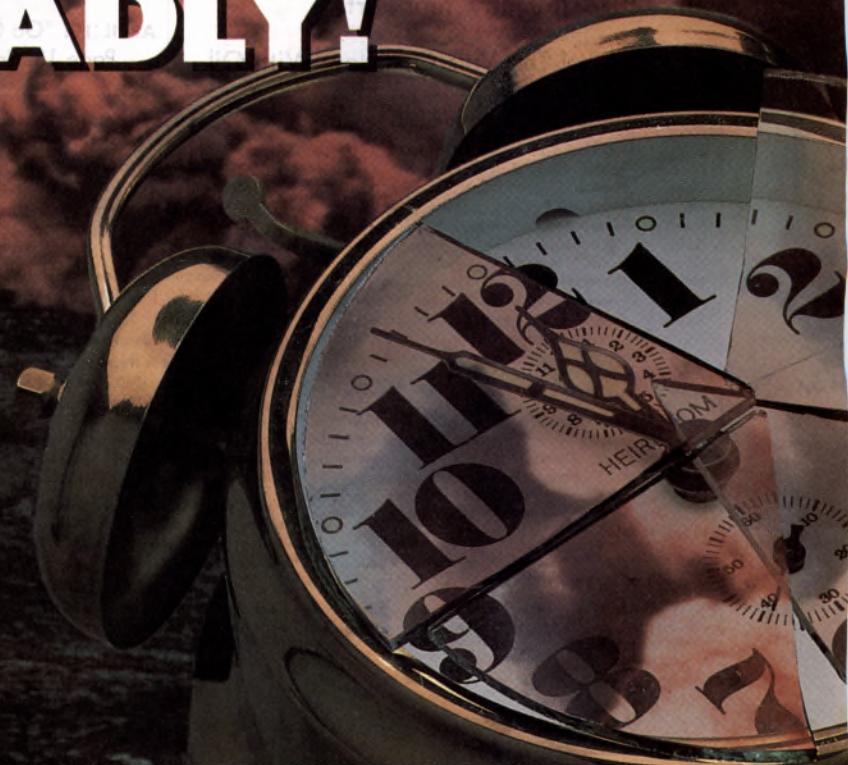


MARCH 1, 1993

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

**DELAY CAN
BE DEADLY!**



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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DELAY WAS DEADLY!

THREE families, seven adults and six children, ran desperately for their lives. They had apparently huddled together in the shelter of someone's home, hoping to ride out the terrifying hail of stones. But as the thunder of falling stones grew quiet, a new terror arrived—a black cloud of suffocating ash. Now there was no choice but to run.

In the lead was a man, probably a servant, who ran with a bag of provisions slung over his shoulder. He was followed by two boys, one about four years old, the other five, running hand in hand. The others followed—panic-stricken, struggling, stumbling, desperately seeking escape. They tried to breathe, but instead of air, they inhaled moist ash. One by one, all 13 fell and lay motionless and were finally entombed by the falling ash. Their pathetic remains would lay hidden until archaeologists uncovered them almost 2,000 years



Soprintendenza Archeologica di Pompei

later and deciphered the sad details of their last moments.

These 13 victims were only a few of the estimated 16,000 that perished in the ancient city of Pompeii, Italy, on August 24, 79 C.E. Many survived by fleeing the city when Mount Vesuvius belched its very first explosion. Yet, those who delayed—mostly wealthy people who did not want to leave their homes and possessions—were buried

under 20 feet of rock and ash.

What happened in Pompeii nearly 2,000 years ago may be ancient history. But in many ways it parallels the situation facing the entire human race today. A global sign, far more ominous than the thunderings of Mount Vesuvius, is serving notice that this present world order is facing imminent destruction. To survive, we must act immediately. Delay is deadly. Just what that sign is and how we can wisely respond to it is the subject of our next article.

WILL YOU HEED GOD'S WARNING?

PEOPLE often ignore lifesaving warnings. Most of the inhabitants of Pompeii chose to ignore the angry sounds of Mount Vesuvius. In a similar fashion, most people today are ignoring the warnings of a coming global catastrophe. But to those who are willing to face the facts, the warning is as real as the flashes of lightning and fire that emanated from Mount Vesuvius back in the first century. Two world wars, hundreds of smaller armed conflicts, famines, great earthquakes, pestilences, wave after wave of crime and violence, and a worldwide preaching campaign all together constitute a dramatic warning that human society is rapidly approaching a cataclysmic crisis.

The Bible makes this sobering prediction: "There will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again." (Matthew 24:21) As was the case in the disaster at Pompeii, there will be those who escape—"a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues," will survive, that is, "come out of the great tribulation."—Revelation 7:9, 14.

The question is, *When* will this destruction come? There is compelling reason to believe that the tribulation is imminent. Apparently with time in mind, Jesus' disciples asked: "What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" (Matthew 24:3) Note the answer Jesus Christ gave.

War—Prominent Feature of the Composite Sign

Jesus did not predict simply one outstanding event. Rather, he spoke of a series of events that, taken as a whole, would constitute a divine warning—a composite sign of the conclusion of the system of things. The first event predicted is described at Matthew 24:7: "Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom." In a parallel prophecy at Revelation 6:4, the Bible predicted that 'peace would be taken away from the earth.' This meant war on an unprecedented scale.

History tells us that this prophecy of global war has seen its fulfillment since the memorable year 1914. The book *American Adventures* says regarding the years before 1914: "Many Americans had entered the new century full of hope. These were the 'good years' and they lasted into the century's second decade. . . . Then, on July 28, 1914, this mood was shaken by one word: war." Thus began World War I, which lasted from 1914 to 1918 and was designated by some as the "war to end all wars." Twenty-eight countries were directly involved in it. And if you include the lands that served as their dependencies, the warring nations represented almost 90 percent of the world's population at that time.

World War I also saw the use of new and exceedingly deadly instruments of warfare, such as the machine gun, poison gas, flamethrowers, tanks, airplanes, and submarines. Almost ten million soldiers were

Twenty-Four Features of the Sign

1. Unprecedented warfare—Matthew 24:6, 7; Revelation 6:4
2. Earthquakes—Matthew 24:7; Mark 13:8
3. Food shortages—Matthew 24:7; Mark 13:8
4. Pestilences—Luke 21:11; Revelation 6:8
5. Increasing lawlessness—Matthew 24:12
6. Ruining of the earth—Revelation 11:18
7. Love cooling off—Matthew 24:12
8. Fearful sights—Luke 21:11
9. Inordinate love of money—2 Timothy 3:2
10. Disobedience to parents—2 Timothy 3:2
11. Loving pleasures more than God—2 Timothy 3:4
12. Love of self dominates—2 Timothy 3:2
13. General lack of natural affection—2 Timothy 3:3
14. People not open to any agreement
—2 Timothy 3:3
15. Self-control lacking at all levels of society
—2 Timothy 3:3
16. Widespread loss of love of goodness
—2 Timothy 3:3
17. Many hypocritically claiming to be Christian
—2 Timothy 3:5
18. Excessive eating and drinking by some
—Luke 21:34
19. Ridiculers reject the sign—2 Peter 3:3, 4
20. Many false prophets are active—Matthew 24:5, 11; Mark 13:6
21. Preaching of the good news of God's established Kingdom—Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10
22. Persecution of true Christians—Matthew 24:9; Luke 21:12
23. Cry of peace and security to climax the last days—1 Thessalonians 5:3
24. People take no note of danger—Matthew 24:39

killed—more than all the soldiers in all the major wars fought during the preceding 100 years! About 21 million were wounded. Truly, it was a global war, marking 1914 as the beginning of “the last days.” (2 Timothy 3:1) However, war was just one feature of Jesus’ sign.

Other Features of the Sign

Jesus added: “There will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another. All these things are a beginning of pangs of distress.” (Matthew 24:7, 8) Luke 21:11 adds “pestilences” to that list. Before World War I ended, the Spanish influenza epidemic began sweeping the earth. Eventually, it killed over 20 million people, more than all those who had died in the war.

During and after the war, millions of others died from starvation. Earthquakes also took a high toll. In 1915 over 30,000 were killed in Italy; in 1920 about 200,000 perished in China; in 1923 almost 143,000 died

in Japan. Still, as Jesus indicated, all of this was just a beginning of pangs of distress. One dictionary defines “pang” as a “brief piercing spasm of pain.” This world has been reeling from one spasm of pain to the next with ever-increasing intensity and frequency since 1914. For example, just 21 years after World War I came the second world war, which claimed 50 million victims and ushered mankind into the nuclear age.

In recent years much has been said about yet another cause of distress: man’s destruction of the environment. Although Jesus did not specifically mention this in his prophecy, Revelation 11:18 indicates that prior to the coming destruction, man would be “ruining the earth.” The evidence that this ruining is taking place is abundant. Quoted in the book *State of the World 1988*, environmental consultant Norman Myers gives this frightening message: “No generation in the past has faced the prospect of mass extinction within its lifetime. No

Environmental Problems—A Sign of the Times

- The protective ozone shield in heavily populated latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere is thinning twice as fast as scientists thought just a few years ago.
- A minimum of 140 plant and animal species are going into extinction each day.
- Atmospheric levels of heat-trapping carbon dioxide are now 26 percent higher than the preindustrial concentration, and they continue to climb.
- The earth's surface was warmer in 1990 than in any year since record keeping began in the mid-19th century; six of the seven warmest years on record have occurred since 1980.
- Forests are vanishing at a rate of some 40,000,000 acres per year, an area about half the size of Finland.
- World population is growing by 92 million people annually—roughly equal to adding another Mexico each year; of this total, 88 million are being added in developing countries.
- Some 1.2 billion people lack water that is safe to drink.

According to the book *State of the World 1992*, by Worldwatch Institute, pages 3, 4, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, London.

generation in the future will ever face a similar challenge: if this present generation fails to get to grips with the task, the damage will have been done and there will be no 'second try.'

Consider the report in the February 17, 1992, issue of *Newsweek* magazine on the depletion of ozone in the atmosphere. Greenpeace ozone specialist Alexandra Allen was quoted as warning that ozone loss "now amounts to a threat to the future of all life on earth."—See the box on this page for further evidence of environmental ruining of the earth.

Space does not permit a detailed discussion of all aspects of Jesus' prophecy. (See the chart on page 5 for an overview of other prophetic features.) One feature that cannot be overlooked, though, is described at Matthew 24:14: "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." There is little question as to who is carrying on this global preaching work. Jehovah's Witnesses in 229 lands spent over one billion hours in this work in the year 1992 alone. Their work thus constitutes one of the most visible proofs that we are living in the last days.

Do Not Be Fooled!

Some may argue, though, that all this talk of "the last days" is mere pessimism. 'What about the recent demise of Communism in Eastern Europe?' they ask, 'or the efforts of the superpowers to make peace? Is this not evidence that things are getting better?' No. Notice that Jesus did not say that the entire world would continuously be engulfed in wars, earthquakes, and famines during the last days. In order for the good news to be preached worldwide, there would have to be at least some periods of relative calm.

Recall, too, that Jesus compared the last days to the days before the Noachian Flood. At that time people were preoccupied with eating, drinking, and marrying—the normal activities of life. (Matthew 24:37-39) This would indicate that while conditions during the last days would be distressing, things would not degenerate to the point where the normal pursuits of life would be impossible. As in Noah's day, the vast majority of humanity are so preoccupied with day-to-day affairs that they take no note of the seriousness of the times.

Therefore, it would be dangerous to lapse into indifference because of some seemingly favorable political developments. (Compare



After destruction will come God's glorious new world

1 Thessalonians 5:3.) The evidence is overwhelming that Jesus' prophecy is undergoing fulfillment now—a warning that destruction is near!

The Glorious Aftermath

The destruction of Pompeii brought death and misery. However, the end of this present system will clear the way for eternal life on a beautiful paradise earth. (Revelation 21:3, 4) No more will divisive human governments ravage the earth with wars. No more will men tremble at the threat of a nuclear holocaust. Gone will be the factories that belch toxic chemicals into the environment.

—Daniel 2:44.

At that time every person alive will be a lover of righteousness and a true friend, completely obedient to the rule of the King-

dom. (Psalm 37:10, 11) Hospitals, funeral parlors, and cemeteries will be things of the past. Divorce, separation, depression, and child abuse will likewise be no more.—Isaiah 25:8; 65:17.

Do you want to survive the last days and live to see God's glorious new world? Then "keep awake, for you do not know when the appointed time is." (Mark 13:33) Nevertheless, world events make it evident that the appointed time is near—dangerously near for many. There is no time to lose. So take lifesaving action, and seek out those who are heeding the global sign of the last days. These are easily identifiable, for they alone are obeying Jesus' command to preach the good news of the Kingdom worldwide. Along with such ones, may you take steps to align yourself with the King, Christ Jesus, of whom it is said: "In his name nations will hope."—Matthew 12:18, 21.

BE TRANSFORMED IN MIND AND ENLIGHTENED IN HEART

"This, therefore, I say and bear witness to in the Lord, that you no longer go on walking just as the nations also walk."—EPHESIANS 4:17.

THE mind and the heart are two of the most wonderful faculties possessed by humans. Though their operations are innumerable, they themselves are unique to each individual. Our personality, speech, conduct, emotions, and values are all deeply affected by the way in which our minds and hearts operate.

² In the Bible, “heart” generally refers to motivation, emotions, and inner feelings, and “mind” to intellect and thinking faculties. Yet, they are not mutually exclusive. For example, Moses urged the Israelites: “You must call back to your heart [footnote, “must recall to your mind”] that Jehovah is the true God.” (Deuteronomy 4:39) To the scribes who were scheming against him, Jesus said: “Why are you thinking wicked things in your hearts?”—Matthew 9:4; Mark 2:6, 7.

³ This indicates that the mind and the heart are closely related. They interact with each other, sometimes reinforcing each other to work as a unified team, yet often battling each other in a struggle for dominance. (Matthew 22:37; compare Romans 7:23.) On this account, to gain Jehovah’s favor, not only must we be sure of the condition of our minds and hearts but we must also train them to work together harmoni-

ously, to pull in the same direction. We must be transformed in mind and enlightened in heart.—Psalm 119:34; Proverbs 3:1.

‘The Way the Nations Walk’

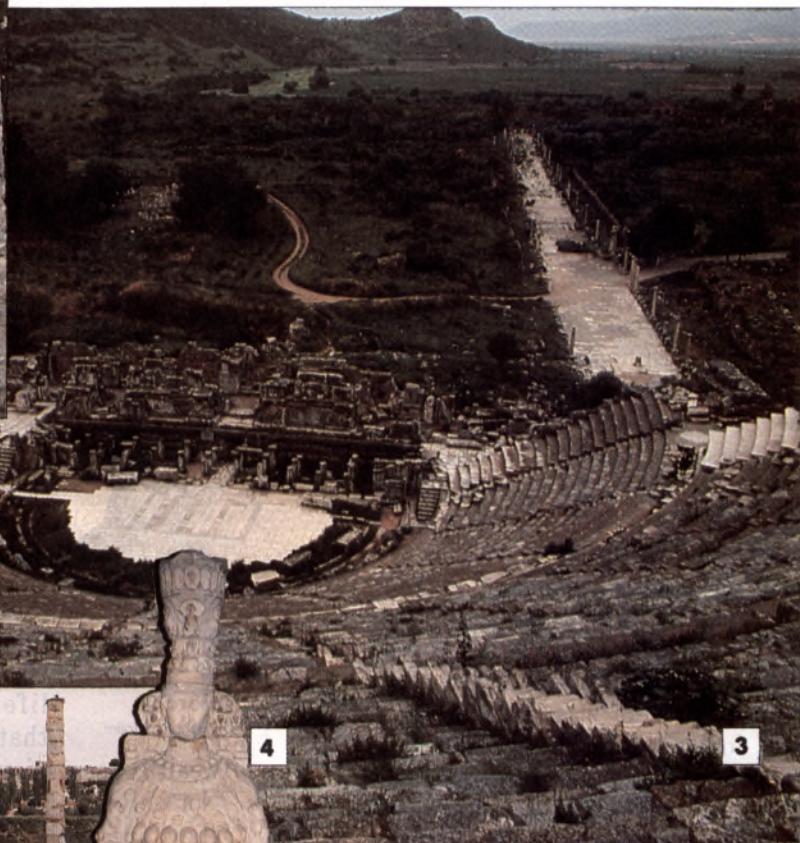
⁴ Satan is a master of deception and manipulation. He knows that to gain control of people, he must target their minds and hearts. Right from the beginning of human history, he has been using devices of one sort or another to achieve that end. As a result, “the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one.” (1 John 5:19) In fact, Satan has so successfully influenced the hearts and minds of the people of the world that the Bible describes them as “a crooked and twisted generation.” (Philippians 2:15) The apostle Paul vividly describes the condition of heart and mind of that crooked and twisted generation, and his words serve as a warning to all of us today. For example, please read Ephesians 4:17-19, and compare it with Paul’s words at Romans 1:21-24.

⁵ We can appreciate why Paul wrote such strong words to the Christians in Ephesus when we remember that the city was notorious for its moral decadence and pagan idol worship. Though the Greeks had their famous thinkers and philosophers, it seems that Greek education gave many of the peo-

1. What do our minds and hearts do for us?
- 2, 3. (a) How does the Bible use the terms “heart” and “mind”? (b) Why must we be concerned about both the heart and the mind?

4. How has Satan influenced people’s minds and hearts, and what is the outcome?
5. Why did Paul write strong counsel to the Ephesians?

1



2



4



3



Ephesus was notorious for its moral decadence and idol worship

1. Roman gladiator at Ephesus
2. Ruins of the temple of Artemis
3. Theater at Ephesus
4. Ephesian Artemis, fertility goddess

ple greater capacity for evil, and their culture only made them more refined in their vices. Paul was deeply concerned about his fellow Christians living in such an environment. He knew that many of them were formerly people of the nations and had "walked according to the system of things

of this world." But now they had accepted the truth. Their minds had been transformed, and their hearts had been enlightened. Above all else, Paul wanted them to "walk worthily of the calling."—Ephesians 2:2; 4:1.

⁶ The situation is similar today. We also live in a world of twisted values, bankrupt morals, and false religious practices. Many among us once lived according to the system of things of this world. Others of us have to rub shoulders with worldlings day in and day out. Some live in households where the worldly spirit prevails. It is, therefore, imperative that we understand the meaning of Paul's words and benefit from his counsel.

6. Why should we be interested in Paul's words?

Unprofitable and Darkened Minds

⁷ To give strong support for his exhortation that Christians "no longer go on walking just as the nations also walk," Paul first mentioned "*the unprofitableness of their minds.*" (Ephesians 4:17) What does that mean? The word translated "unprofitableness," according to *The Anchor Bible*, "implies emptiness, idleness, vanity, foolishness, purposelessness, and frustration." Thus, Paul was pointing out that the fame and glory of the Greek and Roman world might have appeared impressive but pursuing them was really empty, foolish, and purposeless. Those who set their hearts on fame and glory would end up with nothing but frustration and disappointment. The same principle is true of the world today.

⁸ The world has its intellectuals and its elite to whom people look for answers to such profound questions as the origin and purpose of life and the destiny of mankind. But what insight and guidance do they have to offer? Atheism, agnosticism, evolution, and a host of other confusing and conflicting ideas and theories that are no more enlightening than the rituals and superstitions of the past. Many worldly pursuits also seem to offer a measure of satisfaction and fulfillment. People speak of success and achievement in science, art, music, sports, politics, and so on. They revel in their fleet-

7. What did Paul mean by the expression "the unprofitableness of their minds?"
8. In what ways are the world's endeavors unprofitable?



Nero

Musei Capitolini,
Roma

What insight do the elite of the world have to offer?

ing moments of glory. Nonetheless, the annals of history and the record books of today are full of forgotten heroes. All of this is nothing but emptiness, idleness, vanity, foolishness, purposelessness, and frustration.

⁹ Recognizing the unprofitableness of such endeavors, many turn to materialistic pursuits —amassing money and getting the things money can buy—and make these pursuits their goal in life. They are convinced that happiness comes from wealth, possessions, and pleasure seeking. Not only do they put their minds to it but they are willing to sacrifice everything —health, family, even conscience. What is the result? Instead of being fulfilled, they have "stabbed themselves all over with many pains." (1 Timothy 6:10) It is no wonder that Paul urged his fellow Christians to stop walking as the nations do on account of the unprofitableness of that line of thinking.

¹⁰ To show that the world has nothing worthy of being envied or imitated, Paul next said that "*they are in darkness mentally.*" (Ephesians 4:18) Of course, the world does have intelligent and knowledgeable people in nearly every field of endeavor. Yet, Paul said that they are in darkness mentally. Why? His remarks are not about their

9. What unprofitable pursuits do many turn to?
10. How are people of the world "in darkness mentally?"

mental expertise or abilities. The term "mind" can also refer to the center of human perception, the seat of understanding, the inner man. They are in darkness because they have no guiding light or sense of direction in their endeavors. This can be seen in their befuddled sense of right and wrong. People may think that today's non-judgmental, anything-goes mentality is enlightened, but it is really a darkened mentality, according to Paul. Spiritually, they are groping about in total darkness.—Job 12:25; 17:12; Isaiah 5:20; 59:6-10; 60:2; compare Ephesians 1:17, 18.

¹¹ Why is it that people can be intelligent, even brilliant, in so many things and yet be in spiritual darkness? At 2 Corinthians 4:4, Paul gave us the answer: "The god of this system of things has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, that the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine through." What a precious blessing it is that those who embrace the glorious good news have become transformed in mind and enlightened in heart!

Ignorant and Insensitive Hearts

¹² To help us further see why we must be transformed in mind and enlightened in heart, Paul directed our attention to the fact that the way of the world is "*alienated from the life that belongs to God*." (Ephesians 4:18) Not that people no longer believe in God or that they have become completely godless. One newspaper columnist put it this way: "Instead of godless, let's invent a new word: less-God. Less-God people want credit for believing in the Deity while they simultaneously keep Him in a box, letting Him out only on Sunday morning and never

11. What is the cause of the mental darkness in the world?

12. In what way is the world "alienated from the life that belongs to God"?

allowing Him to impact their political world view or their personal lives between Sundays. [They] more or less believe in God but don't think He has much to say about modern society." Paul put it this way in his letter to the Romans: "Although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God nor did they thank him." (Romans 1:21) Every day we see people who go through life with no thought of God whatsoever. Certainly, they give no honor or thanks to him.

¹³ The expression "the life that belongs to God" is a significant one. It further demonstrates how mental and spiritual darkness confound the people's sense of values. The Greek word translated "life" here is not *bi'-os* (from which come words like "biology," "biography"), which means way of life, or life-style. Rather, it is *zo-e'* (from which come words like "zoo," "zoology"). It means "life as a principle, life in the absolute sense, life as God has it. . . . From this life man has become alienated in consequence of the Fall," according to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Thus, Paul was telling us that mental and spiritual darkness has not only led the people of the world to corruption in the flesh but also separated them from the hope of everlasting life that God holds out. (Galatians 6:8) Why so? Paul went on to tell us the reasons.

¹⁴ First of all, he said that it is "*because of the ignorance that is in them*." (Ephesians 4:18) The phrase "that is in them" emphasizes that the ignorance is due not to lack of opportunity but to deliberate rejection of knowledge of God. Other renderings of this phrase are: "their inherent refusal to know God" (*The Anchor Bible*); "without knowledge because they have shut their hearts to

13. What is "the life that belongs to God"?

14. What is one reason why the world is alienated from the life that belongs to God?

it" (*Jerusalem Bible*). Because they reject, or willfully spurn, accurate knowledge of God, they have no basis for gaining the kind of life that Jehovah holds out for those who exercise faith in his Son, who said: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." —John 17:3; 1 Timothy 6:19.

¹⁵ Another reason that the world in general is alienated from the life that belongs to God, according to Paul, is "*the insensibility of their hearts.*" (Ephesians 4:18) "Insensibility" here basically means a hardening, as if covered by calluses. All of us know how calluses develop. The skin may at first be soft and sensitive, but if it is repeatedly exposed to a certain pressure or friction, it hardens and thickens, forming a callus. It no longer feels the irritation. Likewise, people are not born with a hardened or callous heart so that they are automatically unfeeling toward God. But because we live in the world and are exposed to its spirit, it does not take long for the heart to become callous or hardened if it is not safeguarded. That is why Paul warned: "Beware . . . for fear any one of you should become hardened by the deceptive power of sin." (Hebrews 3:7-13; Psalm 95:8-10) How urgent it is, therefore, that we remain transformed in mind and enlightened in heart!

"Past All Moral Sense"

¹⁶ The consequence of such darkness and alienation is summed up by Paul's further words: "*Having come to be past all moral sense, they gave themselves over to loose conduct to work uncleanness of every sort with greediness.*" (Ephesians 4:19) The expres-

15. What contributes to this world's alienation from the life that belongs to God?

16. What is the consequence of the world's mental darkness and alienation from the life that belongs to God?

sion "having come to be past all moral sense" literally means "having ceased to feel pain," moral pain. That is how a callous heart comes to be. Once it ceases to feel pangs of conscience and a sense of accountability before God, there is no longer any restraint. Thus, Paul said that "they gave themselves over" to loose conduct and uncleanness. It is a deliberate, willful step. "Loose conduct," as used in the Bible, denotes a brazen, shameless attitude, contemptuous of law and authority. Likewise, "uncleanness of every sort" includes not only sexual perversions but also the depraved things done in the name of religion, such as the fertility rites and rituals performed at the temple of Artemis in Ephesus, with which Paul's readers were well acquainted.—Acts 19:27, 35.

¹⁷ As if unrestrained indulgence in loose conduct and uncleanness of every sort were not bad enough, Paul adds that such persons act "with greediness." When people who still possess a measure of moral sense commit a sin, they may at least feel remorseful and try hard not to repeat it. But those who have "come to be past all moral

17. Why did Paul say that people who are past all moral sense sin "with greediness"?

Can You Explain?

- What prompted Paul's strong counsel at Ephesians 4:17-19?
- Why are the world's ways unprofitable and in darkness?
- What is meant by the expression "alienated from the life that belongs to God"?
- What are the consequences of a darkened mind and an insensitive heart?

sense" sin "with greediness" ("and still ask for more," *The Anchor Bible*). A radio commentator once put it this way: "If you paint the town red tonight, you have to have a bigger bucket and a bigger brush for tomorrow night." They eagerly enter a vicious downward spiral until they sink to the very depths of depravity—and think nothing of it. What an accurate depiction of "the will of the nations"!—1 Peter 4:3, 4.

¹⁸ In just three verses, Ephesians 4:17-19, Paul thus uncovers the true moral and spiritual state of the world. He points out that the ideas and theories advanced by worldly thinkers and the relentless pursuit of wealth and pleasure are completely unprof-

18. To summarize, what kind of picture did Paul present of the world's mental and spiritual state?

itable. He makes clear that because of mental and spiritual darkness, the world is in a moral quagmire, sinking ever lower. Finally, because of self-imposed ignorance and insensibility, the world has become hopelessly alienated from the life that belongs to God. Surely, we have good reasons not to go on walking just as the nations also walk!

¹⁹ Since it is darkness in the mind and heart that causes the world to become alienated from Jehovah God, how can we do away with all darkness from our minds and hearts? Yes, what should we do so that we can go on walking as children of light and retain God's favor? This will be considered in the next article.

19. What essential questions must yet be considered?

"GO ON WALKING AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT"

"Put on the new personality which was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty."—EPHESIANS 4:24.

JEHOVAH GOD is "the Father of the celestial lights," and "there is no darkness at all in union with him." (James 1:17; 1 John 1:5) His Son, Jesus Christ, said of himself: "I am the light of the world. He that follows me will by no means walk in darkness, but will possess the light of life." (John 8:12) True worshipers of Jehovah, the followers of his Son, are therefore blessed with enlightenment—mental, moral, and

spiritual—and they are "shining as illuminators in the world."—Philippians 2:15.

² Long ago, the prophet Isaiah was inspired to foretell this contrast: "Look! darkness itself will cover the earth, and thick gloom the national groups; but upon you Jehovah will shine forth, and upon you his own glory will be seen." In fact, all humanity alienated from God is spoken of as being under the power and influence of "the world

1. With what are worshipers of Jehovah blessed? Why?

2. What contrast between God's people and the world was foretold?

rulers of this darkness.”—Isaiah 60:2; Ephesians 6:12.

³ The apostle Paul was very much concerned that his fellow Christians remain free from such darkness. He urged that they “no longer go on walking just as the nations also walk” but that they “go on walking as children of light.” (Ephesians 4:17; 5:8) He also explained how they could succeed in doing this. Today, the darkness and gloom that cover the nations have grown thicker. The world has sunk deeper into the mire of moral and spiritual bankruptcy. Worshipers of Jehovah have an increasingly formidable battle to wage. Therefore, we are keenly interested in what Paul had to say.

Learn About the Christ

⁴ After describing the unprofitable pursuits and uncleanness of the world, the apostle Paul turned his attention back to his fellow Christians in Ephesus. (Please read Ephesians 4:20, 21.) Paul had spent about three years preaching and teaching in that city, and he must have been personally acquainted with many in the congregation. (Acts 20:31-35) Thus, when he said, “*You did not learn the Christ to be so*,” he was expressing his personal knowledge that the Ephesian Christians were not taught some permissive, watered-down version of the truth that condoned the types of gross misconduct that he had described in verses 17 to 19. He knew that they had been properly and accurately taught the true Christian way of life as exemplified by Jesus Christ. For that reason, they no longer walked in darkness as the nations did, but they were children of light.

3. For what reasons are we keenly interested in Paul’s timely counsel?
4. What did Paul have in mind when he said: “You did not learn the Christ to be so”?

⁵ How important it is, then, to “learn the Christ” in the proper manner! Are there wrong ways to learn the Christ? Yes, indeed. Earlier, at Ephesians 4:14, Paul had cautioned the brothers: “We should no longer be babes, tossed about as by waves and carried hither and thither by every wind of teaching by means of the trickery of men, by means of cunning in contriving error.” Evidently there were some who had learned about the Christ but who still walked in the ways of the world and even tried to persuade others to do so. Does this show us the danger of just being in the truth, as some use the expression, in contrast with having the truth in us? In Paul’s day those who had only a superficial understanding were easily and quickly swayed by others, and the same is true today. To prevent this, Paul went on to say that the Ephesians needed to have ‘heard Christ and to have been taught by means of Jesus.’—Ephesians 4:21.

⁶ The expressions “to learn,” “to hear,” and “to be taught” used by Paul all imply a process of study and instruction, as in a school. Of course, we cannot hear, learn from, or be taught directly by Jesus himself today. But he is conducting a worldwide Bible educational campaign by means of his “faithful and discreet slave.” (Matthew 24:45-47; 28:19, 20) We can “learn the Christ” properly and accurately if we regularly take in the timely spiritual food provided by the slave class, study it diligently whether personally or in a congregation, meditate on it, and put into practice what we learn. Let us make sure that we fully utilize all the provisions so that we can truthfully say we have “heard him and were taught by means of him.”

5. What is the difference between being in the truth superficially and having the truth in us?
6. How can we learn, hear, and be taught by the Christ today?

⁷ It is interesting that at Ephesians 4:21, after emphasizing the learning process, Paul added: “Just as truth is in Jesus.” Some Bible commentators call attention to the fact that Paul rarely used the personal name Jesus by itself in his writings. Indeed, this is the only instance of such usage in the letter to the Ephesians. Is there any special significance to this? Perhaps Paul was calling attention to the example set by Jesus as a man. Recall that Jesus once said of himself: “I am the way and the truth and the life.” (John 14:6; Colossians 2:3) Jesus said: “I am . . . the truth” because he did not just speak and teach it but lived and personified it. Yes, true Christianity is not just an idea but a way of life. To “learn the Christ” includes learning to imitate him in living the truth. Do you pattern your life after Jesus? Are you daily following his steps closely? Only by doing so can we go on walking as children of light.

“Put Away the Old Personality”

⁸ To show how we can successfully “learn the Christ” and walk as children of light, Paul went on to say, at Ephesians 4:22-24, that there are three distinct steps we must follow. The first of these is: “*You should put away the old personality which conforms to your former course of conduct and which is*

7. What significance may be seen in Paul’s words, “truth is in Jesus”?

8. What illustration did Paul use at Ephesians 4:22, 24, and why is it appropriate?



Jesus said: “I am the way and the truth and the life”

being corrupted according to his deceptive desires.” (Ephesians 4:22)

The expressions “put away” (“put off,” *Kingdom Interlinear*) and “put on” (verse 24) invoke the mental picture of taking off and putting on a garment. This is a metaphor that Paul used quite often, and it is an effective one. (Romans 13:12, 14; Ephesians 6: 11-17; Colossians 3:8-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:8)

When our garment gets soiled or spotted, such as during a meal, we change it the first chance we have. Should we not be equally concerned about any soiling of our spiritual state?

⁹ How, then, does one put away the old personality? The verb “put away” in the original language is in what is called the aorist tense. It indicates an action that is taken just once or once and for all. This tells us that the “old personality” (“old man,” *Kingdom Interlinear*), along with our “former course of conduct,” must be put away with a definite and decisive action, thoroughly and completely. It is not something about which we can successfully deliberate or even hesitate. Why not?

¹⁰ The expression “is being corrupted” shows that “the old man” is in a continuous and progressive course of moral

9. In what way does one put away the old personality?

10. Why must one be resolute and decisive in putting away the old personality?

"Strip off the old personality with its practices"—wrath, anger, badness, abusive speech, obscene talk, and lying.
—Colossians 3:8, 9

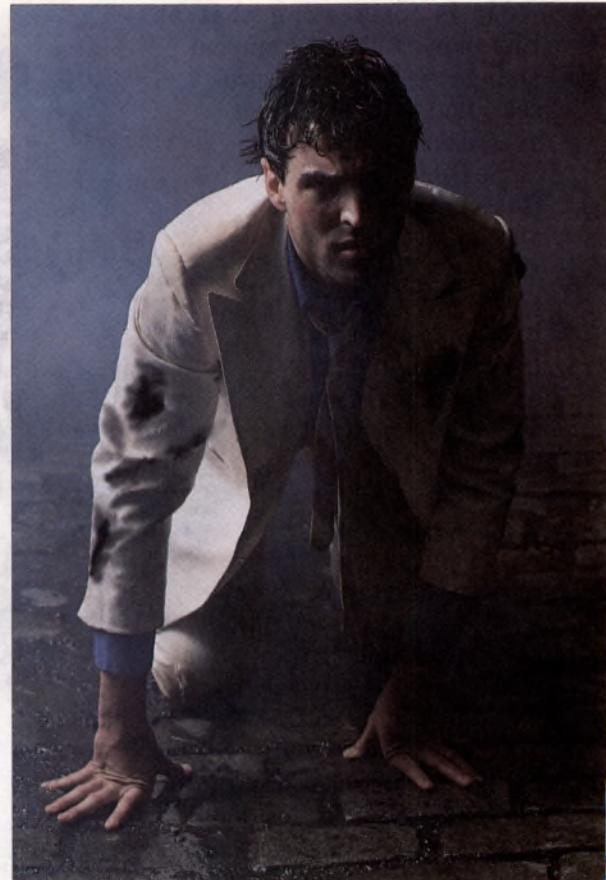
degradation, going from bad to worse. In reality, because of rejecting spiritual enlightenment, all mankind is on a downward spiral. This is the result of "deceptive desires," Paul said. Fleshly desires are deceptive because they may appear harmless, but they are ultimately ruinous. (Hebrews 3:13) If unchecked, the end will be defilement and death. (Romans 6:21; 8:13) That is why the old personality must be put away, stripped off decisively and completely, the way an old, dirty garment is taken off.

A New "Spirit of the Mind"

¹¹ A person who gets up out of a mud puddle needs not only to take off his dirty clothes but also to wash himself thoroughly before he puts on something fresh and clean. That is exactly what Paul outlined as the second step to spiritual enlightenment: "You should be made new in the force actuating your mind." (Ephesians 4:23) As he pointed out earlier, in verses 17 and 18, the nations are walking "in the unprofitableness of their minds" and are "in darkness mentally." Logically, the mind, the center of perception and understanding, is where the renewal must begin. How can this be done? Paul explained that it is by making new the force that is actuating our mind. What is that force?

¹² Is the force actuating our mind, referred to by Paul, the holy spirit? No. The phrase "the force actuating your mind" literally reads "the spirit of the mind of you." Nowhere in the Bible is God's holy spirit spoken of as belonging to a human or to a part of a human. The word "spirit" basically

11. Where must spiritual renewal begin?
12. What is the force actuating the mind?



means "breath," but it is also used in the Bible "to designate the force that causes a person to display a certain attitude, disposition, or emotion or to take a certain action or course." (*Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, page 1026) So "the spirit of the mind" is the force that activates or actuates our mind, our own mental tendency and inclination.

¹³ The natural tendency and inclination of the imperfect mind is toward physical, fleshly, and materialistic things. (Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Colossians

13. Why must our mental inclination be made new?



"Put on the new personality . . . created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty."—Ephesians 4:24

new so that it will incline one's mind in the right direction? The verb "be made new" in the Greek text is in the present tense, expressing continuous action. So it is by continuing to study God's Word of truth and by meditating on what it means that the actuating force can be made new. Scientists tell us that in our brain, information in the form of coded electrical or chemical signals travels from neuron to neuron, crossing many connections called synapses. "A memory of some type is created at the nerve synapse when the coded signal passes through, leaving behind its individual imprint," says the book *The Brain*. When the same signal passes the next time, the nerve cells recognize it and respond more quickly. In time, this creates a new pattern of thinking in the individual. As we persist in taking in wholesome spiritual information, a new thought pattern is being built up, and the force actuating our mind is being made new.—Philippians 4:8.

"Put On the New Personality"

¹⁵ Finally, Paul says: "[You] should put on the new personality which was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty." (Ephesians 4:24) Yes, a Christian puts on a new personality. "New" here refers, not to time, but to quality. That is to say, it is not new in the sense of being the latest version. It is a completely new, fresh personality "created according to God's will." At Colossians 3:10, Paul used similar language and said that it is "being made new according to the image of the One who created it." How does this new personality come about?

1:21; 2:18) Even if a person puts away the old personality with its bad practices, his sinful mental tendency if unchanged will sooner or later compel him to return to what he abandoned. Is this not the experience of many who have tried, for example, to quit smoking, overdrinking, or other bad practices? If they made no effort to be made new in the force actuating their mind, a relapse was almost unavoidable. Any real transformation must involve a thorough making over of the mind.—Romans 12:2.

¹⁴ How, then, does one make that force

14. How can the force actuating the mind be made new?

15. In what sense is the new personality new?

¹⁶ Jehovah God created the first human pair, Adam and Eve, in His image and likeness. They were endowed with moral and spiritual qualities that set them apart from and far above the animal creation. (Genesis 1:26, 27) Even though their rebellion plunged all mankind into sin and imperfection, we, as Adam's descendants, still have the capacity to demonstrate moral and spiritual qualities. God's will is that those who exercise faith in the ransom sacrifice should do away with the old personality and enjoy "the glorious freedom of the children of God." —Romans 6:6; 8:19-21; Galatians 5:1, 24.

¹⁷ True righteousness and loyalty are the two qualities singled out by Paul as characteristic of the new personality. This emphasizes further that the new personality is being made new according to the image of the One who created it. Psalm 145:17 tells us: "Jehovah is righteous in all his ways and loyal in all his works." And Revelation 16:5 says about Jehovah: "You, the One who is and who was, the loyal One, are righteous." Truly, righteousness and loyalty are essential qualities if we are to live up to being created in God's image, reflecting his glory. May we be like Zechariah, the father of John the Baptizer, who was moved by holy spirit to praise God for granting His people "the privilege of fearlessly rendering sacred service to him with loyalty and righteousness." —Luke 1:74, 75.

"Go On Walking as Children of Light"

¹⁸ Having considered in detail Paul's words at Ephesians 4:17-24, we have much

16. Why can it be said that the new personality is "created according to God's will"?
17. Why are righteousness and loyalty outstanding characteristics of the new personality?
18. How has Paul helped us to see the ways of the world as they really are?

to think about. In verses 17 to 19, Paul helps us to see the ways of the world as they really are. Rejecting knowledge of God and hardening their hearts toward him, those still in the world have cut themselves off from the true source of life. Consequently, without true purpose or direction, their endeavors end up in folly and futility. They are sinking ever deeper into moral and spiritual bankruptcy. What a pitiful situation! And what a powerful reason for us to be determined to go on walking as children of light!

¹⁹ Then, in verses 20 and 21, Paul emphasizes the importance of learning the truth in earnest so that we are not just associated with the truth but live it as Jesus did. Finally, in verses 22 to 24, he exhorts us to strip off the old personality and put on the new—decisively, resolutely. Meanwhile, we must keep channeling our mental tendencies in a wholesome, spiritual direction. Above all, we must look to Jehovah for help as we go on walking as children of light. "For God is he who said: 'Let the light shine out of darkness,' and he has shone on our hearts to illuminate them with the glorious knowledge of God by the face of Christ."

—2 Corinthians 4:6.

19. What final encouragement do we have from Paul to go on walking as children of light?

Do You Remember?

- How can we "learn the Christ" today?
- Why must the old personality be put away decisively?
- What is the force actuating the mind, and how is it made new?
- What qualities mark the new personality?

KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

Satisfying the Spiritually Hungry—In School

"HAPPY are those conscious of their spiritual need," said Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount. (Matthew 5:3) Many schoolchildren are thirsty for knowledge of God and his wonderful purposes. They want answers to questions about life and want to know how they should live in order to receive God's approval and be happy. This was evident in a school in the British Virgin Islands. One of Jehovah's Witnesses there relates:

□ "I attended a parent-teacher meeting at the local school, and much was said about drugs, drinking, dating, TV viewing, grades, and other matters, so I decided to take the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work* and present it to the headmistress. After she examined the book, she said that it was just what they needed and asked if the school could obtain a copy for each of the 120 students. The matter was discussed with the congregation elders, and they decided to donate the books to the school. When we mentioned this, the teachers asked that we present the books to the student body. Two Witnesses went, and the room was full of students waiting for them. The brothers spoke for a half hour, and experiences showing how the book has helped young and old were read from the Watch Tower Society's magazines. Then the books were presented to the eager students."

It is a joy to know that the school has decided to use the book as part of the regular fourth- and fifth-grade courses. It will truly answer many questions these students have about life and the future.

Satisfying the Spiritually Hungry —In Papua New Guinea

The following experience was received from a traveling overseer. It illustrates how spiritually hungry the people are in that country and how effective our Bible-based publications are in satisfying their hunger.

□ "As I was unable to visit the village of Kamberatoro," said the overseer, "I spent my time

working along with the small congregation in Vanimo. There is much interest there. A number of people from Bewani accepted literature. One man asked me to come and visit this village, and he would provide me with accommodations. Many people are familiar with our literature. Each time we have gone to the town of Vanimo, we have run out of literature despite taking three boxes of books. *My Book of Bible Stories* is considered as valuable as gold. People are searching for it. The books I took were placed very quickly. When we showed people our literature, some would ask: 'Where is the yellow book?' One man ordered six. He gave me his name and address and asked me to have an announcement made on the radio when I received them. He would then come from his village to get them." The traveling overseer adds: "I found that many people in Vanimo accepted the books *Mankind's Search for God* and *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*."

This illustrates how hungry honesthearted persons are for the spiritual food found in the Bible and the publications that Jehovah has provided by means of "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45-47) How happy Jehovah's Witnesses are to be able to help these truth-hungry people!

Witnessing in Papua New Guinea



GOD MAKES IT GROW

Do you play your part?

IMAGINE the scene. You are in a beautiful garden, surrounded by majestic trees, luxuriant shrubs, and banks of brilliantly colored flowers. Emerald-green lawns slope down to the carefully tended banks of a stream bubbling with crystal-clear water. Nothing mars the view. Impressed, you ask who made this lovely place. In reply the gardener modestly says that God makes all things grow.

Naturally, you knew that. And you remember the gardener's words when you get home and see your own unkempt backyard, where nothing appealing grows, garbage accumulates, and rainwater fills unsightly holes in the ground. You deeply desire to have a garden like the one you just visited. So, firmly believing the gardener's words, you get on your knees and pray fervently to God to make beautiful flowers grow in your yard. What happens? Nothing, of course.

What about spiritual growth? You may have a keen desire to see things grow spiritually, in the way of new disciples responding to the truth of God's Word or in your own spiritual advancement. And you may pray fervently to Jehovah to produce such growth, with a deep conviction that he has the power to do so. But will your keen desire, fervent prayer, and confidence in



God's power in themselves produce growth?

God Makes It Grow

Perhaps you feel that your part in producing spiritual growth is insignificant, even meaningless. Did not the apostle Paul suggest this at 1 Corinthians 3:5-7? He wrote: "What, then, is Apollos? Yes, what is Paul? Ministers through whom you became believers, even as the Lord granted each one. 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."

Paul rightly acknowledges that when things grow, all credit goes to God. A gardener may prepare his ground, sow his seed, and carefully tend the plants, but in the end it is because of the wonderful creative power of God that things grow. (Genesis 1:11, 12, 29) What, though, does Paul mean when he says "neither is he that plants anything nor is he that waters"? ("It is not the gardeners with their planting and watering who count," *The New English Bible*.) Is he playing down the individual minister's part in making new disciples, suggesting that in the end it matters little how we go about our ministry?

"Neither Is He That Plants Anything"

Keep in mind that in this part of his letter, Paul is not discussing the Christian ministry but the foolishness of following men rather than Jesus Christ. Some in Corinth were giving undue importance to notable servants of Jehovah, such as Paul and Apollos. Others were promoting sectarianism and elevating men who thought they were superior to their Christian brothers.—1 Corinthians 4:6-8; 2 Corinthians 11:4, 5, 13.

Glorifying men in this way is not healthy. It is fleshly thinking, and it produces jealousy and strife. (1 Corinthians 3:3, 4) Paul shows the consequences of such thinking. He says: “Dissensions exist among you. What I mean is this, that each one of you says: ‘I belong to Paul,’ ‘But I to Apollos,’ ‘But I to Cephas,’ ‘But I to Christ.’”—1 Corinthians 1:11, 12.

Hence, when he writes, “the planter and the waterer are nothing” (*Phillips*), the apostle is combating such fleshly thinking, stressing the need to look to Jesus Christ as Leader and to acknowledge that all glory for growth in the congregation goes to God. The apostles and other elders are simply servants of the congregation. None should be elevated nor should they themselves seek prestige or prominence. (1 Corinthians 3:18-23) So the planter and the waterer are nothing, says Paul, “compared with him who gives life to the seed.”—1 Corinthians 3:7, *Phillips*.

God's Fellow Workers

In saying this, therefore, the apostle Paul was not minimizing the importance of our part in planting and watering. He did not mean for us to begin thinking, “God will make things grow in his own time,” and then simply sit back and wait for him to do

it. He knew that what we do and how we do it have an impact on how things grow.

That is why Paul constantly encouraged Christians to work hard at their ministry and to improve their skills as teachers. Think of the advice he gives to the young man Timothy. “Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching. Stay by these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.” (1 Timothy 4:16) “I solemnly charge you . . . , preach the word, be at it urgently . . . , with all long-suffering and art of teaching. . . . Fully accomplish your ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:1, 2, 5) There would be little point in Timothy’s working hard to improve his skills if his planting and watering were to have no impact on making things grow.

Like Paul and Apollos, you too can have the inestimable privilege of serving as one of God’s fellow workers. (1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Corinthians 4:1; 1 Timothy 1:12) As such, your work is important. The gardener does not expect God miraculously to produce a beautiful garden without effort on the gardener’s part. Should it be otherwise with spiritual growth? Certainly not. Like the farmer who patiently “keeps waiting for the precious fruit of the earth,” we must first exert ourselves in planting and watering, waiting while God makes it grow.—James 1:22; 2:26; 5:7.

Play Your Part

Since, as the apostle Paul says, “each person will receive his own reward according to his own labor,” we do well to ask how we are laboring.—1 Corinthians 3:8.

Gardening expert Geoffrey Smith says: “No special qualifications are needed to become a gardener, just an interest in plants.” (*Shrubs & Small Trees*) Similarly, no inherent special qualifications are needed for us

to be God's fellow workers, just a genuine interest in people and a willingness to be used by God.—2 Corinthians 2:16, 17; 3:4-6; Philippians 2:13.

Consider some of the good advice offered by skilled gardeners. As one authority says, if a novice gardener is willing to listen to those more experienced than he is, "the learner can quickly become an expert." And, says this same authority, "the expert is always finding something new to learn." (*The Encyclopedia of Gardening*) Do you willingly accept the help and training that Jehovah provides so that you can plant and water effectively? If you do, whether you are new at the work or experienced in it, you can develop further skills as God's fellow worker and so become "adequately qualified to teach others."—2 Timothy 2:2.

If he is willing to listen and learn, says Geoffrey Smith, "the beginner will avoid the worst pitfalls." If we listen to the direction that Jehovah gives through his Word and his organization, we will do things his way. We will then avoid, for example, such pitfalls as foolishly arguing with those who only want to quarrel or fight over words.—Proverbs 17:14; Colossians 4:6; 2 Timothy 2:23-26.

Another piece of good gardening advice is to think things out carefully before rushing

to dig up the soil. "Before spade is put to soil," says *The Encyclopedia of Gardening*, "spend time quietly assessing [your prospects]." Do you fall into the trap of rushing into the Christian ministry without first giving careful and prayerful thought to what you want to accomplish and how best to do it? Get your objectives clear before you start. Think, for example, about the kind of people you may meet and the problems you might face, and prepare to handle these. This will allow you to "gain the most persons [as you] become all things to people of all sorts."—1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

"Do Not Let Your Hand Rest"

If we appreciate the privilege of serving as God's fellow workers, we will not stint in our share of the partnership. "In the morning sow your seed and until the evening do not let your hand rest; for you are not knowing where this will have success, either here or there, or whether both of them will alike be good." (Ecclesiastes 11:6) The final results are in Jehovah's hands, but we will reap only if we first sow diligently.—Ecclesiastes 11:4.

No garden was ever made beautiful through some token, perfunctory digging and scattering of seeds. Similarly, more is required in the Christian ministry than some token share in the distribution of Bible literature. As God's fellow workers, we need diligently and thoroughly to declare the good news about God's Kingdom, searching out those rightly disposed. (Acts 13:48) Remember the principle in the apostle Paul's words at 2 Corinthians 9:6: "He that sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and he that sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."

Like all good gardeners, we try to plant in good soil. Once something is planted in even the best soil, however, that is not the

In Our Next Issue

A Meal With Meaning for You

Jehovah's Mercy
Saves Us From Despair

The Splendor of Gray-Headedness



end of the matter. Says Geoffrey Smith: "This does not mean that once planted up nothing more is required from the person responsible except the purchase of a deck-chair and sunshade." No, for things to grow, effort is required in watering and protecting the plants.—Compare Proverbs 6: 10, 11.

The Christian ministry may, in fact, mean long periods of hard work when nothing much seems to happen. But suddenly, and sometimes unexpectedly, wonderful results may ensue. Geoffrey Smith says: "Gardening consists of long periods of routine toil interspersed with moments of such sublime beauty that all the digging, weeding, and downright anxiety are forgotten." You too can have moments of sublime satis-

God makes all things grow—but the gardener also plays his part

faction when a receptive heart responds to the message of truth—provided you are willing to do the initial digging, planting, weeding, and watering.—Compare Proverbs 20:4.

Paul and Apollos knew that their work of Kingdom preaching and disciple making did not earn them some special prominence in the Christian congregation. They understood that it is God who makes things grow. Still, they did plant and they did water—diligently. May we follow their example and make ourselves available to God as "ministers through whom [others become] believers."—1 Corinthians 3:5, 6.

**Scenes From
the Promised Land**

**Rejoice!
The Vats Overflow
With Oil**



Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

THE prophet Joel exhorted the 'sons of Zion to be joyful and rejoice in Jehovah.' He used olive oil in describing their joy and prosperity: "The threshing floors must be full of cleansed grain, and the press vats must overflow with new wine and oil."—Joel 2:23, 24.

Had you lived in Israel in Bible times, you would have been delighted to have close to your house, or in your fields, an olive tree such as shown above.* It would have made your life easier, more pleasant. Why would an olive tree be so important?—Compare Judges 9:8, 9.

* For a larger view of this scene, see the 1993 Calendar of Jehovah's Witnesses.

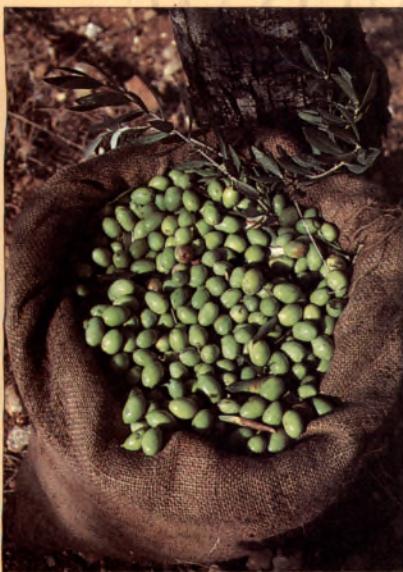


First, take a good look at your tree. Olive trees may live for centuries, some over a thousand years, so an examination would likely show a gnarled, ash-colored trunk. Your tree might be up to 20 feet high, certainly not as towering as a cedar or as graceful as a palm. Its evergreen leaves, with a silvery sheen, provide shade year round. Still, you would not value your tree primarily for its looks or its shade. Far from it.

The fruit is the thing, those thousands of green or black olives! That is what would make the olive tree a key to life and activities in Israel. The tree is covered with light flowers in May, in preparation for the olive berries. (Job 15:33) As these mature, they may change from yellowish green to dark brown or black.

Harvesting the olives in October/November was hard work. You would beat the tree with sticks so that the ripe fruit would fall onto cloths spread below. (Deuteronomy 24:20) The olives would be washed before processing, such as by soaking in brine to remove their normally bitter taste. What next?

That would depend on how you wanted to enjoy or profit from your rich harvest. You could eat the olives raw, or you could pickle them so that your family would have a



tasty supply for many months. Olives could be a major part of the diet, a meal perhaps consisting of some flavorful olives along with barley cakes.

Probably, though, you would put most olives through the steps needed to obtain that extremely useful and valuable commodity—olive oil. You could get various grades of oil, using these in many ways. First, you could lightly beat or press the ripe olives in a mortar or even tread them underfoot. (Micah 6:15) That produced the finest oil, now called extra virgin, which was fitting for the lamps that lighted the tabernacle. (Exodus 25:37; 27:20, 21) Imagine how you would cherish a supply of this choice oil to use in cooking for special occasions!

Olives, even those of poorer quality, could be put in a press to squeeze much more oil from the pulp, though of lower grade. The pulp is about 50 percent oil. Different-style presses could be used, but one is illustrated here.

Whole or partially crushed olives were put in a cylindrical base. A millstone, turned by an ass or a human, rolled over them, forcing out the oil, which ran off and was collected in jars.—Matthew 18:6.

Olive oil might be likened to liquid gold—it was so highly valued and its uses so many. One tree could produce a year's supply of oil for a family of five or six. It would be a principal part of their diet, being easily digested and high in energy. (Compare Jeremiah 41:8; Ezekiel 16:13.) You might perfume some oil and use it as a cosmetic or pour some on the head of a guest in a gesture of hospitality. (2 Samuel 12:20; Psalm 45:7; Luke 7:46) You could use it as a soothing medicine on wounds.—Isaiah 1:6; Mark 6:13; Luke 10:34.

That would not exhaust your uses for a rich supply of olive oil. You could also use it to light your home, to be part of an offering to God, or as a commodity for profitable trading. Yes, in Bible times the olive tree was a most valuable plant, so Joel could fittingly use it to represent prosperity and joy.—Deuteronomy 6:11; Psalm 52:8; Jeremiah 11:16; Matthew 25:3-8.



JEHOVAH SUSTAINED ME IN A DESERT PRISON

AS TOLD BY ISAIAH MNWE

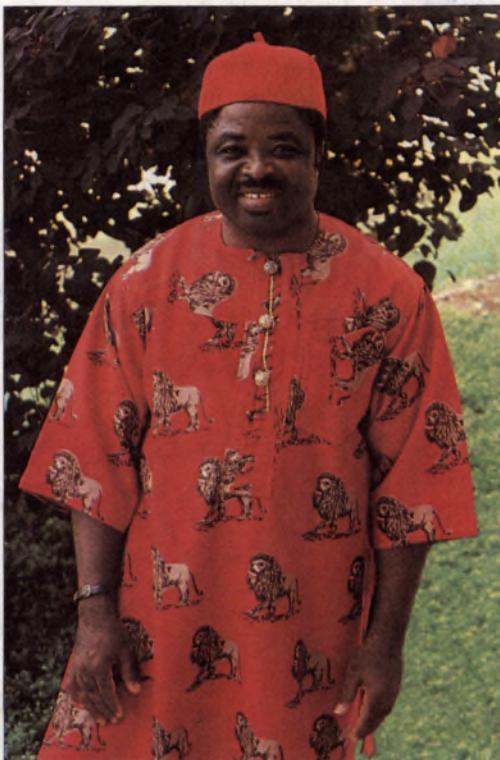
There had been no trial, and I had committed no crime. Yet, I was condemned to hard labor in a penal colony in the middle of Africa's blistering Sahara Desert. What made it worse, none of my friends knew where I was. This occurred over eight years ago, in the summer of 1984.

Let me explain how I came to be in that dire situation.

IN 1958, when I was only 12, my older brother became one of Jehovah's Witnesses. However, my father and mother continued to worship the tribal gods of Abia State, Nigeria, where we lived.

In 1968, I joined the Biafran army. While in the trenches, I thought of the neutral position of Jehovah's Witnesses, and I prayed to God to help me. I promised that if he allowed me to survive the war, I would become one of his Witnesses.

After the war I acted quickly to fulfill my promise. I was baptized in July 1970 and immediately took up the full-time ministry as a pioneer. In time I was appointed as an elder in the Christian congregation. Soon I received an invitation from the Nigeria



branch office to take up a missionary assignment in a nearby country where the work of Jehovah's Witnesses had not been legally recognized. I accepted, and by January 1975, I was on my way, passport in hand.

Arrested

In 1978, I was assigned to visit the Witnesses throughout the country. Since they were few, I traveled widely, visiting all the cities where there were congregations, as well as areas where there were interested persons. Often I was questioned at police checkpoints. Twice, for four days each time, I was detained and interrogated about our work.

Then, in June 1984, as we were preparing for the field ministry one Sunday, a friendly

official notified us that the police were seeking to arrest Jehovah's Witnesses. A week later Djagli Koffivi, who is from Togo, and I were arrested. We were taken to police headquarters and ordered to hand over the names of all of Jehovah's Witnesses in the city. "Unless you give us the names," they said, "we will not release you."

"You are the police," I answered. "It is your job to find the people you want. I am not your agent." We argued for about 30 minutes, and the police threatened us with a beating. Yet, we didn't give them the names of our Christian brothers. They then decided to confiscate my large library of Bible reference books.

While Held in Custody

After returning to the police station with the books, Djagli and I unloaded them. As we did, a paper slipped from my large-print Bible. It was a district convention program on which was printed the names of all the Christian elders in the country. Quickly I picked it up and jammed it into my pocket. However, one of the policemen saw me and ordered me to hand it over. Of course, I felt terrible.

The paper was placed on the table in the room where Djagli and I were bringing the books. When I entered with my next load, I went to the table, picked up the paper, and stuffed it into my pocket. Then I said that I wanted to relieve myself. A policeman escorted me to the toilet area. After I had entered and closed the door, I tore the paper in pieces and flushed it down the toilet.

When the policemen learned what had happened, they were furious. But they were afraid to do anything about it, since their superiors would have charged them with negligence for allowing me the opportunity to destroy the paper. After holding us in custody for 17 days, a police inspector told

us to get our things together because we were going to be moved elsewhere. We put some clothing into a plastic bag, and at the bottom I placed a small Bible that a visitor had smuggled in to us.

We were able to notify the Witnesses that we were being moved but that we did not know where. Early the next morning, July 4, 1984, the police inspector woke us. He searched us, asking us to remove the clothing from the bag and hang it over our arms. But when I reached the last shirt, he said I could put the garments back in the bag, so the Bible was not discovered.

A Desert Prison

The police drove us to the airport, where we boarded a military plane. Hours later we arrived at a town of about 2,000 people, where there is a prison nearby. It is about 400 miles by road to the nearest town. We were taken from the plane to the prison and handed over to the prison superintendent. None of our family or friends knew where we had been taken.

The town where we were taken is an oasis in the Sahara. There are shrubs, a few trees, and buildings with walls of dried mud. Water can be obtained by digging only about four or five feet down. Yet, a 31-year-old native of the area told us he had seen it rain but once in his lifetime! And the area was extremely hot. One prisoner said a thermometer in the prisoners' quarters once registered 140 degrees Fahrenheit! A strong wind blew continually, blowing sand that stung the skin and hurt the eyes.

Anyone arriving at that place would realize he was at the country's ultimate punishment center. The prison was surrounded by high walls that offered some protection from the wind and the sun. However, walls were not needed to prevent escape, since there was nowhere to go. Outside the oasis,

there was not one tree, nothing at all, to give shade to anyone who wanted to escape.

Before we entered, the prison superintendent searched us. He told us to take everything out of our bag. I started lifting out our shirts one by one. When the only thing remaining was the one shirt covering the Bible, I held out the bag to show him the shirt inside and said: "This is all they allowed us to take." Satisfied, he said to proceed into the yard. The Bible was the only publication we had.

Life in Prison

In all, there were about 34 prisoners. They were the most notorious and dangerous criminals in the country. Many were murderers who were considered beyond reform. All of us slept in two large cells separated by an open bathroom. The bathroom contained an uncovered barrel that was used as a toilet. Although this was emptied each morning by prisoners, it seemed that all the flies in the desert came to enjoy the cool and filth of that barrel.

The only food we had was sorghum. It was ground by a prisoner, boiled, and measured out on plates, which were then put out, one on each prisoner's sleeping mat. The food was not covered. By the time we returned from work, there were hundreds of flies covering each plate of sorghum meal. When we picked up our plate, the flies would hum away noisily. For the first two days, we ate nothing. Finally, on the third day, after driving away the flies and removing the dried skin on top, we started eating the sorghum meal. We prayed that Jehovah would protect our health.

We worked under the sun, breaking up the walls of the old prison yards and building new walls. It was extremely hard work. We labored without a break from 6:00 a.m.

until noon, had something to eat, then worked until 6:00 p.m. There were no days off. Not only did we suffer from the heat but during the winter we suffered from the cold. And we also suffered from the cruel guards.

Keeping Spiritually Strong

Djagli and I read the Bible in secret, and we talked together about what we learned. We could not read openly because the Bible would have been taken away and we would have been punished. A prisoner with whom I started a Bible study had a kerosene lamp that he shared with me. Often I woke up at one or two in the morning and read until about five. In that way I was able to read the whole Bible through.

We preached to the other prisoners, and one of them told the chief warden about us. Unexpectedly, the warden gave the prisoner an *Awake!* magazine he had, and the prisoner passed it on to us. I read it over and over again. Our reading and preaching helped keep us spiritually strong.

Communicating With Our Friends

We were not allowed to write or send letters. However, a person who had been friendly said he would help me. On August 20, about six weeks after arriving, I secretly wrote two letters, one to the Nigerian embassy and another to Witness friends. I buried them in the sand and marked the place with a big stone. Later my friend came and dug them up.

Weeks passed, and I heard nothing. Gradually I lost hope that the letters had been delivered. But they did get through, and our fellow Witnesses took up the fight to secure our release. The Nigerian Ministry of External Affairs also took an interest in the matter and asked the government in the country where I was imprisoned why it had jailed me in such a prison.

In the meantime, on the morning of November 15, 1984, we were taken to do some cleaning. The guards led me to a secondary-school toilet that people had been using for weeks despite its being blocked. It was full of excrement. My job, the guards said, was to clean it out. The only tools I had were my hands. As I was wondering how to tackle this revolting task, the chief warden came and said that the district officer of the area wanted to see me.

When I arrived the district officer said that he had recently spoken with the president of the country, who had learned of my plight. The president explained that if I would give the names of Jehovah's Witnesses in the country, I would be released immediately and could leave on the next plane. Again I said that if they wanted Jehovah's Witnesses, it was the job of the police to find them. The district officer told me that I should consider their offer very seriously. He would give me four or five days to think it over. I was then dismissed, and the guards escorted me back to prison and not, thankfully, back to that toilet!

After five days the district officer summoned me and asked what I had decided. I said that the only reason I was in their prison was that I bore witness to the true God and that I had done nothing wrong. I explained that I had a legal passport and residence permit. All my papers were correct, and whenever I had traveled to any city, I always checked with the police to make sure everything was in order. Since I had committed no crime, I asked: "Why am I being punished? If I was not wanted in the country, why wasn't I deported? Why was I condemned to this place?"

I talked for about 15 minutes. When I finished, I was asked to write down what I had just said, and I was told that my com-

ments would be submitted to the president. Paper was given me, and I wrote four pages.

Released At Last!

I did not hear anything more about the matter until January 1985, about seven months after I was imprisoned. On that occasion, the chief warden came and asked me if I had written a letter to the Nigerian embassy. "Yes," I replied.

"Why did you do it? Why didn't you let me know?" he asked.

I told him the matter did not concern him. But I assured him that I had not written anything against him, since he had nothing to do with my being sent to prison. "Even my mother doesn't know where I am," I said. He then wanted to know how I had sent the letter, but I refused to tell him.

The following day the guards serviced a Land-Rover and told me that Djagli and I were being moved. We were brought outside, stripped, and searched. Earlier I had given my Bible to a prisoner with whom I had been studying because I knew that the guards would seize it if they found it with me. This man told us that when he was released, he was going to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses. We pray that he does.

Shortly afterward, I was deported to Nigeria, and in February 1985, I resumed my ministry as a traveling overseer in that country. Since 1990, I have been serving as a district overseer in Nigeria. Djagli is now serving as a faithful Witness in Côte d'Ivoire.

From this experience, I learned firsthand that Jehovah God can sustain us under even the severest of pressure. Time and again we saw his hand protecting us in prison. Our release impressed upon me that Jehovah knows not only where his servants are and what they are suffering but also how to deliver them out of trial.—2 Peter 2:9.

Missionaries of M · I · C · R · O · N · E · S · I · A

ALTHOUGH separated by vast stretches of the seemingly endless Pacific Ocean, missionaries of Micronesia still manage to gather each year for a "family reunion." And where do all these evangelizers from far-flung islands meet? Fittingly, at the place that the local government has named Jehovah Street—the address of the Guam branch office under which they serve.

In June 1992, 56 missionaries converged on the branch in order to attend the "Light Bearers" District Convention. Laughter and lighthearted conversation filled the air as they renewed longtime friendships and cultivated new ones. As always, they arranged themselves on the stairs of the Kingdom Hall for a group photograph and then sat down at three long banquet tables to share an annual missionary meal, highlighted this year by a visit from Albert Schroeder, a member of the Governing Body.

For many of the missionaries, this yearly get-together in Guam is their only opportunity to leave their tiny tropical homes. And tiny these are. Ebeye Island, one of the Marshall Islands, consists of only 78 acres. The Majuro missionary home in the Marshalls and the Kiribati home in the Gilbert Islands are both located on long, narrow atolls less than a half-mile wide. So the missionaries make the most of their exciting trip to Guam.

While the notion of preaching on a remote tropical island sounds romantic, in re-

ality it is a challenge few are equipped to meet. Interestingly, only 7 of the 56 missionaries are from the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. Most came from Hawaii or the Philippines where they were pioneer ministers already accustomed to life in the tropics, and they went directly from their home countries to their missionary assignments.

Because the islands of Micronesia are located so near the equator, missionaries battle stifling heat and humidity to reach residents with the good news. Communication can be an even greater challenge. Each island or island group has its own language—some so obscure they are not even recorded in a dictionary—and it may be years before a newcomer can speak fluently. To help people in these diverse island cultures understand the Bible, the Guam branch prints literature in 11 languages, 9 of which are spoken exclusively in Micronesia.

Some islands are so isolated that they can be reached only by boat. The Tol missionary home in Chuuk (Truk) is located on such an island, and the missionaries there rely on solar panels to provide electricity for just a few hours each day.

Altogether, there are 14 missionary homes throughout Micronesia, which encompasses an area roughly the size of the continental United States. Of the more than 400,000 people who live in the region, 1,000 are publishers of the good news, organized into 20 congregations and 3 isolated groups.

While the people of Micronesia are generally very friendly, local religious customs



Missionaries assemble in Guam, June 1992

and family pressure discourage many from accepting the truth of God's Kingdom. So although the preaching work is flourishing overall (those 1,000 Kingdom publishers are conducting in excess of 2,000 Bible studies), some congregations and groups remain small. For instance, there are only 5 publishers on the island of Tinian, just 7 publishers on the island of Nauru, and the congregations in Yap, Kosrae, and Rota have fewer than 40 publishers each. Nevertheless, some missionaries have remained in their assignments for more than 20 years. Notably, all six on the island of Belau have been there at least 12 years.

For those who endure, the rewards are great. There are daily opportunities to marvel at the beauty of Jehovah's creation. The

lush islands of Micronesia are scattered like small green jewels across the blue backdrop of the Pacific. Miles of uncrowded beaches and coral reefs teeming with colorful fish lure snorkelers and scuba enthusiasts to explore some of the choicest diving spots in the world. And at the end of each day, there is the breathtaking sight of the sunset on the ocean.

The greatest reward, however, is the privilege of serving Jehovah by telling others about his wonderful promises for the future. Because the missionaries of Micronesia continually reach out for that reward, they are living the words of Isaiah 42:12: "Let them attribute to Jehovah glory, and in the islands let them tell forth even his praise."



"Before the Mountains"

YOU have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." (Psalm 90:1, 2, New International Version) Those words were addressed to our Creator, and how comforting they are—especially today, when nothing seems stable!

In a deteriorating economic situation, few feel confident about the future. An alarming increase in crime and drug abuse has changed some cities into war zones. Even that age-old institution, the family, is tottering. We hear of such novelties as homosexual families. Single-parent families are growing in number, with the one parent often having to cope with great stress. The peace of many families is shattered by such abominations as spouse beating and child abuse.

Who will guide us through these difficult times? Well, there is no lack of advice from psychologists, educators, and others, but much of it is

contradictory. For a whole generation in the West, Dr. Benjamin Spock was the foremost adviser in the matter of educating children. Then he admitted that his advice had been mistaken!

How much wiser to have God as our "dwelling place"! In these turbulent times, he is a rock of stability, existing "from everlasting to everlasting." He said of himself through the prophet Malachi: "I am Jehovah; I have not changed." (Malachi 3:6) God's standards, as recorded in the Bible, are completely reliable. He existed "before the mountains," and his counsel, accessible in the Holy Scriptures, is based on his eternal wisdom. It is exactly what we need for happiness and success.

It is wise, then, to have confidence in God's Word, the Bible. Study it to benefit from God's wisdom. Trust what you learn, and let it be a light to guide you down the pathway of life. (Psalm 119:105) Only those who do so have reason to be confident in the future and have genuine peace of mind.