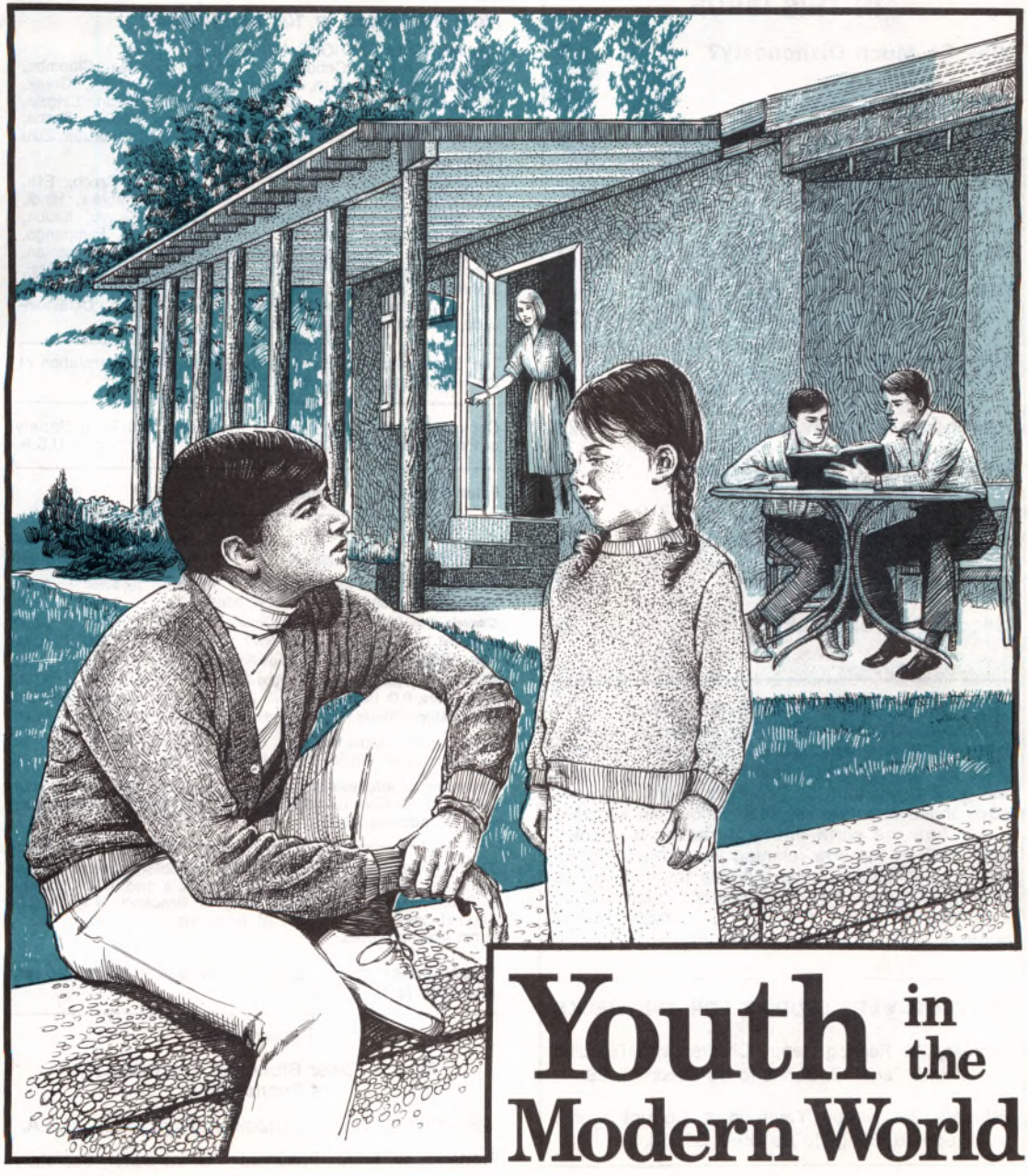
January 15, 1982

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



Youth in the Modern World

January 15, 1982
Vol. 103, No. 2

The Watchtower®

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

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

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February 21: Rearing Happy Children In a Troubled World. Page 12. Songs to Be Used: 75, 39.

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Why So Much Dishonesty?

AN OLD English proverb claims that "opportunity makes the thief." Contrarily, there are some who insist that "the thief makes the opportunity."

Regardless of how it begins, dishonesty in its many forms has reached alarming proportions. Much of it has become so commonplace, however, that many persons no longer view it as dishonest.

Take some typical situations. An employer tells a clerk to reduce the amount shown in the accounts as received for certain sales. The clerk takes the view that it is not objectionable because he is simply doing what the boss directs. A wife cheats on the family budget, assuring herself that she is entitled to a little something of a personal nature. A husband tells his wife that he has to work overtime, but he goes out with his pals or, perhaps, with another woman.

One shopkeeper recently stated that youngsters come into his shop in groups. While one buys, the rest raid the counter. "When I was a lad," he says, "boys were scared when caught. The sad thing is that now, they couldn't care less. In some areas, if you tell them off, they come back and smash your windows."

And it is not the underprivileged classes that do it all. Not long ago, an elderly titled woman in England was convicted of shoplifting. And who has not read of embezzlements, some small but others that run into the millions?

What are the causes of this overwhelming trend toward dishonesty? There are many. From infancy most children are subjected to its insidious influence. Folklore, classical stories such as "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," films, TV programs and many books glorify dishonesty in one way or another.

In an interview a man in São Paulo, Brazil, blamed the influence of such religious practices as easy forgiveness, through confession, for many wrongs done. One woman admitted that her world of honesty collapsed when "Father Christmas" turned out to be a relative. From the stork that is said to bring babies, to politicians with empty promises —in all areas of life we are surrounded by powerful influences that tend to condition the mind to dishonesty.

Some persons cannot see the harm in what they call "little white lies," but the founder of Christianity said: "Whoever is dishonest in small matters will be dishonest in large ones." He also identified the Devil as 'the father of lies' and as the one to whom mankind in general submits as ruler. That is surely food for thought, and it helps us to understand why dishonesty is so widespread.—Luke 16:10, *Today's English Version;* see also John 8:44; 14:30.

Why Be Honest?

THE Bible properly describes Jehovah as "the God of truth," as being one "who cannot lie." (Psalm 31:5; Titus 1:2) Since the time of man's creation, Jehovah has been consistent in his requirement that his true worshipers be honest in all things.—Zechariah 8:16, 17.

If a person is going to be honest, it is important that he be guided not by community attitudes but by the standards of Jehovah God himself. These are recorded in the Bible.

How God Dealt with Israel

In his law given to the nation of Israel, Jehovah commanded: "You people must not steal, and you must not deceive, and you must not deal falsely anyone with his associate. And you must not swear in my name to a lie, so that you do profane the name of your God. I am Jehovah." —Leviticus 19:11, 12.

Thieves did not get off lightly. They had to make compensation to the victim. And if they did not possess the value required by law, they became slaves to pay off the debt by labor.—Exodus 22:1-4.

Jehovah was specific as to details so that there would be no misunderstanding of the fact that he condemned all forms of dishonesty. He strongly warned against 'tricky tongues,' smooth but dishonest words, both violent and secret theft, as well as dishonest scales for business.—Proverbs 1:10-19; Daniel 11:32; Micah 6:11, 12.

A Christian Requirement

Did the divine principle of honesty change with the founding of the Christian congregation? By no means!

As to lying and stealing, the Bible commands Christians: "Do not be lying to one another." "Now that you have put away falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor . . . Let the stealer steal no more, but rather let him do hard work, doing with his hands what is good work, that he may have something to distribute to someone in need." "Let none of you suffer as . . . a thief or an evildoer."—Colossians 3:9; Ephesians 4:25, 28; 1 Peter 4:15.

Honesty builds up trust in the family

The seriousness of the matter is emphasized by this word of warning: "Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, . . . nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God's kingdom. And yet that is what some of you were."—1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

Note that among those early Christians were some who had been thieves and extortioners, but they changed their way of life. Concerning the reputation of the people of Crete, the apostle Paul quoted a Cretan, possibly the poet Epimenides, as saying: "Cretans are always liars, injurious wild beasts, unemployed gluttons." (Titus 1:12) Among the Greeks, the name "Cretan" became synonymous with "liar." But some among the inhabitants of Crete changed their ways and became genuine Christians. In their

midst they had Christian elders who had come to have reputations of being 'free from accusation, not greedy of dishonest gain, lovers of goodness, righteous, loyal, self-controlled.'—Titus 1:7, 8.

What Made Them Change?

Their coming to know Jehovah, "the God of truth," and learning his requirements for his servants produced the change. Their exemplar became Jesus Christ, who 'left a model for them to follow closely.' In studying Jesus' life pattern, they found that there was 'no deception in his mouth.' From his teachings, they learned: "Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them."—1 Peter 2:21, 22; Luke 6:31.

Of course, it is not likely that they changed overnight. That is why, for example, the apostle Paul wrote Titus to "continue reminding" Christians in Crete of certain matters in connection with godly conduct. (Titus 3:1-3) At first they may have felt that the putting on of a new personality was impossible. When they experienced setbacks they may have felt downhearted. But appreciation of the marvelous provision that Jehovah had made for forgiving their past sinful course on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ's sacrifice had an impelling effect. And, as they learned to rely on Jehovah and seek the help of his spirit, they found that changes took place that they had been unable to bring about on their own.—Compare 1 Corinthians 6:11.

An honest person has a clean conscience and can sleep at night

Why Do It?

But why go through that struggle? Why insist on being honest in everything?

Well, let us start at home. What is the result when marriage mates find that they cannot trust each other? It may start with seemingly little things, but soon the entire relationship has eroded. On the other hand, being honest in everything strengthens the marriage bond. And it is a powerful influence for good in the lives of the children too.

Outside the home, your honesty with others shows how you view fellow humans. Here punishment restrains some from wrongdoing. But there are more impelling forces. The apostle Paul wrote: " 'You must not steal, You must not covet,' and whatever other commandment there is, is summed up in this word, namely, 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.' " (Romans 13:9) To receive love we must give it. The person who is honest enjoys good relations with others. He also is at peace with himself. No plagued conscience keeps him awake at night. He is not forever looking over his shoulder, afraid that he might get caught.—Romans 13:3-5

A good relationship with God requires honest conduct

However, most important of all is one's relationship with God. It is earnest love for Jehovah and the desire to have His approval that will move a person to struggle with his own imperfections and to be honest even when others are not. —Psalm 15:1-5.

Are there people who really do this today? Let us see.

They Made It—In Honesty

HOW marvelous it would be to leave your doors open without the fear of being robbed! What a boon to life and pleasure it would be to be able to trust everyone and to be trusted!

But all of this starts with the individual, does it not? Our personal effort comes first.

Consider a few examples of persons who have overcome their bad inclinations and struggled free because they wanted to do so.

Would He Cheat for the Boss?

In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, a man was facing the loss of his job unless he continued to cheat the customers. Why did he find himself in this situation? After having done his employer's bidding without qualms, he began to learn God's standards from the Bible. What would he do next? Promptly do what the Bible said? By no means. He took the easy way out; he stopped studying the Bible. For a little while he kept his job. But this was not the end of the story.

His conscience would not let him rest anymore and he handed in his resignation. (Romans 2:14, 15) His prayers to God for a good conscience must have been heard, for he sought out one of Jehovah's Witnesses who lived near him in order to continue his study of God's Word. Interestingly, it did not take long before his former boss called for him. Why? He wanted him back. The man who was hired in his place was dishonest, not only with the customers but with the boss himself! Meanwhile, strengthened in his resolve to be honest, the Bible student said he would consider going back, but on his own terms—being honest under all circumstances. This stipulation was agreed to. Honesty triumphed, and the man is now a baptized Christian.

Armed Robber Changes

Can an armed robber change his way of life? In southern Brazil a 19-year-old youth belonged to a gang that broke into homes. While in prison he came in contact with Bible literature published by the Watch Tower Society. What he learned shocked him. Jehovah's requirements for a Christian were so different from his own way of life, although nominally he was a Roman Catholic.

Slowly he made progress. His appreciation grew as his doubts were dispelled. Today he studies the Bible himself with other prisoners, and to the prison authorities, lawyers and judges he is known for his amazing transformation. The authorities have been so impressed with

his changed behavior that they allow a group Bible study to be held every week, with 40 present.

A Thief and Liar No More

In London, England, a youngster felt so disgusted with the system around him that he became openly rebellious. Without a regular job and not wanting to work, he found that the inducement to steal was great. As a delivery boy he would take packages for himself and would also steal candy from shops. Soon he got into a burglary gang, but was caught, tried and convicted. Being only 16, he was sent to an English reform establishment called Borstal. After two years he was set free, and for a time stayed out of trouble, fearing further confinement.

Had the establishment reformed him? Not really. After a year he was back on the prowl. As a bus conductor he took advantage of the rush hour to pocket the money instead of ringing up tickets. Once again he lost his job. Meanwhile he got married, but from the start serious problems arose as a result of his heavy drinking and extramarital affairs.

At this point, two months after their wedding, the couple came in touch with the Bible. They agreed to a Bible study. Did it perform a sudden change? Realistically, no. The dishonest streak was too ingrained. He no longer sat in on the study. Nevertheless, a seed had been sown.

In retrospect, he admits that deep down he knew that what he had heard in the few weeks of Bible study was the truth and was the only means of straightening him out. His heart wanted it, but he lacked the strength. One day he became involved in a fight with the police. He was arrested for drunken driving in an uninsured vehicle. When he looked in the mirror the next morning and saw his white shirt covered with blood, he took stock of his position.

"Only two ways were open to me," he says. "Six feet under or clean myself up; make a stand. I prayed to Jehovah to send a certain Witness around. Sure enough, he soon came and I begged him to study the Bible with me. That was in November 1973. In March 1974 I was baptized."

Has it been easy for this former thief and liar? "No," he replies. "There have been ups and downs, slight relapses in attitude. Without Jehovah's help I would never have got out of the mess I was in."

He knows that happiness depends on applying God's law of love. "My family is united at the Kingdom Hall. And I am endeavoring to bring up my children in God's way. I'm sorry my parents didn't know what I know and so couldn't help me."

Life with a Future

In this sophisticated world, some may think that "opportunity makes the thief." But even some former thieves can see that a life of honesty offers much more.

Why? Because it results in uprightness, a good conscience, mutual trust and, above all, God's good pleasure. It is a basic requirement for life in God's new order close at hand, when there will be no more stealing or dishonesty.

Love will be the dominating factor of a most satisfying and full life on a paradise earth under the millennial reign of Christ Jesus. Honesty will reign everywhere. Why not find out more about this worthwhile hope now? Jehovah's Witnesses in your community will be delighted to help you.

A 'Mighty Growth' on Jungle Islands

Though the new branch facilities for Jehovah's Witnesses on the Solomon Islands are impressive, the episodes leading to their construction are even more so.

THIRTY years ago, where the off-white two-story building now stands was dense jungle. In the nearby town jail a young man, imprisoned for illegal activities, was then avidly reading the book *"Let God Be True,"* loaned to him by a fellow prisoner. With the help of this Bible aid published by Jehovah's Witnesses, appreciation of spiritual things began to grow in Clem Fa'abasua's heart. He wanted to know more. But there was not another Witness in all the Solomon Islands.

Clem wrote for more literature and soon began a study of the Bible through the mail with a Witness in Australia. Wherever Clem went he talked about what he was learning. His efforts were the only flicker of spiritual light in these jungle islands in the South Pacific 1,000 miles (1,600 km) northeast of Australia.

In his wildest dreams Clem never imagined that within three decades his lone voice would be joined by over 500 others, and that at the 1981 annual Memorial celebration 2,624 persons would gather in 31 congregations in the Solomons! Nor would Clem have believed that 30 years to the month from his imprisonment he would be sitting in a newly constructed branch office, waiting for the dedication program to start.

The situation in the Solomon Islands has been comparable to that in Asia Minor during the first century when Christianity made rapid progress. The Bible account reads: "Thus in a mighty way the word of Jehovah kept growing and prevail-

ing." (Acts 19:20) The powerful growth of God's Word in the islands was apparent from the events surrounding the dedication program—June 20, 21, 1981.

Who Came to the Dedication?

Many Witnesses had saved their money for some time to make the seven-hour boat trip from the neighboring island of Malaita to this city of Honiara on the island of Guadalcanal. They arrived carrying bags of root vegetables, taro, sweet potatoes, cassava and even some live chickens and pigs. A meal was planned on the Saturday evening of the dedication and each congregation wanted to bring its share.

Clem, though up in years and completely deaf, still devotes many hours each month as a special pioneer to help spread the Word of God. He told the 688 present at the dedication program his story of the problems of the early days. Afterward a taped recording was played of one who also performed a major role in the early 1950's—Les Carnie.

John Cutforth, one of the first traveling overseers to visit the Solomon Islands, teaching Bible truths

Back in 1955, Les Carnie reported, 'On one exhausting nine-mile (14-km) trip I had to contend with swamps, crocodiles and mosquitoes before reaching the territory.' He was the first overseas Witness to come to the Solomon Islands. With his help many of the islanders saw through the false teachings and hypocrisy of traditional religions. They had seen their islands drenched in blood by two "religious" nations during World War II, for Guadalcanal became a focal point in the battle for the South Pacific.

One day, while Carnie was on a riverboat, an unfamiliar native boy sat behind him and spoke up. He said in the native Pidgin English: "Too many religions, they no true. They say 'no kill,' but all'gether fight. Me no like-im them. Me believe all-same you. You savvy gettim small-fella Bible for me?" How had this young boy heard? "Other boys tell me," he said. So God's Word by various means was 'growing and prevailing.'

Teachers of God's Word

A slender man with a deeply tanned face, capped by snow-white hair, John Cutforth, spoke to the dedication crowd. He was the first traveling overseer to serve in the Solomons. He told of his trips during the late 1950's to Malaita island. These involved a full day's journey on the deck of a small boat, followed by up to 10 hours of walking while climbing the mountains on jungle trails. Often he was soaked to the skin from tropical rainstorms. Many areas of the Solomon Islands average 10 to 12 inches* of rain *each month.*

John taught others to spread the Word of God. How delighted he was to see many of those who had gone with him on those epic journeys across the island of Malaita, still faithfully serving Jeho-

* 1 inch equals 2.5 centimeters.

vah after more than 20 years. He spoke of times when the interested people kept them up most of the night asking questions. Finally some of the brothers had to take a short nap while another went on answering the Bible questions. But this perseverance paid off.

'I am conducting Bible discussions with 60 persons! I have over 655 persons now interested in studying the Bible. Please send help!' Thus wrote one of the special pioneers in a letter to the Society back in 1959. Jim Smith, who also sent a taped message to the dedication program, reflected on that period when on North Malaita island over 1,000 people decided at *one time* to leave their old religion and study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses (though not all actually continued and became Witnesses). Many of these were taught by means of picture sermons on blackboards in order to overcome the illiteracy problem.

Whole Villages Want to Learn

God's Word 'grew mightily' with whole villages zealously wishing to be taught by the Witnesses. Among those that came to help teach these eager listeners was a couple from the United States, Charles and Carolyn Isbill, who spent some time in the Solomons. During the dedication program they spoke of how the physical hardships of walking long hours on rough roads and putting up with the monotonous diet were more than compensated for by the keen desire of the new ones to absorb Bible truth, and the love of the brothers who would accompany them.

Not even a 20-year ban on the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines prevented spiritual growth. When the ban was lifted in 1974 and the distribution of the magazines leaped from 3,000 in 1975 to over 12,000 three years later, it became obvious that larger facilities would be needed for storage and shipping space. But who would build the needed structure? Skilled tradesmen are not plentiful in the Solomon Islands and the few brothers with such ability were occupied fully in caring for their families.

The Construction Workers

The decision was made to use 10 young brothers under the supervision of an Australian Witness who was a builder, Rodney Fraser. But many of these young men had never used building tools before! Yet what they accomplished was amazing. They had to dig out of rock-hard coral a 1,500 square-foot (139 m^2) area to the depth of up to twice their height! This they did with pick, shovel and crowbar. The group became a close working team and learned to pour concrete and lay blocks.

Those from the congregations in the islands helped on the weekends. Witnesses in the outer areas contributed food and money. Additional skilled Witnesses from Australia joined the work force and helped to speed up the progress. Finally, after nearly three years of work, all could rejoice to see the completed structure. The building was located on a sloping block at the end of a street, surrounded by fruit trees and flowering shrubs. It presented an appearance fitting its use.

"Branch belong you-me winnim every house long town!" was the delighted claim of the Solomon Island Witnesses who toured the facilities. Or, in other words, "Our branch is the best building in town!"

Truly "in a mighty way the word of Jehovah" has grown in the Solomon Islands. The fine branch facilities will be a constant reminder of the increased influence of the Word of God on the hearts of the people of these jungle islands.

Youth in the Modern World

Adolescence—A Most Hazardous Time!

ADOLESCENCE—the time of life between childhood and maturity—has been described as "the most hazardous developmental human experience" today. The person who said that explained: "The adolescent is endangered because the continuity of the generations has been broken. He stands for the first time utterly alone and unprotected by his elders. He is subjected to the stresses of culture shock, future shock and outright neglect."—Ruth Aikins, in *Quality of Life—The Early Years,* a book sponsored by the American Medical Association.

Change has been so rapid! Moral values have collapsed. Unbelief has grown.

Young people, needing guidance, often do not find in their elders a strength of conviction, firm values or solid ethics. Many young people think the older generation behaved abominably. But youth should remember that while earlier generations may have ignored right principles, *those principles have existed all along in the Bible.* It shows what people should have done, and what God will soon do to solve earth's problems.

The Value of Firm Convictions

Do your children see you as a firm support —someone on whom to pattern their lives?

Joseph and Lois Bird wrote in *Power to the Parents!:* "The child is born into a world he cannot understand, a world in which he cannot survive without a great deal of support and protection. . . . He needs to know that the most significant adults in his life have found answers for their own lives, that they can make sense out of *their* world."

"Our children need to find in us a strength of convictions, a set of firm values and ethics they see us live by. If they find vacillation, compromise, and hypocrisy in our actions, they will have difficulty building the strength necessary to maintain their own convictions as they mature."

How blessed your children are if your family has such convictions, based on the truth of God's Word! That Word can provide your family with firm values, strong spiritual goals, a solid faith in God, and an impelling desire to transmit that marvelous faith to your beloved young ones.

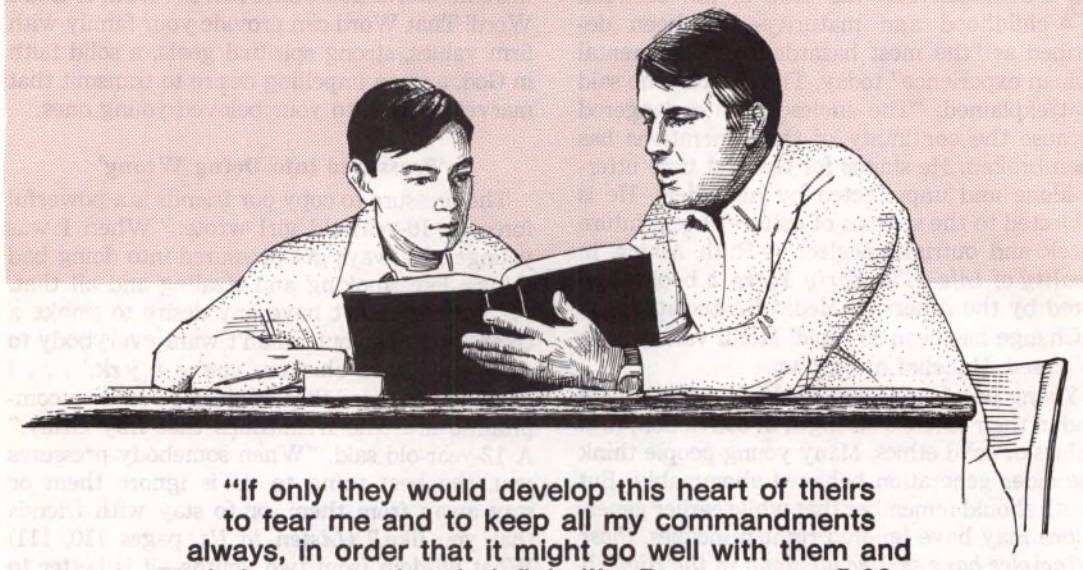
'Pressured into Doing Wrong'

The pressure to copy our friends is a powerful force. A 16-year-old girl wrote: "When I was younger, I always got pressured into doing bad things, like smoking and stealing and all that. . . . I really didn't have any desire to smoke a cigarette either, but I didn't want everybody to say, 'Oh, you're chicken, you're a jerk.' . . . I have now realized that friendships built on compromise are pale friendships that fray easily." A 12-year-old said: "When somebody pressures you, the best thing to do is ignore them or stay away from them, or to stay with friends that you like." (*Listen to Us,* pages 110, 111) What wisdom from two youths—it is better to change friends than to be tempted to violate what you know is right!

Long ago Jehovah warned Israel of this problem. He said that association with unbelievers would cause them to "invite you," and you would eat some of their sacrifices. Then their daughters would marry your sons, and lead them to worship false gods. (Exodus 34:12-16) Young Dinah learned the danger of ungodly association, to her sorrow. When she unwisely visited Canaanite girls, a young man, described as "the most honorable of the whole house of his father," violated her, prompting a great deal of bloodshed. (Genesis 34:1-31) How true the Biblical warning: "Bad company ruins good morals"! (1 Corinthians 15:33, *Revised Standard Version*) Or, as *The Jerusalem Bible* puts it: "Bad friends ruin the noblest people."

The pages that follow provide further details, based on God's Word, showing how families can unite in overcoming the challenges of this modern world.

Rearing Happy Children *in a Troubled World*



"If only they would develop this heart of theirs to fear me and to keep all my commandments always, in order that it might go well with them and their sons to time indefinite!"—Deuteronomy 5:29.

"MY FIRST BABY!" What happy words from the mother who cuddles that small warm bundle to her breast! The Bible speaks of the tenderness of a nursing mother, using it as an example of the affection that should exist in the Christian congregation. Even unrighteous persons love their children and give them good things. How much more should we who love righteousness be concerned with our own young ones, and with training them for life in today's world!—1 Thessalonians 2:7; Psalm 127:3-5; Matthew 7:11.

1. Why is the subject of this lesson of such great importance to us?

2 But the new parent soon realizes that rearing children is a grave responsibility. Where can you find sound advice and guidance? Why not look to the Creator? He arranged for childbirth. (Genesis 1:28) He has seen every child who has ever

2. What is the best source of advice and guidance regarding child rearing? Why?

This is the first of two articles for study. This one is for the parents and the children, while the second one is for the young people themselves.

been born, and the results of what the parents did. His would be the best of instructions. They are recorded in the Bible—along with examples of people who followed his principles, and of others who did not.—Proverbs 3:5, 6.

[3] What does this marvelous book teach us about child rearing? It shows many things that modern specialists think they discovered on their own. Among other things, it shows children's need for love and security. They should be taught about God and his Word. They need good education, wholesome experiences, fine examples and right association. They should learn obedience and respect for authority. They should be taught about morals and marriage, about the kind of husband or wife to want to have and to be, and how to be a good parent. That may sound like a big job for you as a parent. But remember, the Bible can provide wisdom. It can "give to the inexperienced ones shrewdness," and to the young person "knowledge and thinking ability." Let us examine some of the things it tells us about child rearing.—Proverbs 1:4.

Biblical Examples

[4] The Bible shows that the children of God-fearing parents were brought up in security, by families that were concerned about their weaknesses and their need for protection. (Genesis 33:14; 43:8) Children were taught a means of making a living—David was a shepherd boy, and Jesus was a carpenter. (1 Samuel 16:11; Mark 6:3) They also learned something far more important—the wondrous ways of the great God JEHOVAH. This training was not given in catechism classes or in Sunday schools, but by the people who had the greatest interest in the children—by their own parents. Jehovah expected the Israelites to make his ways known to their sons and their grandsons. (Deuteronomy 4:9, 10) Parents were to teach their children at all times —at home or away, when lying down or getting up. They were to teach by *word* and by *example,* passing marvelous truths on to succeeding generations. —Deuteronomy 11:18-21.

[5] The famed French *Dictionnaire de la Bible* says that as soon as the child was able to talk he was taught a few passages from the Biblical law. "His mother would repeat a verse; when he knew it, she would give him another one. Later, the written text of the verses they could already recite from memory would be put into the children's hands. Thus, they were introduced to reading, and, when they had grown, they could continue their religious instruction by reading and meditating on the law of the Lord."* This

3. (a) What are some of the things our children need? (b) Why should this not discourage us?

4. (a) What did children of God-fearing parents learn? (b) By whom and how was this teaching done?

* In Bible times, as today, some people could read and some could not, but the ability to read may have been far more widespread than many persons have imagined. (Compare Isaiah 29:11, 12.) In fact, *The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion* says: "Literacy seems to have been widespread in ancient Israel."

God's commands were to be written upon the doorposts and tied on the hands—acts that would have had little value to people who could not read. (Deuteronomy 6:8, 9; 27:8) The king was to write his own copy of the law and read in it daily. (Deuteronomy 17:15, 18, 19) A young man of Succoth wrote the names of the leading men of his town. —Judges 8:14.

Reading and writing were not limited to the educated class. In his commentary on the book of Judges, James D. Martin wrote that "some of our earliest evidence for alphabetic writing was scratched on cave walls by slaves in the mines of Sinai." Amos was a humble sheep raiser. Micah was a rural prophet from the village of Moresheth. (Amos 1:1; Micah 1:1) Yet both wrote books of the Bible.

The apocryphal book of First Maccabees, likely written about the latter part of the second

[*Continued on page 14*]

5. What does a famed Bible dictionary say about child training?

A youngster asked his mother: "Look how much trouble rearing a child is—do you wish you hadn't had me?" Many years later he still remembers, with deep affection, her answer: "Anything worthwhile takes time and effort."

reference work continues: "It was in the security of the family and on the knees of his father and mother that the child was to receive his first and most profitable moral lessons."—Vol. II, Column 1596.

6 God knew that children respond to new experiences and that these can be a teaching aid. Thus, the "little ones" were taken on exciting trips to Jerusalem to hear God's law read. (Deuteronomy 31:12, 13) Your children can enjoy similar blessings, attending regular circuit and district assemblies of Jehovah's Witnesses where they can benefit from instruction, participate as volunteers, and make fine new friends. You can make such events high points of their lives, as the trips to Jerusalem were special events for the Israelite children.

7 God knew the importance of a good example. Children copy what they see. They can learn a language—as difficult as that is—by imitating what they hear.

[*Continued from page 13*] century B.C.E., indicates that people had copies of the Law in their houses. (1 Maccabees 1:55-57) The Jewish historian Josephus stated his first-century view that the Law orders that children "shall be taught to read, and shall learn both the laws and the deeds of their forefathers."—*Against Apion*, II p. 375 (25).

6. (a) What exciting experiences did Israelite children enjoy? (b) Have your children enjoyed similar experiences, and if so, what were the benefits to them?

7. Why is it so important to set the right example?

God said: "If only [the people] would develop this heart of theirs to fear me and to keep all my commandments always, in order that it might go well with them and their sons to time indefinite!" The Bible says: "*One who is good* will leave an inheritance to sons of sons." (Deuteronomy 5:29; Proverbs 13:22) Thus, much depends on you. As parents, we should do our utmost to set the *right* example, for certainly we would not want our children to be following a wrong one.

Bad Association

8 God also calls our attention to the dangers of bad association. His Word says: "Bad associations spoil useful habits." (1 Corinthians 15:33) Thus, it is important to know with whom your children associate. Do you really know who their friends are? Do you have them bring their friends home, into the house, so that you can get to know them? Or do you simply put the children outside, to get them out of the way? Do you know what kind of language your children hear, and what their associates' attitude is toward lying, stealing and drugs?

9 If that association leaves something to be desired, where can your children

8. What questions should we ask ourselves about our children's associations?

9. What positive steps could you take to help your children to find better friends?

find better friends? Within the congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses—where filthy language, lying, stealing and drug abuse are not tolerated. Have you wished that others in the congregation would associate more with your children? Then why not reach out to them? Have *you* taken the initiative? Why not invite other young people over to your house, or ask them to join you in Christian witnessing or to enjoy other wholesome activities?

[10] If you have tried this, and the problem of associations persists, it might be well to ask yourself, Why? Have you only recently started applying Bible principles? Sometimes young people who are brought to the Kingdom Hall have not yet corrected certain problems, to become good associates themselves. One young person said concerning another: "At the Kingdom Hall she is fine, but you wouldn't believe what she does at school!" This girl's loose sexual attitude on the school grounds made others not want to be identified with her. How can you help your children to make over their own mind in such matters? Your instruction, your family Bible study, your family participation in Christian witnessing, your own example in speech, behavior and honesty, and your efforts to reach the child's heart with right principles can go a long way. When needed, the congregation's elders may also be called upon to give loving help.—James 5:13-15.

Family Problems

[11] But what if there are serious problems right within your own family? What if an unbelieving mate lives exactly contrary to wholesome Bible principles? Do not despair. Your right influence and the help of God's spirit can work wonders. There are children who have soared above apparently insurmountable problems, becoming fine young people. Humans were made by God, and even little children can demonstrate amazing strength when directed in the right way by a friend, by a thoughtful older person, or by a sole believing parent in a largely unbelieving family.

[12] Consider the example of Lot. His family lived in wicked Sodom, and his wife apparently wanted to stay there. But Lot and his daughters fled and survived the city's destruction. (Genesis 19:15-17, 23-26) Young Timothy had an

10. How can you help your children to become better associates for others?
11. Why should you not despair if there are bad examples within your own family?
12. How do the examples of Lot and Timothy provide encouragement in this matter?

How often do you, as parents, set the example not only in attending but in participating at meetings where God's Word is discussed?

PARENTS AND CHILDREN, HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?

- ☐ Where should parents seek advice on child rearing, and why?
- ☐ What are some Bible examples of proper child training?
- ☐ In what practical ways can parents guard their children's associations?
- ☐ How can application of Bible principles overcome problems in divided households?
- ☐ What steps should parents take, looking to the proper education of their children?
- ☐ Can parents and children expect to do everything perfectly? Yet how may they succeed?

unbelieving father, but his mother and grandmother taught him the Scriptures and saw him become a faithful follower of Jesus Christ and a loyal companion of the apostle Paul. (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14, 15) So, even if you do not have a believing mate, God can help you to instill a deep love for truth and righteousness in the hearts of your children.

Knowledge and Education

[13] Do you encourage your children to learn, both in school and in the congregation? Is *learning* important to your family? It was to the Israelites. Theirs was a literate society. Their children could read the Scriptures. In addition to reading, your children will *speak* to others about God's Word. Do they use correct grammar? Have you corrected errors you may have made for years, so that your children will hear you speak correctly? Solomon carefully chose words with which to praise God. Accordingly, we read: "The congregator sought to find the delightful words and the writing of correct words of truth."—Ecclesiastes 12:10.

[14] Obviously we want our children to become mature adults and to make right decisions in harmony with God's Word. Thus, it would be good to start early in teaching them right principles—not just commands to be obeyed but also the reasons for them. Then the children will learn how to make right decisions on their own.

[15] Our children face a corrupt world. It is important for them to see in us a sense of strength and conviction, and they should know that *if they are right,* we will back them up, as Sarah defended Isaac from Ishmael. (Genesis 21:9, 10) We also should remember that by expecting right things, we are more apt to get them. "Do you know why you don't have any trouble with us?" a young Witness asked her father. "Because you don't try to trap us doing wrong—you *expect* us to do right, and we wouldn't do anything else." How often parents accuse their children of something, then find out that they did not do it at all! If you accuse children of lying and the accusation is not true, they may think you expect them to lie, and the next time they may do so.

[16] Many persons have found it wise to take their children, from their earliest age, to meetings where God's Word is

13. (a) Why should young Christians take education seriously? (b) How does Solomon's example show the importance of correct speech?

14. How can we help our children to learn to make right decisions?

15. (a) What important support do our children need from us? (b) About what do we need to be very careful?

16. (a) What suggestions are made regarding Christian meetings? (b) What shows that these meetings are of great value to children? (c) Do you know of examples that illustrate their value to young ones?

discussed—not sitting in a separate room with them, or walking them out to the back (except for brief moments, for good reason) but teaching them to sit calmly, to show respect for the meetings and to benefit from the good things discussed. Today, older persons, solid in the faith, remember the zeal of their parents who regularly took them great distances, perhaps in a rickety old car, to attend such meetings. A congregation elder remembers complicated prophecies he heard his parents discuss as they prepared the *Watchtower* study long ago, when he was a little child playing on the floor. Little did they imagine he was listening—let alone that he would remember the explanation more than half a century later!

[17] In Ezra's day all those intelligent enough to listen stood from daybreak till noon to hear the Scriptures read. (Nehemiah 8:2, 3) If you had been alive then, would your children have been there, or would you have considered the material too deep and the reading too long and have sent them off to play? Joseph and Mary "were accustomed to go from year to year to Jerusalem for the festival of the passover." That is why they were there when Jesus was 12 years old. (Luke 2:41-49) Would you have gone that distance, on foot or on the back of an ass, to attend that assembly? When multitudes, including "young children," came to hear Jesus, and there was nothing for them to eat, Jesus miraculously fed them. (Matthew 14:21; 15:38) Would your children have been there, or would you have stayed home to feed them an apparently necessary meal?

17. What Biblical examples can you cite of children being present at meetings, and what questions might we ask ourselves about these?

[18] Do your children know that you take Bible study meetings seriously? Do they see that you consider these meetings important enough not just for you to attend but for you to *participate in,* offering comments when these are requested? For example, will you have prepared this lesson with your children, and will both you and they offer at least one comment at the meeting in which it is discussed?

A High Goal

[19] Does anyone do all these things perfectly? Of course not! The things discussed here are *things toward which to work,* not goals already achieved. In this world there will always be problems, but the Bible gives us ways of dealing with them, and if we try to do things God's way, he will help. When asked why his children seem strong in the faith, one Christian father said: "I really don't know. We didn't do anything exceptional. We just tried to apply the counsel we got from the Bible and from the organization."

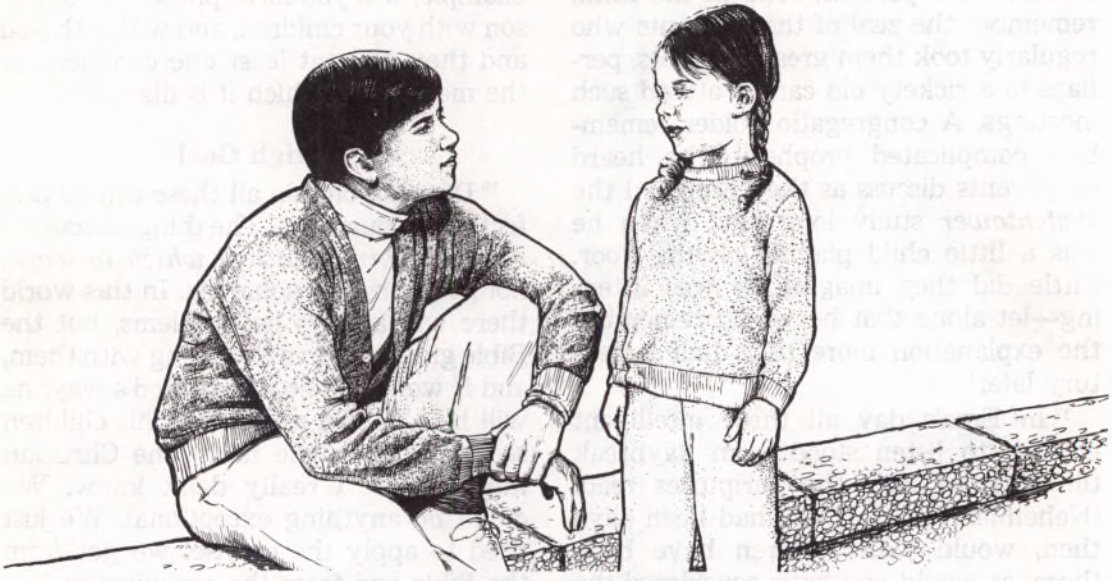
[20] When you come right down to it, that is what it takes to rear happy children today. Set the right example. Teach it to your young ones. Rejoice in the good things they do, and try to help them to correct the others. Share their joys and their life. Demonstrate love. Do things God's way, and he will bless your efforts. Remember Solomon's uplifting inspired words: *"The righteous is walking in his integrity. Happy are his sons after him."*—Proverbs 20:7.

18. In what further way can we show appreciation for Christian meetings?

19. What positive attitude should we have about rearing our beloved children?

20. (a) What are some of the things you can do to rear happy children today? (b) How do both the theme text at the beginning of this lesson and Proverbs 20:7 encourage us in this matter?

Happy Youth *in a Corrupt World*



"Remember your Creator in the days of your youth."—Ecclesiastes 12:1, *The New English Bible.*

WHAT a fine time to be young! Does that sound strange to you? Many young people would point to the bad conditions they see—to crime in the streets, immorality, drug abuse, teenage pregnancies, abortion and venereal diseases. They could point to the danger of atomic war or to the pollution that is ruining the earth. They might ask how this could possibly be a good time to be young, facing the future.

1. Why do many people think this is not a good time to be young?

2 Other young people know that Bible prophecies say that God will not let men destroy the earth. The Bible prom-

2. (a) Why is this really a fine time to be alive? (b) What effect should that fact have on you?

This article was written particularly for youths. So we invite young people to take a lead in commenting when it is discussed at the Kingdom Hall.

ises that God will change things—that he will step in and bring about conditions of righteousness and peace. (Psalm 37:10, 11; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-4; 11:18) Do you believe those promises? If you do, they should have a great effect on your life, for they mean that you can have a bright future.

[3] You may be thinking: *'Oh, I'm too young for all of that!'* But are you? The Bible urges young people—boys and girls—to serve God. (Psalm 148:12, 13) It tells about a little Hebrew girl who led a Syrian army officer, Naaman, to become one of Jehovah's servants. (2 Kings 5:2, 3, 15-17) It says children hailed Jesus, and that when religious leaders did not like that, Jesus asked them: "Didn't you ever read the Scriptures? For they say, 'Even little babies shall praise him!' " (Matthew 21:15, 16, *The Living Bible*) Jesus showed personal interest in young people. He said to let them come to him. And congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses all over the earth are especially interested in young people today—and in the fine things they do to serve God.—Matthew 19:14.

Principles for a Happy Life

[4] You know that your parents want you to be happy. So does your heavenly Father, Jehovah God. His Word, the Bible, gives advice that can keep you out of a lot of trouble. It does not tell you every little thing that you should do, but, in many instances, it merely states *principles*. These are truths that give you the basis on which to decide things, so your own good judgment will tell you what is right. For example, here is a principle that was mentioned in the previous article and that you probably have heard discussed many times: "Bad associations spoil useful habits."—1 Corinthians 15:33.

[5] What does that mean? It means we are influenced by the people around us. If you spend a lot of time with people who use filthy language or who tell dirty stories, you probably will follow their example. If you associate with people whose ideas about sex and marriage are different from what you know God requires, you will get to the point of not being shocked by those things. You can have such association without realizing it. When you read books or watch films or television, you are taking the author's ideas into your own mind. If these ideas are bad, they can dirty up your mind. The Bible does not say to enjoy such things, but to avoid them. (Ephesians 5:3, 4; compare 1 Corinthians 6:18.) It also says: "What! 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 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

[6] We *are* influenced by the people around us. As *The Living Bible* puts 1 Corinthians 15:33: "If you listen to them you will start acting like them." Young people have been tempted into smoking, drug abuse, stealing and all sorts of immoral things because people they associated with did these things or made fun of them for not doing them. Do you think people who make fun of you for doing right are worthwhile friends?

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3. Why is no one too young to be concerned about serving God?

4. How can the Bible help you to lead a happier life?

5. (a) What are some ways that "bad associations" can spoil "useful habits"? (b) What do the scriptures cited in this paragraph show about (1) bad language, (2) dirty stories, (3) sexual immorality?

6. (a) What problems have people had because they ignored the Bible's counsel about bad association? (b) What should we remember about our minds, and where can we find good association?

It is important to remember that your mind is much like a computer. If you put wrong information into it, you will get wrong decisions out of it. So it would be wise to associate with godly persons —with those who come to the Kingdom Hall and who apply what they learn there.—Proverbs 18:24.

[7] But what should you do if someone who should set a good example does not do so? This happened more than once in Bible times. Young Samuel had the outstanding privilege of serving at Jehovah's place of worship, but the sons of the high priest Eli set a very bad example. They were scoundrels who violated Jehovah's law and even had immoral relations with the women who served where Jehovah was worshiped. But young Samuel knew what was right. He did not follow their bad example. The Bible says: "All the while the boy Samuel was growing bigger and more likable both from Jehovah's standpoint and from that of men." (1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-26) Samuel was greatly blessed by God. He grew up to be a prophet, and he was used to write the Bible books of Judges and Ruth and part of the first book of Samuel, which bears his name. He is an example of the statement made in Proverbs 20:11: "Even by his practices a boy makes himself recognized as to whether his activity is pure and upright." Obviously, when you see someone doing wrong, you want to be like young Samuel and not like Eli's sons, who knew Jehovah's way but did not follow it.

Your Christian Conscience

[8] As a faithful young Christian, you know that there are things your Bible-trained conscience will not let you do. For example, you know that many holidays have a pagan origin. They have come from false religious customs. So your conscience will not let you celebrate them. You also know that schools often have nationalistic programs or ceremonies that exalt their nation over others, and thus they are not in keeping with your Bible-based view that "[God] made out of one man every nation of men." (Acts 17:26) Also, you know that schools often push competitive sports to an excess, urging students to spend a great deal of time in such activities—not just for recreation but with such a drive to win that violence may sometimes be the outcome.*

[9] Does following higher standards present problems for you? One young Witness commented: "We have few problems about our Christian consciences as long as the teacher knows our position in advance—before the problem comes up." Young people who calmly and respectfully explain the reason for a certain viewpoint based on their Christian conscience—and do this *before* the teacher has taken a position in front of the class and the matter has become an emotional one—find they have fewer problems in this regard.

[10] A youngster who liked music and wanted to play in the school orchestra said: "I explained to the teacher at the beginning of school that I would like to be in the orchestra, but that there was some music I could not play, and I told her why." When such music comes up, the teacher knows in advance that this student will sit quietly without playing. In fact, teachers have been known to

7. (a) Does everyone who comes to Christian meetings necessarily apply godly principles? (b) What example in Samuel's day shows that this is nothing new? (c) What did Samuel do, and with what results?

8. What might a young Christian's Bible-trained conscience keep him from doing?

* For fine discussions of these matters, see *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, pages 145-149; *Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It*, chapter 16.

9, 10. How have some young Christians handled such problems?

rearrange an entire program to fit such a Christian conscience. Of course, as young people point out, it helps if you have a good reputation in all other school matters—if the teachers know that you really live your religion and that you try hard in their classes.

Worthwhile Goals

[11] What are your plans for the future? Do you realize that many people do not have any? They have no goals, so they have few successes. They take what comes but accomplish little. One goal might be to bring your grades up to a certain level. Another might be to *learn* a particular trade so as to be able to support yourself.

[12] But the Bible shows we also need spiritual goals—things for which to reach out in God's service. It says the person "pursuing righteousness" will be loved by Jehovah and that he will "find life, righteousness and glory." (Proverbs 15:9; 21:21) Jesus said: "From the days of John the Baptist . . . the kingdom of the heavens is the goal toward which men press." Paul said: "I am pursuing to see if I may also lay hold on that for which I have also been laid hold on by Christ Jesus. . . . I am pursuing down toward the goal." (Matthew 11:12; Philippians 3:12-14) Thus, it is fine to have worthwhile goals.

[13] As a young person today, *do you pursue knowledge?* Many young persons do not. Yet knowing about Jehovah is very important. In prayer to his Father, Jesus said: "This means *everlasting life,* their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) What reason could be more important than that?

[14] Do you find God's Word and the Watch Tower publications that explain it interesting, or do you think they are hard to understand? If you find them hard to understand, *My Book of Bible Stories* will help you to get the whole history of the Bible in the right order. It will help you to fit things together and grasp them more easily. Then, the book *Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It* will help you to understand Bible principles that will add joy to your life. The more you learn, the easier learning will become, and you will want to prepare deeper material, including the *Watchtower* lesson, the material for the Theocratic Ministry School and the weekly Bible reading. You cannot do this all in one day, but you can develop spiritual maturity if you set individual goals and progress step by step toward knowledge and ability.—Proverbs 1:5; 2:10-12.

[15] *Do you pursue privileges of Christian service?* Do you have a personal goal of putting a certain amount of time in the house-to-house teaching work each week or month? Do you encourage other young people to come with you? Do you have a goal of becoming more capable of teaching during return visits and home Bible studies? Some young people have a yearly goal of being a pioneer (full-time volunteer preacher) during school vacation.

[16] What about long-range goals? What do you want to accomplish by this time next year? Or in five years, if the end of this old system has not come by then? Do you have a long-range goal of becoming a regular pioneer minister or enjoying other privileges, such as being a member of the Bethel family that provides Bible literature for your part of the world? Setting goals, and working

11. (a) How can goals be of value to young people? (b) What are some worthwhile goals?
12. What are other, more important, goals?
13. How important is accurate knowledge?
14. What step-by-step progress can help you to know Jehovah and to understand his Word?
15. What other goals might you set for yourself?
16. What long-range goals should be considered?

YOUTHS, WHAT POINTS DO YOU REMEMBER ON SEEKING TRUE HAPPINESS?

- ☐ Why is it now a fine time to be young?
- ☐ Who were some children who served God in Bible times?
- ☐ Why should we avoid bad associations?
- ☐ How may you avoid problems at school?
- ☐ Why should goals be important to you?
- ☐ What worthwhile goals may you have now?
- ☐ What long-range goals may you pursue?
- ☐ What major goal may you strive for, and how?

toward them, is a way of directing your life in a more useful way.

17 Think about the loving elders in your congregation and about your circuit and district overseers. At one time they were young people like you. But they reached out, years ago, developing knowledge and ability and serving God and their brothers. Does their example encourage you to make good use of the time you have in your youth? If so, you could become like the psalmist who wrote: "O God, you have taught me from my youth on, and until now I keep telling about your wonderful works."—Psalm 71:17.

Consider Timothy

18 Timothy was an outstanding example of this. Paul told him: "From infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through the faith in connection with Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 3:15) Timothy had learned the truth as a child, and he knew it was of great value. He grew in faith and knowledge. That fact did not go unnoticed, for the Scriptures say "he was well reported on" by the brothers. He was given the outstanding privilege of becoming the faithful coworker and traveling companion of the apostle Paul as that apostle established congregations in the non-Jewish world.—Acts 16:2-5.

19 You can be like Timothy. Take a firm hold on the truth. Use the added time you have now, while you are free from the time-consuming responsibilities of a family and major assignments in the congregation. Study, develop knowledge and ability. Most young people remember that Paul told Timothy: "Let no man ever look down on your youth." But it is important to remember *how* Timothy was to do that. Paul said: "Become an example to the faithful ones in speaking, in conduct, in love, in faith, in chasteness." (1 Timothy 4:12) Also, he told Timothy: "Flee from the desires incidental to youth, but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, along with those who call upon the Lord out of a clean heart." (2 Timothy 2:22) If you really *pursue* these things, you will find that this is indeed a wonderful time to be alive!

20 The old world is facing a catastrophic end, but by following the examples of Samuel, Timothy and other faithful servants of God, you can look to better things. Seek God's favor. Strive to survive the end of this old system and to live through into the righteous conditions near at hand. Yes, heed Paul's counsel to "ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, that your advancement may be manifest to all persons."—1 Timothy 4:15.

17. (a) Where can you find examples of people who developed such knowledge and ability during youth? (b) Do you know of examples that fit this description?
18. How was Timothy an outstanding example of what we have been talking about?
19. How was Timothy to keep people from looking down on his youth?
20. What is your own attitude, as you see this old world facing its end?

Insight on the News

Sinking Morality

Sexual immorality and depravity continue to reach new lows. Now, some "sexologists" are saying that very young children should be allowed to have sexual relations, including relations with adults. One who promotes such views states: "They should have the right to express themselves sexually, which means that they may or may not have contact with people older than themselves." Another says: "We believe children should begin sex at birth. It causes a lot of problems not to practice incest."

In reply to this, columnist Nancy Walker states that these "sexologists" should "at least say what the real issue is: that they want to [have sex] with children." "Time" magazine said: "Such views fall just short of a manifesto for child molesters' lib."

One reason why practically every civilized society has had laws against sexual contact with children is the physical and psychological damage that can be done to them. Child psychiatrist Leon Eisenberg says: "Premature sexual behavior among children in this society almost always leads to psychological difficulties because you have a child acting out behavior for which he is not cognitively or emotionally ready." Psychotherapist Sam Janus states that people who were seduced early in life "go through the motions of living and may seem all right, but they are damaged. I see these people year after year in therapy." And psychiatrist Edward Ritvo concludes: "Childhood sexuality is like playing with a loaded gun."

Mankind's Creator considers all sexual relationships outside of marriage violations of his laws. His Word clearly says: "Do not be misled. Neither fornicators . . . nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men . . . will inherit God's kingdom." (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) Of morally depraved persons, the Bible states: "Those practicing such things are deserving of death."—Romans 1:32.

Compensation for Victim

In several countries, the concept of having persons who commit crimes compensate their victims instead of going to jail is gaining support. For example, in Ontario, Canada, the Victim Offender Reconciliation Project operated at various centers, combined with other court-ordered restitution, resulted in 5,000 offenders paying a total of $4 million to their victims. In some cases, the compensation agreed to between victim and offender was made up of work that helped to restore the damage done.

Several thousand years ago, in the nation of ancient Israel, God's law did not provide for jails. Offenders were required to compensate their victims, at times fourfold or fivefold depending upon the kind of property loss involved. (Exodus 22:1-15) Capital crimes, such as murder, were punishable by death. (Exodus 21:12-17) As long as the nation abided by these God-given laws, they prospered. But when they cast them aside, the entire nation suffered as crime and violence surged.

Active Despite Bans

Though there are bans on witch doctors in some African lands, a great number of people take their illnesses to them for treatment rather than to practitioners of modern medicine. In one African land where there is a ban on witch doctors, these are so busy, it is reported, that even soccer players refuse to play until their witch doctor has laid a curse on the opposing team. Two German medical doctors recently visited this country and filmed a brain operation performed without anaesthesia by a witch doctor.

A young boy was in severe pain after receiving a blow on the head, causing pressure on the brain. He was held down by five men while a witch doctor spent five hours drilling a hole in his head with a sharp instrument. Afterward, oil was poured over the wound and his head bandaged. Astonishingly the boy got up and walked home.

But from what source do witch doctors and spirit mediums get their power? The Bible clearly shows it is from the demons, wicked spirits, and, hence, "anyone who consults" such persons is viewed by God as "detestable."—Deuteronomy 18:9-12.

Determined to Serve Jehovah with All My Vital Force

As told by Henry E. Atiemoh

MY STORY starts in my homeland, Ghana. It was a Wednesday afternoon in March 1951. Two young Christians—Daniel S. Acquah and James K. Ameyaw—knocked on my door during siesta time. Earlier that day, Dan, my fellow employee in the Cocoa Rehabilitation division of the Department of Agriculture, had been having a rather heated discussion with some young men during 'break time' in our office. On our way home by bus, he briefly told me that he had talked to them about a harlot described in the Bible book of Revelation, chapter 17.

We parted, and no sooner had I eaten and lain down to take a nap than Dan arrived with his friend James. But before telling you the result of our discussion, permit me to tell you about my background.

Religious Background

My father had the habit of taking the whole family into the woods where he prayed to certain gods in our behalf. Since I was the eldest boy in our family of four girls and six boys, my father always kept me very close to him at these times.

At the age of seven, I was baptized in the Presbyterian Church without having any accurate knowledge of the Bible. However, in school we memorized and recited certain Scriptural passages and also learned some Bible stories. In 1946, at the age of 15, came my confirmation in the church, as well as my first and only Communion. All this time my father occasionally took us into the woods to pour libations and sacrifice chickens in our behalf. My conscience did not bother me in the least, since many other baptized nominal Christians also continued to participate in such ceremonies.

After finishing my middle-school education in 1947, I attended a commercial school for a time and then started working secularly at Koforidua, Ghana. In 1950 I moved to Accra to work in the Department of Agriculture. While in that city,

I did not attend church services but did read the Bible occasionally, without any real comprehension until those two Christians—Dan and James—visited me that memorable Wednesday afternoon.

Result of the Rapid Doctrinal "Battle"

First of all, I was "knocked out" easily and rapidly on the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. For instance, it was revealing to learn that man's transgression, or sin, resulted in death and that the soul dies. (Ezekiel 18:4, 20) At death, animals and humans alike return to the dust.—Ecclesiastes 3:18-20.

Secondly, I was convincingly "defeated" on the doctrine of infant baptism. From the Bible it was pointed out that before being baptized a person must choose to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:19, 20) And, of course, because of their immature powers of perception, infants are not capable of distinguishing between right and wrong or of becoming disciples.—Hebrews 5:13, 14.

Our discussion that afternoon played a significant part in eventually moving me to demonstrate love for Jehovah God by serving him with all my vital force. (Deuteronomy 6:5) Of course, at that time I wanted to know where Dan and James had learned the things they had told me. 'At the Kingdom Hall,' they said. Could someone other than a member of the congregation go there and listen? The answer was Yes. So that Friday I decided to go to the Kingdom Hall in order to become well versed in the Bible. Dan and James greeted me with broad smiles, and I was impressed with the question-and-answer Bible discussion. I made a comment that was not correct, but I was congratulated by the conductor anyway, and that made me feel very good.

Having decided to continue with Jehovah's Witnesses, I asked if there would be a meeting on Sunday. My friends said Yes, but explained that they would go from house to house in the morning to invite people to the public meeting that evening. When I asked if I could accompany them in that activity, Dan said Yes. So I was his partner in field service that day and distributed quite a few handbills. From then on I could not stop sharing Bible truth with others at home and at work.

Opposition Endured

An aunt of mine was bitterly opposed to my firm decision to associate with Jehovah's Witnesses. She said that even if I had found the truth, I should remain a Protestant and preach to our church members. My reply was that I would have to direct my listeners to the group of Jesus' faithful disciples and should surely be present myself in order to welcome these newcomers. She did not like my decision, but I did not like even the thought of changing it.

The following month, on April 29, 1951, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah by undergoing water immersion during a circuit assembly at Suhum, where my aunt lived. This step was taken without 'consulting flesh and blood.' (Galatians 1:16) At a service meeting three months later, pioneering was discussed in a talk, and within a week I had decided to become a pioneer (or, full-time Kingdom proclaimer). My pioneer service began on November 1, 1951. Then being 20 years old, I planned to serve full time for at least 20 years, to catch up on time lost since infancy without praising Jehovah. —Ecclesiastes 12:1.

My intensified preaching activities sparked more ardent opposition, as messages were sent to my father reporting that I had become insane, had abandoned my secular work and was roaming about unceasingly in the city of Accra

with books and papers in my hands all the time. He, therefore, sent my elder sister to find out whether the reports were true. She received a convincing Biblical testimony and sent a favorable report back to my father, even though she was not happy to see me leave the Presbyterian Church.

'My sister sent a favorable report to my father, even though she was not happy to see me leave the church'

After some months of regular pioneering, my friend Dan S. Acquah and I submitted applications for special pioneer service. While awaiting a reply, I sent a message to my parents, telling them that I might travel to northern Ghana to preach the "good news" there. My father himself came down to persuade me with his very good intention of helping me to construct a house. He wanted me to preach in Accra and not in the north. In his turn, he also received testimony and was told that I had already said to Jehovah: "Here I am! Send me." (Isaiah 6:8) Also, I indicated to him that by remaining faithful to God, I would someday build my house and live forever. (Compare Isaiah 65:21, 22.) Noting my determination, my father no longer insisted, and it was a joy to hear him say: "No one can prevent someone from doing the will of God."

Resigning from Secular Work

Our applications for special pioneer service were approved. So a letter of resignation was submitted to my employers. Surprisingly, the deputy commissioner of Cocoa Rehabilitation and the chief accountant requested an interview. I was asked if an increase in wages was desired for having faithfully kept the government stationery stores at headquarters without any losses or deficits. I responded No. Then the deputy commissioner had me read a letter in which he had recommended my being sent for training in order to become a second division officer instead of continuing as a clerical assistant. I thanked him sincerely for his kindness but said that my firm decision had already been made. I was then permitted to go, receiving my wages, part of which were used to buy a bicycle for my pioneer work. Dan also resigned, and many of the workers thought that a knowledge of the Bible had rendered us insane. But this did not bother us.

Cherishing the New Assignment

As of August 1, 1952, we began serving as special pioneers at Navrongo in northern Ghana. There we found animists, some Catholics and a few Muslims, and out of love we witnessed to all.

First, we preached to the English-speaking inhabitants. However, they did not especially appreciate the Kingdom message. We therefore had to learn Kasem (Grunshi) in order to let the truth ring clearly in the ears of the kindhearted natives who practiced animism. Our efforts were blessed by Jehovah and we succeeded in learning that language.

In 1954, after a small congregation with about 30 zealous native publishers had been built up at Navrongo, Dan S. Acquah was assigned to circuit work. My new pioneer partner was Brother Opare Adu, for whom I became the principal interpreter in the Kasem language. By the end of 1956, when I also entered circuit work, the congregation had reached a peak of 105 Kingdom publishers.

Other Privileges of Service

Early in 1958, the Society invited Dan and me to go together to the Watchtow-

er Bible School of Gilead in the United States. However, this was impossible because I became ill a few weeks before our planned departure and had to undergo an appendectomy. The operation was performed successfully without blood transfusion, and I was discharged in two weeks.—Acts 15:28, 29.

Having regained my strength rapidly, I attended the Divine Will International Assembly in New York city in 1958, when Dan graduated from the 31st class of Gilead School. Soon he was sent to serve in Sierra Leone. After my graduation as a student of the 32nd class, in February 1959, I was sent back to Ghana to continue in the circuit work.

In 1960 I was given a temporary Bethel assignment in the Watch Tower Society's Ghana branch office, where I served for 10 years, spending seven of them on the Twi translation desk. My joy was increased when my younger brothers Nicholas and Edward accepted the truth. Nicholas has died, but this occurred when he was serving faithfully as the presiding overseer in one of the Accra congregations. Edward still serves as an appointed Christian elder. He shoulders well his responsibility as a father of three children while remaining in the special pioneer work.

Nearby Foreign Assignment

Having returned to the circuit work in 1970, the need became greater for special pioneers in the Ivory Coast. Without wasting time, I applied. So, on December 2, 1972, Brother Daniel Anim and I arrived at the Abidjan airport. Two days later, we started our French language course and successfully "graduated" by the end of the month.

Early in January 1973, Brother Anim and I received our assignment to Agboville, about 90 kilometers (56 miles) from Abidjan. We prayed constantly to Jehovah to bless our efforts to speak French better in order to present the "good news" effectively to the hospitable people of the Ivory Coast. Yes, our prayers have been answered and we are enjoying the preaching activities in this country.

It seems appropriate to express my appreciation for the brotherly love and material support provided in my behalf by certain beloved fellow believers both in Ghana and the Ivory Coast. Thus I have been helped to remain in full-time service. Primarily, of course, my gratitude goes to Jehovah for all these benevolent acts, since he is the source of 'every good gift and perfect present.'—James 1:17.

Since January 1977, I have been doing circuit work in this country. Another privilege extended to me is that of serving as a member of the Ivory Coast Branch Committee. With all my heart I thank and praise Jehovah God who has imparted to me the strength to serve him full time for some 30 years. At 50 I feel as energetic as an eagle and it is my hope to continue in full-time service. (Isaiah 40:31) But whatever the future holds in store, it is my determination to serve with all my vital force to Jehovah's praise and honor.

In Coming Issues

- **Expansion at the "House of God"**
- **Dedication and Its Symbol**
- **Jehovah's Valiant Army of Full-Time Fighters**

Mark, *the Action Gospel Writer*

ARE you always in a hurry? With little time for reading? And yet, would you like to grasp the essentials of Christ's life and teaching quickly, without being bogged down in theology or philosophy? In other words, would you like the Christian message in a nutshell? Then take a Bible and read the book of Mark. We say "book" though it occupies only about 25 pages of a standard Bible. And why do we say Mark, rather than the other Gospel writers Matthew, Luke and John? Because Mark's is the most concise and action-packed of the four Gospels or "good news" biographies of Jesus Christ.

The spirit of Mark's Gospel is evident in the very first chapter where he uses the Greek word *euthús*, "at once" or "immediately," 11 times. He constantly transmits a sense of immediacy and urgency to Christ's activity by using that word 42 times throughout his written record.

Early in the first chapter Mark's account has Jesus baptized by his cousin John in the river Jordan. By verses 16 to 21, Christ is choosing the four disciples who accompany him in his first preaching tour of Galilee. Of the first two, Simon and Andrew, who were fishermen, we read: "And at once [*euthús*] they abandoned their nets and followed him." Then Jesus picked out James and John, who were mending their nets with their father, "and without delay [*euthús*] he called them."—Mark 1:10-43.

Mark's distinctive action-style is further illustrated by the account in chapters nine and ten where he describes the crowd as "running up" to Jesus and, later, "running together upon them." The inquiring rich young ruler "ran up and fell upon his knees" before Christ. Only Mark, of the synoptic Gospel writers (Matthew, Mark and Luke), mentions the running in these cases.*—Mark 9:15, 25; 10:17; compare Matthew 19:16 and Luke 18:18.

Who Was Mark?

Now you might be asking: Who was Mark? Was he an eyewitness to the events he describes? Or did he have some other sources of information?

Evidently Mark's mother, Mary, was a believer and allowed her home to be used for Christian gatherings. We also know from the book of Acts of Apostles that he went out into the missionary field as a companion of his cousin Barnabas and the apostle Paul. He was not an apostle or an eyewitness to many of the events he relates. Possibly, he was a disciple at the time Jesus was arrested, some scholars identifying him as the "certain young man" who "got away naked" on that occasion.—Acts 12:6-17, 25; 15:36-41; Mark 14:51, 52.

"John who was surnamed Mark" is named for the first time in the Bible record in connection with the apostle Peter's miraculous release from prison in the year 44 C.E. Peter presented himself by night at Mark's home to inform the Christians meeting there of his release. (Acts 12:12, 18) Little did Mark realize then the influence that this visitor would have on him in later years. How so? Because at a later date he became

* "Synoptic" signifies "taking the same or common view."

an intimate associate of Peter, who, in his first inspired letter, even called him "Mark my son." (1 Peter 5:13) Although Mark had access to other sources, without a doubt his Gospel reflects to a great degree Peter's familiarity with the life and ministry of Jesus. What evidence is there for stating that? A simple example will illustrate the point.

Some time after the Passover feast of 31 C.E., Jesus was on his second preaching tour of Galilee, accompanied by the 12 apostles. He decided to cross the Sea of Galilee by boat. It is interesting to compare how Matthew and Mark tell the story. First, Matthew:

"Now, look! a great agitation arose in the sea, so that the boat was being covered by the waves, he [Jesus], however, was sleeping."—Matthew 8:24.

Although this communicates the idea of a storm, it does not especially highlight the action or stir the emotions. How did Mark describe the same event?

"Now a great violent windstorm broke out, and the waves kept dashing into the boat, so that the boat was close to being swamped. But he [Jesus] was in the stern, sleeping upon a pillow."—Mark 4:37, 38.

Mark was not present. So how could he present such a graphic description? His obvious communicant was the fisherman Peter. Did you notice the vivid description of the storm and its effect on the boat? And the detail "in the stern" that the landsman tax collector Matthew did not include, even though he had been present in the boat? And what a retentive eye and memory Peter must have had to recall the fact that Jesus was "sleeping upon a pillow."—See also Luke 8:23.

It is easy to understand why some Bible scholars describe Mark as Peter's interpreter. But does that mean Mark's Gospel should really be called the Gospel according to Peter? Not at all. In many matters the story gives evidence of Peter's powers of observation and attention to detail. But the vivid fast-moving vernacular style that communicates the idea of almost breathless action is clearly Mark's.

Another vital factor to take into account is that "all Scripture is inspired of God" and that "no prophecy of Scripture springs from any private interpretation . . . but men spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit." Thus we have a happy combination of Peter's perceptive narration and Mark's concise quick-action writing. Mark was, indeed, one of those guided, or "borne along," by God's holy spirit, or active force. —2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

For Whom Did Mark Write?

It is evident that each Gospel writer had a different kind of reader in mind. Matthew wrote primarily for the Jew, as is shown by his many references to the Hebrew Scriptures and his concern for

Who gave the more vivid description—Matthew or Mark?

Jesus' genealogy to establish his legal descent from Abraham. Luke wrote for the benefit of the "most excellent Theophilus" and people of all the nations, with a genealogy that goes right back to Adam. (Luke 1:1-4; 2:14; 3:23-38) Thus each one has a different style, emphasis and focus. For whom did Mark write mainly?

It is most likely that he wrote from Rome and with the Roman believers in mind. His simple, popular form of Greek is peppered with Latin transliterations, which would be a very natural tendency for a Greek-speaking person living in Rome. He uses at least nine Latin words on 18 occasions, including *speculator* (Greek, *spekoulátora,* "body guardsman"), *praetorium* (Greek, *praitórion,* "governor's palace") and *centurio* (Greek, *kenturion,* "army officer," or centurion).—Mark 6:27; 15:16, 39.

Another evidence that Mark wrote mainly for the Gentile is the fact that he mentions nothing of Jesus' birth or his genealogy. In fact, in his opening words he plunges straightaway into John the Baptizer's ministry and his announcement of the Messiah. All the early biographical information about Jesus was in any case unnecessary, since it had been covered adequately in the earlier Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Why repeat their testimony for the benefit of the non-Jews? This, incidentally, contradicts the many modern Bible scholars who hold that Mark was the first Gospél writer, even though the most ancient authorities agree that Matthew was the earliest.

Christ as a Person

What kind of picture of Christ does Mark paint? We find ourselves trying to keep up with a fast-moving miracle worker who every few verses seems to be off somewhere else. We follow him through some 19 miracles performed in at least 10 different places around Galilee and Judea.* And yet at the same time we are helped to see the compassionate Jesus. Details are brought into focus as in no other Gospel, and Jesus' emotional reactions stand out clearly. For example:

"Now people began bringing him young children for him to touch these; but the disciples reprimanded them. At seeing this Jesus was indignant and said to them: 'Let the young children come to me' . . . And he took the children into his arms and began blessing them." —Mark 10:13-16.

Can you picture that scene in your mind's eye? How often have we said or heard the expression "Children *should be* seen but not heard"! Here the disciples were manifesting the same attitude. How did the Master react? He was "indignant." Peter, the eyewitness, evidently recalled Jesus' righteous emotional reaction. Then Jesus said: "Let the young children come to me; do not try to stop them." At this point Mark introduces a very human touch that the writers Matthew and Luke do not mention. It is as if he used a zoom lens to get in closer and highlight a detail when he wrote: "And he took the children into his arms." Here are action and compassion at the same time. We are really seeing Jesus through the very human and humane eyes of Peter. Happily for us, the holy spirit moved Mark to include that little brushstroke that adds color and warmth to the picture.

If you are approaching the Bible or Christianity for the first time, you might well start by reading this crisp, pithy "good news" story of the man of action, Jesus Christ. Shut out the world and its distractions for an hour or two and get involved in Mark's thrilling story, "The beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ." (Mark 1:1) And why not do so "immediately," "at once"!

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* See *"All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial,"* pages 287-289.

Questions from Readers

■ **My son, who was baptized as a teenager, is now married and has a family. Because of the pressure of earning a living he has cooled off spiritually and does not associate with the congregation. Should he be viewed as a "disassociated" person?**

There is nothing in your description that would require such a viewpoint. The question may have arisen because of misunderstanding what it means to be viewed as "disassociated."

The Watchtower of September 15, 1981, page 23, showed that there is a difference between (a) a Christian who becomes spiritually weak and inactive, and (b) a person who clearly renounces his being one of Jehovah's Witnesses, leading the congregation elders to announce that he has "disassociated" himself. It seems that your son fits the first description.

The Watchtower mentioned that some Christians become weak in faith and spirituality. This occurred also in the first century. (Romans 14:1, 2; 1 Corinthians 11:30) It does not mean that they have ceased to be Christians. Even if they become so weak that they no longer share the "good news" with others and stop attending meetings, and they are not bringing reproach on the Christian congregation, they are still to be regarded as our spiritual brothers and sisters. We should want to help them lovingly, following the apostle Paul's counsel: "We exhort you, brothers, admonish the disorderly, speak consolingly to the depressed souls, *support the weak,* be long-suffering toward all." While the elders often take the lead in this, it is to be noted that this counsel was directed to all "the congregation of the Thessalonians." (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 5:14) So the elders and others might offer loving help and encouragement, having in mind the advice: "Straighten up the hands that hang down and the enfeebled knees, and keep making straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather that it may be healed." —Hebrews 12:12, 13; Revelation 3:1-3.

It is quite a different matter with a former Christian who is "disassociated." This designation is applied basically in two situations:

First, though it is uncommon, a person might decide that he absolutely no longer wants to be a Witness. We do not mean a person such as is described above, a spiritually weak or discouraged Christian who may express some doubts. Rather, we mean someone who resolutely declares that he absolutely is no longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Since in the past he voluntarily became a baptized member of the congregation, it would now be proper for him to inform the congregation that he is ending this relationship. It would be best if he did this in a brief letter to the elders, but even if he unequivocally states orally that he is renouncing his standing as a Witness, the elders can deal with the matter.—1 John 2:19.

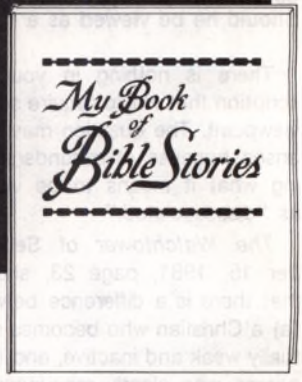
The second situation involves a person who renounces his standing in the congregation by joining a secular organization whose purpose is contrary to counsel such as that found at Isaiah 2:4, where we read concerning God's servants: "They will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore." Also, as stated at John 17:16, "they are no part of the world, just as I [Jesus] am no part of the world."—Compare Revelation 19:17-21.

In either of these two situations, the person by word and/or actions has clearly terminated his status as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, disassociating himself. Hence, the elders will announce briefly to the congregation that this individual has disassociated himself. Those in the congregation will accept the person's decision and thereafter will view him as a *former* brother with whom they would not fellowship, in harmony with what we read at 1 Corinthians 5:11 and 2 John 9-11.

As can be appreciated, the spiritually weak and inactive son about whom the question was asked has not become a "disassociated" person in either of these two senses and no such announcement has been made in the congregation. So it still may be possible to aid him in the spirit of Romans 15:1: "We, though, who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those not strong."—See also Isaiah 35:3.

Used As A Textbook

From many places reports keep coming in about how the publication *My Book of Bible Stories* is being used as a textbook in schools. A mother from Italy writes:

"My eight-year-old son, Emanuele, took his copy of the book to school to show the teacher. She was very struck by its contents and said: 'I am going to keep this book.' That same morning she read the account of the 10 plagues to the class and the children laughed about the frogs getting into the houses and they liked the picture. Then, for homework, the class had to write a brief version of what had been read.

"Emanuele and I were quite surprised because this teacher is a fervent Catholic and is opposed to Jehovah's Witnesses. A few days afterward she showed the book to the priest who comes to teach religion, asking him whether she should continue to read it to the children since it is published by Jehovah's Witnesses. After leafing through the book, the priest said it was very nice and really suitable for children. He told the teacher she could continue to use it in her lessons. So, almost every day the teacher reads the children a story and then has them write about it or discuss it orally."