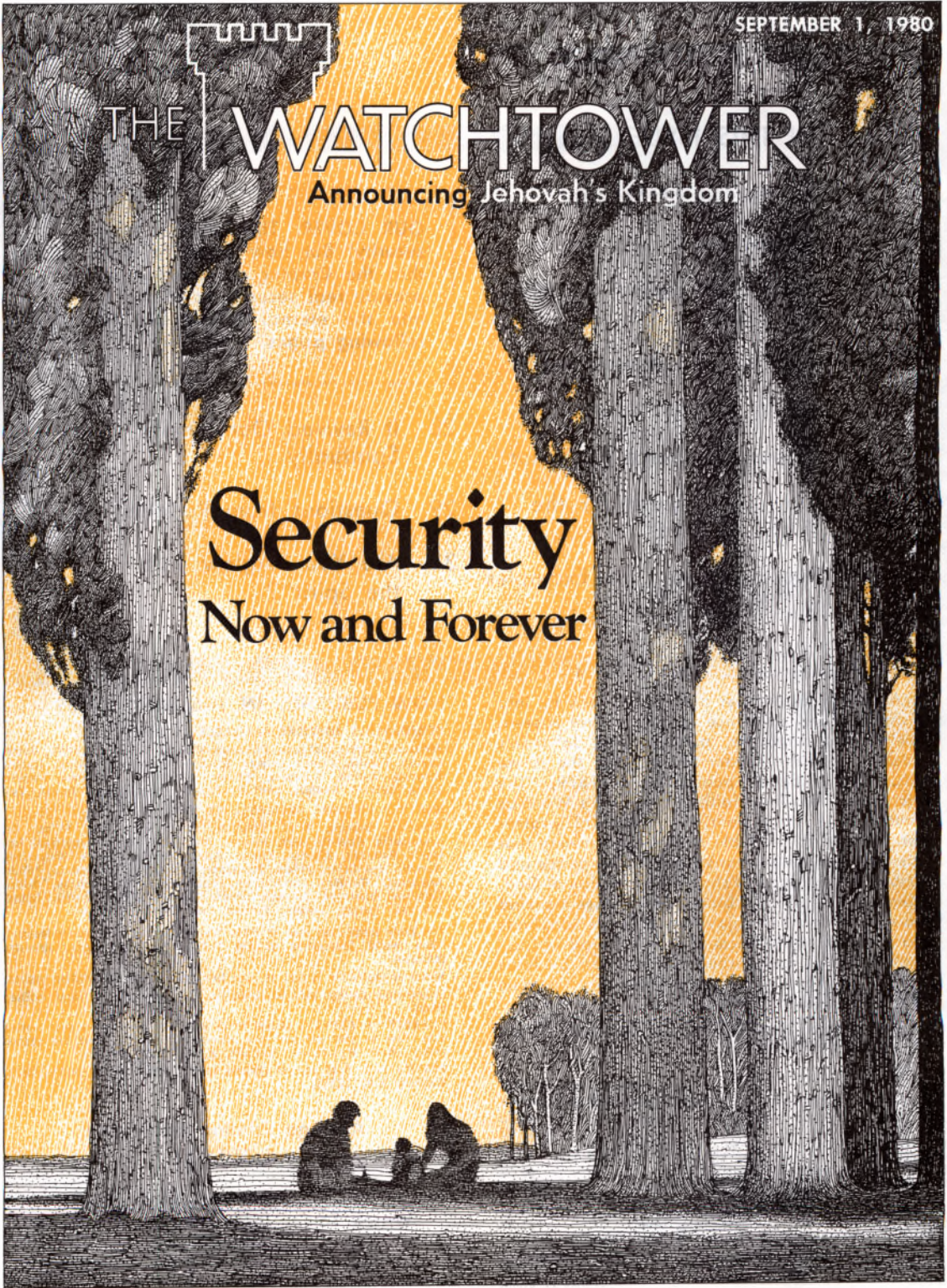


SEPTEMBER 1, 1980

THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

Security
Now and Forever



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OUR COVER: That elusive thing, security! But how good to know that the Creator of mankind can provide real security now, and on into the eternal future! See the following pages

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A WATCHTOWER enables a person to look far into the distance and announce to others what is seen. Likewise, this magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, aids the reader to see what the future holds. Since it began publication in 1879, "The Watchtower" has held faithfully to God's Word as its authority. It stays clear of all political involvement. It points to the Bible prophecies showing that Jesus Christ is God's means for restoring peace and harmony to this globe. It shows that this Son of God, on the basis of his shed blood, will release mankind from sin and death to enjoy eternal life in happiness on a paradise earth. Because Jehovah God will accomplish all this soon through his kingdom by Jesus Christ, "The Watchtower" announces that kingdom as the real hope for mankind.

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The Pursuit of Security

MR. AND Mrs. B—— and their three teen-age children lived in Africa. For 20 years they had developed their beautiful farm and had invested their earnings in a comfortable home, crops, livestock and farm machinery. This became their little fortress, their refuge in time of trouble and sorrow, their source of refreshment and rest after each hard day's work. They felt secure.

Overnight, things changed. For some time political forces had been gaining strength in the country. Men bent on bringing about a change by force were committing acts of terrorism and had laid land mines in the rough unpaved roads of the farming areas. As Mr. B—— returned in his Land Rover from a weekly trip into town, he detonated one of these and was killed instantly.

Mrs. B—— and her family no longer felt secure. With the increasing threats of violence in the neighborhood, anxieties in caring for the farm and with no man about the house, she felt forced to abandon the farm that at one time had meant security. The family left for another country in the hope of finding a more secure way of life.

In this same African country, the scene changed tremendously in a few years. Farm homesteads surrounded by rich tropical vegetation and bearing a "welcome" sign were fenced in with high steel netting

surmounted by barbed wire. Sandbags were placed around the walls of homes, and windows were protected with steel mesh.

Town life changed too as more and more people installed burglar alarms, mounted heavy gates with locks and chains at the entrances of their property, and kept guard dogs to repel unwanted intruders. Shop windows were treated with special tape to prevent them from shattering. Guards were posted to search shoppers as they entered supermarkets. Vacationers hired policemen to protect their homes during their periods of absence.

In many areas, a once peaceful ride through the African countryside became a tense drive from one town to the next. Travelers were advised to check with the police before leaving, and many traveled in convoy protected by armored vehicles. Martial law and curfews became something that people came to view as part of daily living.

Apart from these security measures, many who were in a position to do so made additional arrangements for their own security by investing in gold, silver, jewelry and works of art or by putting their money in foreign bank accounts. They did this so that, if things did not turn out for the better, they would still have some assets.

Such developments are not unique to that particular country. Possibly in your community you have seen some of the same security arrangements and the increased attention given by many people to the safety of their own homes and families. The question is, Do these efforts really bring about the peace of mind and security that we all desire?

Is Military Strength the Answer?

The same concern for security is reflected in the actions of governments. Many are taking unprecedented steps to safeguard their borders

and to protect their diplomats. The queen of England's visit to southern Africa and the pope's visit to Ireland involved the mobilization of hundreds of men solely for security purposes. Movement of ships, aircraft or troops to places that are considered to be of strategic importance is interpreted by some countries as a threat to their national security and often is met by counter military developments.

Most governments share the general belief that their national security depends on military preparedness. Illustrating this, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) recently reported that the world's expenditure on armaments is "not far off \$1 million a minute" and that 75 percent of this is spent by the Third World. (*The Courier*, April 1979, p. 19) But does this enormous military spending bring a feeling of true security to persons living in those countries where they see famine and water-borne diseases taking thousands as their daily toll?

Again we ask, Does military strength really mean security? True, a person can push such thoughts to the back of his mind. But can he really feel secure when he seriously contemplates the fact that governments around the world have enough in the way of explosive devices to kill all of us several times over? To il-

lustrate: Could you rest peacefully at night with a machine gun under your bed while knowing that your neighbor has one like it pointing at your house and that he is itching for the opportunity to use it when he feels there would be no danger to himself?

Desire for Security Common to All

It is only natural that all of us should wish to feel secure. Even in the animal world there is a built-in desire for security. Birds build their nests in the most disguised or difficult-to-approach places. Squirrels store nuts for use during the colder part of the year. Cats about to give birth investigate every cupboard in the house to search for a protected nook in which to nourish their young.

The question that faces all of us today is, Where can we look for security? Animals base their sense of security instinctively on material things. But what about man? Does our security lie in material things, making us no better than animals? Does it depend on our employment or, perhaps, on accumulated wealth in the form of gold, silver or bank accounts? Can armaments make our way of life secure? Or, is security to be found under a particular form of government that may appear to be more stable than others?

Wise King Solomon Said:

"Safeguard practical wisdom and thinking ability, and they will prove to be life to your soul and charm to your throat. In that case you will walk in security on your way, and even your foot will not strike against anything. Whenever you lie down you will feel no dread; and you will certainly lie down, and your sleep must be pleasurable. You will not need to be afraid of any sudden dreadful thing, nor of the storm upon the wicked ones, because it is coming. For Jehovah himself will prove to be, in effect, your confidence, and he will certainly keep your foot against capture."—Prov. 3:21-26.

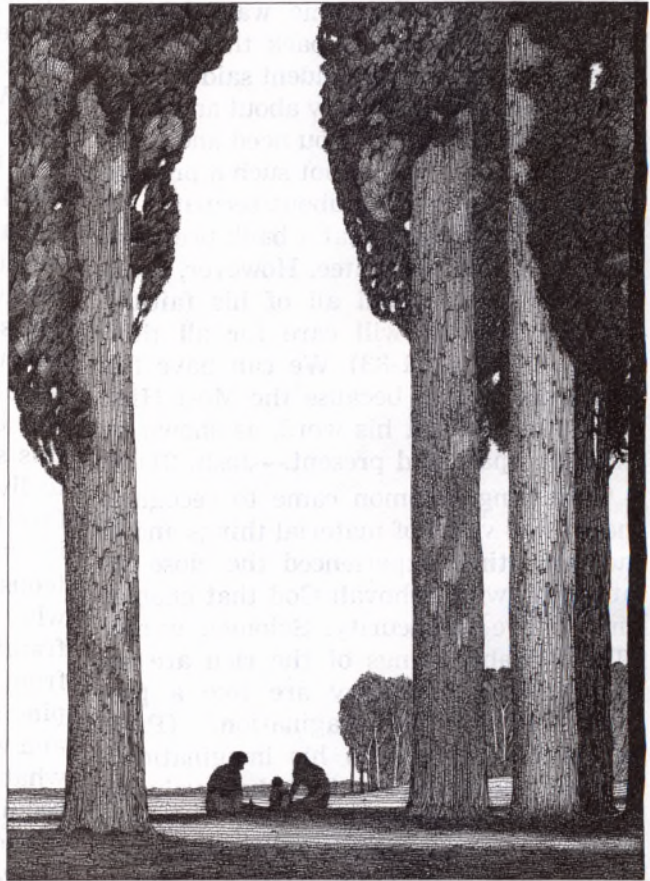
Security Now and Forever

OUR Creator, who knows the value of everything, inspired men to offer this counsel: "Whoever relies on his wealth is riding for a fall." "A king is not saved by a great army, nor a warrior delivered by great strength." "A man cannot trust his horse to save him, nor can it deliver him for all its strength." (Prov. 11:28; Ps. 33: 16, 17, *The New English Bible*) Jesus Christ truthfully stated that "even when a man has more than enough, his wealth does not give him life."—Luke 12:15, *NE*.

Of course, in a worsening criminal climate, we may have to take certain practical steps to safeguard our life and our possessions. But we must recognize that, at best, these measures are only temporary and in no way guarantee our security. What we really desire is the assurance that no set of outside circumstances can do us lasting harm. Is it possible to live with such confidence? Is there any source of strength and authority that can make our way of life secure now and even forever? Can we live in security even when we are threatened by violence, food shortage or economic collapse?

Real Security Identified

Here is something to ponder: Why was it that, in ancient Israel, families could leave their homes and villages unprotected and journey to Jerusalem for their religious



festivals even though they were surrounded by enemy nations? How could it be that when Jerusalem was besieged by the mighty Assyrian army not a drop of Israelite blood was spilled and yet 185,000 enemy soldiers fell in one night? (2 Ki. 19:32-35) How could a nation of some three million men, women and children live for 40 years in a "vast and terrible wilderness infested with poisonous snakes and scorpions, a thirsty, waterless land"?—Deut. 8:15, *NE*.

Jehovah their God, the Creator of all things, was the one making their life secure. It proved

to be just as the inspired psalmist David declared: "In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for you yourself alone, O Jehovah, make me dwell in security."—Ps. 4:8.

Do you doubt that Jehovah God, our heavenly Father, would care for us in the 20th century in the same way that he cared for the Israelites back there? Suppose your local bank president said to you: "I don't want you to worry about anything. Just let me know what you need and I will take care of it." Would not such a promise alleviate your concern about security? Of course, it is unlikely that a bank president could give this guarantee. However, Jehovah God has assured all of his faithful servants that he will care for all their needs. (Matt. 6:31-33) We can have full confidence in this because the Most High always carries out his word, as shown by examples, past and present.—Josh. 21:45.

Wise King Solomon came to recognize the limited value of material things and at the same time experienced the close relationship with Jehovah God that enabled him to live in security. Solomon wrote: "The valuable things of the rich are his strong town, and they are like a protective wall in his imagination." (Prov. 18:11) How true—"in his imagination"! The rich man imagines that these valuable things will protect him when calamity strikes. But how often has experience shown that such a "protective wall" is unreal and offers no protection in times of economic collapse, runaway inflation, political upheaval or terminal illness!

In Proverbs 18:10, Solomon makes this contrast: "The name of Jehovah is a strong tower. Into it the righteous runs and is given protection." There is no crisis of any proportion nor any set of circumstances that can place a servant of God beyond divine help. Here, then, lies the source of real security—our personal relationship with our loving Father.—Ps. 59:16, 17; 62:5-8.

How Can We Be Assured of Protection?

This confidence does not develop overnight. Like a tree that grows stronger with each year, firmer with each storm it survives, our faith in Jehovah is strengthened as we see his righteous ways work out for the best in our lives. Our daily study of his Word, the time we spend in preaching the "good news," our regularly seeking him in prayer—all of these contribute to this personal bond.

Isaiah described the kind of security that we desire in these words: "He is the one that will reside on the heights themselves; his secure height will be craggy places difficult to approach. His own bread will certainly be given him; his water supply will be unfailing." (Isa. 33:16) However, this security is only for those who desire to live a life that contributes to the welfare of others. Isaiah also stated: "There is one who is walking in continual righteousness and speaking what is upright, who is rejecting the unjust gain from frauds, who is shaking his hands clear from taking hold on a bribe, who is stopping up his ear from listening to bloodshed, and who is closing his eyes so as not to see what is bad." (Isa. 33:15) How do these requirements for God's protection apply in modern times?

"Continual righteousness" suggests a daily pursuit of Jehovah's standards of righteousness or honesty. The words "rejecting the unjust gain" remind us that we should not imitate the get-rich-quick ways of the world. In addition to not accepting bribes, never allowing a favor or material gain to color judgment, a person who wishes to have the approval of Jehovah must be a person who is "stopping up his ear from listening to bloodshed, and who is closing his eyes so as not to see what is bad." Twentieth-century films, books and magazines were not available to

the prophet, but one who desires a close friendship with Jehovah would avoid violent and immoral entertainment today.

Our adherence to right principles contributes to our enjoying security. Wise King Solomon summed up the matter in a few words: "He that is walking in integrity will walk in security."—Prov. 10:9.

At times, some Witnesses of Jehovah also have experienced what they viewed as divine protection. Take, for example, Brother Z—. He was reading *The Watchtower* in his car one day when someone suddenly grabbed him around the neck. He prayed fervently to Jehovah. The attacker became motionless, and his grip slackened. Brother Z— started up the car, bade farewell and left the man standing like a statue in the middle of the road.

Then there was a missionary from Kenya. Her parents were bitterly opposed when she started to serve Jehovah. The father threatened her with death if she did not leave those "white monkeys," as he called the Witnesses. He hired thugs

to harm her. She reports: "Jehovah's protection enabled me never to fall into their hands."

As these experiences illustrate, Christians do have to deal with critical situations. However, with full trust in Jehovah, we can be confident that absolutely nothing can do us lasting harm. Our heavenly Father has promised: "I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you." So we can confidently react to any threat to our security, saying: "Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"—Heb. 13:5, 6.

Very soon now the whole human family will experience a crisis that will demolish the seemingly protective walls offered by wealth, military might or political power. Only those who have trusted in the unseen but mighty hand of Jehovah will survive and enjoy security forever under the righteous rule of God's kingdom. (Rev. 21:1, 4) May this be your happy lot for having developed a close personal tie with the Most High.

Bible Truth Shows the Way to Security

— Report from the Dominican Republic

SOME 600 miles (960 km) east of Florida, between the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico, lies the Caribbean island of Hispaniola. The eastern two thirds of this island is occupied by the Dominican Republic. Its land is well watered, which makes for good agriculture. Products include sugarcane, coffee and cocoa, as well as fruits like papayas, bananas, mangoes and pineapples.

People of the Dominican Republic are

friendly and enjoy getting into lively conversations. They gesture with hands, face, and even the whole body. Many Dominicans are Protestants, but most are Roman Catholics, as were the European settlers who came to Hispaniola island from Spain during the 15th century.

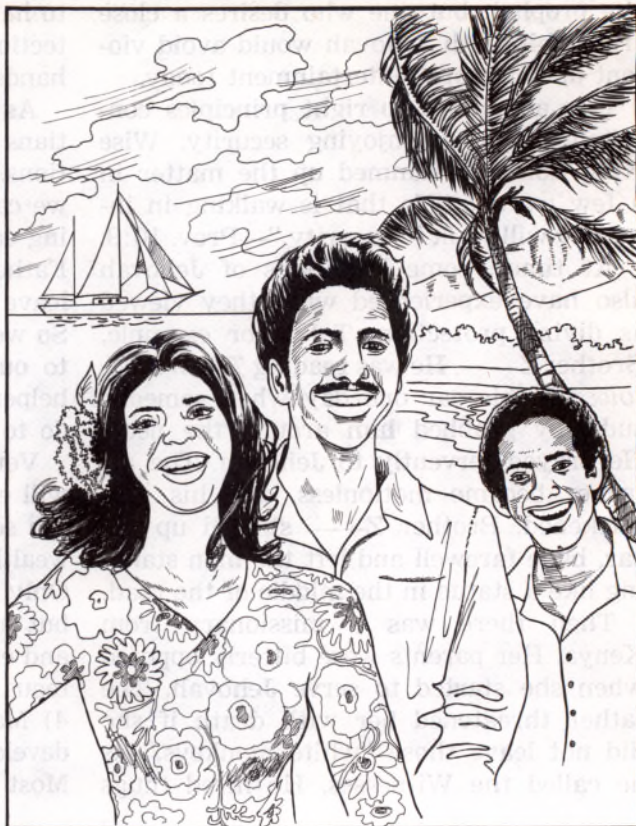
How would the cordial and humble people of this Caribbean country respond to Bible truth? On April 1, 1945, missionaries from the Watchtower Bible School of

Gilead began finding out. They checked into a hotel in the heart of Santo Domingo and the very same day they set out to locate a doctor who had expressed interest in Bible study and whose address had been given to them while they lived in New York. The doctor was located and began studying the Scriptures. A neighbor joined in in these discussions. As a result, Juan Pedro Green and Moisés Rollins were the first Dominicans to become Jehovah's Witnesses.

The work of sharing Bible truth with Dominicans was not confined to Santo Domingo but soon spread into the interior. The missionaries worked north to Santiago, the second-largest city in the republic. Then they pushed farther north to Puerto Plata on the seacoast. In these places many enjoyed listening to Bible truths that they had never heard at church.

Soon after their preaching activities began, Jehovah's Witnesses in the Dominican Republic enjoyed a visit by N. H. Knorr and F. W. Franz, then president and vice-president of the Watch Tower Society. As a result of that visit more missionaries were sent to the country. Eventually missionary homes were established in Santiago, Puerto Plata, San Francisco de Macorís, La Romana, and San Pedro de Macorís.

At the close of 1946, there were 28 Witnesses in the republic. Since the majority of people here were unfamiliar with even basic Bible teachings, the message proclaimed by this small group sounded strange. The number of Witnesses grew slowly at first. In fact, their work met with serious opposition shortly after getting under way. But 'in times of distress, Jehovah became their secure height,' even as the psalmist David said.—Ps. 9:9.



Followers of Jesus Christ take a neutral position with regard to human political affairs and conflicts. For this, they expect to encounter persecution in some places. (John 15:18-20) Opposition to Jehovah's Witnesses in the Dominican Republic began in 1948. At that time the country was ruled by dictator Rafael Trujillo. During 1948, a noted member of Trujillo's Partido Dominicano (Dominican Party) accepted the Biblical message proclaimed by Jehovah's Witnesses and made important changes in his life. He started boldly sharing the Bible's message with others in his hometown of San Cristobal. Government officials there were displeased with the fine response that people were giving to that message. A Catholic priest and local writers raised their voices in opposition to the activities of Jehovah's Wit-

nesses. In June 1950, the Witnesses were placed under official ban. The ban was removed in 1956, but imposed once again a year later. It was not removed until 1960.

Serving Under Ban

Did the ban succeed in stamping out the proclamation of Bible truth by Jehovah's Witnesses? On the contrary, this work prospered. As noted above, there were 28 Witnesses in the Dominican Republic in 1946. When the ban was lifted in 1960, this number had grown to 460.

The years 1961 and 1962 were a period of reorganization. The Watch Tower Society arranged for traveling representatives to visit and strengthen the congregations. In 1961, 17 full-time evangelizers were sent into areas of the republic previously untouched. These efforts proved to be fruitful, and by 1963 more than 1,000 Dominicans were showing active appreciation of the psalmist's words: "You yourself alone, O Jehovah, make me dwell in security."—Ps. 4:8.

Reaching Out into the Rurals

Bible-educational activity was going on in all the cities and towns of this country by 1973. In December of that year, the Society made arrangements to care for the spiritual needs of people living in remote rural areas. Congregations received letters inviting persons to spend two months preaching in such rural areas. Nineteen "regular pioneers" (full-time preachers) volunteered for this special service. Between December 1973 and January 1977, six groups were organized and sent to places where previously there had been little or no activity of Jehovah's Witnesses. How did these volunteers go about their work? One of them relates:

"First we moved to a central place in the area where we were to preach. We rented an old 'kitchen' (a little thatched-roof hut

built outside of houses). There we settled down with a small bed, a little table stove, a pressure cooker and other such items. Every day we got up early, had a good breakfast and equipped ourselves with an abundance of literature that explains basic Bible teachings. At the start of the day we would be loaded down with literature. But this would not last long. People were delighted to hear about the Word of God. As we continued preaching, the cartons of publications became lighter.

"After a day of introducing the Bible's message and leaving literature with people, we would spend a second day making return visits on those who showed interest. As the country folk had little money, we exchanged Bible publications for chickens, eggs and fruits. Thanks to Jehovah, we never went hungry."

Response by residents of these outlying areas was remarkable. Many heard the Bible read to them for the very first time in their life. In some cases religious leaders had told people that Jehovah is the Devil. How surprised they were to read Bible texts such as these: "You, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth." "Jah Jehovah is my strength and my might, and he came to be the salvation of me"! (Ps. 83:18; Isa. 12:2) In some places the interest was so great that public meetings were organized. One of these gatherings was attended by 68 persons. They were so desirous of learning about the Word of God that they offered to rent a house to "set up a church." They really wanted spiritual security. "Some wept at our departure," relates one of the pioneers. Plans are under way for campaigns of preaching in these places.

On one occasion Jesus told his listeners: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you." (Matt. 11:28) Many persons in the Dominican Republic are finding that refreshment, along with spiritual security, as Jehovah's Witnesses continue the preaching of the "good news" in this land.—Matt. 24:14.

Jehovah—A Secure Height

In a South American country a former union official studied with Jehovah's Witnesses, accepted Bible truth and was baptized. In that same month he was stopped on the way home from work by the military police who asked for his identification card. Upon presenting it he was ordered to get into an army truck. He asked the officer in charge if he could notify his wife but was told that was impossible. It appears that because of his previous union connections he was suspected of being a Communist.

He was blindfolded and driven to a barbed-wire enclosure where there were about 100 men who likewise were suspected of being Communists, as well as some hardened criminals, including one charged with the murder of six men, also a journalist. As night came on it got cold, but the men were given no bedding, so they curled up and slept on the ground like animals. Early the next morning one of the commanding officers lined them up and ordered them to sing the national anthem and salute the flag. The Witness refused to do either, for which the officer ridiculed him.

The prisoners received one meal a day at noontime. The others noticed that the Witness silently prayed before eating, and began to ridicule him, even heckling him. On the third day while this was going on the murderer came over to them, and said: "I've been listening to you guys for three days now. The next one who says something bad about this man will be the seventh one I murder. Believe me, I'll find a way to shut you guys up for good!" That same day another man called all the men together and asked the Witness if he could pray for them, and the following day they asked him to offer prayer before the meal. In time, he was able to witness to all the men.

Every afternoon a number of prisoners were taken for interrogation. Some they never saw again. When the journalist returned, he looked glassy-eyed and did not seem to know where he had been. In the meantime, the wife of the Witness had been trying in vain to get some information regarding the disappearance of her husband.

On the ninth day it was the turn of the Witness. He was led blindfolded to the interrogation point where he was severely beaten and questioned for some eight hours. In reply to their questions, he told them about Jehovah and Christian neutrality.

Finally, he was informed that he was to be hanged. They asked him if he had any last words. He requested that they tell his wife what had happened to him. They then asked him if he was not afraid to die so young. He replied: "If you had picked me up some months ago I guess I would have been very afraid of dying. But the Bible says that death is like sleeping. And I firmly believe that Jehovah will resurrect the dead. One day you, too, Sir, will have to face death."

They then led him to the gallows, the Witness praying for Jehovah to strengthen him to keep faithful and for God to care for his wife and children. They put the noose around his neck. The order was given to release the trapdoor, but he only fell to his feet. It had been a trick. After that he and some others were blindfolded, handcuffed and driven to the place where he had been seized nine days before. It was Sunday, and so he headed for the Kingdom Hall where he found his wife and children. It was as if he had been resurrected.

Jehovah had indeed proved to be a "secure height" for this newly baptized Witness during those days of trial.—Ps. 144:1, 2.

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

- The newspaper "Diário de Pernambuco" tells of a monstrous crime in Olinda, Brazil, that illustrates the dangers of toying with spiritism. A man strangled his daughter, who was a year and five months old, and when questioned by police he said:

Dangers of Spiritism

"A spirit came down into my body and forced me to do this. I was disconcerted, not knowing what I was doing and finally I committed this foolishness."

Relating what led to the crime, the man said that when doctors could not cure his illness, "I decided to accept the opinion of some friends and went to look for a voodoo priestess. I began to attend the ceremonies, and she prescribed for me a lot of fetishes, performed some voodoo rituals over me, and I got all right. Then she told me I should pay all the fetish obligations, otherwise terrible things would happen to me. Since I do not believe much in these things, I did not pay any attention to her threats. I did not do anything that she ordered to be done, and it all ended up in this happening to me."

According to the newspaper, his story is not uncommon among the "macumba" (Brazilian voodoo) followers. Wisely, the Bible warns us to keep away from every practice associated with spiritism. Spiritism brings a person under the influence of unseen, but very real, evil powers: Satan the Devil and his demons.—2 Cor. 4:4; Gal. 5:20, 21; Rev. 21:8; 22:15.

- "There appears to be considerable truth to the belief that the happier you are the longer you live," stated "The Wall Street Journal."

'Joyful Heart a Curer'

It cited a study made of university graduates whose lives were followed for 32 years. It was found that chronic anxiety, depression and emotional maladjustment increased the risk of early aging, disability and death from physical illness. On the other hand, it was found that good mental health retarded the aging, the disability and the death rates. In the "best" adjusted group of men, 57 of 59 were still in excellent health by the age of 53. However,

in the "worst" adjusted group only 30 of 48 were still in good health, the others having died or having become chronically ill.

Long ago, the Bible noted: "A heart that is joyful does good as a curer, but a spirit that is stricken makes the bones dry." (Prov. 17:22) Similarly: "A joyful heart has a good effect on the countenance." (Prov. 15:13) Many have found that, by turning to the Bible and learning about God and his purpose to establish a righteous new order on earth, they have considerably lessened their anxieties. Also, by doing God's will they come under the influence of his powerful holy spirit that brings "love, joy, peace, . . . mildness, self-control," all of which help to produce "a joyful heart." —Gal. 5:22, 23.

- A national convention of the United Methodist Church reaffirmed that it is the most

No Rules Religion

"open church in the country," reported Denver "Post" religious editor Virginia Culver. She wrote: "The Church doesn't have a statement or creed to which members must subscribe, and most members don't want any such thing." A minister of the church stated: "We trust in God's love more than in institutions, or rituals or the Bible." Evidently, each person is relatively free to believe what he wants, and to do what he wants, as though God had no specific rules for human behavior and worship.

How does this square with God's view of the matter? "My law do not forget, and my commandments may your heart observe . . . Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding." (Prov. 3:1, 5) "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work."—2 Tim. 3:16.

Without using God's own Word as a guide, an organization may call itself a religion, but it cannot be true Christianity. It is merely religious anarchy, which is common in the world. The bad fruitage of such religions shows that they do not originate with God. —Matt. 7:13-17.

Follow the Great Exemplar

PEOPLE often are influenced by what others say and do. Whether for good or for bad, the example set by a family head, a religious leader or a well-known national figure affects individuals. Has your own attitude and way of life been affected by those to whom you have looked as examples?

Tragic have been the results of following the bad examples of religious and political leaders. Recently, Jim Jones brought over 900 of his religious followers to a suicidal end in Jonestown, Guyana. Earlier in this century, the whole world suffered when Adolf Hitler and his party followers plunged the world into a holocaust. Many present-day acts of terrorism throughout the world are due to the influence of men who are seeking to publicize their cause or aspirations. The increasing number of persons seeking notoriety may remind us of the Bible's prediction: "Wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse, misleading and being misled."—2 Tim. 3:13.

The trend today, as far as wicked men and their aims are concerned, is moving in that direction—"from bad to worse." But who is chiefly responsible for this state of affairs? The Bible alone provides the reliable answer. Please note that at 2 Timothy 3:13, just quoted, the apostle Paul stated that wicked men not only were misleading others but were "being misled." Ba-



sically, by whom? The same apostle identified "the god of this system of things" as the one chiefly responsible for blinding so many. (2 Cor. 4:4) And who is this? Satan the Devil, who has used his deceptive powers for centuries, from the very time of mankind's fall into sin, when this archdeceiver misled the first two human creatures. He then used the serpent as his visible instrument. (Gen. 3:1-7) Since then, the Devil has used a variety of individuals and organizations, including the worldwide false religious empire Babylon the Great. And it can be said that "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one."—Rev. 17:1-5; 1 John 5:19.

At this point in history, the Devil knows that his time is short. This adds to the increasing dangers among which we live. As individuals, we must be sure that we do not fall into his trap, for he "is misleading the entire inhabited earth." After disclosing his vision of heavenly warfare, the apostle John wrote: "So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with

him." We are in the advanced period of his short confinement within the vicinity of the earth. This accounts for the widespread deception, trouble and woe, with wicked men misleading and being misled, all under the influence of God's chief adversary, Satan the Devil.—Rev. 12:7-12.

Our Great Exemplar

There is one Leader who never was nor ever will be under the control and influence of "the god of this system of things." Nineteen centuries ago, that Leader provided an example that has influenced his followers in a wholesome, lifesaving way. Shortly after his baptism in the Jordan River and his anointing with the holy spirit, that One had an encounter with the Devil. Read the Bible account of it at Matthew 4:1-11. Who is there identified as having resisted the Devil's wily efforts to turn him aside from serving and worshipping God? Why, none other than Jesus Christ, the Son of the Most High God, Jehovah!

Jesus did not allow himself to be influenced by the Devil's temptations, but resisted each thrust. By effectively using the Scriptures, Jesus turned aside each of Satan's temptations. Failing in his wicked efforts, the Devil was bent on 'bruising' Jesus by bringing about his death.—Gen. 3:15.

There is no question that Jesus Christ was different from sinful human leaders. His whole life was devoted to accomplishing his Father's will, not his own. (John 5:30) In preaching about God's kingdom and making known his Father's name and purpose, Jesus Christ was willing to undergo insults, reproach and persecutions. (Matt. 26:67, 68; John 15:20, 21; Rom. 15:3) Finally, he submitted to an ignominious death on a torture stake. (Phil. 2:8) Jesus Christ was, indeed, the Great Exemplar for all who desire to please the heavenly Father, Jehovah.—Heb. 12:1-3.

"No Part of the World"

When standing before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, Jesus made it clear that His kingdom is "no part of the world." (John 18:36, 37) Accordingly, rather than fighting with carnal weapons and rising up against the established order, Jesus' followers remain neutral as far as worldly controversies are concerned. This is because they, like their Great Exemplar, are "no part of the world." (John 15:19; 17:14, 16) For them to be truly influenced by what their Master taught and did, they must avoid the spirit of the world and must not get entangled in its affairs.—1 John 2:15-17.

This is not easy, and it cannot be done in the disciples' own strength. Fittingly, therefore, Jesus petitioned God in their behalf, saying: "I request you, not to take them out of the world, but to watch over them because of the wicked one." (John 17:15) Jesus knew that he would be leaving the earthly scene and that his followers would need heavenly watchcare and protection. Moreover, there would be a constant need for them to be on guard against the Adversary.—Jas. 4:7, 8.

Although being absent because of laying aside his fleshly body in sacrificial death, Jesus Christ would still be in a position to influence and direct the steps of his true followers, doing so from his lofty place at God's right hand. (Heb. 10:12, 13) In addition, they would have the help of the holy spirit.—John 14:25, 26.

How comforting all of this is to true Christians today! Regardless of our circumstances and the trials that we may face, by following our Great Exemplar we will never be misled by wicked men, impostors, or Satan himself. Rather, with full faith we will rely on the support of Jehovah God and of his Son, who promised: "Look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things."—Matt. 28:20.

Showing Concern for the "Flock of God"

"Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son."—Acts 20:28.

NO ONE on earth ever showed greater concern for members of the human family than did Jesus Christ, the Great Exemplar. He referred to those who listened to his voice as his "sheep." And, as the Fine Shepherd, he surrendered his soul or laid down his life in their behalf. (John 10:11, 27) Following his resurrection from the dead, Jesus impressed upon his apostle Simon Peter the need to give these "sheep" special attention. How did Jesus do this? In a way that truly motivated Peter throughout the rest of his earthly life.

² Three times Jesus put a similar question to Peter. Twice, he asked: 'Simon, do you love me?' Finally, Jesus inquired: "Simon son of John, do you have affection for me?" After being asked virtually the same question the third time, Peter became grieved and emphatically assured his Lord: "You know all things; you are aware that I have affection for



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you." Yes, Jesus was fully aware of Peter's love and affection for him. But the point was that the apostle would have to prove this over a long period of time. How? By showing concern for the "sheep." In each instance, after Peter had replied affirmatively to the question posed, Jesus intensified the point, saying: (1) "Feed my lambs"; (2) "Shepherd my little sheep"; (3) "Feed my little sheep." (John 21:15-17) Thus, Jesus most effectively emphasized not only his personal concern for the "sheep" but Peter's heavy future

1. How did Jesus Christ show great concern for those whom he likened to sheep?

2. (a) According to John 21:15-17, how did Peter react to the questions posed by his Master? (b) What did Jesus emphasize in this case? How?

responsibility to care for them, even as his Lord had pointed out so emphatically.

³ That was an unforgettable experience for Peter. Unquestionably, Jesus had reached deep into the apostle's heart. In proof of his love for the Fine Shepherd, Jesus Christ, never would Peter neglect to feed the "sheep." Lovingly and conscientiously he would endeavor to shepherd "the flock." About 30 years later, Peter wrote "to the temporary residents scattered about," that is, to those who had become disciples of Jesus Christ. As part of the "flock of God" they were reminded of a deliverance from their previous fruitless form of conduct. How had this been accomplished? Not with a purchase based on such ordinary things as silver or gold, but "with precious blood, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb, even Christ's." (1 Pet. 1:1, 18, 19) Peter appreciated that this had been a heavy price to pay. It had cost Jehovah God the sacrifice of his only-begotten Son, whom he had sent to this earth to provide a ransom for many. (Matt. 20:28; John 3:16) By the time Peter had written his first letter, the purchased members of "the flock" had grown to many thousands. So there then were more "sheep" than Peter could care for on his own. Along with Peter, however, other qualified men had been raised up who showed concern for "the flock" by feeding, leading and protecting it. They, too, appreciated that "the flock" belonged to Jehovah. And in our day this point is fully realized by the tens of thousands of spiritual undershepherds who have been given the responsibility of shepherding the "flock of God" in their care.

⁴ When Peter was inspired to write his first letter, no doubt he could recall what

Jesus had impressed upon his mind and heart with regard to shepherding the "sheep." This is evident from the apostle's words of exhortation directed not only to those first-century undershepherds but to spiritually older men among God's people today. Peter wrote: "Therefore, to the older men among you I give this exhortation, for I too am an older man with them and a witness of the sufferings of the Christ, a sharer even of the glory that is to be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; neither as lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd has been made manifest, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."—1 Pet. 5:1-4.

Caring Lovingly for the "Flock of God"

⁵ As an eyewitness of the sufferings of the Christ, Peter was moved to emphasize the importance of showing concern for the "flock of God." Just as the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ, demonstrated such concern, so it should be with all those shepherding "the flock." But a Christian overseer certainly could not do this if he felt that he was serving under compulsion. No appointed elder today should feel that he must serve due to being put under pressure. While there is much work involved in shouldering this privileged responsibility, the loving undershepherd will display a desire to help and to be of service. But he will manifest that spirit only if he has the same mental attitude as that possessed by Christ Jesus, who displayed humility and willingness to endure suffering. (Phil. 2: 5-8; 1 Pet. 4:1) If an elder recognizes him-

3. (a) How did Peter give proof of his love for the "fine shepherd"? (b) What shows that Peter was not alone in showing concern for "the flock"?

4. What fitting counsel on shepherding did Peter give when writing to older men in the Christian congregation?

5. (a) To be effective, what attitude should a Christian overseer have in order to fulfill his responsibility toward "the flock"? (b) Why can an overseer today view matters as Peter did?

self to be part of "the flock" under the care of the Great Shepherd, Jehovah God, being accountable to Him and to the Fine Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and not to some human, then he will serve eagerly, uncompromisingly. (1 Pet. 2:25) Even though they have not been eyewitnesses of Jesus' sufferings as Peter was, overseers today are favored with the detailed Bible accounts of Christ's life and ministry. So they can view matters as Peter did and thus have the same spirit as that of the apostle when it comes to shepherding "the flock."

⁶ To be a proper example, a Christian undershepherd must not be interested in dishonest or selfish gain, or in the attaining of undue prominence. Any 'greatness' involved comes from placing himself at the disposal of his brothers, being approachable, serving their spiritual interests. Knowing that "the flock" belongs to Jehovah, who purchased it with the blood of his Son, exemplary older men do not 'lord it over those who are God's inheritance.' Rather, these undershepherds treat "the flock" tenderly and protectively, thus following the counsel and pattern furnished by the Fine Shepherd.—Matt. 20:25-27; Titus 1:7; contrast Ezekiel 34:2-4; Jude 16.

⁷ It must truly be acknowledged that by far the majority of Christian overseers today are showing proper concern for "the flock" in a variety of ways. The time and effort spent in feeding the "sheep," by giving personal attention to individuals, and in presiding at congregation meetings provide fine examples for fellow believers. (1 Tim. 5:17) Consider, too, the fine lead that conscientious undershepherds give in the field activity, seeking out other sheep-like persons and making disciples. (Matt. 28:19, 20; 2 Tim. 4:5) And what about the concern shown in protecting "the flock"

from worldly elements and from those who would prey upon "the flock"? (Eph. 4:11-14; Col. 2:8; Jude 22, 23) In these and many other ways the "flock of God" benefits from those shepherding them out of loving concern for their spiritual welfare.

Valuable Lessons for Us Today

⁸ In reading Biblical accounts of what first-century overseers accomplished in behalf of "the flock," we are impressed with the fine example of the apostle Paul. He also gave encouragement to older men, just as Peter did. While journeying to Jerusalem, Paul called for a meeting of the older men from Ephesus. No doubt they greatly appreciated the opportunity to spend some time with Paul, even as overseers today meet periodically to exchange helpful experiences, to be mutually built up in the faith and to receive Scriptural admonition.

⁹ We can learn some valuable lessons from Paul's discussion with those overseers from Ephesus. The record at Acts 20:17-38 provides us with a deeper insight into the kind of example the apostle had set for his brothers, including those older men from Ephesus. Was Paul a self-sparing minister who just enjoyed traveling about to the various parts of the district of Asia? Not at all. He was a self-sacrificing man of God who was "slaving for the Lord with the greatest lowliness of mind and tears and trials" during the whole time that he was there. (Acts 20:18, 19) He did not hold back from "teaching . . . publicly and from house to house," and that in the face of dangers. Nor was he fearful of what some residents of the community thought of him, or of the threats made by any opposers. Paul gave a thorough witness in

6. What should overseers keep in mind when dealing with "the flock"?

7. In what ways do many overseers show real concern for "the flock"?

8. To provide spiritual encouragement, what did the apostle Paul arrange in behalf of the older men from Ephesus?

9. How does the account at Acts 20:18-21 show that Paul was a self-sacrificing man of God?

the territory.—Acts 20:20, 21; compare Acts 19:1-20:1; 2 Corinthians 1:8-11.

Shepherding in Times of Persecution

¹⁰ Now the apostle was heading for Jerusalem, undaunted by the prospect that “bonds and tribulations” were awaiting him there. He was prepared to lay down his life, if necessary, in order to finish his course in faithfulness and fulfill the ministry he had received from the Lord Jesus. (Acts 20:22-24) What a fine example that was for those Ephesian overseers! Paul’s concern was not only for those who needed to hear the “good news” but for the individuals bearing the responsibility to spread the message to others. Is this not the kind of concern that all appointed Christian elders should have today? Happily, we do have men who are imitating Paul in that they are willing to risk their very lives for the sake of the “good news” and to protect their brothers. Indeed, in lands where Christians suffer intense persecution, many faithful undershepherds loyally have stayed with “the flock,” even though the way may have opened up for these responsible men to go to countries where such sufferings apparently could have been avoided. To illustrate: Recently an elder who has already undergone years of imprisonment and cruel beatings visited the United States to receive training provided for the Watch Tower Society’s branch personnel. The opportunity was open to him to go to a country where there is at present no persecution. But he chose to return to the land in which he had been serving even though imprisonment and harsh persecution seemed certain for him there. Like so many other Christian undershepherds, he regards caring for “the flock” to be a privilege more precious than

10. How have many present-day overseers imitated Paul in their efforts to aid “the flock” despite personal suffering?

his own personal freedom. Truly, such overseers are to be commended. How fine that they continue to provide care for ‘sheep in distress’!—Compare Isaiah 32:1, 2.

¹¹ It was among those who were now overseers in Ephesus that Paul had gone “preaching the kingdom.” They themselves had heard the message from his own lips. He had poured out his heart to them and others in declaring “all the counsel of God,” not his own ideas. So his conscience was clear. There would be no bloodguilt chargeable to his account for failing to give the witness. (Acts 20:25-27) So it should be with overseers in this time of trial, difficulty and hardship in finishing the work of giving a widespread Kingdom witness. Overseers today know that much depends on their zealous example in taking the lead in the work. For this reason, they endeavor to have as great a share as possible in declaring the “good news.” Thus they, too, keep clean and free of any bloodguilt. Others in the congregation observe that these elders take the lead in warning the wicked and searching out the honest-hearted. Accordingly, such fellow believers are encouraged to follow their fine example. As in the case of those whom Paul helped, many today making up “the flock” are persons first contacted by overseers who were witnessing in their territory. Now that such individuals are in the congregation, the overseers show even greater concern for them.—1 Thess. 1:5, 6; 2:7, 8.

¹² Paul’s great concern for those older men from Ephesus, as well as for “the flock” in their care, is indicated by his words: “Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he pur-

11. (a) In view of Acts 20:25-27, what was Paul’s position regarding bloodguilt, and how can overseers today maintain a similar position? (b) Understandably, how do overseers feel toward persons whom they initially helped to become disciples?

12. How are we to understand Paul’s statement at Acts 20:28?

chased with the blood of his own Son.” (Acts 20:28) Each one of those men surely felt the need to examine himself in view of the serious responsibility involved in shepherding “the flock.” Also, those overseers needed to apply Paul’s counsel to themselves as a body of older men. They had to cooperate and work together in caring for “the flock.” For best results, there had to be unity of thought and action on their part. This, in itself, would show that they had deep concern for “the flock.”

¹³ How appropriate it is to use Paul’s admonition for the benefit of Christian older men today! Often, as when traveling overseers meet with congregation elders, those words recorded at Acts 20:28 have served as a basis for sound counsel. Let it be noted that what is said there does not mean paying attention only to oneself. Rather, the entire body of elders in each congregation has the responsibility of caring for the specific needs of “the flock.” This is true even though each elder may have a definite assignment that contributes toward this overall objective. Overseers must fulfill their shepherding responsibilities conscientiously and with loving concern, recognizing that “the flock” is precious to Jehovah in view of the price paid for its purchase.—Eph. 1:7.

Guarding Against Apostate “Wolves”

¹⁴ Knowing what would develop after his death and that of the other apostles, Paul issued this warning: “I know that after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness, and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves.” (Acts 20:29, 30) Later,

13. What can be said about the application of Acts 20:28 today?

14. (a) What warning is found at Acts 20:29, 30? (b) Why was it timely for Paul to warn the Ephesian overseers?

the apostle Peter warned that there would be opportunists and promoters of sects preying upon the unwary, untaught and unsteady ones. (2 Pet. 2:1-3; 3:15, 16) As long as the apostles were present, they acted as a restraint against tendencies in that direction. But the Scriptures plainly foretold a major apostasy, and it did, in fact, eventuate. It still continues in the form of Christendom.—2 Thess. 2:6-10.

¹⁵ In this “time of the end” the Christian witnesses of Jehovah are pointedly warned against apostatizing or falling away. (Dan. 12:4; Matt. 24:9-13) Hence, faithful Christian undershepherds must show concern for “the flock” by being watchful. They should be alert so as to protect members of “the flock” from slipping into bad associations. (1 Cor. 15:33) Maintaining a healthy spiritual outlook and attitude is not easy in view of the constant pressures from the unclean world. That is why each person in the congregation should heed the admonition: “Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out imitate their faith.” (Heb. 13:7) At times older men may find it necessary to offer Scriptural counsel and to caution fellow believers against being influenced by those who seek their own selfish interests and pleasure rather than the spiritual good of “the flock” as a whole. The firm direction given by Paul at Romans 16:17-19 applies in such cases. He stated: “Now I exhort you, brothers, to keep your eye on those who cause divisions and occasions for stumbling contrary to the teaching that you have learned, and avoid them. For men of that sort are slaves, not of our Lord Christ, but of their own bellies; and by smooth talk and complimentary speech they seduce the hearts of guileless ones.

15. (a) Why should those now shepherding “the flock” be watchful? (b) At times, why is it necessary for elders to act on the direction given at Romans 16:17-19?

For your obedience has come to the notice of all. I therefore rejoice over you. But I want you to be wise as to what is good, but innocent as to what is evil."

Laboring in Behalf of "the Flock"

¹⁶ Because Paul traveled extensively, he had a broad view of what was taking place in the congregations of his time. He knew that there were various problems and dangers. So it is understandable that he should urge the older men of Ephesus to keep awake spiritually. Over a period of three years Paul had demonstrated his love and concern by continuously admonishing them, even with tears. (Acts 20:31) Evidently there was an emotional strain involved in such shepherding. It took something out of Paul to render that watchful and loving attention. It is not surprising, therefore, that overseers today go through a similar experience at times, especially when there are serious problems to handle. (Compare 2 Corinthians 2:4.) In such situations their foremost concern is for "the flock." They labor diligently to keep it spiritually clean and healthy, free from leaven.—1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:7-10; Titus 2:1.

¹⁷ In committing the Ephesian overseers "to God and to the word of his undeserved kindness," Paul could feel confident that they were in the best of hands. (Acts 20:32) Likewise today, after overseers have done all that they can in giving counsel and help, or in taking whatever other disciplinary action is Scripturally advisable, they can leave matters in God's hands. In situations where our dear brothers and sisters in the faith are beset by serious problems, it is always comforting to know

that by committing them and their interests to Jehovah in prayer and letting his Word, spirit and organization provide the needed direction, the outcome will be according to his will. Under those circumstances, whatever occurs will be by God's permission. (Compare 1 Peter 2:23.) Again, this shows concern for "the flock," for it turns attention to the One who can do the most good in every situation.

¹⁸ With a clear conscience, Paul could point to the evidence that he had not sought to enrich himself at the expense of his brothers. He had worked with his own hands and thus had the satisfaction of caring for his necessities. (Acts 20:33, 34) True, when in need he did accept something from the Philippian Christians. He did not seek such gifts, but, rather, the fruitage that is associated with such giving. (Phil. 4:14-17) As Paul was industrious and did not serve for dishonest gain, so overseers of our day can set a fine example by showing that they are not lazy, or that they are not seeking to avoid hard work. Their concern for "the flock" prevents them from becoming a burden on the congregation.—2 Thess. 3:6-10.

¹⁹ Having noted what Paul had exhibited in his own life and service, those Ephesian overseers had something to go by as they endeavored to assist the weak and to give of themselves in building up the congregation. Acting in harmony with the principle that "there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving," present-day Christian overseers furnish a fine example for others. (Acts 20:35) Indeed, they not only give much but are giving unstintingly. Their continuing to do so contributes to the happiness of all in the congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses.

16. (a) What is indicated by the fact that Paul sometimes gave admonition with tears? (b) In showing concern, overseers today work diligently to do what for "the flock"?

17. (a) What important point should be learned from Paul's words at Acts 20:32? (b) Committing persons and their interests to Jehovah allows for what outcome?

18. (a) What was Paul's view concerning his material provisions? (b) By imitating Paul's example in this, how do overseers show concern for "the flock"?

19. Acting in harmony with the principle stated at Acts 20:35 has what effect on overseers and the congregation as a whole?

"Anxiety for All the Congregations"

²⁰ It is obvious that the fine examples provided by such faithful apostles as Peter and Paul were outstanding. They expended themselves in behalf of fellow Christians and showed deep concern not just for one congregation but for the whole association of their brothers. (1 Pet. 2:17) Despite many inconveniences, problems and trials, the apostles kept the spiritual welfare of "the flock" uppermost in mind.

²¹ In writing to fellow believers at Corinth, Paul cited beatings, imprisonments, trying experiences and various dangers that he had encountered in serving as a minister. The apostle then added: "Besides those things of an external kind, there is what rushes in on me from day to day, the anxiety for all the congregations." (2 Cor. 11:23-28) We can only imagine the pressures Paul had and the concern he felt for "all the congregations," for he kept in touch with a number of Christian associates. (2 Tim. 4:9-13) He traveled extensively in the course of his missionary tours and made a number of return visits to the congregations. (Acts 15:36) His activities in behalf of others were demanding indeed. He gave talks for extended periods and regularly witnessed in synagogues, public places and from house to house. (Acts 17:2; 19:9, 10; 20:20) To care for his material needs and to avoid burdening the congregation, it was necessary for Paul to engage in secular work. (Acts 18:1-3; 2 Thess. 3:8, 9) Obviously, the apostle also spent considerable time studying God's Word, and the knowledge thus acquired doubtless served him well when he was divinely inspired to write

some 14 of the 27 books comprising the Christian Greek Scriptures. Truly, Paul was a very busy man, but he carried on, always displaying great concern for "the flock."

²² There is a vast amount of work being done today in behalf of the "flock of God." With over 42,000 congregations of Jehovah's people, think of the attention that must be given to their needs. A regular flow of spiritual food is being provided by the "faithful and discreet slave." (Matt. 24:45-47) Programs for congregation meetings, circuit assemblies and district conventions are arranged regularly to enable Christians to come together for spiritually upbuilding study, worship and association. (Heb. 10:23-25) Traveling overseers are sent to visit and care for the special needs of all the congregations. (Compare Acts 16:4, 5.) Communications containing counsel and encouragement are sent to congregations and bodies of elders. (Compare Philippians 1:1; 1 Peter 5:12; Jude 3.) Other arrangements, too numerous to mention, are made to benefit the "flock of God" spiritually and otherwise.

²³ This work involves a tremendous amount of time, effort and expense. But of what is it an evidence? It shows that Jehovah cares for his people. Through his Son, the Fine Shepherd, God demonstrates superb shepherding ability. (Isa. 40:10, 11) Tens of thousands of undershepherds have been appointed by holy spirit and they are sharing in shepherding the "flock of God." All of this shows loving concern for "the flock" as a whole and for the individuals that make up "the flock." May we personally display heartfelt appreciation for the love shown by the Great Shepherd, Jehovah God, and his Son, Jesus Christ, in all their tender care for us.

20. To what extent were Peter and Paul concerned with "the flock"?

21. (a) According to 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, what were some of "those things of an external kind" that Paul experienced? (b) How did Paul show his deep concern for others?

22, 23. (a) In our time, what are some ways in which provision is made for the "flock of God"? (b) All these provisions furnish evidence of what, and how should we be affected thereby?

Overseers — Be Fine Examples to “the Flock”

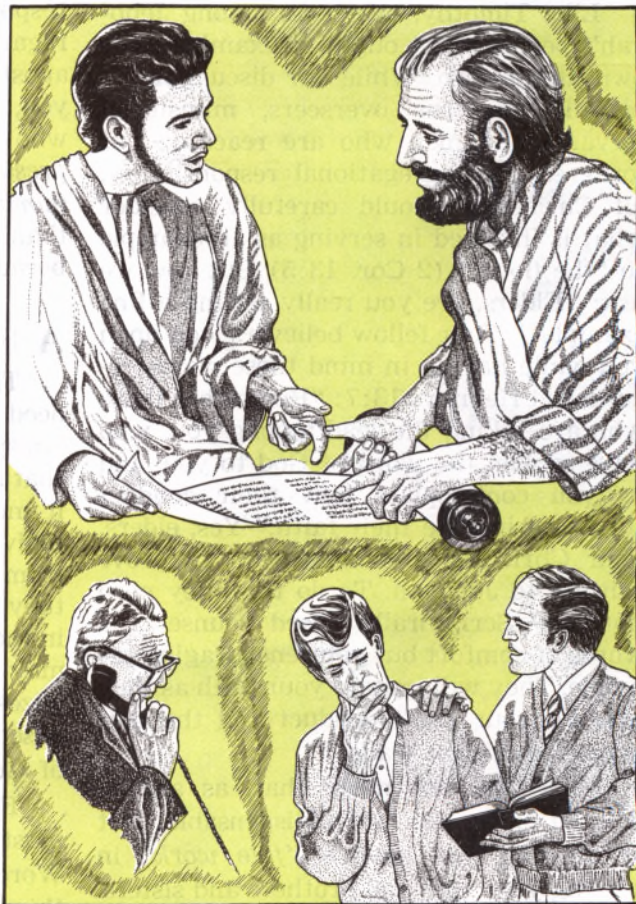
“Become an example to the faithful ones in speaking, in conduct, in love, in faith, in chasteness.”
—1 Tim. 4:12.

MUCH is involved in serving as an overseer in the Christian congregation. This fact is recognized by thousands of dedicated, spiritual men who are entrusted with this privilege today. Since all individuals in the congregation are Christian brothers and sisters, appointed elders know that their responsibility does not make them any better than other worshipers of Jehovah. (Matt. 23:8-12) Yet, in view of their responsibilities and the Scriptural requirements they must meet, more is expected of them. It is even as Jesus said: “Indeed, everyone to whom much was given, much will be demanded of him; and the one whom people put in charge of much, they will demand more than usual of him.” (Luke 12:48) “The flock” is greatly affected by what these undershepherds say and do. It is expected, therefore, that these men would set a fine example for others.

² This matter of being a good example cannot be overemphasized. It is one of the direct points of counsel found in Paul’s first letter to the overseer Timothy. Paul did

1. Why should we expect Christian overseers to set a fine example?

2. In what particular ways did Paul encourage Timothy to become an example?



not take anything for granted, and he did not want Timothy to do so either. Because Timothy was still a young man, some might tend to look down on him. No doubt Paul had this in mind when he wrote: “Let no man ever look down on

your youth. On the contrary, become an example to the faithful ones in speaking, in conduct, in love, in faith, in chasteness. While I am coming, continue applying yourself to public reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not be neglecting the gift in you that was given you through a prediction and when the body of older men laid their hands upon you." (1 Tim. 4:12-14) There would be no legitimate reason for others to look down on Timothy if he continued to pursue an exemplary Christian course in life.

³ Like Timothy, overseers among Jehovah's people today ought to examine their own life pattern. While our discussion especially concerns overseers, ministerial servants and men who are reaching out for greater congregational responsibility, all Christians should carefully consider what is involved in serving as an example to "the flock." (2 Cor. 13:5) But now we ask: "Elders, are you really setting a fine example?" Your fellow believers look upon you while having in mind these words recorded at Hebrews 13:7: "Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out imitate their faith." Yes, elders, your Christian associates want to prove faithful to Jehovah. To do this they need not only Scripturally based counsel and words of comfort but your encouraging example. They will imitate your faith as they observe your right conduct and the outcome to which it leads.

⁴ This does not mean that, as an appointed elder, you are indispensable. Not at all. But you have a "*fine work*" in serving your spiritual brothers and sisters. (1 Tim. 3:1) Yours is not a position of

some supposed 'greatness' resulting from your efforts. (Matt. 20:26, 27) Yes, you have additional privileges and responsibilities. But properly fulfilling these will require that you humbly *slave* for Jehovah, Jesus Christ and your fellow believers. (Rom. 12:11; Gal. 5:13; Col. 3:23, 24) Indeed, you must work hard, preside, admonish and do other things in behalf of your brothers and sisters in the faith. They recognize that you have an appointment; but it is the hard work you do, along with your example, that moves them to be responsive in supporting your efforts. Such regard is proper and in keeping with the apostle Paul's words: "Now we request you, brothers, to have regard for those who are *working hard among you* and *presiding over you* in the Lord and *admonishing you*; and to give them more than extraordinary consideration in love because of their work."—1 Thess. 5:12, 13.

A Fine Example "in Speaking"

⁵ There can be no question about the need for overseers to be a fine example "in speaking." Certainly, this is something that must be true in their own homes. Also, it must be manifest when they speak to individual members of the congregation or from the public platform, as well as when they are witnessing from house to house in the community. An overseer's comments may influence others more than he realizes. So what he says must always be based on or governed by the principles of God's Word.

⁶ For speech to be upbuilding, the heart must be filled with good things from God's Word. Then the mouth will "speak good things," making statements that are spiritually fitting and upbuilding. (Matt. 12:34) An overseer must guard against letting

3. What should overseers examine, and why?

4. (a) How do 1 Timothy 3:1 and Matthew 20:26, 27 emphasize what is involved in serving as Christian overseers? (b) Fulfilling his responsibilities requires what of an elder? (c) According to 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13, for whom should brothers have regard, and how should they show it?

5. In what varied circumstances should overseers be a fine example "in speaking," and why is this necessary? 6. Why must elders guard against wrong thoughts and "speak good things"?

wrong thoughts or ideas take root in his mind or heart, as this ultimately would show up in his speech and would be detrimental to others. Showing what to avoid and the kind of sayings that should be heard, the Bible counsels: "No bad language must pass your lips, but only what is good and helpful to the occasion, so that it brings a blessing to those who hear it." —Eph. 4:29, *The New English Bible*.

⁷ To be an example in speaking, Christian undershepherds must not go "beyond the things that are written." (1 Cor. 4:6) Whether in matters of doctrine, morals or Christian organization, an overseer should "preach the word." (2 Tim. 4:2) If he were to introduce strictly personal opinions or to spread ideas contrary to the teaching received through the "faithful and discreet slave," this would cause confusion. Rather than pushing ahead presumptuously in a course that could lead to dishonor, therefore, why not wait upon Jehovah and his organization? (Prov. 11:2) Perhaps there will be a further explanation or clarification of the subject later. Or, through prayer and diligent study of God's Word with the help of the Watch Tower publications, the elder may find that he was wrong and will be glad that he did not spread his mistaken views.

⁸ Paul told Timothy to charge others "not to fight about words, a thing of no usefulness at all because it overturns those listening." The apostle then referred to the unhealthy effects of statements made by men who had deviated from the truth. There is nothing to be gained and likely much to be lost spiritually by fighting about words or getting involved in debates with those who reject healthful teaching. (2 Tim. 2:14-19; Titus 1:7-9) This does

not mean that a person cannot sincerely raise a question about a matter that he does not understand. However, insisting on some viewpoint may cause unnecessary disturbance. Of course, if some individuals need spiritual help, there is a proper way to teach, and that is "with mildness." —2 Tim. 2:23-26.

⁹ Overseers should "work hard in speaking and teaching," not only in reaching outsiders with the truth but in spiritually building up the congregation. (1 Tim. 5:17) It takes time and effort to prepare Bible talks and meeting parts that are spiritually refreshing, instructive and practical. By regularly studying the Scriptures and by using the Watch Tower Society's publications, talk outlines and other material from the "faithful and discreet slave," speakers and teachers can develop many fine points that will enable them to impart healthful teaching. And by becoming an example in speaking, overseers show that they are applying themselves in the right way.

Always Maintaining "Fine Conduct"

¹⁰ Congregational overseers must become an example also "in conduct." To succeed in maintaining fine conduct, they need heavenly wisdom and understanding. The disciple James emphasizes this point, saying: "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show out of his fine conduct his works with a mildness that belongs to wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and contentiousness in your hearts, do not be bragging and lying against the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is the earthly, animal, demonic. For where jeal-

7. Why should Christian overseers refrain from spreading strictly personal opinions or ideas?

8. (a) Why avoid fighting about words and getting involved in debates? (2 Tim. 2:14-19) (b) If a person raises a question and needs spiritual help, how should aid be given?

9. To teach effectively, what is required of overseers? 10, 11. (a) What relationship is there between conduct and heavenly wisdom? (b) What happens when the wisdom from above is displayed, as compared with situations wherein ungodly traits are in evidence?

ousy and contentiousness are, there disorder and every vile thing are.”—Jas. 3: 13-16; 1 Pet. 2:12.

¹¹ Relationships with fellow elders as well as with other congregation members are strengthened by fine conduct that reflects heavenly wisdom. (Jas. 3:17, 18) On the other hand, contentiousness, jealousy, bragging and other worldly, animalistic and demonic traits and actions tear down such relationships. These bad traits have no place among the ranks of God’s people. To act in a self-centered way belies any profession of Christlike love. Hence, fine conduct calls for “doing nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind considering that the others are superior to you.” (Phil. 2:3) Such conduct is truly exemplary in that it reflects a mental attitude like that displayed by Christ Jesus.—Phil. 2:5-8.

¹² To set a fine example, overseers and other responsible brothers must always conduct themselves circumspectly toward the opposite sex. They are to entreat “older women as mothers, younger women as sisters with all chasteness.” (1 Tim. 5:1, 2) Constant vigilance is needed so as to guard against any ‘loosening up’ as regards adherence to God’s high moral standards. If there is definite evidence that some are trying to corrupt others morally, overseers must take swift action to keep the organization clean, knowing that Jehovah ‘exacts punishment for these things.’ (1 Thess. 4:3-8) At the same time, appointed undershepherds must refrain from openly discussing judicial matters involving those who have violated God’s righteous principles. Confidentiality must be maintained. The congregation can be expected to have full confidence only in

12. (a) How should female members of the congregation be viewed and treated? (b) What are overseers required to do about violations of God’s moral standards? (c) In connection with judicial matters, confidentiality places what responsibility on elders?

elders who exercise proper oversight and whose personal conduct is always above reproach.

Exemplary “in Love”

¹³ Overseers cannot be truly successful in becoming “an example to the faithful ones” unless they manifest the spirit of love. After reminding Timothy to ‘stir up the gift of God that was in him,’ Paul said: “For God gave us not a spirit of cowardice, but that of power and of love and of soundness of mind.” (2 Tim. 1:6, 7) We know the wholesome effects produced in our lives as a result of having God manifest this quality of love toward us. When overseers are fine examples in displaying the spirit’s fruit of love, this, more than anything else, shows how they feel about their fellow worshipers of Jehovah. Love has a drawing power, prompting us to seek the counsel and help of loving undershepherds. We appreciate the warmth of their interest and their earnest desire to aid us in making spiritual progress.

¹⁴ To carry on as spiritual men, overseers endeavor to ‘let all their affairs take place with love.’ (1 Cor. 16:13, 14) If married, these men are to be “loving their wives as their own bodies,” which they feed and cherish. (Eph. 5:28, 29) Overseers appreciate how much their own bodies require daily care. So, too, their wives need attention and regular spiritual care that will enable them to fulfill their supportive wifely roles in a way that is “becoming in the Lord.” (Col. 3:18, 19) Discussing the daily text from the *Yearbook of Jehovah’s Witnesses*, reviewing material in the Society’s publications, preparing for Christian meetings and keeping awake to occasions for praying together—all are expressions of such love. Also, as opportunity affords, elders should help

13. What spirit is necessary if overseers are to be successful in setting a fine example, and why so?

14. Married overseers have what opportunities to show that they ‘love their wives as their own bodies,’ and this enables their wives to do what?

their wives in other ways. This and the proper rearing of any children the couple may have will provide evidence that the man presides well over his own household and thus meets one of the Scriptural requirements for overseers.—1 Tim. 3:4, 5; 5:8.

¹⁵ Indeed, an overseer who maintains a fine family arrangement shows that he can “take care of God’s congregation.” (1 Tim. 3:5) In discharging congregational responsibilities, an elder takes a keen personal interest in those related to him in the faith. (Gal. 6:9, 10) Overseers prepare for and conduct congregation meetings, visit the sick and others in need, and regularly participate in publicly declaring the “good news.” All of this is an example of love for God, for the “sheep” in their care and for those to whom these elders preach the Kingdom message.

¹⁶ There are times when overseers find it necessary to give direct counsel or to take disciplinary action. Their desire is to help individuals and protect the congregation. In this, elders imitate the apostle Paul. Motivated by love, the apostle acted in the best interests of the congregation at Corinth, although this placed a considerable strain on him. He wrote: “Out of much tribulation and anguish of heart I wrote you with many tears, not that you might be saddened, but that you might know the love that I have more especially for you.” (2 Cor. 2:4) While some persons in that congregation did not fully appreciate Paul’s tireless and unselfish efforts, he was willing to expend himself even further in their behalf, for he said: “For my part I will most gladly spend and be completely spent for your souls. If I love you the more abundantly, am I to be loved the less?” (2 Cor. 12:15) Like Paul, many

overseers exert themselves wholeheartedly. They do so out of love for their brothers, thus setting a commendable example.

¹⁷ It is possible to point to many overseers who have for years literally spent themselves in serving Jehovah and caring for the needs of their spiritual brothers and sisters. The example provided by these men has promoted the spirit of love in the entire organization of God’s people. Our confidence has been strengthened by such examples in shepherding “the flock” during these trialsome days. Because of having true love and concern for “the flock,” these undershepherds have reason to express themselves as did Paul, who wrote: “May the Lord cause you to increase, yes, make you abound, in love to one another and to all, even as we also do to you; to the end that he may make your hearts firm, unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the presence of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones.” —1 Thess. 3:12, 13.

Showing Faith Strengthens Fellow Believers

¹⁸ Despite the loud religious professions of many today, “faith is not a possession of all people.” (2 Thess. 3:2) It must, however, be our possession if we are to please God. (Heb. 11:6) Here, too, Christian overseers must be an example to all—“in faith.” Moreover, they must have deeds or works to prove the existence of genuine faith on their part. (Jas. 2:14-26) Among other things, these works include such deeds as comforting sick fellow believers, supplying the needy among them and having a regular share in proclaiming the “good news of the kingdom.”—Matt. 24:14; compare Matthew 25:34-40.

¹⁷ The fine examples of many overseers have had what effect upon the organization of God’s people, providing a basis for what sentiments on the part of faithful undershepherds?

¹⁸ To what works should overseers be able to point as evidence that they have genuine faith?

15. How can an overseer show that he can “take care of God’s congregation” and that he has love?

16. What moved Paul to act in the best interests of the Corinthian congregation, and is the same attitude found among Christian overseers today?

¹⁹ It is significant that Paul repeatedly stressed the point that 'the righteous one will live by reason of faith.' (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38) Faith not only provides us with a vision of what lies ahead but moves us to do things. For example, it takes faith to enroll as auxiliary or regular pioneers and then serve as full-time preachers of the "good news." (Mark 13:10) Despite family responsibilities and other duties, many overseers and ministerial servants arrange to share in this activity. Many adjust their secular employment and other affairs so as to give more attention to congregational responsibilities. And genuine faith is required when taking a direct part in preaching the "good news," fulfilling assignments at Christian assemblies, erecting Kingdom Halls or engaging in various day-to-day theocratic activities. Indeed, it takes faith for overseers and all of Jehovah's people to believe, live, work and worship according to God's Word.

²⁰ Faith also is needed to withstand difficulties and surmount trials of faith. After Peter exhorted older men to become examples to "the flock," he warned: "Keep your senses, be watchful. Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone. But take your stand against him, solid in the faith, knowing that the same things in the way of sufferings are being accomplished in the entire association of your brothers in the world." (1 Pet. 5:8, 9) Overseers must be ever alert to the Devil's tactics and the devices he uses to sidetrack, ensnare or devour God's servants. Never should Christians allow themselves to be lulled into complacency about the situation they face, and appointed undershepherds of "the

flock" should be especially vigilant. In many lands, experience shows that when difficulties and trials befall Jehovah's Witnesses, overseers are in the forefront of the battle. With reliance on God, these elders keep helping their fellow believers in various ways, resisting the Adversary, praying earnestly, and using the large shield of faith and other spiritual armor. —Eph. 6:10-18.

²¹ Overseers should help "the flock" to walk by faith and rejoice in the hope ahead. Because of their invisibility, we cannot see Jehovah God and his Son in the heavenly realm. Nevertheless, their dealings with us are *real*. (Heb. 11:27) What is taking place as a result of their leadership is in fulfillment of what the Bible foretold. Overseers should eagerly help their spiritual brothers and sisters to appreciate this fact and to see that members of the "great crowd" are being gathered in considerable numbers. Jehovah's blessing is on the work being done. (Isa. 60:22; Rev. 7:9) We are experiencing the spiritual security he has promised. (Ps. 91:1, 2) Fruits of Jehovah's holy spirit, including faith, do abound among God's people today. (Gal. 5:22, 23; compare Romans 1:8.) Our eyes of faith behold the coming execution of Jehovah's judgments. (Rev. 11:16-18; 16:14, 16) Beyond the "great tribulation" a new order is due to begin, and the earth will be brought to a paradise state. (Matt. 24:21; Luke 23:43; 2 Pet. 3:11-13) There is going to be a resurrection. (John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15) The human family will be restored to peaceful relations with God, and everlasting life will be the lot of those who prove obedient during the final test. (Rev. 20:7-10) But as we look to the future, we ap-

19. Why is faith essential, and what does it enable many to do?

20. (a) What part does faith play in taking a firm stand against the Devil? (b) How can overseers especially help fellow believers to surmount trials of their faith?

21. What do overseers, in being examples in faith themselves, help "the flock" to do as far as faith and hope are concerned?

preciate the tens of thousands of overseers who now serve as examples in faith, loyal undershepherds who are doing so much to help "the flock" to rejoice in the hope ahead.—Rom. 12:12.

"In Chasteness"—Worthy Examples

²² Finally, overseers are exhorted to "become an example to the faithful ones . . . in chasteness." This means more than *being* clean in mind and moral conduct. Obviously, they must be careful that what their minds dwell upon is chaste. (Phil. 4:8; Jas. 3:17) But, in order to remain chaste, overseers must also exercise good judgment when considering brothers for responsibility within the congregation. Their qualifications must be weighed carefully in the light of Scriptural requirements. Never should favoritism be shown to personal friends or relatives. If there are doubts about a person's moral conduct, allow time and facts to remove such doubts. This would be in line with the sound counsel found at 1 Timothy 5:22: "Never lay your hands hastily upon any man; neither be a sharer in the sins of others; preserve yourself chaste."

²³ Overseers also avoid sharing in the sins of others by handling judicial matters properly. In dealing with cases of wrongdoing, elders should be merciful when the circumstances call for mercy, but they must not condone or take a casual view of sin. (Prov. 28:13; Jas. 2:13; compare Jude 3-15, 22, 23.) Care must be exercised by appointed elders so that they are not swayed by partiality, sentiment or emotion when listening to the statements of wrongdoers or the testimony of others. By letting

Bible principles govern any decisions they make in such cases, faithful undershepherds will preserve themselves chaste.

²⁴ By becoming examples in the foregoing ways, all faithful Christian overseers can with good conscience say, as Paul did: "Become imitators of me, even as I am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1) Although conscious of his personal weaknesses, the apostle was able to say with confidence that he was following Christ. The same thing is true of overseers today who are endeavoring to measure up to God's requirements.

Congregation Encouraged to Speak the Word Boldly

²⁵ What results can we expect from following the example provided by faithful undershepherds of the "flock of God"? Why, all in the congregation will be encouraged to continue speaking the word of God with boldness while maintaining fine conduct! (Acts 4:29-31; 1 Pet. 2:12) The fruitage of love will unmistakably identify the congregation as being made up of Jesus Christ's true disciples, and this will draw others into association with God's people. (Zech. 8:23; John 13:34, 35) Active faith will be displayed in the doing of such fine works as preaching the "good news," making disciples and pursuing godly ways. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) With chasteness dominating the lives of all who seek God's approval, the entire congregation will be kept clean. May we therefore serve Jehovah together in faithfulness, appreciating the blessings we enjoy as God's people. And may our loving heavenly Father continue to bless our united efforts as we work with Christian overseers who are fine examples to "the flock."

22. (a) How can reflection on Philipians 4:8 and James 3:17 help overseers to be examples in chasteness? (b) In recommending brothers for responsibility within the congregation, how must overseers endeavor to remain chaste?

23. What will help overseers to preserve themselves chaste in handling judicial matters?

24. What will make it possible for overseers to express themselves as Paul did at 1 Corinthians 11:1?

25. Imitating the good example set by Christian overseers can produce what results in the congregation due to God's blessings?

It Revived Our Family Spiritually

Last September a 28-year-old woman explained in a letter how the recent publication "My Book of Bible Stories" had been responsible for the spiritual revival of most of her family. She wrote:

"In 1963 my family learned the truth about Jehovah's kingdom from two Witnesses in the house-to-house work. Within three years, all seven of us—my father and mother and we five children—dedicated our lives to God and were baptized.

"However, around 1970 all the members of my family quit attending Christian meetings—all, that is, except me. This caused me severe heartache, since I could not understand why they had quit. No one would tell me. They just said they didn't want to go anymore. I asked them if they still felt this was the truth, and they said, 'Yes, it most certainly is.'

"Well, this upset me even more because I just couldn't understand how they could believe it was the truth and yet not do anything about serving Jehovah. In 1973 my dad twice had open-heart surgery, and yet refused taking blood because of what God's law says. (Lev. 17:12-14; Acts 15:28, 29) Also, my mother had operations on her spine and refused blood for the same reason. Yet they still refused to associate with the congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses anymore.

"In 1975 I became ill. Several doctors told me I would live for only two years at the most. Thankfully I have lived longer. Shortly before I became ill my oldest brother married a devout member of the Church of Christ. My brother tried to witness to her about the Bible teachings that he still believed but had been doing nothing about. She would absolutely refuse to hear anything about these things.

"In 1978 I had the wonderful privilege of attending the Victorious Faith convention in New Orleans. With the help of two loving Witnesses I managed to go despite my condition. I was the only one in my family

who went. I was so happy I felt like shouting; my heart seemed ready to burst with appreciation. I felt Jehovah's spirit there so strongly.

"When 'My Book of Bible Stories' was released a brother asked if he could get mine for me since I was handicapped. I said, 'yes.' So off he went to get 12 books, one for each member of my family, including my nieces and nephews.

"I didn't know whether or not my family would appreciate my giving them one. So I told them that the books were a gift of love. My sister-in-law who belonged to the Church of Christ said that she didn't mind her daughter having a copy. My little niece Aubre is three years old and can already read some.

"One day Aubre asked her mother if she could read to her. Her mother said that she could, so little Aubre went to get her 'Bible Stories' book and started reading. After a while my sister-in-law found she was listening to her little daughter with real interest. After she put Aubre to bed, she sat down and read the book through.

"That night when my brother came home from work, she told him that everything she had read in the book was true. 'It's so simple,' she said, 'I don't know how I could have been so blind not to have seen it.' My brother said that he had tried to explain these things to her before. She said that it took a three-year-old with a book about the Bible to make her see how everything fit, because Jehovah God really had a purpose for the earth.

"A year later now, five of the original seven members of my family are again serving Jehovah wholeheartedly, but counting nieces and nephews the number is 11. I thank Jehovah for giving me the strength to endure and make the assembly, and for the timely release of a wonderful book. Now when I fall asleep in death my heart will rejoice in the hope of seeing my family in the resurrection. Oh, what a joy the 'Bible Stories' book has proved to be!"

QUESTIONS from READERS

● What guidance does the Bible provide concerning gambling? For example, would it be bad for a Christian to put up small money stakes in a card game played just for entertainment?

The Scriptures do not provide a basis for any rigid rule against every "bet," no matter how small. Yet they do help us to see that gambling is a serious wrong, one that can result in exclusion from the Christian congregation and from God's kingdom.

The words "gamble" and "gambling" are sometimes used regarding activities involving a risk or hope of gain. A person might be spoken of as 'taking a gamble' that a new business he sets up or invests in will make a profit. But the discussion that follows is about the sort of "gambling" in which wagering or betting is involved. For example: "Gambling is generally defined as the voluntary risking of a sum of money called a *stake*, *wager*, or *bet*, on the outcome of a game or other event." (*Encyclopedia Americana*) The Bible does not pointedly discuss such gambling.

Judges 14:11-19 tells of a test that Samson proposed involving payment, but rather than being a form of gambling, this was a strategy he used in "looking for an opportunity against" the enemy Philistines. Nor was the use of "lots" in Israel gambling; they were a means of getting God's direction or settling disputes. (Prov. 16:33; 18:18; 1 Sam. 14:41, 42) And though the Hebrews played games and had races, there is no evidence that they bet on these. (Jer. 12:5) Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* observes: "So long as [the Israelites] remained agricultural, they seem to have been singularly free from the evil of gambling. In Babylon they became mercantile, and mixed with people among whom games of chance were part of regular ordinary life."—Vol. VI, p. 164.

In this regard Isaiah 65:11, 12 refers to "the god of Good Luck" or Good Fortune to whom Babylonian gamblers looked for help. Any Israelite who, as those verses mention, prepared a table of food for such idol gods of luck would be following a course of apostasy.

Actually, the only case in the Bible that could be classed as gambling was when Roman soldiers cast lots to determine who would get Jesus' inner garment.—Matt. 27:35; John 19:23.

Though the Bible does not discuss gambling in detail, it does provide us with principles that help in evaluating gambling. These make it clear that the Christian should be conscious of motive regarding gambling and of the effects gambling often produces.

It is widely acknowledged that gambling often leads to or incites greed. This is important to Christians, for the Bible strongly condemns "greediness." God informs us that "greedy persons" will not inherit his kingdom, and that covetousness is to be classed with idolatry. Hence, sincere Christians want to avoid practices that might cause them to manifest greediness and thus to fall far short of the glory of God.—Col. 3:5; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Rom. 3:23.

Of course, greed can be manifest in many ways. A person might show excessive greed in his eating, becoming a glutton. Or, greedy excess in drinking might make him a drunkard. (Titus 1:12, 13; Prov. 23:20; 1 Tim. 3:3) However, eating is a normal, needed aspect of life. And even the enjoyment that some get from moderate amounts of alcoholic drinks involves a natural process, consuming as part of the daily fluid intake a beverage that the body can "burn" as fuel. So "greed" is not as frequently or easily connected with these things as with gambling.

The greed of gambling is a prime cause of much of the crime and violence associated with serious gambling operations. But even in the individual gambler greed is often an underlying motive. Do not many gamble because they hope to win what others will lose? This is recognized even by persons whose thinking is not primarily based on the Bible. Professor D. M. Smyth commented: "Through their promotion of lotteries governments are appealing to one of the lowest human qualities—greed. They are contributing to the corruption, not improvement, of human life. . . . The promoters of lotteries are encouraging the view that it is right for an individual to profit through the losses of many."—*Toronto Star*.

Yet, someone might reason: 'What if I played a friendly card or board game with relatives? We might bet small amounts of money, so no one could win or lose much. Could that not be just innocent entertainment, without any greediness?'

Some might argue that way. But where money is used, in however small amounts, the danger is obvious. It can be 'the thin edge of the wedge,' and especially would this be dangerous in encouraging the gambling spirit where children are among the players. Why not just keep a pencil score, or otherwise play the game simply for the fun of it? The spiritual elders in the congregation would not want to get involved in what you do in this respect. They would not try to legislate as did the religious leaders described at Luke 6:1-5. However, if it came to their attention that spirituality was endangered, they might give kind counsel as those who are 'keeping watch over the souls' of the flock.—Heb. 13:17.

Experience shows that many who became greedy, compulsive gamblers began by making petty bets 'for entertainment.' They saw that they could win small amounts and were tempted to try to win larger amounts. The greedy compulsion can addict a person, even leading to a life that previously would have been unthinkable. A former gambler in Canada commented: "I have a niece who loses \$100 a week. Her husband has to work two jobs. Her kids are literally starving. She'll beg, borrow and steal to play."

Pride also is often involved as a motive behind gambling. Being able to win appeals to the spirit of pride. Yet God says: "Self-exaltation and pride . . . I have hated." True worshipers are encouraged to cultivate modesty and humility.—Prov. 8:13; 11:2; 22:4; Mic. 6:8; Jas. 4:16.

Gamblers often magnify 'Lady Luck.' For them "luck" is not a word merely meaning good results, but is a superhuman influence like a god. Greed and pride move gamblers to trust in "luck."

Gambling frequently has the effect of inducing laziness. It encourages persons to dream of getting something for nothing, even moving them to lie or cheat to win rather than work. But God's Word counsels against laziness and urges thrift, diligence and hard work. "If anyone does not want to work, neither let him eat."—Prov. 6:9-11; Eph. 4:28; 2 Thess. 3:10.

The bad fruits of gambling are so notorious that in many communities gamblers are looked down upon, even if gambling is legal. Thus, the desire to have a "fine testimony from people on the outside," and to avoid prejudicing others against the "good news of the kingdom" has added to the reasons why many Christians

absolutely avoid all gambling.—1 Tim. 3:7, 10; Matt. 24:14; 1 Cor. 9:11-23; 2 Cor. 6:3.

Those serving as 'shepherds of the flock' are rightly interested in helping fellow Christians to avoid things that might damage their spirituality. Hence, if a person becomes involved in gambling and genuinely shows himself to be inclined toward greediness or the producing of some of the bad fruits associated with gambling, the elders would want to help. They could give counsel privately or publicly where they see dangerous tendencies toward greed. (1 Pet. 5:2, 3; Gal. 6:1) And if a Christian unrepentantly pursues a course of greediness, it might even be necessary to remove him from the congregation, in harmony with the directions in God's Word, which says, "Remove the wicked man from among yourselves." Paul adds: "Do you not know that unrighteous persons will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God's kingdom."—1 Cor. 5:11-13; 6:9, 10.

However, matters rarely get to that point, for true Christians completely avoid all forms of gambling. They want to produce the fruitage of the spirit, not to share in activities that are known to stimulate greed and to produce the works of the flesh. (Gal. 5:19-23) They appreciate the value of earning their living through honest work. As the apostle Paul admonished: "We exhort you, brothers, . . . to make it your aim to live quietly and to mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we ordered you; so that you may be walking decently as regards people outside and not be needing anything."—1 Thess. 4:10-12.

Christians view what they have—including their life and their money or material resources—as devoted to God. They are responsible to God for the way they use these. So rather than squander their time and money on gambling pursuits that can induce greediness in them and that can harm others, they use their time and funds in ways that will honor Jehovah. (Prov. 3:9) In that way they 'work at good, they are rich in fine works, ready to share.' And, as Paul wrote, they are "safely treasuring up for themselves a fine foundation for the future, in order that they may get a firm hold on the real life."—1 Tim. 6:17-19.

The Roaring Lion

THE roar of a lion is an awe-inspiring sound. It may be heard over a distance of five miles (8 km). The reason for this mighty sound is twofold. It is a means of communicating with distant members of the pride and also serves as a proclamation of territory rights. Contrary to popular belief, the lion does not usually roar when hunting wild animals. However, when trying to prey upon domestic animals in an enclosure often a lion will roar. The terrifying sound is calculated to cause a stampede that breaks down the protective fence and exposes the prey.

This reminds us of the words of the apostle Peter. To fellow Christians he wrote: "Your

adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone." (1 Pet. 5:8) As Christian "sheep," secure in the protection provided by the "fine shepherd," Christ Jesus, we do well to pay attention to Peter's words. (John 10:14, 15) "Keep your senses, be watchful," says the apostle, lest the threatening roars of the Devil cause any to panic and flee into an area of spiritual danger.

ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER 1, 1980

The annual meeting of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania on October 1, 1980, will be held at Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 44-17 Greenpoint Avenue in the Borough of Queens, New York city. The meeting will be at ten o'clock in the forenoon of Wednesday, October 1, 1980.

It will be appreciated if the members of the corporation will now see to it that the Secretary's office has their present mailing addresses so that the regular letters of notice and proxies can reach them shortly after September 1.

The proxies, which will be sent to the members along with the notice of the annual meeting, are to be returned so as to reach the office of the Secretary of the Society not later than September 15. As each member knows, he should complete and return his proxy promptly whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not. The information given on each proxy should be definite on this point as it will be relied upon in determining in advance those who will actually be personally present.

It is expected that the entire session including the formal business meeting and any remarks by members or officers will be concluded at 12 noon or shortly thereafter. There will be no afternoon session. No arrangements will be made for tying in the annual meeting by telephone line to any other locations.

In Coming Issues

- **Single Parents—Coping in Today's World**
- **Should You Believe the Bible?**
- **Are We Nearing Armageddon?**

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

September 28: Showing Concern for the "Flock of God," ¶1-13. Page 14. Songs to Be Used: 118, 106.

October 5: Showing Concern for the "Flock of God," ¶14-23, and Overseers—Be Fine Examples to "the Flock," ¶1-9. Page 18. Songs to Be Used: 5, 99.

October 12: Overseers—Be Fine Examples to "the Flock," ¶10-25. Page 23. Songs to Be Used: 9, 18.



Are You “Aglow With The Spirit”?

“DO NOT loiter at your business. Be aglow with the spirit. Slave for Jehovah.” So wrote the Christian apostle Paul. (Rom. 12:11) It is vital that those dedicated to God serve him with zeal, as in declaring the “good news” of the Kingdom. (Matt. 24:14) Indeed, zealously proclaiming that message may have immediate lifesaving effects. This seems evident from the following incident that occurred in the Philippines:

“The southern parts of the country have been affected by the activity of rebels, and Jehovah’s Witnesses have had some difficult situations to face because of this. One Witness in that area found that his zeal to preach at every opportunity actually saved his life. This Witness was a circuit overseer, and he was traveling from one congregation to serve the next one in his circuit. He had to travel by *lanza* (a small, oceangoing launch), and while waiting for the vessel to leave, he witnessed to the man next to him in the boat. The owner of the *lanza* was furious. He did not want his boat to be turned into a

‘church’ for another religion, and he shouted at the Witness to get out of his boat. . . . the Witness just meekly got out of the boat and waited for the next one.

“Out at sea, they [the circuit overseer and other passengers on the second boat] saw the first vessel. Everyone in it was dead, including the owner who had shouted abuse. Seemingly, a few days earlier the rebel group had asked the owner of the *lanza* to ferry their members, and he had refused. Now they had taken revenge. Hence, the circuit overseer’s informal witnessing actually saved his life.”

Indeed, serving Jehovah with a fiery zeal can be lifesaving in more than one way. It may result in a rather immediate sparing of a person’s life. Especially, however, can it lead to the eventual salvation of the Kingdom proclaimer and of a truly appreciative listener. (1 Tim. 4:13-16) Have you heartily embraced the “good news”? If so, are you “aglow with the spirit” in sharing the Bible’s message with others?