest in the good news of Jehovah's Kingdom. In time, Seymore began to conduct Bible studies with 13 of his students. Their interest was such that they arranged to study the Bible twice a week. Eventually most of them began to attend the Christian meetings at the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. So far nine of them have become dedicated and baptized Witnesses of Jehovah. As for Seymore, he now accomplishes his ministry fully by serving as a regular pioneer and an elder in one of the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in Barbados.

This is just one example of how Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the world 'do the work of evangelizers,' in part by sharing in informal witnessing. They follow the Bible's admonition found at Colossians 4:5, 6, which says: "Go on walking in wisdom toward those on the outside, buying out the opportune time for yourselves. Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt, so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one."



DO NOT GIVE UP!

"Let us not give up in doing what is fine, for in due season we shall reap if we do not tire out."—GALATIANS 6:9.

ALION hunts in various ways. Sometimes it will ambush its prey at water holes or along well-used paths. But sometimes, says the book *Portraits in the Wild*, a lion "simply takes advantage of a situation—for example, coming upon a sleeping zebra foal."

² Our "adversary, the Devil," explains the apostle Peter, "walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone." (1 Peter 5:8) Knowing that his remaining time is short, Satan is exerting ever greater pressure on humans to keep them from serving Jehovah. However, this "roaring lion" is especially interested in preying upon Jehovah's servants. (Revelation 12:12, 17) His

1, 2. (a) In what ways does a lion hunt? (b) Upon whom is the Devil especially interested in preying?

hunting methods are similar to those of his counterpart in the animal kingdom. How so?

³ At times Satan tries an ambush—persecution or opposition aimed at breaking our integrity so that we stop serving Jehovah. (2 Timothy 3:12) But, like the lion, at other times the Devil simply takes advantage of a situation. He waits until we get discouraged or grow weary, and then he tries to capitalize on our low emotional state in order to get us to give up. We must not become easy prey!

⁴ Yet, we are living in the most demanding period in all human history. In these "critical times hard to deal with," many of us may feel discouraged or weighed down on occasion. (2 Timothy 3:1) How, then, can we

3, 4. (a) What methods does Satan use in preying upon Jehovah's servants? (b) Because these are "critical times hard to deal with," what questions are raised?

avoid growing so weary that we become easy prey for the Devil? Yes, how can we heed the apostle Paul's inspired counsel: "Let us not give up in doing what is fine, for in due season we shall reap if we do not tire out"?—Galatians 6:9.

When Others Disappoint Us

⁵ In Bible times, even the most faithful servants of Jehovah may have felt weighed down. "I have grown weary with my sighing," wrote the psalmist David. "All night long I make my couch swim; with my tears I make my own divan overflow. From vexation my eye has become weak." Why did David feel that way? "Because of all those showing hostility to me," he explained. The hurtful actions of others caused David such pain of heart that his tears flowed freely. Still, David did not draw away from Jehovah because of what fellow humans had done to him.—Psalm 6:6-9.

⁶ Similarly, the words or actions of others may cause us to grow weary with much pain of heart. "There exists the one speaking thoughtlessly as with the stabs of a sword," says Proverbs 12:18. When the thoughtless

5. What caused David to grow weary, but what did he not do?

6. (a) How may we be affected by the words or actions of others? (b) How do some make themselves easy prey for the Devil?

In Our Next Issue

Do You Have the Spirit of Giving?

Joyful "Doers of the Word"

Righteousness Exalts a Nation

one is a Christian brother or sister, the 'stab wound' can go deep. The human tendency may be to take offense, perhaps harboring resentment. This is especially true if we feel that we have been treated unkindly or unjustly. We may find it hard to talk to the offender; we might even deliberately avoid him or her. Weighed down with resentment, some have given up and have stopped coming to Christian meetings. Sadly, they thereby "allow place for the Devil" to take advantage of them as easy prey.—Ephesians 4:27.

⁷ How can we avoid playing into the Devil's hands when others disappoint or hurt us? We must try not to harbor resentment. Instead, take the initiative to make peace or settle matters as quickly as possible. (Ephesians 4:26) Colossians 3:13 urges us: "Continue . . . forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another." Forgiveness is especially fitting when the one who has given offense admits error and is genuinely sorry. (Compare Psalm 32:3-5 and Proverbs 28:13.) It helps us, though, if we keep in mind that to forgive is not to condone or minimize the wrongs that others have committed. To forgive involves letting go of resentment. Resentment is a heavy burden to carry. It can consume our thoughts, robbing us of happiness. It can even affect our health. In contrast, forgiveness, where appropriate, works to our own benefit. May we, like David, never give up and draw away from Jehovah because of what other humans have said or done to us!

When We Fall Short

⁸ "We all stumble many times," says James 3:2. When we do, it is only natural to

7. (a) How can we avoid playing into the Devil's hands when others disappoint or hurt us? (b) Why should we let go of resentment?

8. (a) Why do some feel especially guilty at times? (b) What danger is there in getting so swallowed up by guilt that we give up on ourselves?

feel guilty. (Psalm 38:3-8) Feelings of guilt can be especially strong if we are battling a weakness of the flesh and experience periodic setbacks.* One Christian who faced such a struggle explained: "I didn't want to go on living, not knowing if I had committed the unforgivable sin or not. I felt that I might as well not exert myself in Jehovah's service because it's probably too late for me anyway." When we get so swallowed up by guilt that we give up on ourselves, we give the Devil an opening—and he may quickly take advantage of it! (2 Corinthians 2:5-7, 11) What is needed may be a more balanced view of guilt.

⁹ When we sin it is appropriate to feel a measure of guilt. Sometimes, though, feelings of guilt persist because a Christian feels that he could never be worthy of God's mercy. Yet, the Bible warmly assures us: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous so as to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) Is there any sound reason to believe that God will not do that in our case? Remember, in his Word, Jehovah says that he is "ready to forgive." (Psalm 86:5; 130:3, 4) Since he cannot lie, he will do as his Word promises, provided we come to him with a repentant heart.—Titus 1:2.

¹⁰ What should you do if you are fighting a weakness and have a relapse? Do not give

* For example, some may struggle to control a deeply ingrained personality trait, such as a bad temper, or to overcome a problem with masturbation.—See *Awake!*, May 22, 1988, pages 19-21; November 8, 1981, pages 16-20; and *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, pages 198-211, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

9. Why should we have confidence in God's mercy?

10. What heartwarming reassurance did an earlier *Watchtower* publish about fighting a weakness of the flesh?

up! A relapse does not necessarily cancel the progress you have already made. The February 15, 1954, issue of this journal offered this heartwarming reassurance: "We [may] find ourselves stumbling and falling many times over some bad habit that has bitten more deeply into our former pattern of life than we had realized. . . . Do not despair. Do not conclude you have committed the unforgivable sin. That is just how Satan would like you to reason. The fact that you feel grieved and vexed with yourself is proof in itself that you have not gone too far. Never weary of turning humbly and earnestly to God, seeking his forgiveness and cleansing and help. Go to him as a child goes to his father when in trouble, no matter how often on the same weakness, and Jehovah will graciously give you the help because of his undeserved kindness and, if you are sincere, he will give you the realization of a cleansed conscience."

When We Feel That We Are Not Doing Enough

¹¹ The Kingdom-preaching work plays an important part in the life of a Christian, and sharing in it brings joy. (Psalm 40:8) Some Christians, though, feel very guilty about not being able to do more in the ministry. Such guilt could even erode our joy and cause us to give up, imagining that Jehovah feels that we never do enough. Consider the feelings that some struggle with.

"Do you know how time-consuming poverty is?" wrote one Christian sister who with her husband is raising three children. *"I must conserve wherever I can. This means spending time searching through thrift shops, clearance racks, or even sewing clothes. I also*

11. (a) How should we feel about sharing in the Kingdom-preaching work? (b) What feelings about sharing in the ministry do some Christians struggle with?

spend an hour or two each week working on [discount food] coupons—cutting, filing, and trading them. At times I feel very guilty doing these things, thinking that I should be spending that time out in the field service."

"I thought I must not really love Jehovah enough," explained a sister with four children and an unbelieving husband. "So I struggled with my serving Jehovah. I tried really hard, but I never felt that it was enough. You see, I didn't have any feeling of self-worth, so I could not imagine how Jehovah could ever accept my service to him."

A Christian who found it necessary to leave the full-time service said: "*I couldn't stand the idea that I was failing in my commitment to serve Jehovah full-time. You can't imagine how disappointed I was! I cry now remembering.*"

¹² It is only natural to want to serve Jehovah as fully as possible. (Psalm 86:12) Why, though, do some feel very guilty about not being able to do more? For some, it appears to be related to a general feeling of worthlessness, perhaps resulting from unpleasant experiences in life. In other cases, inappropriate guilt may result from an unrealistic view of what Jehovah expects of us. "I had felt that unless it hurts, you must not be doing enough," admitted one Christian. As a result, she set excessively high standards for herself—and then felt even guiltier when she was unable to reach them.

¹³ What does Jehovah expect of us? Put simply, Jehovah expects us to serve him whole-souled, doing what our circumstances allow. (Colossians 3:23) There may, however, be a big difference between what we would *like* to do and what we *realistically*

can do. We may be limited by such factors as age, health, physical stamina, or family responsibilities. Nevertheless, when we do all we can, we may feel assured that our service to Jehovah is whole-souled—no more and no less whole-souled than that of someone whose health and circumstances allow him to be in the full-time ministry.—Matthew 13:18-23.

¹⁴ How, then, can you determine what you can realistically expect of yourself? You may wish to talk over the matter with a trusted, mature Christian friend, perhaps an elder or an experienced sister, who knows your abilities, your limitations, and your family responsibilities. (Proverbs 15:22) Remember that in God's eyes your worth as a person is not measured by how much you do in the field ministry. All of Jehovah's servants are precious to him. (Haggai 2:7; Malachi 3:16, 17) What you do in the preaching work may be more or less than what others do, but as long as it represents your best, Jehovah is pleased, and there is no need for you to feel guilty.—Galatians 6:4.

When Much Is Demanded of Us

¹⁵ "Everyone to whom much was given," said Jesus, "much will be demanded of him." (Luke 12:48) Certainly 'much is demanded' of those serving as congregation elders. Like Paul they expend themselves in behalf of the congregation. (2 Corinthians 12:15) They have talks to prepare, shepherding calls to make, judicial cases to handle—all without neglecting their own families. (1 Timothy 3:4, 5) Some elders are also busy helping to build Kingdom Halls, serving on Hospital Liaison Committees, and volunteering at assemblies and conventions. How can these hardworking, devoted men

14. What can you do if you need help in determining what you can realistically expect of yourself?

15. In what ways is much demanded of congregation elders?

12. Why do some Christians feel very guilty about not being able to do more in the ministry?
13. What does Jehovah expect of us?

avoid growing weary under the weight of such responsibilities?

¹⁶ When Moses, a modest and humble man, was wearing himself out in caring for the problems of others, his father-in-law, Jethro, offered a practical solution: share some responsibility with other qualified men. (Exodus 18:17-26; Numbers 12:3) "Wisdom is with the modest ones," says Proverbs 11:2. To be modest means to recognize and accept your limitations. A modest man is not reluctant to delegate to others, nor does he fear that he somehow loses control by sharing appropriate responsibilities with other qualified men.* (Numbers 11:16, 17, 26-29) Instead, he is eager to help them to progress.—1 Timothy 4:15.

¹⁷ Congregation members can do much to lighten the load of elders. Understanding that elders have their own families to care for, others will not make unreasonable demands on the elders' time and attention. Neither will they take for granted the willing sacrifices that the wives of elders make as they unselfishly share their husbands with the congregation. One mother of three whose husband serves as an elder explained: "Something I never complain about is the extra load I willingly carry in the household so that my husband can serve as an elder. I know that Jehovah's blessing is rich on our family because of his serving, and I do not begrudge what he gives. Yet, realistically, I often have to rake more leaves and do more of the disciplining of our children than I would otherwise because my

* See the article "Elders—Delegate!" in the October 15, 1992, issue of *The Watchtower*, pages 20-3.

16. (a) What practical solution did Jethro offer Moses? (b) What quality will enable an elder to share appropriate responsibilities with others?

17. (a) How may congregation members lighten the load of elders? (b) What sacrifices do the wives of elders make, and how can we show them that we do not take these for granted?

husband is busy." Sadly, this sister found that some, instead of appreciating her extra load, made insensitive remarks such as, "Why aren't you pioneering?" (Proverbs 12:18) How much better it is to commend others for what they are doing rather than criticize them for what they are not able to do!—Proverbs 16:24; 25:11.

Because the End Has Not Yet Come

¹⁸ When a runner knows that he is near the end of a long race, he does not give up. His body may be at the limit of its endurance—exhausted, overheated, and dehydrated—but so near to the finish is no time to stop running. Similarly, as Christians we are in a race for the prize of life, and we are very near the finish line. Now is not the time for us to stop running!—Compare 1 Corinthians 9:24; Philippians 2:16; 3:13, 14.

¹⁹ Christians in the first century faced a similar situation. About 61 C.E., the apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Jerusalem. Time was running out—the wicked "generation," the apostate Jewish system of things, was about to "pass away." Especially did the

18, 19. (a) Why is this no time to stop running in the race for everlasting life? (b) What timely advice did the apostle Paul give to the Christians in Jerusalem?

What Is Your Answer?

- How can we avoid giving up when others disappoint or hurt us?
- What balanced view of guilt will keep us from giving up?
- What does Jehovah expect of us?
- How can modesty help congregation elders to avoid growing weary?
- Why is Paul's advice at Hebrews 12:3 timely for us today?

Christians in Jerusalem have to be alert and faithful; they would need to flee from the city when they saw it surrounded by encamped armies. (Luke 21:20-24, 32) Timely, then, was Paul's inspired advice: 'Do not get tired and give out in your souls.' (Hebrews 12:3) The apostle Paul here used two vivid verbs: "get tired" (*ka'mno*) and "give out" (*e-kly'o-mai*). According to one Bible scholar, these Greek words were "used by Aristotle of runners who relax and collapse after they have passed the finishing post. The readers [of Paul's letter] were still in the race. They must not give way prematurely. They must not allow themselves to faint and collapse through weariness. Once again

there is the call to perseverance in the face of hardship."

²⁰ How timely Paul's advice is for us today! In the face of increasing pressures, there may be times when we feel like an exhausted runner whose legs are about to give out. But so near to the finish line, we must not give up! (2 Chronicles 29:11) That is just what our Adversary, the "roaring lion," would want us to do. Thankfully, Jehovah has made provisions that give "to the tired one power." (Isaiah 40:29) What these are and how we can take advantage of them will be discussed in the next article.

20. Why is Paul's advice timely for us today?

JEHOVAH GIVES TO THE TIRED ONE POWER

"Those who are hoping in Jehovah will regain power.

They will mount up with wings like eagles."—ISAIAH 40:31.

EAGLES are among the most powerful birds in the skies. They can glide great distances without even flapping their wings. With wings that may span over seven feet, "the King of Birds," the golden eagle, is "one of the most impressive of all eagles; lifting above hills and plains, [it] soars for hours over some mountain ridge, then rises in spirals until a dark speck in [the] sky."—*The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds*.

² With the flight abilities of the eagle in mind, Isaiah wrote: "[Jehovah] is giv-

ing to the tired one power; and to the one without dynamic energy he makes full might abound. Boys will both tire out and grow weary, and young men themselves will without fail stumble, but those who are hoping in Jehovah will regain power. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not tire out." (Isaiah 40:29-31) How comforting to know that Jehovah gives those trusting in him the power to go on, as if equipping them with the seemingly tireless wings of the soaring eagle! Consider, now, some of the provisions he has made to give to the tired one power.

1, 2. What does Jehovah give to those trusting in him, and what will we now consider?

The Power of Prayer

³ Jesus urged his disciples “always to pray and not to give up.” (Luke 18:1) Can pouring our heart out to Jehovah really help us to regain power and avoid giving up when life’s pressures seem overwhelming? Yes, but there are some things we must keep in mind.

⁴ We must be realistic in what we expect Jehovah to do in answer to our prayers. One Christian who had slipped into a deep depression later observed: “As with other illnesses, Jehovah does not perform miracles at this time. But he does help us to cope and to heal to the extent that we can in this system.” Explaining why her prayers made a difference, she added: “I had 24-hour-a-day access to Jehovah’s holy spirit.” Thus, Jehovah does not shield us from the pressures of life that can weigh us down, but he does “give holy spirit to those asking him!” (Luke 11:13; Psalm 88:1-3) That spirit can make us equal to any trial or pressure we may face. (1 Corinthians 10:13) If necessary, it can infuse us with “power beyond what is normal” to endure until God’s Kingdom removes all stressful problems in the new world so near at hand.—2 Corinthians 4:7.

⁵ In order for our prayers to be effective, though, we must persevere, and we must be specific. (Romans 12:12) For instance, if you grow weary at times because you are fighting a weakness of the flesh, at the start of each day, petition Jehovah to help you to avoid succumbing to that specific weakness during the day. Pray similarly throughout the day and before going to

3, 4. (a) Jesus urged his disciples to do what? (b) What may we expect Jehovah to do in answer to our prayers?

5. (a) For our prayers to be effective, what two things are vital? (b) How might we pray if we are fighting a weakness of the flesh? (c) What will our persistent and specific prayers demonstrate to Jehovah?

sleep each night. If you have a setback, beg Jehovah for his forgiveness, but also talk to him about what led to the relapse and what you might do to avoid those circumstances in the future. Such persistent and specific prayers will demonstrate to the “Hearer of prayer” the sincerity of your desire to win the fight.—Psalm 65:2; Luke 11:5-13.

⁶ Sometimes, however, those who have grown weary may feel unworthy to pray. A Christian woman who had felt that way later observed: “That is very dangerous thinking because it means that we have taken it upon ourselves to judge ourselves, but that does not belong to us.” Indeed, “God himself is Judge.” (Psalm 50:6) The Bible assures us that although “our hearts may condemn us . . . , God is greater than our hearts and knows all things.” (1 John 3:20) How comforting to know that when we may judge ourselves as unworthy to pray, Jehovah may not feel that way toward us! He “knows all things” about us, including the circumstances in our life that may have caused us to feel so unworthy. (Psalm 103:10-14) His mercy and depth of understanding move him to hear prayers from “a heart broken and crushed.” (Psalm 51:17) How could he refuse to hear our cries for help when he himself condemns “anyone stopping up his ear from the complaining cry of the lowly one”?—Proverbs 21:13.

The Warmth of the Brotherhood

⁷ Another provision Jehovah has made to help us to regain power is our Christian brotherhood. What a precious privilege it is to be part of a worldwide family of brothers

6. Why may we rightly expect Jehovah to hear our prayers even when we may feel unworthy to pray?

7. (a) What is another provision Jehovah has made to help us to regain power? (b) Knowing what about our brotherhood can be strengthening to us?

and sisters! (1 Peter 2:17) When the pressures of life weigh us down, the warmth of our brotherhood can help us regain power. How so? Knowing that we are not alone in facing stressful challenges can be strengthening in itself. Among our brothers and sisters, there are no doubt some who have faced similar pressures or trials and who have experienced feelings much like our own. (1 Peter 5:9) It is reassuring to know that what we are going through is not uncommon and that our feelings are not unusual.

⁸ In the warmth of the brotherhood we can find 'true companions' who, when we are in distress, can provide much needed assistance and comfort. (Proverbs 17:17) Often, all it takes are some kind words or thoughtful actions. A Christian who struggled with feelings of worthlessness recalls: "There were friends who would feed me with positive things about myself to help me overcome the negative thoughts I had." (Proverbs 15:23) Following the death of her young daughter, a sister found it difficult at first to sing Kingdom songs at congregation meetings, especially songs that mentioned the resurrection. "One time," she recalls, "a sister who was sitting across the aisle saw me crying. She came over, put her arm around me, and sang the rest of the song with me. I felt so full of love for the brothers and sisters and so happy that we had got to the meetings, realizing that's where our help is, there at the Kingdom Hall."

⁹ Of course, each of us has a responsibility

8. (a) What examples show how we may find much needed assistance and comfort in our brotherhood? (b) In what way have you personally been assisted or comforted by "a true companion"?

9, 10. (a) How may we contribute to the warmth of our brotherhood? (b) Who especially need wholesome association? (c) What can we do to help those who need encouragement?

to contribute to the warmth of the Christian brotherhood. Thus, our hearts should "widen out" to include *all* our brothers and sisters. (2 Corinthians 6:13) How sad it would be for those who have grown weary to feel that the love of the brotherhood has cooled toward them! Yet, some Christians report feeling lonely and left out. A sister whose husband opposes the truth pleaded: "Who does not desire and need upbuilding friendships, encouragement, and loving association? Please remind our brothers and sisters that we need them!" Yes, especially do those whose circumstances in life weigh them down—those with unbelieving mates, single parents, those with chronic health problems, older ones, and others—need wholesome association. Do some of us need to be reminded of that?

¹⁰ What can we do to help? Let us widen out in expressing our love. When extending hospitality, let us not forget those who need encouragement. (Luke 14:12-14; Hebrews 13:2) Rather than assuming that their circumstances prevent them from accepting, why not invite them anyway? Then let them decide. Even if they cannot accept, they will no doubt feel encouraged to know that others have thought of them. It may be just what they need to regain power.

¹¹ Those who are weighed down may need assistance in other ways. A single mother, for example, may need a mature brother to show interest in her fatherless boy. (James 1:27) A brother or a sister with a serious health problem may need some help with shopping or household chores. An older one may yearn for some companionship or need some assistance to get out in the field ministry. When there is an ongoing need for such aid, it poses a real 'test of the genuine-

11. Those who are weighed down may need assistance in what ways?



**When extending hospitality,
let us not forget those who need
encouragement**

ness of our love.' (2 Corinthians 8:8) Instead of drawing away from needy ones because of the time and effort involved, may we pass the test of Christian love by being sensitive and responsive to the needs of others.

The Power of God's Word

¹² A person who stops eating will soon lose his strength, or power. Accordingly, another way Jehovah gives us the power to go on is by seeing to it that we are well fed spiritually. (Isaiah 65:13, 14) What spiritual food has he provided? Above all, his Word, the Bible. (Matthew 4:4; compare Hebrews 4:12.) How can it help us to regain power? When the pressures and problems we face begin to sap our strength, we can draw strength from reading about the feelings and real-life struggles of faithful men and women in Bible times. Although out-

12. How does God's Word help us to regain power?

standing examples of integrity, they were humans "with feelings like ours." (James 5:17; Acts 14:15) They faced trials and pressures similar to our own. Consider some examples.

¹³ The patriarch Abraham grieved deeply over the death of his wife even though he had faith in the resurrection. (Genesis 23:2; compare Hebrews 11:8-10, 17-19.) A repentant David felt that his sins had made him unworthy to serve Jehovah. (Psalm 51:11) Moses had feelings of inadequacy. (Exodus 4:10) Epaphroditus became depressed when it became known that a serious illness limited his activity in "the Lord's work." (Philippians 2:25-30) Paul had to fight against the fallen flesh. (Romans 7:21-25) Euodia and Syntyche, two anointed sisters in the congregation at Philippi, apparently had some difficulty getting along. (Philippians 1:1; 4:2, 3) How encouraging to know that these faithful ones had feelings and experiences like our own, yet they did not give up! Neither did Jehovah give up on them.

¹⁴ To help us draw strength from his Word, Jehovah uses the faithful and discreet slave class to provide us with a steady

13. What Scriptural examples show that faithful men and women in Bible times had feelings and experiences much like our own?

14. (a) What instrument has Jehovah used to help us to draw strength from his Word? (b) Why have the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* journals carried articles on social, family, and emotional issues?

Elders can ask Jehovah to help weary ones understand how much they are loved

flow of “food at the proper time.” (Matthew 24:45) The faithful slave has long used the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* journals to defend Bible truth and proclaim God’s Kingdom as man’s only hope. Especially in the last few decades, these journals have carried timely Scriptural articles on social, family, and emotional challenges that even some of God’s people encounter. For what purpose has such information been published? Certainly to help those who are experiencing these challenges to draw strength and encouragement from God’s Word. But such articles also help all of us to have a clearer understanding of what some of our brothers and sisters may be going through. Thus we are better equipped to heed Paul’s words: “Speak consolingly to the depressed souls, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all.”—1 Thessalonians 5:14.

Elders Who Are “a Hiding Place From the Wind”

¹⁵ Jehovah has provided something else to help us when we grow weary—the congregation elders. Of these the prophet Isaiah wrote: “Each one must prove to be like a hiding place from the wind and a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water in a waterless country, like the

15. What did Isaiah prophesy about those serving as elders, and what responsibility does this place upon them?



shadow of a heavy crag in an exhausted land.” (Isaiah 32:1, 2) Elders, then, have a responsibility to measure up to what Jehovah has foretold about them. They “must prove to be” sources of comfort and refreshment to others and be willing to “go on carrying the burdens [or, “troublesome things”; literally, “heavy things”] of one another.” (Galatians 6:2, footnote) How can they do this?

¹⁶ As previously mentioned, sometimes a person who has grown weary may feel unworthy to pray. What can the elders do? They can pray with and for the person. (James 5:14) Simply asking Jehovah, in the hearing of the weary one, to help that one to understand how much he or she is loved by Jehovah and by others would certainly

16. What can the elders do to help one who feels unworthy to pray?

be comforting. Hearing the fervent, heartfelt prayer of an elder may help strengthen the confidence of a distressed person. He or she may be helped to reason that if the elders are confident that Jehovah will answer prayers in behalf of that one, then he or she can share that confidence.

¹⁷ "Every man must be swift about hearing, slow about speaking," says James 1:19. To help weary ones to regain power, elders must also be empathetic listeners. In some cases congregation members may be struggling with problems or pressures that cannot be solved in this system of things. What they may need, then, is not some solution to "fix" their problem but simply to talk to a good listener—someone who will not tell them how they are supposed to feel but who will listen without being judgmental.—Luke 6:37; Romans 14:13.

¹⁸ Elders, being quick to listen can help you to avoid unwittingly making a weary one's load even heavier. For instance, if a brother or a sister has missed some meetings or has slowed down in the field ministry, does he or she really need counsel about doing more in the ministry or about being more regular at meetings? Perhaps. But do you have the whole picture? Are there increasing health problems? Have family responsibilities recently changed? Are there other circumstances or pressures that are weighing him or her down? Remember, the person may already feel very guilty about not being able to do more.

¹⁹ How, then, can you help the brother or sister? Before you draw conclusions and offer advice, *listen!* (Proverbs 18:13) With discerning questions 'draw up' the feelings of the person's heart. (Proverbs 20:5) Do

17. Why must elders be empathetic listeners?
18, 19. (a) How can being quick to listen help an elder to avoid making a weary one's load even heavier? (b) What results when elders show "fellow feeling"?

not dismiss these feelings—recognize them. The weary one may need to be reassured that Jehovah cares for us and understands that at times our circumstances may limit us. (1 Peter 5:7) When elders show such "fellow feeling," weary ones will 'find refreshment for their souls.' (1 Peter 3:8; Matthew 11:28-30) When they find such refreshment, they will not need to be told to do more; their hearts will impel them to do all they reasonably can in serving Jehovah.—Compare 2 Corinthians 8:12; 9:7.

²⁰ Truly we are living in the most demanding time of all human history. The pressures of living in Satan's world are increasing as we get deeper into the time of the end. Remember, like a hunting lion, the Devil waits for us to grow weary and give up so he can take advantage of us as easy prey. How thankful we can be that Jehovah gives to the tired one power! May we take full advantage of the provisions he has made to give us the power to go on, as if he were supplying us with the mighty wings of a soaring eagle. With the end of this wicked generation so near, now is no time to stop running in our race for the prize—everlasting life.—Hebrews 12:1.

20. With the end of this wicked generation so close at hand, what should we be determined to do?

What Is Your Answer?

- What may we expect Jehovah to do in answer to our prayers?
- In what ways may we draw strength from our Christian brotherhood?
- How does God's Word help us to regain power?
- What can elders do to help weary ones to regain power?

A HUNDRED YEARS OLD AND GOING STRONG

AS TOLD BY RALPH MITCHELL

My father, a man of medium height, was a Methodist preacher. He was moved from church to church every two or three years through a succession of mostly small towns, including Asheville, North Carolina, U.S.A., where I was born in February 1895. So I grew up quite familiar with Christendom.

I REMEMBER being led as a young boy to the "mourners' bench" at revival meetings to be filled with the holy spirit—to "get religion," as they called it. I was told to confess my sins, keep the Ten Commandments, and be good. Thus I would go to heaven when I died. 'Well,' I said to myself, 'I guess I'll be going to hell because I can't be good enough for heaven.' I thought that only adults—especially preachers—were living up to Bible standards.

But even before my teens, I began to detect hypocrisy in religion. For example, my father would sacrifice the material needs of his family just to provide the bishop's fund with a large amount of money at the general conference. He hoped that this would get him an appointment to a larger church. I remember one local preacher who was also a cotton farmer. He was eager to get a

prominent position, so he sold a hundred bales of cotton and went to the conference with a pocketful of money. When it seemed that they had got all the money they could out of the audience—made up mostly of preachers—this cotton-farmer preacher jumped up and shouted: "Is this all you are giving your bishop? Every preacher that comes up with five dollars, I will cover it with ten dollars!" Over a thousand dollars was collected, and the bishop appointed this man to be presiding elder over my father. I could not believe that such an appointment came from God.

From then on I was skeptical about anything having to do with religion.

I was drafted when the United States became embroiled in the first world war. I well remember hearing the army chaplains preach to us soldiers about loyally fighting for our country, and this only heightened



my distaste for religion. My goals were to survive, finish my education, and then get married. Religion had no place in my plans for the future.

A Change of Attitude

In 1922, I fell in love with a young woman named Louise. As it turned out, she was a devout Catholic, and when we decided to get married, she wanted a Catholic wedding. Well, I didn't want a religious ceremony of any kind, so she agreed that we would get married at a municipal building in New York City.

At first we had no religious conflicts. I simply made it clear to her that I had no confidence in religion and that we would get along fine as long as there was no mention of it. Then, between the years 1924 and 1937, children came along—one after another, until we had five boys and five girls! Louise wanted our children to attend Catholic school. I didn't want them to have any type of religious training, so we argued about that.

Early in 1939 something happened that would change my outlook on religion altogether. Henry Webber and Harry Piatt, two of Jehovah's Witnesses, came to my house in Roselle, New Jersey. It quickly became apparent that they wanted to talk about the one subject I had no interest in discussing—religion. My faith was still soured by the fact that the chaplains in the army said, 'Fight for your country,' while the religionists back home said, 'Thou shalt not kill.' What hypocrisy! I thought I would set these two Witnesses straight. "Let me tell you something," I said to them. "If your religion is true, then all the others are false. And even if just one of the others is true, then all the rest, including yours, are false. There can be only one true religion." Much to my surprise, they agreed with me!

Next, they asked me to get my Bible and to open it to 1 Corinthians 1:10. There I read: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (*King James Version*) I was intrigued by this scripture. At the same time, I was afraid that these two men were trying to involve me in some type of cult. Yet I had learned something—that there should be no divisions among Christians. I had many other questions on my mind. For example, What happens to the soul at death? How I would love to discuss that question with them! But, I thought, that would create too much religious controversy in the home.

Then one of the two men said: "We would like to come back and talk with you again next week." I tried to dismiss them tactfully, but my wife spoke up. "Ralph," she said, "they want to know when they can come back." This surprised me, since she was an ardent Catholic! Still, I thought, 'Maybe we can find some points of agreement on the subject of religion after all.' So I agreed to have Henry Webber and Harry Piatt call back the next Friday.

Thus it was that I began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. Not too long after this, I was invited to attend a convention at Madison Square Garden in New York City. I vividly recall Joseph F. Rutherford's talk "Government and Peace," given on June 25, 1939. I was one of the 18,000 persons present. Actually, 75,000 heard the lecture, when you include those who were tied in by an international hookup using radio-phone lines.

Things did not go smoothly though. Followers of Catholic priest Charles Coughlin

had threatened to break up the assembly, and sure enough, about halfway through Brother Rutherford's lecture, hundreds of angry people began boozing and shouting slogans such as, "Heil Hitler!" and "Viva Franco!" There was so much commotion that the riot could be heard over the phone lines! It took about 15 minutes for the ushers to quell the mob. All the while, Brother Rutherford, undaunted, kept speaking as the repeated applause from the audience gave him support.

Now I was really curious. Why would a Catholic priest instigate so much hatred against Jehovah's Witnesses? I figured that there must be something to what Rutherford was preaching—something that the clergy did not want people like me to hear. So I continued studying the Bible and making progress. Finally, in October of 1939, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah by means of water baptism. Some of my children were baptized the following year, and my wife, Louise, was baptized in 1941.

Facing Up to Trials

Soon after I accepted the truth, my mother passed away, and I had to return to North Carolina for her funeral. I felt that I could not in good conscience attend the services that would be conducted inside the Methodist church. Hence I phoned my father before making the trip and asked him to keep the coffin at the funeral home. He agreed, but when I got there, they were on their way to the church, where they thought that I would surely join them.

Well, I did not, and this caused quite a stir in my family. Though my sister Edna and I had always been close, after Mom's funeral she would not talk to me. I wrote letters, but she did not answer them. Each summer when Edna came to New York to attend teachers' courses at City College, I tried to

see her. But she would turn me away, saying that she was busy. Eventually I gave up, since it seemed that I was only plaguing her. Many years would pass before I heard from her again.

Because of their refusal to salute the flag, six of my children were expelled from school in 1941, as were many other children in the United States and Canada. In order to meet the legal educational requirement, the Witnesses arranged schools of their own called Kingdom Schools. A former hotel in Lakewood, New Jersey, was the location of the school that my children attended. A Kingdom Hall was on the first floor, along with the school classroom, a kitchen, and a dining area. The girls' sleeping quarters were on the second floor, and the boys' bedrooms were on the third floor. It was a fine school. Most of the children who boarded there went home only on the weekends. Those who lived farther away went home every other weekend.

From my early years in the truth, I had a burning desire to become a pioneer, as full-time evangelizers of Jehovah's Witnesses are called. At the 1941 convention in St. Louis, Missouri, a brother on the program told how he could pioneer while raising 12 children. I thought, 'If he can pioneer with 12, I can pioneer with 10.' However, my circumstances did not allow me to begin pioneering until 19 years later. Finally, on October 1, 1960, I was able to begin serving Jehovah as a regular pioneer.

A Surprise Visit

In 1975, I received a phone call from my sister Edna. I was now 80 years old, and I had not seen her nor heard her voice for some 20 years. She was calling from the airport, and she asked me to come and pick up her and her husband. It was good to see Edna again, but the biggest surprise was

yet to come. On the way home, her husband said, "You have a convert." I didn't know what he meant. When we arrived at the house, once more he said, "You have a convert here." My wife understood right away. Turning to my sister, she asked, "Edna, are you a Witness?" "I surely am," Edna replied.

How did Edna come to accept the truth? Well, in 1972, in an effort to mend our estranged relationship, I had sent her a gift subscription to *The Watchtower*. About a year later, Edna became ill and was confined to her home. The magazines were still on her desk in their wrappers. Out of curiosity Edna opened one and began reading. Upon completing the magazine, she thought to herself, 'This is the truth!' By the time Jehovah's Witnesses called at her home, she had read through the whole stack of *Watchtower* magazines. She accepted a Bible study, and in due course she became one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Coping With Loss

My wife, Louise, eventually contracted diabetes, and her condition worsened until she passed away in 1979, at the age of 82. When Louise died, a part of me died as well. My whole world stopped. I did not know what to do. I had no plans for the future, and I desperately needed encouragement. A traveling overseer, Richard Smith, encouraged me to continue my course of pioneering. I found that my greatest comfort came from comforting others who had lost loved ones in death.

The Watch Tower Society was organizing a tour of Israel in 1979, so I signed up. This trip was a great stimulus to me, and when I got back home, I went right back to work in the pioneer service. Each year since then, I have made it my business to help out in unassigned or infrequently worked territories



With my daughter Rita

in another part of the country. Despite my advanced age, I am still able to make myself available for this privilege.

I estimate that over the years, I have had the joy of helping some 50 persons on the road to life. Most of my children are in the truth. Two of my daughters serve as regular pioneers. Another daughter, Louise Blanton, serves at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York, with her husband, George, and one of my sons has served as an elder for many years.

Of course, due to imperfection inherited from our first human parents, all of us are subject to sickness and death. (Romans 5:12) Certainly my life has not been free from aches and pains. I am presently suffering from arthritis in my left leg. At times it gives me a lot of discomfort, but it has not stopped me from getting around. And I pray that it will not. I want to keep going. My greatest desire is to continue in the pioneer service right down to the end, doing all I can to make known Jehovah's name and purposes.

Watchtower Educational Center

Sends Out Missionaries

THE Watchtower Bible School of Gilead has held classes in a variety of locations. Between 1943 and 1960, in facilities at South Lansing, New York, U.S.A., 35 classes, made up of students from 95 lands, received special training. Then the school moved to the world headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, where it operated for nearly 28 years. From 1988 until early 1995, Gilead School held classes at Wallkill, New York.

During these years the school widened out its scope of operations. Under its direction a ten-week course of instruction was provided to three classes in Mexico; five of such classes were convened in Germany; two in India. Since 1987 a subsidiary school known as the Ministerial Training School has held classes in 34 lands, providing a special eight-week course of training for young men who qualify. The instruction given to the 99th class of Gilead, at the newly constructed Watchtower Educational Center at Patterson, New York, however, was a 20-week course, one that included a comprehensive study of the entire Bible, a discussion of the modern-day history and organization of Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as extensive counsel on foreign missionary work.

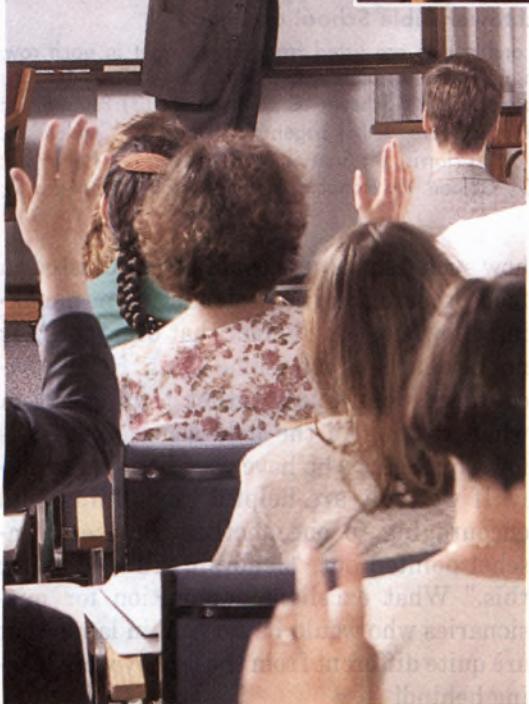
On September 2, that 99th class graduated. The three-hour graduation program was held in the new auditorium at the Watchtower Educational Center. It was filled to capacity. Additional audiences at the Bethel facilities in Patterson, Wallkill, and Brooklyn were tied in electronically. This was an exciting day not only for the graduating class along with their relatives and close friends but also for hundreds who had shared as volunteers in building the fine new school facilities.

In his opening remarks, Carey Barber of the Governing Body focused attention on the significance of what was taking place. He said: "This is to be the hub of the greatest divine education activity that has ever been carried forward on this earth." He explained that we are approaching the climax of the warfare between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. (Genesis 3:15) The only ones who will survive the awesome confrontation during the coming great tribulation, he showed, will be those who have accurate knowledge of God's Word and are obedient to it.

"Our current educational program," he declared, "is designed to bring all of Jehovah's people everywhere into the fine condition of maturity described at Proverbs 1:1-4—that of knowing wisdom and discipline, being able to discern understanding, receiving the discipline that gives insight, righteousness, judgment, uprightness, and thinking ability." What a safeguard it is to have such spiritual resources!

Counsel to the Graduating Class

Those introductory comments were followed by a series of five brief discourses directed to the graduating class. Harold Jackson, formerly a Gilead instructor and now a member of the headquarters staff in Brooklyn, urged the class, "Hold Fast to Your Godly Contentment." Lloyd Barry, a longtime missionary and now a member of the Governing Body, spoke on "Serving Jehovah With Humility." He explained that this quality would be important to the graduates in their adjusting to new situations as well as in their relations with fellow missionaries, with the con-



***Classroom scenes
at Watchtower
Educational Center***

gregations in which they would serve, and with the local people.

Karl Adams, currently serving on the Gilead faculty, reasoned with the class on the question "What Will Faith Lead You to Do?" He encouraged them not to be like those Israelites who complained about conditions in the wilderness and longed to be back in Egypt but, rather, to be like Abraham, who looked to God's Kingdom instead of a return to Ur of the Chaldeans as the solution to problems. (Exodus 16:2, 3; Hebrews 11:10, 15, 16) Ulysses Glass, the school registrar, drew on the experience of Asaph as recorded in Psalm 73 to admonish the graduating class, "Recount Your Blessings." And Albert Schroeder, a member of the Teaching Committee of the Governing Body, spoke on the theme "Jehovah Provides." As evidence of such provision, he pointed to Gilead School itself and its role in accomplishing the great work of preaching and disciple making.

Later the audience listened with keen



99th 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) Heffey, S.; Riley, E.; Mortensen, D.; Honable, A.; Bolton, J.; Poole, J.; Siimes, G.; Sousa, L. (2) Pashnitski, B.; Shepherd, D.; Pashnitski, W.; Järvinen, J.; Paulsen, K.; Rasmussen, E.; Schewe, C.; Olsson, L. (3) Paulsen, E.; Samsel, T.; Bowes, B.; Harris, E.; Kazan, I.; Liebl, N.; Sousa, P.; Puro, J. (4) Lager, K.; Lager, V.; Golden, K.; Bolton, S.; Johnson, M.; Johnson, S.; Liebl, A.; Rasmussen, B. (5) Harris, D.; Samsel, W.; Schewe, O.; Heffey, R.; Kazan, L.; Riley, T.; Järvinen, O.; Puro, M. (6) Mortensen, D.; Golden, R.; Honable, L.; Shepherd, M.; Bowes, R.; Siimes, T.; Poole, E.; Olsson, J.

interest when Milton Henschel, the president of the Watch Tower Society, spoke about "Members Belonging to One Another." He read and commented extensively on Romans chapter 12. Among other things, he said: "We have to take into consideration that we have a very close relationship with our fellow servants in the congregation." He added: "It is good for us always to think of one another as Jehovah's property, and rather than being critical, rather than finding fault, let us always be helpful. We are helping ourselves when we maintain the spiritual unity of the Christian congregation." He showed

how such helpfulness could be manifested in food preparation in missionary homes, making allowance for the fact that everyone may not be able to eat the same thing. He also encouraged helpfulness rather than criticism when sharing in the field service with fellow Christians who have very little materially. If we truly are helpful, upbuilding, and encouraging to one another, Brother Henschel pointed out, "Jehovah will love us for this." What excellent admonition for missionaries who would be serving in lands that are quite different from those they were leaving behind!

Getting to Know the Class Better

The 48 students of the 99th class were, on an average, 32 years of age and had already devoted more than 11 years to the full-time ministry.

Interviews that were part of the graduation program gave the audience opportunity to get to know a few of them. Nikki Liebl, from the United States, and Simon Bolton, from England, related incidents that had tested their faith that Jehovah would provide for their physical needs. They experienced Jehovah's care as they kept the full-time ministry in first place.

Isabelle Kazan, whose native tongue is French, said that she had learned Arabic in order to witness to Arabic-speaking people in her home country. When she began in 1987, the one small group in Paris consisted of just four Arabic-speaking brothers, in addition to herself and another sister who were learning the language. (It was not easy. They would spend eight hours in preparing their *Watchtower* lesson each week in order to be able to comment.) Was the effort worthwhile? Well, today there are Arabic-speaking Witnesses organized into five circuits throughout France. Another student, Miko Puro, told how the French that he had learned in school enabled him to preach to African refugees in his native Finland, and it will also be of value in his missionary assignment in Benin. Bonny Bowes recounted her struggle to speak French fluently so that she could serve effectively in Quebec, Canada. And Bjarki Rasmussen, from Denmark, related experiences that he and his wife had already had during years of service in the

Faeroe Islands. Yes, these new missionaries are seasoned full-time ministers.

The graduates were assigned to 19 lands—in Africa, Central and South America, Eastern Europe, and the Orient. Graduates of earlier classes have already served in more than 200 lands. Many of those graduates are still busy in their assignments. These new missionaries are now joining them in further expanding the Kingdom witness to the ends of the earth.—Acts 1:8.

Still in their assignments:
(left) Charles Leathco with his wife, Fern, in Brazil, graduates of the first and sixth classes of Gilead;
(below) Martha Hess, in Japan, graduate of the seventh class of Gilead



"Where Does the Money Come From?"

VIEWERS of the Watch Tower Society's video "Jehovah's Witnesses—The Organization Behind the Name" are impressed. They see clean-cut men and women from various races and backgrounds, smiling and working together in harmony. Not only do the thousands of happy workers catch their attention but so does the large complex of buildings at the Society's Brooklyn headquarters and at their farms at Wallkill, New York. The video shows that inside these buildings can be found up-to-date technology—high-speed printing and binding equipment producing many millions of publications each month, a panoply of computer equipment, and a full array of support services.

This reflects a tremendous outlay of resources. So some ask, "Where does the money come from?"

Visitors to the Society's world headquarters are similarly impressed. They crane their necks to view the new 30-story residence building, one of many buildings used to house the more than 3,000 volunteer ministers who work there. A visit to the new Watchtower Educational Center about 70 miles north of Brooklyn also leaves many standing in awe. Still under construction, it accommodates some 1,200 workers. Two classes of missionaries will be trained there each year and sent abroad to their assignments. It is also from this location that direction is given to the more than 10,000 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in the United States. Many branches worldwide have also recently enlarged their facilities or are in the process of doing so. To carry out all these operations takes a good deal of money. People ask, "Where does the money come from?"

The answer is that it comes from ordinary individuals like any of us. They are persons, worldwide, who desire to do all they can to further the vital Christian work of preaching and teaching. Such a willing spirit is not without precedent.

The Example Set by Ancient Israel

Over 3,500 years ago, a need for generous contributions arose. Jehovah had instructed Moses to have a tabernacle, or "tent of meeting," constructed to be used in His worship. The divinely given design called for a variety of precious items. Jehovah commanded: "From among yourselves take up a contribution for Jehovah. Let every willing-hearted one bring it as Jehovah's contribution." (Exodus 35:4-9) How did the people respond? The account tells us that "they came, everyone whose heart impelled him, and they brought, everyone whose spirit incited him, Jehovah's contribution for the work of the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments." This "voluntary offering" gradually became so large that it was 'much more than what was needed for the work that Jehovah commanded to be done.' (Exodus 35:21-29; 36:3-5) What a selfless, generous spirit the people displayed!

Less than 500 years later, a call again went out for a generous contribution from the Israelites. King David's desire to build a permanent house for Jehovah in Jerusalem was about to be realized through his son Solomon. David himself gathered and contributed a major portion of what would be needed. Others joined in when David issued the call to bring "a gift for Jehovah." The result? "The people gave way to rejoicing over their making voluntary offerings, for it

was with a complete heart that they made voluntary offerings to Jehovah; and even David the king himself rejoiced with great joy." (1 Chronicles 22:14; 29:3-9) The silver and gold alone would be worth about \$50 billion at current values!—2 Chronicles 5:1.

We note from these examples that no one was coerced into giving. It was strictly "voluntary" and given "with a complete heart." Jehovah would not have been pleased with anything less. Similarly, when the opportunity arose to contribute money to aid needy Christians, the apostle Paul wrote that it was not to be "as something extorted." He added: "Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."—2 Corinthians 9:5, 7.

The Need Today

Is there a need for contributions today? Indeed there is, and there will be even more so as time progresses. Why?

Christians have been given specific instructions for this time of the end. Jesus commanded his disciples: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you."—Matthew 28:19, 20.

To accomplish this great teaching and preaching work as we move ever closer to the finale of "the conclusion of the system of things" takes considerable time and resources. Why? Because of all that is involved in carrying the message of God's Kingdom "to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) Most people are not well versed in the Scriptures as were the first-century Jews. In fact, a goodly number of earth's inhabitants are not even acquainted with the Bible and do not regard it as the Word of God. Preachers must be trained and sent to distant lands. (Romans 10:13-15)

And think of the number of languages involved! Those preached to need to have Bibles and Bible-based publications to read and study in their own language. To reach all systematically and progressively bring them to spiritual maturity so that they can aid still others requires organization on a grand scale.—2 Timothy 2:2.

Jesus said that the "good news of the kingdom" must first "be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14) So now is the time to devote all that we can to get that vital work done. Our resources can be put to no better use before material wealth ceases to be of any practical value.—Ezekiel 7:19; Luke 16:9.

Where Does the Money Go?

The Watch Tower Society publishes Bible literature in over 230 languages, as well as in Braille for the blind and videos in sign language for the deaf. That requires teams of translators and proofreaders in each language. Just to think of doing all this work, especially for the *Watchtower* magazine, which is published each month in 121 languages and simultaneously in 101 of them, staggers the imagination. Yet it is necessary so that people earth wide can have and read the same information. Every year there are increases in the cost of paper and other materials used in producing the Kingdom message in printed form or audio or video recordings. Such costs have to be defrayed by using donations from the brothers.

The preaching and teaching work is carried on in territories covered by over 75,000 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide. To unify and encourage them, trained traveling overseers visit each congregation about twice each year. Assemblies also play a vital role in imparting instruction. Large facilities must be rented

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 local 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 11201-2483, or to the Society's office that serves your country. 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

for the conventions, which are so faith strengthening. Your contributions are also used for these purposes.

While assemblies are generally held only three times a year, local congregations assemble for five weekly meetings. (Compare Exodus 34:23, 24.) The influx of new ones responding to the good news has meant the addition of thousands of new congregations each year. With the help of millions of dollars in loans dispensed through the Society, hundreds of new Kingdom Halls are constructed each year, and many others are renovated and expanded. Although this is a rotating fund that is used over and over, the demand keeps increasing.

One area where there has been unprecedented growth is in the nations in Eastern Europe that were subject to the former So-

viet Union. How joyful was the progressive news that the work had opened up in these places! Now missionaries are being sent to many of these countries. New branches have been established in some lands, swelling the number of volunteer ministers who staff the worldwide Bethel family to over 15,000. Of course, branch buildings to house them have to be bought or constructed. Your contributions help to fill the need.

All this work has not gone unnoticed by Satan and his demons. They do all they can to thwart the efforts of Jehovah's faithful servants or make problems for them. (Revelation 12:17) This means an increasing load of legal battles to protect the rights of God's people to preach and live in harmony with his righteous laws. Additionally, the ravages of war in Satan's system of

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.



things, as well as natural disasters, means that relief supplies are often needed for our stricken brothers and sisters and others with them. Your contributions help supply this vital aid.

Jehovah Will Reward You

Generously using our time and resources to promote the Lord's work brings great blessings. How so? Because God, to whom ultimately all things belong, will reward us. Proverbs 11:25 states: "The generous soul will itself be made fat, and the one freely watering others will himself also be freely watered." Jehovah is indeed pleased when we do our part to advance his worship. (Hebrews 13:15, 16) He promised the ancient Israelites who would bring in the contributions required under the Law cove-

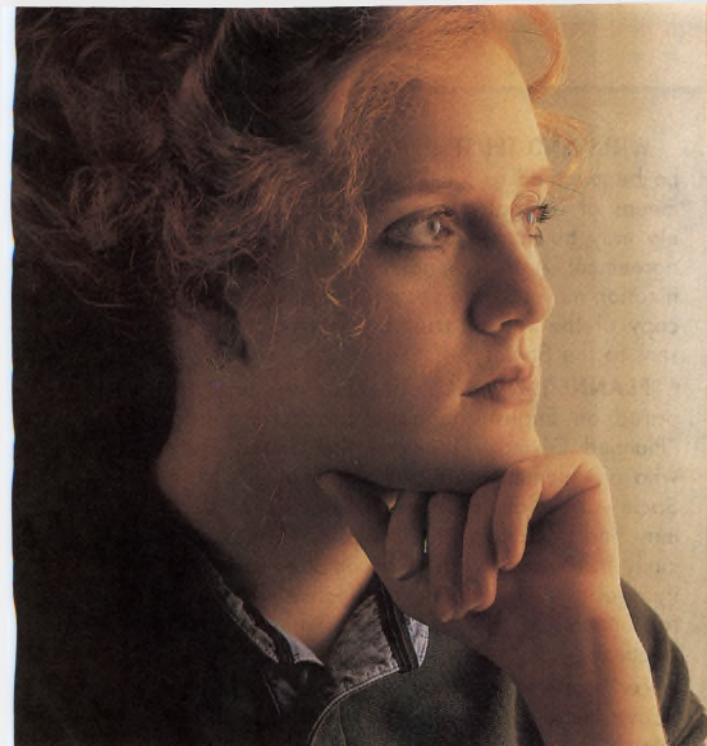
WILLS AND TRUSTS: Property or money may be bequeathed to the Watch Tower Society by means of a legally executed will, or the Society may be named as a beneficiary of a trust agreement. A trust benefiting a religious organization may provide certain tax advantages. A copy of the will or trust agreement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

PLANNED GIVING: The Society has prepared an English-language brochure entitled "Planned Giving." Those in the United States who are planning to make a special gift to the Society now or to leave a bequest at death may find this information helpful. That is especially true if they wish to accomplish some family goal or estate-planning objective while using tax benefits to minimize the cost of the gift or bequest.

For more information regarding any of the above matters, write to the Treasurer's Office, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201-2483, or to the Society's office that serves your country.

nant: "Test me out, please, in this respect,' Jehovah of armies has said, 'whether I shall not open to you people the floodgates of the heavens and actually empty out upon you a blessing until there is no more want.'" (Malachi 3:10) The spiritual prosperity that Jehovah's servants enjoy today is evidence that God keeps his promise.

This grand work of declaring to all the day of salvation and helping honesthearted ones on the road to life will not continue forever. (Matthew 7:14; 2 Corinthians 6:2) But all those of the Lord's "other sheep" must be gathered. (John 10:16) How imperative it is to meet that challenge today! And how happy each of us will be, in looking back from that new world of righteousness, to say, 'I had a full share in that final ingathering work'!—2 Peter 3:13.



do not harbor resentment

IT MAY seem more challenging than ever to avoid becoming resentful when someone offends us. The Bible has practical counsel for such situations. "Be wrathful," the apostle Paul wrote, "and yet do not sin; let the sun not set with you in a provoked state."—Ephesians 4:26.

When someone wrongs us, it is only normal to feel a degree of wrath. That Paul says "be wrathful" implies that the anger may at times be proper—perhaps in response to unfair treatment or a miscarriage of justice. (Compare 2 Corinthians 11:29.) But when left unresolved, even justified anger can have disastrous consequences, leading to great sin. (Genesis 34:1-31; 49:5-7; Psalm 106:32, 33) So, what can you do when you feel provoked to wrath?

In most cases involving minor transgressions, you can either settle the situation in your heart

"and keep silent" or approach the offender and discuss the issue. (Psalm 4:4; Matthew 5:23, 24) Either way, it is best to put the matter to rest quickly so that resentment does not fester and breed tragic results.—Ephesians 4:31.

Jehovah forgives our sins freely, even sins that we in our ignorance may not be aware of committing. Can we not likewise forgive the minor transgression of a fellow human?—Colossians 3:13; 1 Peter 4:8.

Interestingly, the Greek word for "forgive" literally means to "let go off." Forgiveness does not require that we minimize or condone the wrong. At times it may simply involve letting go of the situation, realizing that harboring resentment will only add to your burden and disrupt the unity of the Christian congregation. Further, it can be detrimental to your health to harbor resentment!—Psalm 103:9.