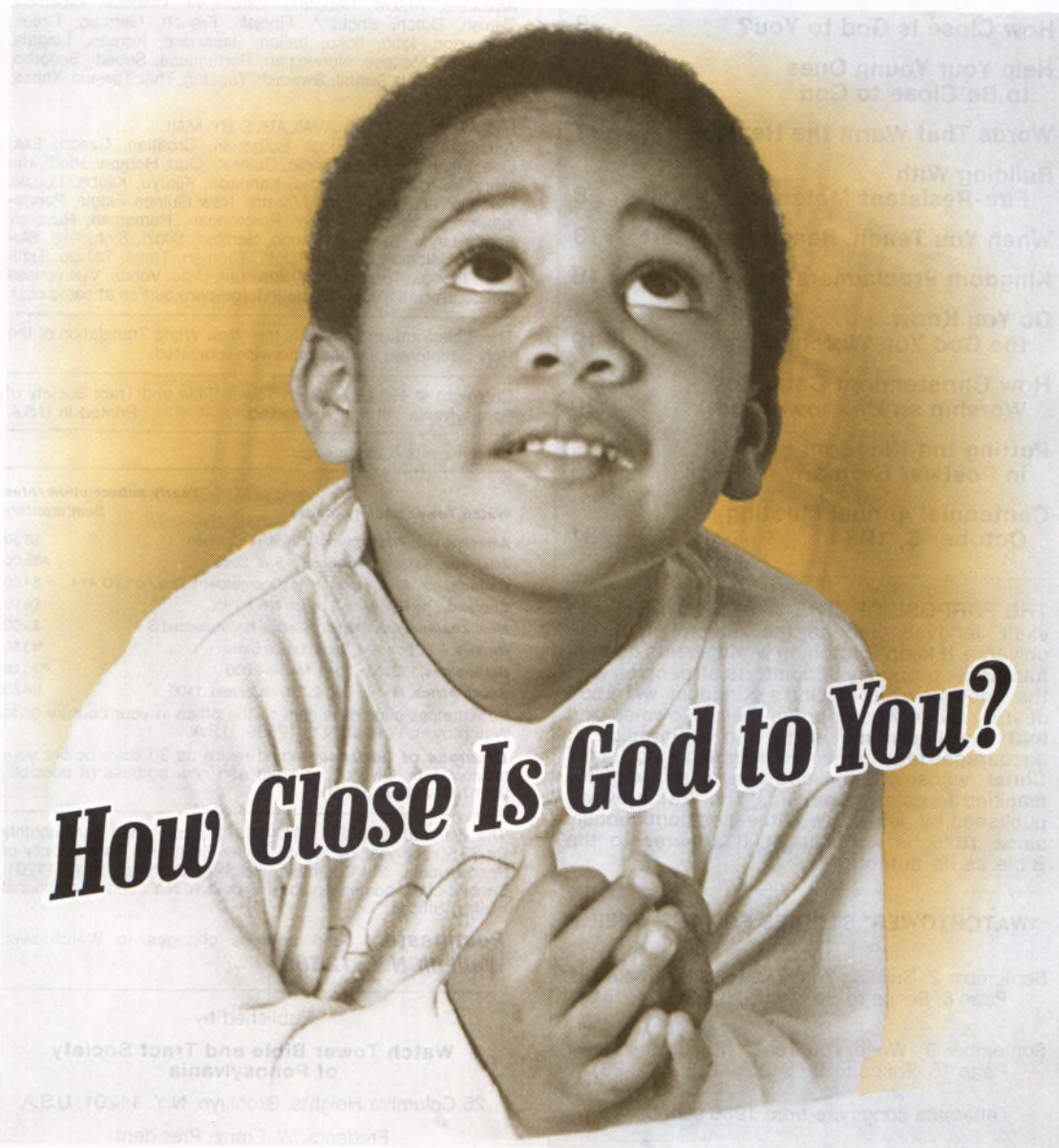


August 1, 1984

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



How Close Is God to You?

The Watchtower®

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

August 1, 1984
Vol. 105, No. 15

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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 continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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Page 8. Songs to Be Used: 164, 35 (94, 15).

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How Close Is God to You?

THREE-YEAR-OLD Raphael began his prayer in this simple way: "How are you, Jehovah?" While we could not favor such an approach by adults, we may smile at this young one's childish sincerity. The fact is that Raphael obviously feels close to God. To him, God is more than some abstract force. He is a real *person*. Is God that real, that close, to you?

How strange it is that many people who claim to believe in God never try to learn more about him or to get close to him! For some, a haughty attitude prevents their drawing close to God. God's "eyes are against the haughty ones," said King David. (2 Samuel 22:28) Others are too modest and unassuming to think that it would be possible to have a relationship with God. What the haughty need to do is cultivate childlike receptiveness. Said Jesus: "Truly I say to you, Unless you turn around and become as young children, you will by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens." (Matthew 18:2-4) And the overly modest would, perhaps, benefit from a little more of the childlike attitude that allows Raphael to approach God so unhesitatingly.

But while having the right attitude is a good start, to feel truly close to God, more is needed. First of all, there must be an *awareness* of him. When you look at the wondrous creative works of God, are you moved to think of him, to praise and thank him as did the psalmist David? He asked: "When I see your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have prepared, what is mortal man that you keep him in mind, and the son of earthling man that you take care of him?" (Psalm 8:3, 4) Taking the time to meditate on God's creation appreciatively is sure to strengthen the bond of love between you and God.

"Draw Close to God"

Two magnets, when they are properly aligned, have an attraction for each other. Indeed, the closer together they are moved, the stronger that attraction is. Something similar can happen in our relationship with God, for the disciple James says, "Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you."—James 4:8.

Learning about God is one way to "draw close" to him.

(John 17:3) Only by studying God's Word, the Bible, can one learn his name, Jehovah, and the truth about his purposes for the earth and his attributes, such as love, wisdom, justice and power. (Psalm 83:18) 'But,' you might say, 'I already know that God is almighty, wholly righteous and full of wisdom and love.' Yet, is that in itself an indi-



A desire to get to know God is causing many to make drastic changes in their lives

cation of true and adequate knowledge of God? Not necessarily.

In themselves, mere statements about God and his qualities can seem rather meaningless, especially if you cannot relate them to your personal experience. For example, how could a person deaf from birth comprehend what "loud" and "soft" mean? How can he know the difference between the chirp of a sparrow and the coo of a dove if he has no means of making a comparison between them? Similarly, by itself the statement that "God is love" may seem like nothing more than a cold fact. (1 John 4:8) But to grasp God's love fully, both mentally and emotionally, a person must consider how that love has been expressed toward mankind. (John 3:16) He must also be able to relate God's love to his own personal experience. "Taste and see that Jehovah is good," said the psalmist. (Psalm 34:8) As an individual does this, he cannot help but feel drawn to God.

Gazing at his father, little Larry once asked: "I know that I should love Jehovah more than anything else, but how can I love him more than you? I can see you and I love you, but I cannot see Jehovah." The father put the child at ease by explaining that such a feeling is quite normal at the outset. And the youngster was assured that after learning what the Bible says about Jehovah's wondrous qualities and acts, and by his personally experiencing God's loving care, he could develop a stronger attachment to Jehovah than to



all others! (Matthew 22:37, 38) So can any of us who take the time to learn about Jehovah God.

What "Knowing" God Means

Often we use the word "know" to refer to a brief acquaintance or mere recognition of a person. 'If I am not mistaken, I know him,' we may find ourselves saying. We may even say this if we had only caught a glimpse of the person somewhere or had briefly been introduced to him.

The apostle John helps us to appreciate that "knowing" God means more than having a passing acquaintance with Him. Consider some of the points made in John's first divinely inspired letter. Epitomized, it says in part: To know God is to love God. To know and to love God is to keep his commandments. It means to cease walking in darkness and to put the truth into practice. It is to follow the lead of God's Word and spirit and to stick to the truth. Knowing God, we feel free to approach him in prayer, with the conviction that he hears us and, in reply, will

give us all things needed to perform his will.—1 John 1:5-7; 2:3, 4, 13, 14; 3:19-24; 4:6-8, 13; 5:3, 14, 15.

Obviously, then, knowing God is not something passive. Much effort is required to get to know Jehovah God and enjoy a close relationship with him. Surely, more is needed than going through the motions of certain religious rites. Nor is knowing God some sudden emotional sensation, such as many “born again Christians” claim to have enjoyed. The psalmist said: “Make me know your own ways, O Jehovah; teach me your own paths. Make me walk in your truth and teach me, for you are my God of salvation. In you I have hoped all day long.” (Psalm 25:4, 5) “Knowing” God is, therefore, an entire way of life!

Furthermore, after exhorting us to “taste and see that Jehovah is good,” the psalmist says: “Turn away from what is bad, and do what is good; seek to find peace, and pursue it.” (Psalm 34:8, 14) In some cases, drastic action is needed to “turn away from what is bad.”

For example, Mari, a hippie during the 1960’s, was heavily involved in taking drugs. This, in turn, led to thievery, immorality, abortion—even prostitution. In time, though, she came in contact with Jehovah’s Witnesses and began to see the need to make changes if she was to be close to God. “I gave up a two-to-three-pack-a-day smoking habit and all drugs, and I resolved in my heart to follow Jehovah’s command regarding fornication. I threw out all my books on dreams, astrology and spiritism, and I got rid of all my idolatrous statues, candles and pictures.” Eventually, she made a dedication to God and serves him to this day.

But will you make the effort needed to come to know God? Though your lifestyle may not be as flagrant as that of Mari, you may have to make real changes. You may be assured, however, that God does not disappoint those who sincerely and humbly search for him with childlike eagerness to learn and do his will.

Help Your Young Ones to Be Close to God

WITH fewer than a thousand words, the Bible writers describe the first 30 years of Jesus’ life. But with tens of thousands of words, they report on the last three and a half years. This is because Jesus Christ’s public ministry—not his birth, childhood and young manhood—was the dominant subject of the Gospel accounts. Nevertheless, the Bible’s brief references to Jesus’ earlier years do make

it apparent that even young ones can be close to God.

When we open our Bibles to chapter 2 of Luke’s account, we find 12-year-old Jesus at the temple, “sitting in the midst of the teachers” of God’s law. He was “listening to them and questioning them” but was also astounding them with “his understanding and his answers.” (Luke 2: 46, 47) Moreover, we read that as he grew

physically he also increased in wisdom and understanding.—Luke 2:40, 52.

How can we account for Jesus' having this spiritual inclination? At least some of the credit must go to his parents. As Jews, they were under obligation to follow Jehovah's counsel on child rearing. God's prophet Moses had said: "These words that I am commanding you today must prove to be on your heart; and you must inculcate them in your son and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up." (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7) Doubtless, God saw to it that his Son was placed in a family that would carry out this counsel. Parents today should show the same interest in their children. Are you helping them to know Jehovah and to want to serve him?

"From Infancy"

Spiritual training is not something that can properly be put off until children get older. Timothy, for example, grew up to be an outstanding Christian. But he had been instructed in the Holy Scriptures "from infancy." (2 Timothy 3:15) In harmony with this, some Christian mothers have been observed asking Jehovah's blessing aloud before giving their babies their bottle. No wonder these infants are soon saying "amen" at the close of such prayers! This is a small first step in helping them to develop appreciation for all the spiritual and material gifts that they receive from God.

Michael and Sephorah (seven and eight years old respectively) showed the results of fine parental training. Once, when they and their parents went on a trip, they took the initiative in asking God for guidance and protection. And at their destination the children remembered to thank Jehovah for a safe arrival.

Christian and Eric (three and six years

old) were out in a park with their parents. As sometimes happens with little ones, they got lost. When did the parents find them? Just as the little boys had prayed to Jehovah to help them!

Many forms of training can be given successfully while children are quite young. At a large Christian assembly in Belgium, three-year-old Gino was brought to the platform and seated upon a high stool. The speaker asked him to recite to the audience the names of all 66 books of the Bible. Can you do this? Well, Gino could! He continued thriving under his parents' training and today serves as a traveling overseer of Jehovah's Witnesses. Of course, not all children have the same abilities to learn, but this does illustrate the benefit of giving them spiritual instruction.

Young children can even be given a grasp of Bible doctrines. At a nursery school in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, four-year-old Kai refused to pray along with the other children. When asked why, he replied: "We do not believe in a three-cornered god!" Now Kai's conception of the Catholic triune deity may not have been completely accurate, but it was sufficient for him to know that he should not pray to it!—Mark 12:29.

Making God a Part of Their Lives

Children at times have problems. Rather than keeping these to themselves, they should confide in their parents. But the children should also be encouraged to 'throw their burden upon Jehovah.' (Psalm 55:22) They can be helped to appreciate that Jehovah will not treat their requests with disdain, for his Son, Jesus Christ, said: "Let the young children come to me; do not try to stop them." (Mark 10:14) And children should be taught to pray to God through Jesus Christ.—John 14:6.

When children learn to depend upon Jehovah for help and see the *results* of doing so, this often has dramatic effects upon their faith. Jacquy, a young man now serving at one of the Watch Tower Society's branch offices, says of an experience that took place when he was 14 years old: "That year our circuit assembly was scheduled the weekend before final examinations. The problem was that our teacher did not give us the material for review until Friday. After talking the matter over with my parents, we decided that I should not miss the assembly program, even though it meant I would have very little time to study. [Hebrews 10:24, 25] I prayed to Jehovah to help me in my efforts to prepare as best I could for the examinations.

"Came Monday morning, and all the students were very nervous because, for the first time, the examinations were oral. I again prayed for Jehovah to be with me. What happened? I received the highest grades of any of the students for the subjects dealt with that day. One teacher from the jury even questioned me further, remarking, 'I want to see just how far he can go.' Yet I could answer his questions."

What did Jacquy learn from this fine outcome? "Experiencing Jehovah's help brought me still closer to him. I learned that we should not be anxious about anything but should turn to Jehovah God with every form of prayer and supplication." —Philippians 4:6, 7.

Yes, it is important that we help our young ones to "know" Jehovah, to make him a part of their daily lives. When they perceive that Jehovah is with them in their dealings, will they not have much greater incentive to continue serving him faithfully than they would have from only hearing and reading about him? Training them in this way, of course, will not be easy. But young ones will not quickly forget the enthusiasm and conscientiousness with which their parents pass their spiritual inheritance of knowledge of Jehovah on to them. Neither will Jehovah forget such faithful efforts. (Hebrews 6:10-12) May those of us who are parents therefore work toward helping our young ones achieve the reward that our heavenly Father holds out for those who know him and are known by him—"everlasting life." —John 17:3.

Words That Warm the Heart

HER father asked eight-year-old Debora: "Do you pray to Jehovah?" Her answer: "Yes, much." "When?" "When I am alone." "Why then?" "So that nobody bothers me!"

A mother asked six-year-old Laurent: "Do you want me to leave the light on in your room tonight?" (Laurent was afraid of the dark and had been told to pray to Jehovah about it.) "No, I am not afraid anymore because Jehovah is with me."

A girl of six years said in prayer: "Thank you, Jehovah, for the hope of a

resurrection. It is a very good idea!" In another prayer, she said: "You will have a lot to do here in our country when we are in Paradise, Jehovah, because it rains here so terribly much."

Three-year-old Udo prayed: "Please, Jehovah God, get my father to read the Bible so that he will not die at Armageddon!" The door of the boy's bedroom was open, and his father heard the prayer. That broke down his last resistance to the truth, and today he is a faithful servant of Jehovah.

Building With Fire-Resistant Materials

"Some will use gold or silver or precious stones in building on the foundation; others will use wood or grass or straw."

—1 CORINTHIANS 3:12, *Today's English Version*.

IT IS certainly a pitiful sight when a beautiful house burns to the ground. How especially sad it would be if you had built it! To see all your time and effort go up in smoke would be painful indeed. And yet this pain is nothing compared to the hurt felt by the Christian parent whose son or daughter abandons the truth for the things of the world. Little could be more painful than seeing one's child come to such spiritual ruin.

² The feelings in the hearts of such parents may be somewhat similar to the disappointment that you as a Christian minister may have experienced. Perhaps you started a Bible study with an individual and then spent months or even years helping him to come to a knowledge of the truth. You see him attend meetings and even begin sharing in the field ministry. But then, suddenly, he weakens spiritually and becomes inactive, perhaps even returning to former bad practices. How disappointing!

³ Sad to say, this happens from time to time. So it is only natural to ask: Why does it happen? Is there anything we can do about it? While the individual's own

1, 2. (a) What would be more painful than seeing one's house burn to the ground? (b) What similar disappointment do Christian ministers sometimes experience?

3. Faced with such situations, what questions naturally arise, and upon what do the answers depend?

heart condition may be a factor, to some extent the answers to those questions depend upon the answer to another question: When you teach others, are you building on a right foundation with fire-resistant materials? Our clearly understanding what this means and how to do it is a key in helping those we teach—our Bible students and our children—to stand firm in the truth.

Who Does the Building?

⁴ In answer, we turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 3, where Paul likens the Christian minister to a builder. We read: "According to the undeserved kindness of God that was given to me, as a wise director of works I laid a foundation, but someone else is building on it. But let each one keep watching how he is building on it. For no man can lay any other foundation than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ." —Verses 10, 11.

⁵ What kind of building work is Paul talking about? Well, note the context: "You people are . . . God's building." "You people are God's temple." (1 Corinthians 3: 9, 16) So it is a figurative building work, one involving "people." That is to say, the Christian minister 'builds people' in the

4. At 1 Corinthians 3:10, 11, to what does Paul liken the Christian minister, and how?

5. (a) According to the context, what kind of building work is Paul discussing? (b) In what sense does the Christian minister 'build people'?

sense that he endeavors to build up in interested persons a Christian personality, making disciples out of them.—Matthew 28:19, 20.

⁶ Does that suggest that the Christian teacher has the sole responsibility for how the student develops? Not at all. In the first place, we are “God’s fellow workers.” While Paul’s words at 1 Corinthians 3:9-15 focus on the responsibility of the one building, or teaching, really it is a joint building work in which the student also is involved. We might compare it to preparing a soldier for battle. Others may train and equip him, but once he is out in the battle the soldier must put up a fight, using what he has learned. His very life depends upon it! Similarly, the one teaching endeavors to build a genuine Christian, one able to resist the pressures and temptations of this system. At the same time, though, the student has a responsibility; he has to apply in his life what he learns.—Matthew 7:24-27; Philippians 2:12, 13.

⁷ Nevertheless, the fact remains that the one teaching has a weighty responsibility. As we further consider Paul’s words, we will see the importance of teaching God’s Word effectively so as to build in others appreciation for our heavenly Father.

Lay the Right Foundation

⁸ Before you can put up a building, you must first lay the foundation. So in the building work of making disciples, what is the foundation? Paul answers: “No man can lay any other foundation than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 3:11) Yes, the right foundation upon which

we are to build is Jesus Christ.—Compare Ephesians 2:20-22 and 1 Peter 2:4-6.

⁹ How can we lay Christ as a foundation when teaching others? To begin with, we must teach the truth about Jesus and help others to build their lives around that truth. That includes helping them to put faith in Jesus as our Helper and the One through whom Jehovah provides the ransom. (Matthew 20:28; 1 John 2:1, 2) But that is not all. Jesus Christ is the appointed head of the Christian congregation. (Colossians 1:18) He is also earth’s rightful King, and in that capacity he will soon “complete his conquest” at Har-Magedon. (Revelation 6:1, 2) Clearly, then, to lay Christ as a foundation involves teaching the whole truth about him, helping others to understand Jesus’ role in the outworking of God’s purpose. Why is this so important? If our students put faith in Jesus as God’s reigning King, they will not easily get disheartened over world conditions and the problems of daily living.—Isaiah 28:16; 1 Peter 2:6-8.

¹⁰ However, more is involved in laying Christ as a foundation. We should have the same aim as did the apostle Paul. His prayer for the Ephesians was that “the Christ dwell through your faith in your hearts with love; that you may be rooted and established on the foundation, in order that you may be thoroughly able to grasp mentally with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness that God gives.” (Ephesians 3:17-19) Notice that being “rooted and established on the founda-

6, 7. (a) On whose responsibility do Paul’s words at 1 Corinthians 3:9-15 focus? (b) Nevertheless, how is a joint building work involved? (c) What will a further consideration of Paul’s words help us to see?

8. In this figurative building work, what is the foundation?

9. (a) In teaching others, what is involved in laying Christ as a foundation? (b) Why is it important for our Bible students to understand the whole truth about Jesus?

10. (a) According to Ephesians 3:17-19, what else is involved in laying Christ as a foundation? (b) How do we let Christ ‘dwell in our hearts’?

tion” involves having Christ ‘dwell in our hearts.’ What does this mean? Well, Christ ‘dwells in our hearts’ when we let his example and teachings affect our feelings and actions.

¹¹ How can we help those we teach to have Christ ‘dwell in their hearts’? Imparting knowledge is vital, for they are to “grasp mentally” “the breadth and length and height and depth” of the truth of God’s Word, particularly as it relates to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. We want our students to acquire “the mind of Christ,” to know him thoroughly as a living, feeling person. (1 Corinthians 2:16) This will touch their hearts.

¹² But notice that Paul also said: “And to know [Greek, *gnonai*, to know “practically, through experience”] the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge.” We can know Christ’s “love” by learning what the Bible tells us about his life course and the way he dealt with others. However, it is by imitating the kind of person Jesus is that we can genuinely appreciate his feelings. In this way, by experience, we come to know “the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge.”

¹³ So in laying the foundation, call attention to Jesus’ qualities—his love (John 15:13, 14), warmth and feeling (Matthew 11:28-30), humility (John 13:1-15) and compassion (Mark 6:30-34), to name a few. Encourage your student to imitate these qualities in his way of life. This will provide a fine foundation upon which to build other important qualities. At times, when discussing Bible accounts about Jesus, you

11, 12. (a) How can we help others to have Christ ‘dwell in their hearts’? (b) In addition to learning about Jesus, what else is involved?

13, 14. (a) How can we help our students to imitate Jesus’ qualities? (b) Why will trying to be like Jesus help our students to develop a good relationship with Jehovah? (c) In addition to the right foundation, to what else must we give attention?

may need to pause and ask: ‘What quality do you see Jesus displaying? How can you more fully display this quality in your life?’ Explain that imitating Jesus’ personality will help the Bible student to develop a strong, intimate relationship with Jehovah. How so? It is because Jesus so perfectly mirrored his Father’s personality that when we try to imitate Jesus we are actually imitating Jehovah himself!—John 14:9.

¹⁴ Having the right foundation is important, but is it enough? Paul answers: “But let each one keep watching how he is building on it.” Yes, what about the materials we use in erecting the structure that will rest on top of the foundation?

The Fire-Resistant Materials

¹⁵ This brings us to verse 12 of 1 Corinthians chapter 3, where Paul discusses various building materials: “Now if anyone builds on the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood materials, hay, stubble.” That is quite a variety of contrasting materials! Is Paul suggesting that we build a little of each into our students? Apparently not. Notice how some other translations put it: “Some will use gold or silver or precious stones in building on the foundation; others will use wood or grass or straw.” (TEV) “On this foundation you can build in gold, silver and jewels, or in wood, grass and straw.” (The Jerusalem Bible) So evidently Paul is contrasting two types of buildings. On the one hand there is, as it were, a beautiful palace adorned with gold, silver and precious gems. In contrast there is a thatch-roofed hut made with wooden boards or posts supporting walls of dried grass mixed with mud.

¹⁶ Applying Paul’s illustration, then, the question is: In teaching others, are you

15, 16. (a) At 1 Corinthians 3:12, what contrast is Paul evidently drawing? (b) Applying Paul’s illustration, what question is asked?

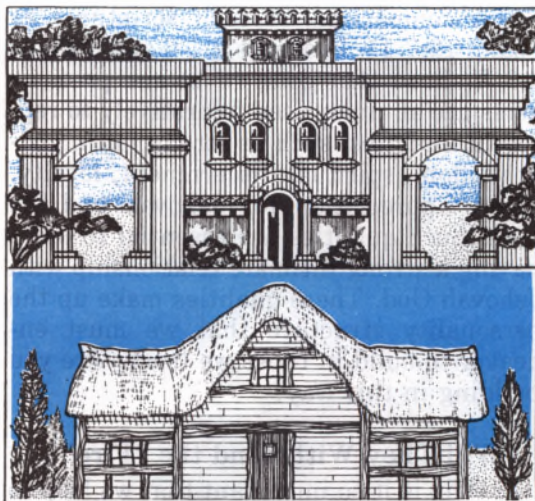
When teaching others, are you building with fire-resistant or combustible materials?

building “palaces” or “huts”? The reason why some youths and newer ones fall away may be that not all are built with the same materials. What is the difference? The situation in the ancient congregation in Corinth illustrates the difference between building with fire-resistant materials and flammable ones.

¹⁷ Paul had done his part in laying the proper foundation, but apparently some in Corinth were building upon it with ‘wood, hay and stubble’—flimsy materials representing qualities that are not durable. (1 Corinthians 3:12) Thus, Paul had to write to the brothers there: “Dissensions exist among you. What I mean is this, that each one of you says: ‘I belong to Paul,’ ‘But I to Apollos,’ ‘But I to Cephas,’ ‘But I to Christ.’ The Christ exists divided.” (1 Corinthians 1:11-13) So the members of the congregation were split into factions. And why? Because they attached too much importance to certain men. Paul set them straight, explaining: “What, then, is Apollos? Yes, what is Paul? Ministers through whom you became believers . . . I planted, Apollos watered, but *God* kept making it grow.”—1 Corinthians 3:5-7.

¹⁸ In short, the problem was this: Because they attached too much importance to following men, some members of the congregation in Corinth did not have a strong intimate relationship with Jehovah. This is a key factor in determining whether we are building with “gold” or “hay,” building “palaces” or “huts,” as it were.

17, 18. (a) What serious problem existed in the congregation in ancient Corinth, and how did Paul set matters straight? (b) So what is a key factor in determining whether we are building with “gold” or “hay”?



¹⁹ There is a valuable lesson to be learned from that. Some may say, ‘But I do not teach others to follow any man.’ However, this can easily happen even though we do not intend it. For example, if, when a student raises questions, we repeatedly say, ‘Brother (or Sister) So-and-so says, . . .,’ might we inadvertently be directing too much attention to an imperfect man or woman? Or if, when questions are raised, we say, ‘Well, I’m not sure, but here is what I would say,’ might we unwittingly be attracting too much attention to ourselves? Remember, it is very easy for a student to develop an exalted opinion of his teacher. (Compare Acts 10:25, 26 and Revelation 19:10.) If we want to build “palaces,” we need to be on guard against building followers of men. Instead, we must help our students to develop a close relationship with Jehovah. To that end we must build with ‘gold, silver and precious gems.’ What do these represent?

19. (a) How might the one teaching inadvertently direct too much attention to himself or to another human? (b) If we want to build with ‘gold, silver and precious gems,’ what must we endeavor to do?

²⁰ A comparison of such scriptures as Psalm 19:7-11, Proverbs 2:1-6 and 1 Peter 1:6, 7 shows that gold, silver and precious gems are at times used figuratively to represent qualities, such as strong faith, godly wisdom, spiritual discernment, loyalty, loving appreciation for Jehovah and his laws. Such qualities are essential to one's having a strong intimate relationship with Jehovah God. These qualities make up the personality structure that we must endeavor to build in those we teach. Are you building in this way?

Will They Withstand the "Fire"?

²¹ Why is it so important that we help to build such durable qualities in those we teach? The apostle Paul goes on to explain: "Each one's work will become manifest, for the day will show it up, because it will be revealed by means of fire; and the fire itself will prove what sort of work each one's is." (1 Corinthians 3:13) So the "fire" will "prove" in just what way we are building. What does the "fire" here represent? Violent physical persecution? Evidently not. For notice that "each one's work" will be subjected to the "fire." Not all Christians receive violent persecution. So the "fire" represents any of the pressures or temptations that could destroy one's spirituality.

²² For some the "fire" may come in the form of the neutrality issue. For example, some may be pressured to participate in political activities or face imprisonment. (John 15:19) At times the "fire" may be more subtle. Perhaps it is the temptation to watch movies or TV programs that fea-

20. What do the 'gold, silver and precious stones' represent? (Proverbs 3:13-15)

21. (a) Why is it so important that we build durable qualities in those we teach? (b) What does the "fire" represent?

22. What are some of the fiery tests that some may experience?

ture sex and violence. For Christian youths the "fire" may come in the form of exposure to sexual provocation, invitations to take drugs or the pressure to share in the world's degraded entertainment. The natural desire to be accepted by others can exert tremendous pressure on Christian youths to conform.—1 John 2:16.

²³ Most true Christians have successfully withstood such fiery tests. Sad to say, however, others have not. Hence, we need to ask ourselves: When the ones we have taught face the "fire," how will they fare? Will they be like that beautiful palace adorned with fire-resistant gold, silver and precious stones, and stand firm? Or will they be like that hut made of wood, hay and stubble, and burn up? Of course, much depends upon the student himself. At the same time, though, much also depends upon us as teachers—how we ourselves have built. So this question remains: How do you build such durable qualities in those you teach? This will be discussed in the next article.

23. (a) With regard to facing such tests, what questions are raised, and upon what do the answers depend? (b) What will be discussed in the next article?

Can you explain:

- ☐ How a joint building work is involved in teaching others?
- ☐ How you lay Christ as a "foundation"?
- ☐ What can be learned from what happened in the congregation in ancient Corinth?
- ☐ What the "fire" is, and how this emphasizes the importance of building durable qualities in others?

When You Teach, Reach the Heart

WHEREAS you can make quick work of putting up a hut, you certainly cannot build a palace overnight. The same is true of making disciples. It is no small task to build in others a deep appreciation for Jehovah and his standards. It takes considerable time and skill to produce such “palaces.”

² To accomplish this, more is involved than imparting knowledge. As Proverbs 3:1 says: “My son, my law do not forget, and my commandments may your heart observe.” Our students must be taught what the Bible says. But more than that, Bible truth must be impressed upon their hearts. Yes, it is the heart that we must reach if we are to build fire-resistant qualities into those we teach, helping them to develop a strong relationship with Jehovah God.

³ Clearly, this is easier said than done. To reach hearts we must not only have the right building materials but also employ the “art of teaching.” (2 Timothy 4:2) It is not enough to tell the truth to our students. Rather, the “art of teaching” involves helping them to think and to reason on what they learn. It is not that our ingenuity or methods can produce spiritual growth; it is God’s blessing that

counts. (1 Corinthians 3:5, 6) Nevertheless, there are a few suggestions that can help us to reach the hearts of others. As we consider these points, have in mind those whom you teach—your Bible students and your children.

Set the Right Example

⁴ What better example could we have of how to reach the hearts of others than Jesus Christ himself? Why was he so effective in reaching people? For one thing, Jesus practiced what he preached, providing a sterling example for his followers to imitate. (John 13:15; 1 Peter 2:21) This, then, is the *first* suggestion: *set the right example*. Is it not logical that we should have the same durable Christian qualities that we wish to build in others? As Jesus put it: “Every well-trained student will be like his teacher.” —Luke 6:40, *The New Berkeley Version*.

⁵ The Bible repeatedly shows the connection between setting the right example and reaching the hearts of others. For instance, Deuteronomy 6:4-6 indicates that love for Jehovah must “be on your [the parent’s] heart” before you can inculcate it into the hearts of your children. (Proverbs 20:7) In contrast, Jesus rebuked the hypocritical Pharisees of his

1, 2. (a) What does it take to build in others a deep appreciation for Jehovah and his standards? (b) Why is more than head knowledge needed?

3. (a) Why does the “art of teaching” have much to do with whether we reach the heart? (b) As we consider some practical suggestions, whom should you have in mind?

4. (a) What is one thing that made Jesus effective in reaching others? (b) Why is it important to set the right example when teaching others?

5. How do the Scriptures show the connection between setting the right example and reaching the hearts of others?

day because they 'said but did not perform.' Is it any wonder that the heart of the people had grown "unreceptive"? —Matthew 23:3; 13:13-15.

⁶ So there must be harmony between what you teach and what you practice. For example, if you wish to build in your students or children a love for Jehovah and a desire to please him, then should they not be able to see by your prayers, speech and actions evidence of such love and desire in you? If you want to instill a strong devotion to Bible principles, should they not first see that you, by your words and deeds, do not try to sidestep those principles? Those we teach, particularly our children, often pay more attention to what we do than to what we say. When others see that we live in accord with what we teach, we will be in a better position to reach their hearts.

Ask Questions

⁷ A second suggestion, something else that made Jesus such an effective teacher, is the *use of questions*. Jesus was a master at getting people to think and reason. (Matthew 17:24-27) Much of your success in reaching the hearts of those you teach depends upon your use of questions. Why?

⁸ First, by asking questions you can determine whether your student really is understanding what he is learning. After all, if he does not understand and accept the information, how can it possibly take root in his heart? (Luke 8:15) Second, to reach the heart it is helpful to know what is in the heart. Preconceived ideas and false religious teachings may be strongly entrenched. Since we cannot read the

6. Why is it important for you to live in accord with what you teach? (Romans 2:21-23)

7, 8. (a) Upon what does much of our success in reaching others depend? (b) Why are questions helpful in reaching the heart?

heart, we need to ask questions that particularly get the student to express in his own words what he feels in his heart. Consider some examples.

⁹ Let us suppose that you are discussing chapter 10, "Wicked Spirits Are Powerful," in the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*. You come to paragraph 18, on page 97, where the printed question asks, "What example of the early Christians at Ephesus is a good one to follow if a person wants to break free from spiritism?" Your student may answer correctly from the paragraph, but how does he really feel? Perhaps he practiced spiritism for many years and became a strong believer in it. If so, is he now convinced that he should break free from it? You might have to ask: 'How do you feel about this? How can you apply this information in your life?' The way he now answers may reveal to what extent the information has touched his heart.

¹⁰ To take another example, you might be considering with your child chapter 26, "The Fight to Do What Is Right," in the same book. On page 220, the "b" question for paragraph 8 asks, "What viewpoint, as expressed by a youth, would we be wise to have?" Your child may at first answer from the paragraph, not really expressing how he feels. You may need gently to probe a little deeper: 'But how do you feel about this? Does this viewpoint seem reasonable to you?' Or you might pose a situation: 'Suppose some youths at school were smoking and offered you a cigarette? What if quite a number of others were watching and started making fun of you because you did not accept? What would you do?' When used discreetly, such questions can help you to determine what is in your child's heart.

9, 10. Illustrate the effective use of viewpoint questions.

¹¹ A word of caution, though. At times such questions may bring answers that surprise or disappoint you. What then? If it is a sensitive subject, it may be better not to force the issue but to say: 'Let's go on for now. We'll talk about this again sometime.' (John 16:12) Especially is such caution needed on the part of the parents. When wrong views are expressed, hold your emotions in check. You do not want to damage the line of communication. If your child becomes afraid to express how he feels, how will you know what is in his heart so that you can help him?

Highlight the Wisdom of Obeying God's Laws

¹² A third suggestion is to help your student to see the *wisdom of obeying God's laws*. (Deuteronomy 4:5, 6; 10:12, 13) This can touch his heart. How so? Well, if he is convinced that keeping Jehovah's laws is in his own best interests, this may move him to love God and want to please him.—Psalm 112:1.

¹³ How can you help those you teach to see the wisdom of obeying God's laws? We might illustrate this by comparing Jehovah's laws to "No Trespassing" signs. While such a sign is in itself a warning, would you not agree that when the sign contains the reason for the warning obedience comes more readily? For example, if the sign says "No Trespassing—High Voltage," then the would-be trespasser, recognizing the possibility of personal danger, is more inclined to heed the warning.

11. (a) Why is caution needed when using questions? (b) Why do parents especially need to be cautious when their children express wrong views? (Colossians 3:21)

12, 13. (a) Why will seeing the wisdom of obeying God's laws touch your student's heart? (b) What is involved in helping a student to see that obeying Jehovah is the course of wisdom?

¹⁴ It is similar with God's laws. Do not simply tell your student what the Bible says is right and what is wrong; help him to see why a particular course is wise or foolish. Reason with him on how obedience to God's laws will benefit him. Help him to see the consequences of disregarding those requirements. The Bible itself does this at times. Read for yourself, please, Proverbs 22:24, 25; 23:4, 5; 24:15, 16, 19, 20. Notice that in each case the Bible gives the reason why a course is good or bad.

¹⁵ To illustrate, consider how the following questions and scriptures emphasize the wisdom of obeying God's laws.

Lying, Stealing: Why is dishonesty harmful? (Proverbs 15:27; 20:10; Revelation 21:8) Why does it pay for you to be honest in dealing with others? (Proverbs 3:3, 4; 12:19; Hebrews 13:18)

Fornication: How may immorality hurt us? (Proverbs 5:9; 7:21-23; 1 Corinthians 6:18) How may it have a harmful effect upon others? (1 Thessalonians 4:6; 1 Corinthians 5:6; Hebrews 12:15, 16) How do you benefit when you heed the Bible's moral standards? (Proverbs 5:18, 19; Hebrews 13:4)

After reasoning in this way on a Bible law, you might ask: 'Do you feel that Jehovah has our best interests at heart? Do you agree that his laws really do not deprive us of anything good?'

¹⁶ During the course of the study, reason similarly on God's law regarding drunkenness, the paying of taxes, smoking, the blood issue, and so forth. In this way your student or child is helped to see

14. (a) In what way could you reason with your student to help him to see why a particular course is wise or foolish? (b) What scriptures illustrate the importance of giving the *reason* why a course is good or bad?

15. Use the questions and scriptures provided to discuss the wisdom of obeying what God says about dishonesty and fornication.

16. What effect may reasoning in this way have upon your student?



Do your prayers reflect the depth of your devotion to God? This can touch your child's heart

that all of God's laws are for our good. It is not that your student should always need reasons to obey God. But a few examples may help to reach his heart, moving him to want to please God. Thus, when the "fire," or test, comes, he will more readily obey God's word.—1 Corinthians 3:13.

Help Them to Know God

¹⁷ A fourth suggestion is this: *help your student to know God.* (John 17:3) More than just helping him to know that Jehovah exists and has a name, help your student to come to know him intimately. This will touch his heart because to know Jehovah is to love him.

¹⁸ How can you help your student to know Jehovah intimately? For one thing, you cannot love someone unless you know his qualities, his ways. So during the study, be ever mindful of drawing atten-

17. What additional suggestion can help you to reach the heart of your student?

18. During the study, how could you draw attention to Jehovah's qualities?

tion to Jehovah's matchless qualities. This often can be done regardless of the subject being considered. For example, when discussing the ransom, you could pause at an appropriate point and ask: 'How does the ransom provision magnify the depth of Jehovah's love for us?' Or when considering God's permission of wickedness, you could ask: 'How has Jehovah shown great long-suffering in the face of man's wickedness?' or, 'How did Jehovah display matchless wisdom in the way he handled the rebellion in Eden?' Reasoning in this way will help to build in your student a strong feeling of devotion to Jehovah. He will come to view Jehovah as a Person whose qualities he finds endearing, inviting.

¹⁹ In addition, you cannot really get to know someone well without some kind of communication. Similarly, your student cannot enjoy an intimate relationship with Jehovah without communicating with him. Appreciating this, teach your student how to pray. Help him to see the wide variety of matters that are proper subjects for prayer. (1 John 5:14) Build in him appreciation for Jehovah as One who both hears and answers prayers. (Psalm 65:2) Encourage him to express his innermost feelings, 'pouring out his heart' to Jehovah.—Psalm 62:8.

²⁰ Here again, your own example is important. Do your prayers reflect the depth of your devotion to God? This can have a very wholesome effect on those you teach, including your children. Consider the following experience.

Some years ago, one Christian couple were teaching their three-year-old boy how to pray. One night, after praying for Jehovah

19, 20. (a) What else is needed in order to know Jehovah intimately? (b) How does the experience in the paragraph illustrate the importance of setting the right example when it comes to prayer?

to bless Mommy and Daddy, the boy asked Jehovah to bless "Wally." Who was "Wally"? His parents did not know, and the boy began praying for "Wally" quite regularly! Finally, after much wonderment, they realized what had happened. The boy was praying for the brothers in Malawi (who at the time were experiencing persecution), but he mispronounced it as "Wally." The point is, the little boy had heard his parents praying in this way, and he imitated their fine example. Just imagine how those parents felt!

Does this not illustrate the importance of setting the right example when it comes to teaching others how to pray?

The Reward

²¹ So, then, if we are to build in others fire-resistant qualities, helping them to develop a good relationship with Jehovah, we must reach their hearts. It may not be easy to do, but it is rewarding. Paul indicated this when he said: "If anyone's work that he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward; if anyone's work is burned up [because he built poorly, not using fire-resistant materials], he will suffer loss [that is, what he built will be lost to the "fire"], but he himself will be saved; yet, if so, it will be as through fire." What is the "reward"? Evidently Paul had in mind something other than the prize of eternal life in God's New Order, for notice that the one who built poorly loses the "reward," though he himself may be saved if he makes it through the "fire."—1 Corinthians 3:14, 15.

²² What, then, is this "reward"? Some—

21. (a) According to 1 Corinthians 3:14, 15, for what may you as a Christian builder hope? (b) Is the "reward" the prize of eternal life in God's New Order? Explain.

22, 23. (a) What reward did the apostle Paul receive in connection with his Christian brothers at Thessalonica? (b) What "reward" is your heart's desire, and how may you receive it?

thing Paul said to the Thessalonians sheds light on this. To the persecuted Christians there, Paul wrote: "What is our hope or joy or crown of exultation—why, is it not in fact you?—before our Lord Jesus at his presence? You certainly are our glory and joy [“our pride and our joy!” *Today's English Version*]." (1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20) Paul had aided those Thessalonians into the way of truth. And although from the beginning they had experienced persecution, they were standing firm. Paul's reward was the joy of seeing them endure in the face of opposition. This testified that Paul had built well.

²³ It is similar with us. Is it not your heart's desire to help those you teach to develop the durable Christian qualities that will enable them to stand firm in the face of the temptations and pressures that may come upon them? Yes, how rewarding it is to see your Bible students and your children withstanding such fiery tests! This testifies that you have built well. May that be your reward as you build on a right foundation with fire-resistant materials and as you look to Jehovah to bless your efforts.

Can you recall?

To reach the heart—

- ☐ Why is it important to set the right example?
- ☐ What kind of questions are helpful, and why?
- ☐ Why does your student need to see the wisdom of obeying God's laws?
- ☐ Why must your student learn how to pray?

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

The Resurrection Hope

THE resurrection hope is part of the "primary doctrine" of the Bible and gives a person spiritual strength when facing death. (Hebrews 6:1, 2; John 5:28, 29) Jehovah has provided this hope. A student in Japan cultivated this hope and shared it with others.

When this student was first contacted by a Kingdom proclaimer, he refused to take Bible literature because he did not like to read. However, he was invited to the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses and was warmly welcomed. He liked what he

heard and later invited three of his high school companions to go with him, which all of them did. All four were considered "bad" boys by their school-teachers.

As they studied the book *Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It*, their rebellious attitude changed, and this was noticed by the teacher, who also became interested and began to share in the Bible study. The leader of the "bad" boys was sickly and died at the age of 15. Although he had attended the Christian meetings of Jehovah's

Witnesses only a short time, he had built up a wonderful faith. So just before he died he wrote and expressed his strong faith in the resurrection hope. He said:

"My life will end after 15 years because of complications from dwarfism. Compared to an ordinary person, I have lived only one fifth of my life. But in those 15 years, I had entire satisfaction. Especially in the spring of my 15th year have I enjoyed delightfully happy days. . . . Best of all is the knowledge that there is an Almighty God who can cure sickness and do away with death. To know that if one dies there is a hope of a resurrection is delightful."

This young person loved the scripture that gives hope of 'new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness is to dwell.' (2 Peter 3:13) He added: "I will sleep a little while. If it is God's will, we will meet again in Paradise. . . . Do not cry for me. I will only be sleeping. I will awake soon. Look for me in the thousand-year Kingdom. Wait for me. I'll be along soon."

By his strong faith and hope this young person encouraged others. Two of his teachers and three of his friends continued to study the Bible and attend meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses. The resurrection hope not only sustained this young man but can also sustain all those putting faith in Jehovah God's promises.

"I will sleep a little while.
If it is God's will, we will
meet again in Paradise."



Do You Know the God You Worship?

“GOD IS DEAD.” That phrase, coined by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche a century ago, was revived by some theologians in the 1960’s. Many educated people then thought that a purely secular human society could solve mankind’s problems and ensure happiness.

Then disillusionment set in, and the 1970’s saw a trend toward “desecularization.” Sociologists discovered that, to be happy, humans need a spiritual dimension to their lives. Even in scientific circles it became easier to admit the need for belief in God. Thus in his 1979 book *Dieu existe? Oui* (Does God Exist? Yes), French author Christian Chabanis was able to include interviews with nine French personalities in the field of science, all of whom confessed some form of belief in God.

Of course, millions of people have never gone along with the “God is dead” theology. They have maintained their faith in God.



Altar dedicated to anonymous gods,
found at Pergamum, Asia Minor

But does this necessarily mean that they have a clear notion about God?

In 1967 the Synod of French Catholic bishops drew up a list of problems that were disturbing Catholics. The first item on the list was “Our knowledge of God,” and the second was “The person of Christ.” In his book *God for Men of Today*, author Jacques Duquesne interviewed a 58-year-old Catholic man who admitted: “I sometimes wonder if Christ is really God. . . . I try to convince myself. It’s a big problem for me.” Duquesne also quoted two Catholic priests as stating that for many Christians “dogmas are separate, abstract, arbitrary formulas; each has barely any meaning; one dogma does not throw light on another dogma; they are, therefore, difficult to express to people living today. If theologians decided to add a fourth Person to the Trinity, to what extent would that disturb the bulk of even the best Christians?”

Actually, the doctrine that most confuses not only Catholics but also members of the Eastern Orthodox Church and most Protestant churches is the Trinity. Concerning it *A Catholic Dictionary* states: “We can understand how three individual men are distinct from each other and yet possess humanity in common. The unity of the three Divine Persons is altogether different. When we speak of them as one God, we mean not only that each is God, but that each is one and the same God, and herein is the mystery, incomprehensible to any created intelligence.” No wonder Catholics complain that their biggest problem is “knowledge of God”!

Worshipping an Unknown God

Almost a billion people belonging to Christendom's churches are called upon to worship a God they cannot comprehend. They find themselves in a situation similar to that of the ancient Samaritans, to one of whom Jesus said: "You Samaritans worship what you do not know." (John 4:22, *New International Version*) Why could Jesus say that?

In the eighth century B.C.E., the ten-tribe northern kingdom of Israel and its capital Samaria were conquered by the Assyrians, and many Israelites were deported to Assyria and other conquered territories. Subsequently, the king of Assyria sent various subjugated people, notably from Babylonia, to the area of Israel known as Samaria. This produced a mixed population of Israelites and pagans. Concerning practitioners of the resulting hybrid religion, the Bible says: "It was of Jehovah that they became fearers, but it was of their own gods that they proved to be worshipers, according to the religion of the nations from among whom they had led them into exile."—2 Kings 17:26-33; compare 1 Kings 12:28-31.

Yes, the Samaritans feared Jehovah. They even accepted a part of his Word—the Pentateuch, or the first five books of the Bible. But they mixed the worship of Jehovah with Babylonish false religion.

And it was concerning such Samaritans that Jesus stated: "You worship what you do not know." They *knew* of Jehovah, but they did not accept all of his Word. Nor did they worship God "with spirit and truth."—John 4:22, 23.

Do not members of Christendom's churches find themselves in a similar situation? They *know* of God, but many of them admit that they do not really *know* him. You cannot afford to remain indifferent about this, for Jesus stated: "Eternal life means to *know* you, the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ, whom you sent."—John 17:3, *Today's English Version*.

What is the doctrine that has especially prevented members of Christendom's churches from knowing Jehovah, "the only true God"? Undoubtedly, it is the 'incomprehensible mystery' of the Trinity. Yet when reading the Bible a person does not get a feeling that the early Christians were worshipping a 'mystery God.' The apostle John said that "the Son of God . . . has given us intellectual capacity that we may gain the knowledge of the true one [Jehovah God]. And we are in union with the true one, by means of his Son Jesus Christ."—1 John 5:20.

So how did the churches of Christendom come to worship a God their members cannot comprehend? This matter will be taken up in the article that follows.

How Christendom Came to Worship an Unknown God

CHRISTENDOM'S mysterious three-in-one God is not the God of the Jews. Their daily Shema, or confession of faith, states: "The Lord our God, the Lord is

one." Neither is this triune deity the God of the nearly 600 million Muslims, whose Koran declares: "He, Allāh, is one."

It is a historical fact that Christianity

had Jewish roots. Jesus Christ himself was a Jew. He fulfilled the Law God gave to the Jews and was the Messiah whose coming was foretold by the Jewish prophets. (Matthew 5:17; John 1:45; Acts 3:18) His earliest followers were all Jews or circumcised proselytes. (Matthew 10:5, 6; Acts 2:1-11) And we have seen that the Trinity was not and still is not believed by the Jews.

Can it be said that Christ and the writers of the Christian Scriptures abandoned the monotheistic notion of one God and introduced a mysterious three-in-one Godhead? No, for the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1976 edition) correctly states: "Neither the word Trinity, nor the explicit doctrine as such, appears in the New Testament, nor did Jesus and his followers intend to contradict the Shema in the Old Testament: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord' (Deut. 6:4). . . . The doctrine developed gradually over several centuries and through many controversies."

Apostasy and Philosophy

The Christian apostle Paul wrote: "The time is sure to come when, far from being content with sound teaching, people will be avid for the latest novelty and collect themselves a whole series of teachers according to their own tastes; and then, instead of listening to the truth, they will turn to myths."—2 Timothy 4:3, 4, the Catholic *Jerusalem Bible*.

Evidence within the Bible itself shows that apostasy already was at work before the death of Christ's apostles. (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 7; 1 John 2:18, 19; Jude 3, 4, 16, 19) Apostates from within the Christian congregation rose up as false teachers. Instead of following Bible truth, these ungodly men turned to "myths." They carried off many Christians as their prey "through the philosophy and empty

"The Christian Bible, including the New Testament, has no trinitarian statements or speculations concerning a trinitary deity."

—*Encyclopædia Britannica*

deception according to the tradition of men."—Colossians 2:8.

Commenting on what happened, Oxford University Professor J. N. D. Kelly writes: "During the first three centuries of its existence, the Christian Church had first to emerge from the [monotheistic] Jewish environment that had cradled it and then come to terms with the predominantly Hellenistic (Greek) culture surrounding it." Then, speaking of early teachers who later became known as church fathers, Professor Kelly continues: "Most of them exploited current philosophical conceptions. . . . They have been accused of Hellenizing Christianity (making it Greek in form and method), but they were in fact attempting to formulate it in intellectual categories congenial [suited] to their age. In a real sense they were the first Christian theologians." These early "theologians" set about adapting primitive Bible-based Christianity to current philosophical ideas.

Philosophical Origins of the Trinity

Interestingly, the French encyclopedia *Alpha* states: "Most religious traditions or philosophical systems set forth ternary [threefold] groups or triads that correspond to primeval forces or to aspects of the supreme God." Another French work points to the Greek philosopher Plato (of about 427 to 347 B.C.E.) and declares:

"The Platonic *trinity*, itself merely a rearrangement of older *trinities* dating back to earlier peoples, appears to be the rational philosophic *trinity* of attributes that gave



Gaulish, threeheaded god in Reims museum (France)

birth to the three hypostases or divine persons taught by the Christian churches. . . . This Greek philosopher's conception of the divine *trinity* . . . can be found in all the ancient [pagan] religions."—*Dictionnaire Lachatre*.

Naturally, Christendom's priests and clergymen, for the most part, deny this pagan philosophical origin of the Trinity dogma. The authoritative French *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* devotes 16 columns of small type to its arguments against the relationship between Plato's trinity and Christendom's triune God. Yet, this work has to admit that Catholic "Saint" Augustine himself—said to have been "of decisive importance for the Western [Roman] development of the Trinitarian doctrine"—recognized this relationship. Moreover, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1976, Macropædia) states: "Such a Hellenization did, to a large extent, take place. The definition of the Christian faith as contained in the creeds of the ecumenical synods of the early church indicate that unbiblical categories of Neoplatonic philosophy were used in the

formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity."

A Trinitarian "Unknown God"

Speaking to a group of philosophers in Athens, Greece, the apostle Paul declared: "While passing along and carefully observing your objects of veneration I also found an altar on which had been inscribed 'To an Unknown God.'" (Acts 17:23) Interestingly, the French *Pirot and Clamer Bible* comments that the Greek philosophers "had not come to a knowledge of God the Creator. Even Plato saw in God merely the organizer of preexistent matter." Plato's God was a nameless supreme "idea" that his later disciples called "the One," or "the Good." It was such a mysterious, unknowable God tied in with Plato's divine triad theory that apostate Christian church fathers set out to imitate. In a sense, therefore, Christendom has an "unknown God."

Since "neither the word Trinity, nor the explicit doctrine as such, appears in the New Testament," the philosopher-theologians had to fish around in the Scriptures to find a semblance of justification for a triune God. The best they could come up with were a few texts that happen to mention the Father, the Son and the holy spirit in the same context, although not necessarily in that order. (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14 [13 in many Catholic Bibles]) Such texts were said to contain a "triadic formula." On this point, the scholarly *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* states: "Perhaps recollection of the many triads of the surrounding polytheistic world contributed to the formation of these threefold formulae." Then, in a footnote, this work says that in the apocryphal Gospel of the Hebrews, the spirit (feminine gender in Hebrew and Aramaic) "is regarded as the mother of Jesus" and adds: "Thus we have the common family

triad of antiquity, i.e., father, mother and son."

Of course, this was a little too much like the pagan triune gods of Egypt, Babylon and Gaul. And if the holy spirit was Jesus' mother, what would become of Mary? So the church fathers abandoned the pagan "father, mother and son" trinity and invented an original triune God composed of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But this caused further problems, as explained by the *Encyclopædia Britannica*: "The question as to how to reconcile the encounter with God in this threefold figure with faith in the oneness of God, which was the Jews' and Christians' characteristic mark of distinction over against paganism, agitated the piety of ancient Christendom in the deepest way. It also provided the strongest impetus for a speculative theology—an impetus that inspired Western metaphysics [philosophy] throughout the centuries." Yes, the Trinitarian "unknown God" of Christendom is a product of theological speculation and philosophy.

The Trinity Controversy

In the early centuries of our Common Era there was "an astonishing plurality of views and formulations" regarding the Trinity. Historian J. N. D. Kelly, himself a Trinitarian, admits that the earliest

"Perhaps recollection of the many triads of the surrounding polytheistic world contributed to the formation of these threefold formulae."—*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

church fathers were all firm monotheists. He writes: "The evidence to be collected from the Apostolic Fathers is meagre, and tantalizingly inconclusive. . . . Of a doctrine of the Trinity in the strict sense there is of course no sign."—*Early Christian Doctrines*.

True, such second-century "fathers" as Ignatius of Antioch and Irenaeus of Lyons expressed ideas that could be interpreted, at the most, as belief in a two-in-one God made up of the Father and the Son. But Kelly states: "What the Apologists had to say about the Holy Spirit was much more meagre . . . [They] appear to have been extremely vague as to the exact status and role of the Spirit. . . . There can be no doubt that the Apologists' thought was highly confused; they were very far from having worked the threefold pattern of the Church's faith into a coherent scheme."

Those who held that there is only one God, the Father, of whom Jesus is the Son, came to be called Unitarians. We read: "The Trinitarians and the Unitarians continued to confront each other, the latter at the beginning of the 3rd century still forming the large majority." (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th edition) But as time went by and church fathers became increasingly influenced by a new form of Plato's philosophy (Neoplatonism), the Trinitarians gained ground. Third-century Neoplatonic philosophy, with its complicated theories of substance or essence, seemingly enabled them to reconcile the irreconcilable—to make a three-

In Our Next Issue

- Living Forever
—Is It Just a Dream?
- Must All True Christians
Be Ministers?
- One God or Three?

fold God appear like one God. By philosophical reasoning they claimed that three persons could be one while retaining their individuality!

The Arian Controversy

The Trinity controversy came to a head at the beginning of the fourth century C.E. The main protagonists were three philosopher-theologians from Alexandria, Egypt. On the one side was Arius, with Alexander and Athanasius on the other. Arius denied that the Son was of the same essence, or substance, as the Father. He held the Son to be really a son, who therefore had a beginning. Arius believed the Holy Spirit was a person, but not of the same substance as the Father or the Son and in fact inferior to both. He did speak of a "Triad," or "Trinity," but considered it to be composed of unequal persons, of whom only the Father was uncreated.

Alexander and Athanasius, on the other hand, maintained that the three persons of the Godhead were of the same substance and, therefore, were not three Gods but one. Athanasius accused Arius of re-introducing polytheism by separating the three persons.

The head of the Roman Empire at that time was Constantine, who was anxious to use apostate Christianity as "cement" to consolidate his shaky empire. For him, this theological controversy was counter-productive. He called the Trinity quarrel a "fight over trifling and foolish verbal differences." Having failed to reconcile the two opposing parties by a special letter sent to Alexandria in 324 C.E., Constantine summoned a general church council to settle the matter either way. At this First Ecumenical Council held at Nicaea, Asia Minor, in 325 C.E., the assembled bishops eventually came out in favor of Alexander and Athanasius. They adopted the Trinitarian Nicene Creed, which, with alterations believed to have been made in

"The evidence to be collected from the Apostolic Fathers is meagre, and tantalizingly inconclusive. . . . Of a doctrine of the Trinity in the strict sense there is of course no sign."

—Oxford Professor J. N. D. Kelly

381 C.E., is subscribed to up to the present day by the Roman Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox Church and most Protestant churches. Thus it was that Christendom came to worship a mysterious, incomprehensible, three-in-one "unknown God."

Far-Reaching Consequences

The Trinity controversy did not end at Nicaea. Arianism (which was not true Christianity) made several comebacks over the years. The German tribes that invaded the declining Roman Empire professed Arian "Christianity" and took it into much of Europe and North Africa, where it continued to flourish until well into the sixth century C.E., and even longer in some areas.

The Trinity doctrine divided Christendom for centuries. At various ecumenical councils, theologians philosophized on the precise nature and role of the Son and on whether the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father alone or from the Father and the Son. All these wranglings merely confused the notion of God in the minds of people.

The Trinity doctrine has, in fact, so confused the minds of many members of Christendom's churches that their faith in God is shaky, if not completely shaken. But what about you? Do you wonder what the Scriptures really say about the Father, the Son and the holy spirit? These matters will be discussed fully in the next two issues of *The Watchtower*.

Putting the Kingdom First in Postwar Germany

On what principle will we base our decisions in life? The best teacher of all, Jesus Christ, told his disciples to 'seek first God's Kingdom.' If they did so, all their other needs would be supplied. (Matthew 6:33) Since my youth I have found that laying our burdens on Jehovah, declaring his works and keeping Kingdom interests first in life will truly 'make us rich' in a spiritual way. (Proverbs 10:22; Psalm 55:22; 71:5; 73:28) The following personal experiences from an exciting chapter in my life demonstrate this principle.

IT WAS early 1945. World War II was drawing to a close in Europe. The German war effort was faltering, and the attitude of the people and even of the government had changed. Instead of looking forward to victory, there was an anticipation of defeat. For this reason the pressure placed on Jehovah's Witnesses by their Nazi persecutors had also been reduced.

I was one of a number of female Witnesses who had been transferred from the Ravensbrück concentration camp to work as governesses in the homes of Nazi officials. One afternoon, a few months before the war ended, the SS officer for whose two children I was caring approached me privately in his house. His name was Kiener.



As told by Gertrud Poetzinger

"Have you heard that the Russians are advancing on the eastern front?" he asked coldly. When I replied that I had, he asked: "What will you do if they come in here?" Looking him in the eye, I responded: "Well, they are our enemies and you are our enemies. So what difference does it make?" Yes, with such boldness Jehovah enabled us to continue standing courageously as Christian neutrals and Kingdom advocates in those difficult days. —John 15:19.

A Successful Escape

Reports of German withdrawal were not just rumors. Toward the end of April, Kiener arranged for his wife and their children to flee southward. At my request he sent me along with them. Mrs. Kiener gave me civilian clothes to wear in order not to give any indication that she had anything to do with the Nazi organization. We boarded a truck headed for the northern Bavarian countryside, closer to the American Front than to the Russian.

That was the first time I had really been



I wore the prison uniform while caring for the SS officer's children

away from the concentration camps in seven and a half years. But the war was not yet over, and tension ran high. As the truck rolled along, a squadron of Allied fighter planes swooped over us. I was in front with the two children and the driver. He was sure the planes would return to strafe the truck with machine-gun fire. In my heart I urgently prayed: "Jehovah, after all you have protected me through, please don't let me die like this now!"

As anticipated, the fighter planes were making a wide turn so as to pass over us again. The driver was pressing down on the accelerator, but of course there was no hope of outrunning the aircraft. Suddenly, there appeared a side road leading into a patch of woods. The driver made a fast,

sharp turn onto it and sped into the wooded area. Since the foliage was quite thick, the truck could not be seen from above, and the planes passed us by.

There were other such close calls during the war. However, the end of the war, which came only ten days after this incident, brought challenges of other sorts.

Caring for Greater Responsibilities

Mrs. Kiener, her children and I had found lodging along with a number of other refugees in the small village of Mönchsdeggingen, near Nördlingen. When the fighting had officially been stopped for one week, I informed her that I had to leave. Her response was understandably one of distress. Whom else could she trust? Now the whole country was against the Nazis and their families. But I had greater responsibilities. With the end of the war came the need for Jehovah's Witnesses to reorganize the Kingdom-preaching work. I also had to try to find my husband, Martin.

We had been married only three and a half months when Martin was taken away and later sent to the Dachau concentration camp. Still later, I was also arrested and eventually put in the Ravensbrück camp. It had been two years since I had heard from my husband, and nine long years had passed since we had been separated. Was Martin still alive? If so, was he well?

An Unforgettable Day

The time came for me to depart. It was 4:30 in the morning. My breakfast consisted of a piece of heavy, dark bread. I set out on foot with no money, no food-ration coupons and no possessions except a child's small school pouch in which I had kept some of the morning's bread and a few personal items. The day passed by with me steadily making my way along

the road toward Munich, my husband's hometown and the most likely place to find him if he was still alive.

As evening drew near I found myself on the outskirts of a village. There was a curfew in effect, and it would be impossible to spend the night outdoors without running the risk of being arrested. So I stepped off the road and began to pray: "Jehovah, please help me. In all the years I have been serving you, I have never wanted for a place to lie down at night." When I finished praying I stepped back onto the road and looked around, but everything was the same.

On my coming into the village, the first house I saw had a wall around the yard. Through the gate I could see a woman doing some yard work, and I asked her: "Could you please tell me if there is any place to spend the night here?" She looked me over and replied rather cautiously that I would have to go around the back of the house and ask her husband, as quite a number of people already were staying there.

Rounding the back of the house, I stepped inside to see a big meal of German specialties spread out before my eyes. Nine people were seated around the table, ready to begin eating. I momentarily stood there dazed, having eaten nothing since very early that morning. The man of the house raised his eyes and said firmly: "Well, don't just stand there! Ten can eat just as well as nine!"

Before eating, however, I asked the man if I could spend the night there. He agreed, and his wife showed me a cot right at the head of the stairs out in the hallway. I thought of the men swarming through the house but assured her that the cot would be fine. She then left for an evening church service.

During the meal, a younger woman also staying in the same house listened intent-

ly to the conversation, which had quickly led into a witness about God's Kingdom. It was difficult to discern exactly how she was reacting, and after a while she retired to her room.

The lady of the house eventually returned home and invited me into the sitting room. She showed me a German Elberfelder edition of the Bible, which has God's name, Jehovah, in many places. "I got this from a Bible Student years ago," she said. "Can you tell me if it is a genuine Bible? I have often read it, but I couldn't understand it by myself. Can you please explain something about it to me?"

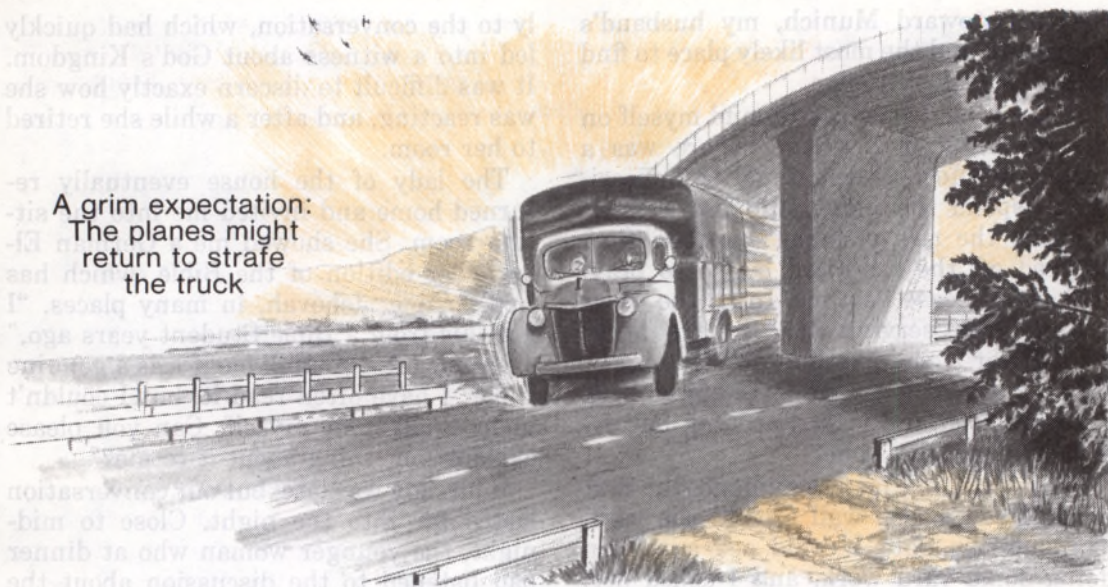
It already was late, but our conversation lasted far into the night. Close to midnight, the younger woman who at dinner had listened to the discussion about the Kingdom joined us, saying she could not sleep because of thinking about the things we had discussed. She added that she wanted to give me something to help me on my journey. At that, she handed me 20 marks—a lot of money in those days.

I told the women about going to Munich and said that I would have to go in the morning as early as possible. The lady of the house asked when I wanted to get up, and I told her five o'clock, although it was already past midnight. Then, as I headed for the cot in the hallway, she stopped me, saying: "You are not going to sleep there. Come." She unlocked a door in the hall, revealing a beautifully furnished guest room with lace curtains and fine linens on a comfortable bed. "Here is where you are going to sleep," she said.

A Challenge of a Different Sort

When I arose at five the next morning, the lady and her husband were already sitting in the kitchen with breakfast waiting for me. After we had eaten, she took my small school pouch and stuffed it full of sandwiches. Finally, she and her hus-

A grim expectation:
The planes might
return to strafe
the truck



band stood in front of the house to see me off, waving good-bye until I could no longer see them in the distance.

I reflected on the fact that only about 24 hours earlier I had left Mrs. Kiener, the SS officer's wife, with practically no material provisions. All I then had was the determination to put Jehovah's Kingdom first and to take advantage of my new-found freedom to that end. Before I made it to Munich, however, Jesus' counsel to seek not only God's Kingdom but also "his righteousness" was to be challenged. —Matthew 6:33.

In the middle of the afternoon, tired and footsore, I tried to get a ride on one of the American trucks carrying other refugees in the direction of Munich. I succeeded in getting one to stop, and in my very limited English made my request known to the driver. He said the back was full, but I could ride in the cab with him, and I accepted his offer.

As we were nearing Munich, the driver made several stops, letting out some passengers each time. When we were about to

enter the city, he turned the truck onto a road leading out into the foothills. Noticing this, I tried to explain to him that I wanted to go into the city. "No!" he said. "We are going to the mountains."

I then realized that all the other passengers were gone. I tried to open the door but could not figure out how to unlock it. The road wound into the hills, and all along the way in my broken English I tried to tell the man that I wanted no part of what he had in mind. But he kept driving until we arrived at a small glen in the woods. He stopped the truck and got out, walked around to my side of the truck and opened the door. I stepped down and stood facing him. He began saying how beautiful the day was and what a beautiful place it was, and that no one would see us.

"Yes," I said, "it is a beautiful day and place, and nobody may be here, but Jehovah God sees us, and Jehovah will . . . me and you." But I could not think of the English word "punish." So I waved my hands wildly in front of his face and screamed at him loudly! This seemed to

have an effect, for his attitude obviously changed. He paused for a moment, reflecting, then bade me to get back into the truck. Without a word, we drove into the center of Munich where he stopped and asked if that was close enough. I assured him that it was. Again he opened the door from the outside, and once more I stood face to face with him. This time, however, he took my hands and said: "You are a righteous woman. Pray for me, that my wife be as faithful as you are."

Immediately, I began to pioneer, engaging in the full-time preaching work in Munich. I tried to contact as many fellow Witnesses as possible in order to help get our meetings and other activities going again, since practically all our Kingdom-publishing activities had been disrupted by the war and the persecution.

My Husband Is Alive!

Not long after arriving in Munich, I found out that Martin was indeed alive and well. He had been transferred to the extermination camp at Mauthausen, Austria, but had survived. Along with about a hundred other Witnesses, he had to wait there until their papers were processed. These would identify them as individuals persecuted by the Hitler regime. Without such papers it would not have been possible for them to travel or to obtain adequate provisions.

After learning about the situation, I personally went to the American military commander in Munich and said: "My husband is in a concentration camp in Austria, and I want you to send a car there and bring him back!" As things turned out, the commander eventually sent two buses there and brought all the Witnesses back.

A New Challenge Met

Now I was faced with another challenge. My husband was coming back! But where

could we live? I had been living in a tool shed behind a house, sleeping in a chair surrounded by all the garden tools. We needed a place to live, but I knew that Jesus' servants should put the Kingdom first.

So in prayer I resolved to take one full day from my pioneering to look for a suitable place to live. I went to the American-operated housing authority and obtained a list of apartments. Beginning early in the morning of the day selected, I went all the way through the list. Sundown found me standing in front of the last house listed, having just been told that it, like all the others, no longer was available. What was I to do?

I prayed to Jehovah for help. After all, he knew what was needed and would care for those who put the Kingdom first. I had taken the one day away from pioneering and had come up with nothing. When I finished praying, once again it seemed that nothing had changed. But I had confidence in Jehovah, the "Hearer of prayer." (Psalm 65:2) So the only thing to do was to go forward and look for an answer. This I did, literally, and not too many paces in front of me I saw three women conversing along the sidewalk. Approaching them, I asked if they could direct me to an available apartment.

One of the group turned and said quite bluntly: "You just have to go out and find one for yourself!" Her impoliteness startled me, but I thought: 'Perhaps this is my answer! I will start right here at this corner and just begin going from house to house.' Going up to the first house, I rang the bell and a woman greeted me with the words: "You must have come from the housing authority!" Her number had not been on my list, however. She ushered me up to a second-story apartment and opened the door to a nice room with a



With my husband, Martin, I now enjoy witnessing publicly and from house to house in Brooklyn, New York

small kitchen across the hall—and a splendid view of the Bavarian Alps!

Rich Blessings for Faithfulness

Martin and I moved into that apartment. From the very beginning, of course, we both remained busy with the Kingdom work. I continued pioneering, and Martin began to make arrangements to visit groups of Witnesses a distance from Munich in order to build them up spiritually. He made these one- or two-day excursions alone, since traveling still was very difficult.

Once, Martin returned from a trip just as I was leaving for service at 9:00 a.m. He asked me to be sure to set out clean clothing and whatever else he would need because he had to leave on another trip that afternoon. I said that I was going out

to make return visits and conduct some home Bible studies and would be back at noon to fix his lunch and help him pack. Noon came and went, but I was not there; nor were his clean socks and other things ready for his suitcase. Four o'clock came and went, then 8:00 p.m., and finally I came home at 11 o'clock that night happy for all the good experiences I had enjoyed during that day. Then it dawned on me! In my enthusiasm for the service and my exciting Bible studies that day, I had forgotten all about Martin and his trip. At that time, I was just not used to having a husband at home!

Naturally, such absentmindedness did not last long. Martin had to be away much of the time, and I soon became acutely aware of his absence. Missing him, I found myself weeping quite often. However, because I did not want the landlady to see me as anything except my usual happy self, I would go to a nearby cemetery, sit down on a stump and cry there. I reasoned: 'Lots of other people come here and cry. So it won't seem unusual to anyone if I do too!' But crying did not really improve the situation.

I had so many good experiences conducting 22 Bible studies with families at least once each week! But I wanted to share these good things with my husband. Martin was back and in good health, and yet we could not be together. So I prayed to Jehovah about the matter. I also confided my distress to Brother Erich Frost, then the overseer of the preaching work in Germany. I told him that having my husband back just meant that I had his socks and underwear to wash. Brother Frost might have thought that he was encouraging me by saying that I should be happy that I could at least do this. But I was not too satisfied with that answer! Nevertheless, endure I did.

Some time later, Martin was invited to

Magdeburg to be trained as a servant to the brethren, as circuit overseers were then known. At the conclusion of this training, Brother Frost announced that he had something special for Gertrud. Direction had been received from the Brooklyn headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses that all wives previously in pioneer service could join their husbands in visiting the various congregations in the traveling work. My prayers had again been answered!

In Retrospect

As I reflect on the many experiences my husband and I have had, I am convinced that our heavenly Father knows the things we need and that we will receive

them at the proper time if we are *really* putting the Kingdom *first* in our lives. I can also see that I have not received things I really did not need.—Matthew 6:32.

For nearly 31 postwar years I traveled the length and breadth of Germany with my husband as he visited and spiritually assisted Christian congregations in that land. Since 1978, however, I have worked at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York, where Martin has been serving as a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. Although I am now 72 years old, how grateful I am to Jehovah that I still have plenty of strength—enough to spend full days in Kingdom service!

CENTENNIAL ANNUAL MEETING, OCTOBER 6, 1984

It gives us great pleasure to announce that this year the annual meeting of members of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania will be held October 6, 1984, in the Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall of Pittsburgh, R. D. 2, Coraopolis, Pennsylvania 15108. This location is near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where the Society was first organized. The time of the meeting will be at ten o'clock in the forenoon of Saturday, October 6, 1984.

The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania was formed in 1881 and was first incorporated in 1884 under the name Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society. Thus, 1984 marks the one hundredth anniversary of this Bible Society. How mightily Jehovah God has used this Society over the past hundred years!

A special program, including the business meeting, will be arranged from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. In order that as many as possible may have the opportunity to enjoy this rich spiritual feast, arrangements are being made to tie in the Pittsburgh Assembly Hall with other available assembly halls in the United States as well as those in Canada. However, even with these expanded seating facilities, it will not be possible to accommodate all of Jehovah's Witnesses who would like to attend. Hence, only those who have been baptized Witnesses for more than 40 years will be invited, and admission will be by ticket only. In due time, congregations will receive more details concerning this matter.

The regular letters of notice of the annual meeting, together with proxies, will be sent to the members of the corporation so that we can receive a reply not later than August 1, 1984. Each member should complete and return his proxy promptly whether he personally will be attending the business meeting at Pittsburgh or will be attending at another assembly hall. The information given on the proxy should be definite on this point, as it will be relied upon to determine in advance where members will actually be present. If a traveling companion will accompany the member, this should also be stated so that a seat may be reserved also for the companion.

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